

**UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE TWENTY SIXTH MEETING OF THE
UK NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR ANTARCTIC RESEARCH
Monday 7th June, 2021, 13.00
Online**

Present:

Prof M. Bentley	Chair, University of Durham
Mrs K. Gosling	Secretary, British Antarctic Survey
Prof J. E. Francis	British Antarctic Survey
M. S. Colwell	British Antarctic Survey
Dr T. Bracegirdle	British Antarctic Survey
Dr E. Griffin	SCAR Executive Officer, Cambridge
Dr D. Bakker	University of East Anglia
Dr H. Griffiths	British Antarctic Survey
Prof J. Smellie	University of Leicester
Dr P. Whitehouse	University of Durham
Dr N. Johnston	British Antarctic Survey
Dr L. Ireland	British Antarctic Survey
Prof P. Convey	British Antarctic Survey
Mr G. Clarkson	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Ms R. Cooper	Royal Society
Dr H. Peat	British Antarctic Survey
Prof L. Peck	British Antarctic Survey
Dr N. Arnold	Scott Polar Research Institute
Prof M.J. Siegert	Imperial College London
Prof R. Bingham	University of Edinburgh
Dr K. Hughes	British Antarctic Survey
Ms H. Jenkins	British Antarctic Survey
Dr L. Garratt	Natural Environment Research Council
Dr A. Jungblut	Natural History Museum
Ms A. Reichardt	British Antarctic Survey
Prof K. Dodds	Royal Holloway University of London
Dr S. Grant	British Antarctic Survey

Apologies:

Dr K. Hendry	University of Bristol
Mr H. Burgess	NERC Artic Office
Prof E. Wolff	University of Cambridge
Dr Chandrika Nath	SCAR Executive Director, Cambridge
Prof Julian Dowdeswell	Scott Polar Research Institute

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mike Bentley welcomed everybody to the meeting. He led a series of short introductions.

2 TWENTY-FIFTH MEETING OF THE UK NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR ANTARCTIC RESEARCH ON 15th JUNE, 2020 (*paper*)

The following amendments were noted:

- Attendees: Add Lizzie Garratt, NERC.
- Title: should read 'Twenty fifth meeting'
- Item 3: The SCAR OSC will be in Hyderabad in 2022.
- Item 5: The current UKNCAR Chair term ends in 2023.

3 MATTERS ARISING INCLUDING ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING (paper)

UKNCAR mailing list: It was suggested the Antarctic Science Conference mailing list could be used to reach the UK Antarctic community, however this would require additional consent. This action will be followed up by KG and MB.

4 Report from SCAR Delegates meeting (March 2021)

The SCAR Delegates meeting was held online in March 2021, changes to the SCAR Articles of Association were discussed to enable online meetings.

The new Executive Committee was appointed. Dr Yeadong Kim is the new SCAR President, taking over from Prof Steven Chown. Two new Vice Presidents were elected, Prof Deneb Karentz and Prof Jefferson Simões, making four in total.

Turkey and the Czech Republic have been formally recognised as Full Members of SCAR. Mexico joined SCAR as a new Associate Member.

Budgets were approved for the next year, there was discussion about how to use the carry forward resulting from COVID-19 impact on travel.

Future Open Science Conferences (OSCs) will be held in Hyberbad in 2022, Chile in 2024, and Oslo has submitted an indicative bid for 2026.

The final report for the SCAR Antarctic COVID-19 group has been published. The survey results show the pandemic has unequally affected Antarctic scientists, with a disproportionate impact on women, especially those with caregiving responsibilities, and on Early Career Researchers.

SCAR is encouraging groups to consider and reduce the carbon impact of their activities, in particular large international meetings. Initiatives such as hybrid meetings, and reducing the number of meetings are being discussed. SCAR is working on further advice to the community.

5 UKNCAR Membership and Co-opted Members

The committee reviewed the list of SCAR groups and UK representatives to check for updates and review committee membership. It was noted that as always the committee is seeking those who are based in the UK and who are actively involved in SCAR activity. A number of updates were noted. The new Scientific Research Programmes are still being formed, so it is not yet clear in all cases who will be involved from the UK.

MB

MB will revisit the membership in six months time, working with UK members of some of the new SRPs (Tom Bracegirdle and Kevin Hughes). The committee are invited to send suggestions for potential new members to MB. In particular, nominations for early career and researchers who would also improve the diversity of the committee are welcome.

AR

KG/AR will ensure all current SCAR groups are included on the report.

6 Report from the Director of BAS

Jane Francis provided an update.

It has been a challenging year for Antarctic operations, 2020/21 was a minimal season. The season was completed successfully and importantly UK Antarctic research stations remained free from COVID-19. A very busy season is planned for 21/22. There are still a number of challenges resulting from the pandemic, in particular the gateways in Chile and South Africa. Deployment is planned via the Falkland Islands, with quarantine measures in place. Construction of the new Discovery Building at Rothera will continue, which must be watertight by the end of the season. There are a number of delayed science projects to support.

RRS Sir David Attenborough (SDA) is currently at the shipyard, if everything goes according to plan the ship will sail to Greenwich for a COP26 event, before sailing to the Antarctic for a logistics-only season.

NERC has formed a new group called the Polar Research and Operations Board (PROB) with NERC, BAS and external members, to aid longer term planning of polar ship and field operations and new science programmes. Within BAS, a new group called the Polar Operations Group will bring together all the logistics needs, science programme support, construction plans etc. to feed into the PROB's activities. This should allow NERC to develop future long-term polar science programmes more easily and ensure that NERC and BAS can plan ahead more effectively.

7 Report from Royal Society

Ruth Cooper explained that UKNCAR is required to submit a funding application to the Royal Society on an annual basis to cover 49% of the SCAR subscription fees. Ruth confirmed this year's application has again been successful. BAS pays the remaining 51% of the SCAR subscription fees.

The GERC meeting is taking place on 8th June. MB will attend as an *ex-officio* member, he will give a report to the meeting on UK involvement in SCAR activities, based on the reports submitted by the UKNCAR committee.

8 NERC Updates

Lizzie gave an overview of the NERC report on grant success rates. Proposals submitted to UKRI calls such as the Future Leaders Fellowship are run by a different research council and so do not include the same classification for Polar north or south, therefore it is not possible to report on them in the same way.

Although funding through Discovery Science calls continues to be very difficult to obtain, the community is reminded of the opportunity to put ideas forward for NERC Highlight topics.

Huw Griffiths raised a concern about a lack of information from NERC on the availability of shiptime for Antarctic science cruises for those wanting to submit funding proposals. Lizzie Garratt noted the concern and agreed to raise this with the Marine Planning team and NERC Head Office. It was suggested the SDA mailing list managed by BAS Communications could be used. **LG**

9 Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research

i Standing Scientific Groups Reports

Written reports provided.

ii Update on Scientific Research Programmes

Written reports provided. It is noted that the current programmes are now coming to an end and the focus is on publications.

ICED – Nadine Johnson highlighted a [survey](#) being carried out by the Southern Oceans Task Force to gather insights into how Southern Ocean science should evolve over the coming years to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals and provide valuable information to develop an inclusive Action Plan. Deadline 18th June.

AntVolc – John Smellie reported on the group’s outputs. They are producing a White Paper, that they will try to publish in a mainstream journal. They are also creating an outreach booklet aimed at primary school children.

iii Update on SCAR Expert Groups and data products

Written reports provided.

iv SCAR’s New Scientific Research Programmes

Instabilities & Thresholds In Antarctica (INSTANT) will address the question of Antarctica’s contribution to sea level, considering the interactions between ocean, atmosphere, cryosphere and solid Earth. The programme has a very large policy and stakeholder element. The Kick Off meeting, held in February 2021, was very well attended.

Integrated Science To Inform Antarctic And Southern Ocean Conservation (Ant-ICON) aims to answer fundamental science questions (as identified by the SCAR Horizon Scan and emerging issues), relating to the conservation and management of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean. The Kick Off meeting has taken place.

Near-Term Variability And Prediction Of The Antarctic Climate System (AntClimNow) – will aim to address the question of variability of the Antarctic climate system, looking in the near term. The group is currently running a workshop, with two separate events to cover different time zones. There is an even wider launch on 9th June, with over 100 people attending. Tom Bracegirdle noted the group would be happy to share their experience of running online events with SCAR, to disseminate common knowledge.

Standing Committee on the Antarctic Treaty System (SCATS). Susie Grant has recently taken on the Chief Officer role for SCATS, she provided an overview. SCATS is the body within the SCAR structure tasked with developing SCAR’s scientific advice to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings (ATCM), Committee on Environmental Protection (CEP), the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals (CCAS) and the Advisory Committee to the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP). This includes developing Working Papers on emerging policy, reviews of the state of knowledge and scientific and technical advice. SCAR currently provides an annual lecture at the ATCM, and there is a plan to do the same for CCAMLR. The

committee includes representatives from the science groups with a range of expertise. There were 15-16 papers submitted for upcoming ATCM, topics include a climate change update, conservation of emperor penguins, new methodology for selection of Geological Frameworks and Geosites and a SCAR environmental code of conduct for geoscience field researchers in Antarctica. There has also been a major update to Antarctic Climate Change and the Environment Report.

Eoghan Griffin reported that SCAR welcomed ideas to use budgets in other activities where travel has not been possible, they are also interested to hear experiences from groups using online platforms, and especially what has worked well.

10 Future science developments

A UK Antarctic Science future science scoping and prioritisation meeting took place on 22nd March 2021. The outcome of the meeting is a draft paper on future UK Antarctic science priorities, comments are invited from the UKNCAR and UKAAP. The paper will also be reviewed at the next DIPSI meeting. The writing group will then review the feedback before circulating the paper to selected stakeholders for comment. The aim is to publish the paper later this year.

Martin Siegert added that this was not replicating the international horizon scan that has taken place, but is aiming to provide a reflection on what the UK can bring to Antarctic science and what it is best suited to do. The document is meant for funders, policy makers and researchers – so when writing a proposal they can link to the document to back up their research ideas. It is intended to be a short document. Will send doc to Diversity in UK Polar Science Initiative (DiPSI) meeting.

Huw Griffiths commented that the paper should include more emphasis on the UK's strengths, especially in the Ecosystems section, and could be more positive about taking ownership of the UK's past activities in the region.

The committee is invited to send further comments to MB within the next week. **ALL**

11 FCDO update

George Clarkson gave an update. The 43rd ATCM will be held next week, it will be quite challenging to get through all topics. This will be the first meeting since the publication of the IPCC special report on global warming of 1.5°C. It also marks the 30th anniversary of the Madrid Protocol. Another key topic will be Antarctic tourism.

Klaus Dodds has written a detailed report on the genesis of the Madrid Protocol, to mark the 30th anniversary. The research for the report involved speaking to the diplomats who were involved; it highlighted the UK's leadership role in polar diplomacy, which continues today with recent agreements signed with Australia and Norway.

At COP26 there will be a cryosphere pavilion, managed by ICCI, this will provide an opportunity to be involved in the event.

12 Diversity in UK Polar Science Initiative (DiPSI)

UKNCAR members are part of the DiPSI Steering Committee, Kate Hendry and Martin Siegert are 2 of the Co-chairs, and Chandrika Nath, Huw Griffiths and Holly Jenkins are members.

An important recent output from DiPSI has been the Race Impact Survey Report, all are encouraged to read the report and page 15 contains positive actions that can be taken. In particular, the importance of role models and opportunities should be considered by UKNCAR when reviewing committee membership.

The DiPSI Steering Committee meets every 2 months, it is useful to feed issues from UKNCAR and UKAAP into those meetings.

There is an open call for SCAR group on EDI coming out next week, the scoping group has list of actions to take forward.

Huw Griffiths thanked everyone who took part in the Polar Horizons event, over 120 students were paired with polar researchers. This model is being looked at by NERC and UKRI for future activities and funding opportunities in other disciplinary areas.

13 UK Polar Network (UKPN)

Holly Jenkins gave an update. UKPN co-organised the Polar Early Career Conference in May, endorsed by United Nations Ocean Decade. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion was a central point of the meeting. UKPN have a new website.

Robert Bingham thanked UKPN for their pivotal role in the organisation of the UK Antarctic Science Conference.

14 UK Polar Data Centre (PDC)

Helen Peat encouraged those involved in SCAR groups with data to reach out to PDC and SCADM, for help with publishing data and open data.

15 UKAAP

Martin Siegert gave an update. The UK Antarctic Science Conference was held as an online event in March 2021, the event was a great success, including significant international attendance. The UK Arctic Science Conference will be hosted by Durham University in April 2022 [NB: dates will be 11-13 April 2022]. Then the next Antarctic conference is planned later in 2022, hosted again by the University of Edinburgh.

The UK will host the Arctic Science Summit Week in 2024.

The polar regions are referenced in the UK's Integrated Review 2021 titled 'Global Britain in a Competitive Age, the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy' (see especially p. 64) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-integrated-review-2021>) Klaus Dodds has written an article about the review published on the Council

on Geostrategy's online magazine (<https://www.geostrategy.org.uk/britains-world/the-polar-regions-in-the-integrated-review/>)

16 AOB

Dorothee Bakker highlighted a [survey](#) on NERC data future capabilities and encouraged polar-related submissions.

MB thanked Katie Gosling for her contribution to UKNCAR as secretary. She is stepping down following this meeting. Aurelia Reichardt, BAS, is taking over.

UK NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR ANTARCTIC RESEARCH

26th Committee Meeting, 7th June, 2021

ACTIONS

Action No.	ITEM	ACTION	BY	STATUS
1	3. Matters Arising	Set up a mailing list to enable reaching the UK Antarctic community. Look into using the UK Antarctic Science Conference mailing list	AR/MB	
2	5. UKNCAR Membership and Co-opted Members	Add additional SCAR groups to report	AR/MB	
3	5. UKNCAR Membership and Co-opted Members	Revisit membership in 6 months time once new SRPs are active. Check UK representatives and invite new members to join UKNCAR.	AR/MB	
4	8. NERC Updates	Raise concerns about communicating ship scheduling for research proposals with the Marine Planning team and NERC Head Office.	LG	
5	10. Future science developments	Comments are invited on the draft paper on future UK Antarctic science priorities.	All	

MB: Mike Bentley (Chair)

AR: Aurelia Reichardt (Secretary)

LG: Lizzie Garratt