

**UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE TWENTY SEVENTH MEETING OF THE
UK NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR ANTARCTIC RESEARCH
Tuesday 28th June 2022, 13.00 – 15.10
Online (Zoom)**

Present:

Prof M. Bentley	Chair, University of Durham	MB
Dr T. Bracegirdle	British Antarctic Survey	TB
Prof J Smellie	University of Leicester	JS
Dr H Peat	British Antarctic Survey	HP
Dr H Griffith	British Antarctic Survey	HG
Prof P. Convey	British Antarctic Survey	PC
Mr S. Colwell	British Antarctic Survey	SC
Dr K. Hendry	British Antarctic Survey	KaH
Dr S. Grant	British Antarctic Survey	SG
Dr L. Ireland	British Antarctic Survey	LI
Dr D. Bakker	University of East Anglia	DB
Ms P. Muschitiello	British Antarctic Survey	PM
Prof M. Siebert	Imperial College London	MS
Prof E. Wolff	University of Cambridge	EW
Dr K. Hughes	British Antarctic Survey	KeH
Dr A. Jungblut	National History Museum	AJ
Dr L. Thomas	British Antarctic Survey	LT
Prof L. Peck	British Antarctic Survey	LP
Mr. G. Clarkson	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office	GC
Mr L. Clarke	The Royal Society	LC
Ms J. Surma	Natural Environmental Research Council	JS
Dr C. Nath	SCAR Executive Director, Cambridge	CN
Ms A. Reichardt	Secretary, British Antarctic Survey	AR

Apologies:

Ms R. Cooper	The Royal Society	RC
Dr L. Garratt	Natural Environmental Research Council	LG
Dr C-D. Hillebrand	British Antarctic Survey	CDH
Prof K Dodds	Royal Holloway, University of London	KD
Prof J. Francis	British Antarctic Survey	JF
Dr N. Arnold	Scott Polar Research Institute	NA
Prof R. Bingham	University of Edinburgh	RB

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES and AGENDA (P)

MB introduced new members and provided a short overview of the role of UKNCAR.

MB reminded the committee of UKNCAR ToR:

- share information of SCAR activity within SCAR community
- report on UK involvement in activities
- inform Royal Society of UK SCAR activities

MB reiterated the role of UKNCAR members:

- help disseminate information and updates to community
- brief and debrief the SCAR delegates (JF and MB)
- identify issues and concerns to raise with SCAR

2 MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH MEETING, 2021 (P)

The minutes of the 26th meeting were confirmed as accurate and accepted without amendments.

3 MATTERS ARISING INCLUDING ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING (P)

Updates on actions from 26th meeting were provided.

Action 1) There is still no solution in sight for a mailing list of the polar community. The best current list remains the UK Antarctic Science conference list. Setting up and maintaining a comprehensive list would be a mammoth task.

MB will advertise UKNCAR at the UK Antarctic Science Conference through RB.

Action 2) The new SRPs as well as Action and Expert Groups have been added to the member list and updated with new representatives, i.e. SOOS.

Action 3) addressed in Item 4.

Action 4) Confirmed with JS: LG addressed communication and planning issues around Marine Science and Ship Operations with NERC and it was agreed that the newly formed *Polar Research and Operations Board* (PROB) is responsible for communicating this to the science community. MB is a member of PROB alongside Prof Karin Lochte (Ex-Director of AWI).

Action 5) Comments have been received and a Grantham discussion paper has been produced outlining UK Antarctic research priorities ¹

4 UKNCAR MEMBERSHIP AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS (P)

MB urged committee members to advertise UKNCAR's activity and suggest names of UK-based scientists involved in SCAR activity, especially where groups are underrepresented. The committee strives to improve its diversity and we are particularly interested in suggestions of early to mid-career researchers. **all**

The committee agreed that Southern Ocean Observing System (SOOS) and Humanities and Social Sciences (SC-HASS) are both under-represented and invitations would go to Sian Henley (Edinburgh) and Adrian Howkins (Bristol), respectively **MB**

MB raised that there was no representation of UKPN at this meeting and it was not possible to contact the representative in advance of the meeting. HG commented that many members of UKPN will change soon. HG will connect AR with UKPN to enable better representation in the future. UKPN is a very active group and understanding and publicising of their activity would be beneficial. **AR/HG**

¹ [The future of UK Antarctic science: strategic priorities, essential needs and opportunities for international leadership](#)

MB raised that 3-year maximum terms on UKNCAR are probably too short as it takes a considerable amount of time to get familiar with the SCAR activity and, many research programs and groups run up to 7 years (SRPs) or even longer (some groups).

5 UKNCAR CHAIR

MB's 5-yr term as chair of UKNCAR will come to an end in 2023 and the committee is now seeking (self) nomination for a new Chair to take up the role in time for the next UKNCAR meeting (likely June 2023).

MB explained the responsibilities of the UKNCAR chair.

- Chairing UKNCAR annual meeting
- Activities as UK Alternate Delegate to SCAR (Director of BAS is *ex officio* the UK Lead Delegate to SCAR)
 - o Attending SCAR delegate meetings
 - o Interactions with SCAR, consultations, discussions, information sharing.
 - o working on SCAR sub-committees and strategic initiatives
- Attend, contribute to, and report UKNCAR/SCAR activity to biannual Royal Society Global Environmental Research Committee (GERC) meetings

The chair noted there is no budget, and so funding to attend meetings must be sourced individually (NB: RS reimburse GERC travel expenses). The ToR state that the UKNCAR chair must be filled by a person external to BAS.

MB encouraged members who are interested to get in touch to discuss details of the role. Anyone interested should nominate themselves to the UKNCAR secretary, Aurelia Reichardt, aurich@bas.ac.uk by 30th November 2022.

**Non-BAS
members**

MS commented that chair of UKNCAR also attends meetings of UK Arctic and Antarctic Partnership (UKAAP) and vice versa to enhance communication and collaboration.

MB noted that if no nominations are received he would be willing to stay in the role for another 2 years to the next OSC (Chile), and as SCAR activity emerges from the COVID pandemic. However, he suggested, and it was agreed, that this should not extend to another full term, as renewal of chair is healthy for committee activity and UK input to SCAR delegates meetings.

6 Report from the Director of BAS (P)

MB presented the report as JF could not attend the meeting.

There is increased focus on the logistical burden of delivering polar ops. A *Polar Research and Operations Board* (PROB) has been formed to focus on long-term logistical planning. Membership includes NERC, BAS and externals with MB and Prof Karin Lochte (AWI, Ex-Director).

The global rise in fuel cost has a significant impact on marine planning. New costing models are being rolled out across BAS to better analyse true project cost.

The current backlog of science projects due to the COVID-19 pandemic is not expected to be cleared until 2027/28. Other national programs, e.g. NSF, are facing similar struggles.

HG commented that the delay in SDA science delivery is adding to the massive backlog. There is a need to communicate the severity of the situation to scientists. DB added the PICCOLO cruise is currently 5 years delayed.

EW raised that this committee should take a view on whether all projects in the backlog will still take place as proposed, and whether this should be reconsidered in case of new urgent ideas/projects.

PC added that ongoing station modernisation (AIMP - Antarctic Infrastructure Modernisation Program) has a massive impact on science projects supported on station. Bed nights are limited and recently no CASS proposals are being granted. This will impact careers. KaH further added that CASS applications can disproportionately impact ECRs (Early Career Researchers).

MS suggested that there could be potential for a sell-by date on delayed projects and suggested a light-touch review of proposals which are caught in backlog. This would allow NERC to reconfirm whether projects are still worth undertaking and reconnect with PIs. MS noted that the modernised infrastructure is important for science capabilities and it is necessary to remind the community that current upgrades will provide great opportunity down the line for projects to come.

MB will feedback to JF and PROB on these comments and concerns.

MB

7 Report from Royal Society

LC (Royal Society Head of International Affairs - Americas/Multilaterals/Africa) updated the committee on activities of the Royal Society as stand-in for RC.

At the 2022 G7 in Germany a joint Academies statement on the Ocean and Cryosphere² was released. It highlights the urgent need to protect oceans and cryosphere by reduction of greenhouse gases and calls for enhanced scientific collaboration and data sharing.³

Recent GERC: (Global Environmental Research Committee)⁴ activities include two publications on “Synthetic chemicals in the environment” and “Astrobiology and the environmental sciences” (to be published in September). The next focus will be on the future of forests.

² [Academies statement on Ocean and Cryosphere](#)

³ [2019 Royal Society briefing on IPCC report on ocean and cryosphere](#)

⁴ [GERC webpage and publications](#)

A report has been published from the 2020 GERC workshop on UK contribution to the UN Decade of Ocean Science⁵. LC also pointed members to the 2018 GERC paper on polar science⁶. All briefings and reports are maintained on the Royal Society website.

LC shared that the Royal Society is concerned about the Ukraine conflict and the impact on science. He asked the committee on their experiences on how it has affected Antarctic and Arctic science.

LT replied it has impacted projects in East Antarctica where logistics largely go through Russian station Novo.

PC added that Belarus and Ukraine collaborators (both have polar programs) are heavily impacted. In addition, UKPN is heavily impacted with Early Career community and opportunities for Russian early scientists.

MS urged that it's worth continuing dialogue with Russian scientists peer-to-peer as there is a trust that has been built over the year. It will be important when re-engaging with Russian scientists after the war ends.

MB commented that ISC (International Science Council), of which SCAR is a member issued a statement on the Ukraine/Russia conflict⁷.

HG added that while there are obvious impacts on Arctic activities, Antarctic science is also impacted. One example is the NERC National Capabilities funded project BIOPOLE, where Russian members have been removed from the project.

LC urged that there is a need to differentiate between individuals and institutions.

8 NERC Updates (P)

The NERC success rate for Polar South paper has been shared.

JS cautioned that 2022 data is incomplete at the moment as the year is only halfway through.

HG queried whether numbers for 2021 were particularly low and whether this could have been a result of COVID. JS confirmed that this was her interpretation of the data.

9 Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research

i Standing Scientific Groups Reports (P)

A written report on Geosciences was provided, updated current reports on Life Sciences and Physical Sciences will be submitted at a later date.

Geosciences

⁵ [GERC Ocean Decade workshop report](#)

⁶ [2018 GERC polar science paper](#)

⁷ [ISC statement on war in Ukraine](#)

KaH shared that there was a good recovery from COVID in Geosciences. The last year was quiet on a conference and networking front. The new NERC funded project BIOPOLE is underway, which is exciting news. It was off to a good start especially in terms of ECR engagement. KaH added that it has been very hard to get information out of the community to write the annual report.

Life Sciences

PC echoed KaH's issues. The lack of a community list makes it difficult to collate an integrated report. This year the SCAR biology conference would have taken place. However, SCAR are fully intending this to be an in person meeting in New Zealand next year in the UK summer. It has been hard to get good engagement in this year's Open Science conference. There has been less enthusiasm from many when it was confirmed not to be an in-person meeting.

Physical Sciences

SC shared the Physical Sciences 2018/2020 report as this year's report is currently being put together. Activities are starting to pick back up. Two Action Groups have asked for extension due to COVID impact. The annual Physical Science group meeting will take place online. There is good ECR participation. The Physical Sciences Chief Officer (David Grommit) and Secretary (Steve Colwell) will be up for re-election next year.

Update on Scientific Research Programmes (P)

- ii Written reports provided.

AntClimNow

TB raised that engagement with ECR suffers from the lack of in-person meetings. A workshop is planned in September at BAS Cambridge. 40 applications for in-person attendance have been submitted already, mainly from ECR. TB echoed the SCAR Open Science conference is suffering due to virtual character and reiterated that a UK polar science mailing list would be useful for workshop communication etc.

ANT-ICON

KeH shared that ANT-ICON is off to an interesting start. Being a group which brings together social and natural scientists as well as science and policy comes with its own challenges. It was further complicated by being launched during the pandemic. KeH shared his optimism for the future of the project.

INSTANT

MB noted that INSTANT is a giant SRP (11 sub-committees so far) and is making progress on developing white papers and plans for a 2023 conference. INSTANT activity has been almost exclusively online with the attendant inclusion advantages but the well-known timezone and focus disadvantages. Some activities have resorted to running twice to accommodate different timezones. Various marine cruises have happened in last 12 months, many of them international in their staffing.

- iii **Update on SCAR Expert Groups and data products**

Written reports were provided.

ACCE

ACCE is now included in SCATS and will no longer be treated as a separate Action Group.⁸

ICED

SG reported that ICED is a SCAR and SCOR (Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research) joint program. They were heavily involved in producing the Southern Ocean Action Plan. The project Marine Ecosystem Assessment of Southern Ocean (MEASO) was very active in publishing papers and had a side event at Glasgow COP26. They generated considerable visibility for the UK in Southern Ocean and Policy.

IPICS

MB reported that the Oldest Ice drilling campaign has started and WACSWAIN will soon publish their results.

EW mentioned the IPICS conference will be in-person this year.

OpMET

Nothing additional to report

AntVolc

JS introduced a booklet on Antarctic volcanism produced for school children as an outcome of AntVolc. It will be distributed through social media.

JS recommended AntVolc should soon be disbanded as an Expert Group or otherwise define new objectives and agenda.

ANTOS

PC confirmed that a report will be submitted after the Open Science Conference. A database as key product of the group is currently being set up and populated by Korea.

SCAGI:

LI reported that there haven't been any meetings since 2020 as there was a change in chairs. However, this will soon be rectified with a new co-chair being elected this year.

SCATS:

SG reported from the 2022 Antarctic Treaty Consultancy Meeting (23rd May – 2nd June, Berlin Germany). The decadal ACCE synopsis submitted by SCATS with input from many SCAR groups⁹ was well-received by the treaty parties. It includes policy and research recommendations.

A proposal by the UK to designate Emperor penguins as specially protected species was denied as no agreement could be reached between the parties (China could not agree).

SG reported on tensions with Russia. There were strong statements supporting Ukraine from other parties. China appeared more negative about some of SCAR's activities and on the extent of SCAR's policy recommendations.

⁸ [ACCE updates](#)

⁹ [SCATS ACCE decadal synopsis](#)

SCATS will present at the Open Science Conference joint with AntEco.
MB asked SG to send a short email to promote the joint meeting.

SG

AntArchitecture:

RB sent apologies, a report has been submitted.

Geological Heritage and Geo-conservation:

KeH stepped down from involvement in this group, which ends UK involvement in this group.

EDI:

PM reported on positive progress in the Antarctic Treaty Consultancy Meeting especially around language and inclusivity. There will be a business meeting at the Open Science Conference to push good work and action forwards. PM reported that it was slow going with this new group, especially as it has a different standing with SCAR than other scientific groups. It was noted that there is very good UK representation.

HG added that while there is a core group it is open to join to everyone. There are opportunities for volunteers to work on different sub-projects and topics i.e. inclusion in conferences or specific aspects of EDI. Please get in touch with Pilvi if you are interested.

MB highlighted that the work of the UK with DiPSI and SCAR EDI are seen as a role model by some other countries.

General update from SCAR Executive:

CN praised the strong UK representation within SCAR and reiterated that DiPSI serves as role model for many countries. UK members being active in SCAR plays an instrumental role for driving progress within SCAR.

CN echoed the above-mentioned difficulties of getting information from members on updates within groups. This seem to be the case across all groups and many countries.

Despite general disappointment that the Open Science Conference won't happen in person, >1000 abstracts have already been submitted with ~600 registrations.

SCAR business meetings will take place 27-29th July.

The SCAR delegates meeting will take place 5-7th September with more communications to come.

CN thanked everyone who contributed to the SCAR strategic plan (2023-28) and welcomed comments from anyone with an invitation to cascade this down within groups. MB will circulate the link to comment on the strategic plan.

MB

Other comments

HG raised that Plastic in Polar Environments (Plastic-AG) has lots of UK leadership but no report or representative in this group yet. HG suggested

**MB/
AR**

inviting various names - Cath Waller (Hull), Claire Waluda and Clara Manno (BAS).

MS added that Bedmap3 is a SCAR Action Group. Pete Fretwell and colleagues at BAS have been busy assembling new bed data (provided by numerous nations/Pis), and a draft of the data product is due soon - with submission due later in summer. Similarly, the new bed surface paper will follow shortly after.

10 FCDO update

GC reported from the Antarctic Treaty Consultancy Meeting (ATCM). Strong statements condemning the war in Ukraine were issued. Ukraine presented a paper on how the war has affected its Antarctic program. ATCM has a strong role in addressing global change. New protected areas and ASPAs have been designated. The ATS is developing a plan to protect the heritage of the Endurance wreck.

Canada's application to full consultancy party has been postponed, as Russia and China could not agree on this.

A strong statement on EDI was issued from ATCM: Everyone working in Antarctica should be safe and welcome.

Next year's meeting will be held in Helsinki 2023 with a joint workshop on climate change protection.

KeH mentioned that in the discussion of Emperor Penguins the China delegation used information from a Canadian blogger associated with Climate Change denial. This highlights the need for emphasising the importance of peer-reviewed papers and facts and the key role of SCAR science in underpinning robust policy decisions.

MB commented that SCAR papers and activity increasingly lead to policy outcomes with strong UK involvement. This is a very positive direction.

11 Diversity in UK Polar Science Initiative (DiPSI) (P)

MS announced that KaH has stepped down as Co-Chair. The position is now filled by Dr Sammie Buzzard, University of Cardiff. Sammie will be invited to join UKNCAR. **MB/AR**

The new focus of DiPSI is on socio-economic inclusivity/exclusivity of polar science. Unfortunately this issue has been neglected in the UKRI EDI strategy. A questionnaire has been built to get a feel of the problem. It was rolled out at the Arctic Science Summit at Durham in Spring 2022.

BAS published their Polar Code of Conduct for people deploying South. There is potential to amend this to be inclusive to all researchers going to the Arctic and Antarctic.

HG added that DiPSI are connecting with charities and networks already addressing the issue surrounding socio-economic exclusion, with the idea of using existing infrastructure to reach schools.

PM added that the Polar Code of Conduct will be presented at the UK Antarctic Science Conference

12 UK Antarctic Science Conference

- (i) Dates are set for Thursday to Friday 1-2 September 2022 ¹⁰
- (ii) based in Edinburgh University (Edinburgh Climate Change Institute - ECCI)
- (iii) will be hybrid, space for 200 in person
- (iv) they are making space in the schedule for the Diversity in Polar Science Initiative, Early-Career Panel (UKPN), BAS logistics, and Net Zero conversation
- (v) Conference dinner at Dynamic Earth (Thursday)
- (vi) contact Rob Bingham (RB) if any requests/suggestions

13 UK Polar Network (UKPN)

AR couldn't get any comms from UKPN but will try to get back in touch with the network through HG. **AR/HG**

14 UK Polar Data Centre (PDC) (P)

HP shared that PDC are compiling a document to align all polar data policy. All SCAR groups will have to be aware of the revised SCAR data policy and apply it to their activities.

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

Bedmap3 will be coming soon and a data paper will be published. It is partially UK led.

15 UKAAP

MS presented on UKAAP.

- (i) Arctic Science Summit Week 2024 will be held in Edinburgh at around Easter time.
- (ii) The committee has arranged (previously) a UKRI SPF (Scientific Priorities Fund) proposal for the SDA to sail in the Arctic. SPF is now (probably) defunct, but the plan still exists, and is supported by a Grantham paper on the UK and the Arctic.¹¹
- (iii) Edinburgh will host the next Antarctic symposium, 1-2 Sept. Details from RB to follow.
- (iv) KaH has stepped up as Vice Chair of UKAAP.

16 AOB

MB mentioned COP27, to be hosted by Egypt in Sharm-el-Sheikh in November 2022. SCAR have submitted a side event application for the Cryosphere pavilion (in collaboration with ICCI). The focus will be on sea level rise, but there are likely to be thematic days. SCAR may be advertising opportunities for Antarctic speakers to contribute to events but have suggested potential delegates consider accommodation availability, as it is likely to be limited in Sharm-el-Sheikh.

¹⁰ [Edinburgh Cryosphere – Cryosphere Research at the University of Edinburgh](#)

¹¹ [Grantham paper on the Arctic and the UK climate research and engagement](#)

MB refreshed the committee on UKNCAR ToR as there are inconsistencies. MB **MB**
will suggest some amendments and provide to the committee for approval.

- (i) It states that the committee elect the UK and alternate delegate to SCAR. This is not true as the Director of BAS is automatically the UK delegate and the Chair of UKNCAR is the alternate delegate to SCAR.
- (ii) Co-opted members are currently on 3-year terms with option to extend. MB proposed to extend membership to a 5-year term.

To help new members navigate the complex vocabulary of SCAR acronyms, a glossary will be created and circulated with the agenda, as well as published on the UKNCAR website¹². **AR**

TB announced the NERC National Capability Multi-Centre Science programme has granted funding to TerraFIRMA (Future impacts risks and mitigation actions). The project involves a component on modelling the Antarctic ice sheet¹³.

The meeting concluded at 15:10.

¹² [UKNCAR website](#)

¹³ [TerraFIRMA](#)

UK NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR ANTARCTIC RESEARCH
27th Committee Meeting, 28th June, 2022
ACTIONS

Action No.	ITEM	ACTION	BY	STATUS
1	4. UKNCAR Membership and Co-opted Members	Approach UKPN for adequate representation	AR/ HG	Complete
2	4. UKNCAR Membership and Co-opted Members	Contact Klaus Dodds regarding Humanities and Social Sciences representation (SC-HASS), invite Adrian Howkins to join UKNCAR; Invite Sian Henley (SOOS)	AR/ MB	Complete
3	4. UKNCAR Membership and Co-opted Members	Communicate need to better understand who is involved in various SCAR groups and invite them to represent these at UKNCAR	all	
4	5. UKNCAR Chair	Contact Aurelia Reichardt aurich@bas.ac.uk and Chair Mike Bentley if interested in self-nominating for UKNCAR Chair	Non-BAS	
5	6. Report from the Director of BAS	Report to PROB and Jane Francis on committee's comments and concerns regarding logistics issues and expectation management	MB	Ongoing
6	9iii. Update on SCAR Expert Groups and data products	Invite Plastic-AG representative to join UKNCAR	MB/ AR	Ongoing
7	9iii. Update on SCAR Expert Groups and data products	Send short email promoting the SCATS/AntEco joint meeting at the Open Science Conference	SG	
8	9iii. Update on SCAR Expert Groups and data products	Circulate link to comment on SCAR strategic plan	MB	Complete
9	11. Diversity in UK Polar Science Initiative (DiPSI)	Invite Sammie Buzzard (DiPSI) to join UKNCAR	MB/ AR	Complete
10	16. AOB	Review ToR and circulate to committee for approval	MB	

11	16. AOB	Compile a glossary of UKNCAR terminology	AR	
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MB: Mike Bentley (Chair) AR: Aurelia Reichardt (Secretary) SG: Susie Grant HG: Huw Griffiths