



Scottish Consortium  
for Rural Research

## MINUTE OF THE 143<sup>RD</sup> MEETING OF THE SCRR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 26<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2020, ONLINE

### **Present:**

Prof Geoff Simm (Chair)  
Prof Sarah Skerratt (Scientific Director)  
Prof Willie Donachie (Secretary/Treasurer)  
Dr Nick Fraser (NMS)  
Prof Lee Innes (MRI)  
Dr Kathy Velandar (Edinburgh Napier University)  
Prof David Miller (JHI)  
Prof Stuart Monro  
Prof Martin Price (UHI)  
Prof Des Thompson (SNH)

### **Apologies:**

Prof Karen Halliday (UoE)  
Prof Pete Hollingsworth (RBGE)  
Prof David Hopkins (SRUC)

- 1. Welcome & Apologies:** Professor Simm welcomed those present online.
- 2. Minutes and matters arising from 141<sup>nd</sup> Executive meeting:** The minutes were corrected for typos and accepted with no matters arising.
- 3. Update, Members, Centres of Excellence and Networks**

3.1. UHI (MP) A new Centre for Remote and rural Studies, based at Inverness College, has been created with Dr Vicky Johnson as Director (<https://pure.uhi.ac.uk/en/persons/vicky-johnson>). This is a substantial addition to the UHI family of groups studying Rural Issues.

3.2. NMS (NF) Following the recommendation at the 142<sup>nd</sup> Executive Committee Meeting to look at the state of Taxonomy training in Scottish and UK HEIs a quick review has shown that very little is taking place. Vertebrates and insects appear to be the main interests. KV reported that Edinburgh Napier had held 145 hours of Taxonomy training in the year and latterly with Webex and online tutorials. This had worked well. Uses indicator species within families across a range and students taught to differentiate at a general level.

The Edinburgh Conservation Science Seminar was being held on the 10 July 2020 as a Zoom mediated event.

3.3. JHI/SEFARI (DM) Institute staff on furlough begin returning to work on 29<sup>th</sup> June.

- Events in Summer 2020 were continuing online and included: Arable Scotland 12 July 2020 and the Scotland Agricultural Show
- The EU 2030 Strategy and Farm to Fork
- The Higgins Review has been published and contains recommendations for Scottish Research.

#### SEFARI

An initiative by SEFARI to bring together existing educational resources for home schooling was discussed. SCRR members have extensive resources to share and it would help publicise the research activity within SCRR.

COP26 is now planned for November 2021 and it offers an opportunity for a SEFARI led contribution.

3.4. MRI (LI) There was no furlough at MRI as essential laboratory and animal work had to continue. An NHS Testing Node has been set up at the Institute in collaboration with SRUC Veterinary Services to provide PCR viral antigen testing. This is Moredun's Centenary Year but the COVID-19 pandemic has postponed the big celebrations until 2021. The Moredun 'Bus' building is nearly ready for touring and other online events are going ahead.

3.5. SNH (DT) The Field Studies Centres have all been involved in online learning activities with no visitors/students allowed onsite. However 400K students have been reached.

The most recent Biodiversity Report was put before Parliament on the 26<sup>th</sup> June. The Edinburgh Process for Subnational and Local Governments on the development of the Post 2020 global biodiversity framework. The Edinburgh Process is being delivered through a consultation (30 April – 12 June 2020) - supported by a series of online information sessions (Session 1: 5 – 8 May 2020) and thematic webinars (12 May - 4 June 2020). The Edinburgh Process is part of the work programme of the Convention on Biological Diversity Open-ended Working Group for the development of the Post 2020 global biodiversity framework, as a partner event.

There is a major effort by the Scottish Government on a Green Recovery. This follows on from the Report of the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery: Towards a Robust, Resilient Wellbeing Economy for Scotland:

(<https://www.gov.scot/publications/towards-robust-resilient-wellbeing-economy-scotland-report-advisory-group-economic-recovery/>)

This report recommends 'prioritisation of sector plans to deliver a green recovery, where the coincidence of emissions reductions, the development of natural capital and job creation are the strongest'.

There is some expectation that a new Centre of Expertise in Biodiversity will be created for the next Research Strategic Programme.

3.6. University of Edinburgh (GS) Online teaching is to the fore for the foreseeable future. Presently on campus it is COVID-19 and animal work that is happening. World One Health Conference will be an online event in October/November 2020.

## 4. Events

4.1 Peter Wilson Lecture 2020: The Peter Wilson Lecture was held online for the first time in its 17-year history in May, hosted by the RSE, and we had 147 registrants. The title was 'Young People and Evidence: lessons from youth debate on climate change' and young people from as far afield as Vietnam and California, as well as from here at home in Scotland, challenged our thinking around climate change and our shared futures. The speakers' key points centred around the need to create compelling, evidence-based narratives, putting lived-experience at the centre, whilst valuing different types of knowledges (local and external). British Sign Language (BSL) was used throughout the debate which was viewed by 147 people from countries as far afield as Australia and Belgium.

4.2 SCRR/Scotia Club Meeting: 'Agriculture transition to Zero Transmissions' was held on 27 February 2020 at the RSE. Speakers were Bill Spoor, Chair of the Scotia club, Bob Reed, SRUC; Nigel Miller, farmer; Paul Ritchie, SRUC and Alastair Lawrence, SRUC. The talks were well received and the responses stimulated a varied and good discussion. The Committee agreed this event should continue annually.

4.4. Challenging Upland Futures Forum: The meeting will now take place in the Perth Theatre on 19-20<sup>th</sup> January 2021. There will be no field trip due to COVID-19 restrictions. The 'Geographer' will publish the presentations as articles in a September edition.

4.4 SCRR AGM 2020 : Arrangements for the AGM have been made with the RSE. The date will be 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020. This will likely be an online event. A special meeting of the Executive Committee will be organised to discuss arrangements.

## 5. Membership

5.1. SCRR Consortium Membership: No changes in membership have occurred since February 2020 meeting.

5.2. Executive Committee Membership.

5.2.1 Kathy Velandar and Martin Price announced that they will be retiring summer 2020 and therefore leaving the Executive Committee. This will be official at the AGM 2020 and new members of the Committee will be sought.

5.2.2 A major aim after the 2019 AGM was the appointment of an Early Career Researcher to the Executive Committee. The process for recruitment was discussed and agreed.

## 6. Finances

6.1. Accounts and current financial position: WD presented the current financial position which continues to be healthy (see Appendix 1).

## **7. Publicity & communications**

7.1. **SCRR Website:** A proposal to review the website management and possible changes was put forward by SS at the previous Executive meeting. This is being pursued.

7.2. **SCRR Newsletter:** The next newsletter, Number 95 is planned for online issue in July 2020.

A discussion on whether the Newsletter should move to an online only publication concluded that SCRR should retain both options. The update of the website was deemed essential and should be given priority. (SS, WD)

## **8. AOB:**

8.1. DM suggested that the Committee look again at holding a Biological Collections Meeting as SEFARI and the Scottish Government were considering options for Underpinning Strategies in the forthcoming Research Programme.

## **9. Date and place of next Executive meetings:**

9.1. 11 November 2020, SCRR AGM, Online

KEY	Prof Geoff Simm	GS	Prof David Miller	DM
	Prof Sarah Skerratt	SS	Prof Kathy Velandar	KV
	Prof Willie Donachie	WD	Dr Nick Fraser	NF
	Prof Lee Innes	LI	Prof Martin Price	MP
	Prof Stuart Monro	SM		

## Appendix1.

### Scottish Consortium for Rural Research Income & Expenditure Account Year to date 26/06/20

	Actual		Balance in Bank
	£		£
Balance brought forward 31/03/2020	39,445.82		39,445.82
<b>Income</b>			
Subscription	0		39,445.82
Total Income		0	
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Salaries & Honoraria	3,696.21		35749.61
Travel		35749.61	
Meetings & Hospitality	100		35649.91
Office Rent, Rates, Heat & Light	0	35649.91	
Office Expenses & Telephone	0	35649.91	
SCRR Newsletter publication	0	35649.91	
Publicity, Posters, Website	453.60		35196.31
Miscellaneous	0	35196.31	
Total Expenditure	0	4,249.51	
<b>Balance26/06/20</b>		<b>35196.31</b>	