

**UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE
UK NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR ANTARCTIC RESEARCH
Thursday 20th June 2024, 09:00
Online (Zoom) and at the British Antarctic Survey, Cambridge**

Present:

Prof M. Bentley	Chair, University of Durham	MB
Dr Jack Humby	Secretary, British Antarctic Survey	JH
Prof J Francis	Director, British Antarctic Survey	JF
Prof Rob Bingham	University of Edinburgh	RB
Dr Helen Peat	British Antarctic Survey	HP
Dr Huw Griffiths	British Antarctic Survey	HG
Dr Susie Grant	British Antarctic Survey	SG
Dr Louise Ireland	British Antarctic Survey	LI
Prof Eric Wolff	Royal Society	EW
Jessica Surma	NERC	JS
Dr Anne Jungblut	National History Museum	AJ
Dr Julie Jones	Sheffield University	JJ
Dr Liz Thomas	British Antarctic Survey	LT
Dr Sammie Buzzard	University of Northumbria	SB
Ms Pilvi Saarikoski	British Antarctic Survey	PS
Dr Sian Henley	University of Edinburgh	SH
Dr Kevin Hughes	British Antarctic Survey	KHu
Dr Claus-Dieter Hillebrand	British Antarctic Survey	CDH
Dr Thomas Bracegirdle	British Antarctic Survey	TB
Prof Lloyd Peck	British Antarctic Survey	LP
Dr John Lowe	BASMU	JLo
Prof Klaus Dodds	Royal Holloway University London	KD
Dr Chandrika Nath	SCAR	CNa
Dr Nadine Johnston	British Antarctic Survey	NJ
Prof Kate Hendry	British Antarctic Survey	KHe
Dr Stewart Jamieson	University of Durham	SJ
Chloe Nunn	Vice President, UK Polar Network	CNu
Henry Burgess	British Antarctic Survey	HB
Prof Pete Convey	British Antarctic Survey	PC

Apologies:

Dr Matt Warner	BASMU	MW
Ruth Cooper	Royal Society	RC
Dr Adrian Howkins	University of Bristol	AH
George Clarkson	FCDO	GC
Tom Jordan	British Antarctic Survey	TJ
Rachel Cavanagh	British Antarctic Survey	RC

- 1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES and AGENDA (P)**
 - Introductions, welcome to SJ, CNU, BASMU people joining this year now giving us a welcome and contextually important insight into medical research.

- 2 MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH MEETING, 2023 (P)**
 - The minutes of the 28th meeting were confirmed as accurate and accepted without amendments.

- 3 MATTERS ARISING INCLUDING ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING (P)**
 - Members asked to please keep suggesting more people:
 - Kath Waller, Claire Waluda: PlasticsAG to be included → **Action MB/JH**

 - AntVolc had ended its term, but SCAR wants them to continue. John Smellie is no longer a member of UKNCAR, but KH covers an update on AntVolc in the SSG-Geosciences report.
 - AntVolc, OpMet, and Geological Heritage will be removed as groups in UKNCAR → **Action JH**

- 4 UKNCAR MEMBERSHIP AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS (P)**
 - Standing down: Steve Colwell (OpMet), John Smellie (AntVolc). Welcome new members Stewart Jamieson (Uni. Durham, INSTANT) and Rachel Cavanagh (BAS, new co-chief officer of AntClimNow) and new UKPN President, Chloe Nunn (Vice President, standing in for Ellie Honan)
 - Members asked to send in suggestions for new members to JH/MB

- 5 New UKNCAR Chair and Secretary update**
 - New Chair: MB and JF in agreement that RB will take over as the new UKNCAR chair after the SCAR OSC in the Autumn 2024.
 - JF thanked MB for his extra long term which was extended due to COVID and that UKNCAR look forward to continuing to work with him on many SCAR and UKNCAR aspects in future which he's still involved in.
 - MB wants to stay involved with UKNCAR through INSTANT

 - New Secretary: JH already started

- 6 Report from the Director of BAS**
 - Very successful last season: SDA had its first full science season. With BIOPOLE and PICCOLLO science cruises. SDA about to go to Greenland for the first time this summer
 - Louise Heathwaite (NERC chair) will visit SDA with the Ambassador to Iceland when SDA is transiting back from Greenland.
 - The Discovery building at Rothera is nearly finished. There are contractors wintering there now to get the building ready for finishing this coming summer season and then handover to BAS the following season.
 - UKRI coming to the end of a spending review, which will have knock-on effects for NERC and BAS. Lots of work going into making sure BAS doesn't have a deficit – which is a very difficult challenge with lots of pressures right now to protect the ALI budget

- Antarctica-InSyNC: Large multinational expedition with the same observations at the same time across Antarctica, identify where the data gaps are and fill them. All Antarctic nations are getting together to plan a big campaign with ships, and field science. In the planning stage now, to take place in the 2028-29 season.
- CNa: SCAR is very keen to play a big role in InSyNC and very happy for anyone who wants to engage with them on this to contact them.

7 Report from Royal Society

- MB: SCAR have increased membership fees for the first time in 10 years and Royal Society are aware and the request had gone in for the next membership subscription payment
- The RS's Global Environmental Research Committee (GERC) has been disbanded so UKNCAR has less direct channel to the RS
- EW: the new replacement committee is more science-focused but likely to still provide the same function of overseeing bodies that they fund

8 NERC Updates (P)

- Taken as read.
- HG asking JS (NERC) if InSyNC will have extra funding for the project. JF said that it's too far in advance to say for sure yet, but NERC are talking positively about funding for InSyNC.
- MB noted that researchers should keep proposing strategic research programs or highlight topics to NERC because it does lead to funding for Antarctic research.

9 FCDO update

- No update.

10 Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research Standing Scientific Groups Reports (P)

i Geosciences

- Taken as read.
- KHe: AntVolc is likely winding down as it's been very successful and achieved what it set out to do, but SCAR is very keen for it to continue, but it's lacking current leadership. Open invitation for someone to take on the reigns of this.
- Potential new proposed SRP on Antarctic Geological Evolution, AGE. SJ noted that this may have overlap with areas of INSTANT so it could be worth looking more into that.

ii Life Sciences

- No paper submitted.

- PC: The major Life Sciences event this past year was the SCAR Biology Symposium in Christchurch, New Zealand. There was strong UK representation, including: HG gave the opening plenary talk. Charlotte Walshaw from Edinburgh won the presentation prize. PC and Jas Lee were chair and member of the international steering committee, respectively.
 - o At the symposium, a new SRP was proposed, from the biology community, because there isn't a full biology SRP under SCAR. This was led by the Americans, and there has not been much progression since the symposium.

iii **Physical Sciences**

- TB: No update, but there will be plenty to add after the OSC for next years meeting.

SC-ATS

- SG: SC-ATS - Science advice that gets funnelled into policy making.
- Large number of papers delivered by SC-ATS into the ATCM and engagement from all SCAR groups to engage with the ATS
- SCATS has been increasing contributions to CCAMLR, especially on impacts of climate change. A climate change workshop hosted in Cambridge last year which they were heavily involved in.
- Presented ~20 papers at the ATCM in India recently. The papers presented were very wide ranging from avian influenza, tourism, climate change, and Antarctic climate indicators. Impacts of sea level change and effects on coastal infrastructure. Input from all SCAR SRPs and groups such as ANT-ICON, INSTANT and AntClimNow and climate reporting.
- SCATS and Ant-ICON science policy fellowship awarded to an ECR from Brazil but working in the Netherlands on Antarctic Tourism. Great for getting ECRs involved in these policy forums and build experience.
- Invitation to get in touch or share information on your research as early as possible as it's quite a different task to write policy papers compared with academic papers.
- SG noted there will be a webinar coming soon on policy paper report writing and more information how to get involved with SCATS.
- NJ asked if there's a specific annual reporting process to SCATS to go to the ATCM. CNa and SG said that there isn't necessarily a formal process because the needs of the ATCM can change and SCATS/SCAR will often go directly to groups or pull information from written reports.
- CNa: noted that SG also sits on the board of Antarctic Environments Portal, a web resource, that provides briefings on policy relevant issues to decision makers. UK scientists are major contributors to this, which is great and heavily encouraged. There will be a session at the OSC on this. Looking for a new editor for this.
- CNa, MB, and others, thanked SG for her hard work on SCATS, as her term as CO of SCATS is ending. Her impact and hard work have been extremely appreciated and she's done so much to raise the profile of UK science at the ATCM and in the ATS.
- SH welcomes the idea of a SCATS webinar, but made the point of a recent SOOS symposium of hybrid (online and in-person) format was

very successful in reaching those from countries not traditionally seen as active Antarctic nations. SH happy to help with mailing lists and contact points across the communities.

- JF thanked SG for her work and reiterated how important it is that SG has been able to communicate with various aspects of policymakers, such as lawyers, who use very different language to scientists.

SCAGI

- Taken as read.
- SCAGI has just appointed, Felix Fennell (BAS), as a liaison representative to ISO/TC 211, which is the technical committee to standardise geographic information/geomatics.

SCADM

- Taken as read.
- HP: BAS hosted the 5th Polar Data Forum last Autumn. This was a great opportunity for all polar data managers to meet and share on their work. Particularly for other nations with vessels and for BAS to share the exciting work they've been doing on the SDAs data.

SC-HASS

- KD: This SCAR group - SC-HASS - Humanities and Social Sciences - now has 150 members. It contributes to SCAR-wide programs, most notably the Ant-ICON scientific research program (SRP) on Antarctic and Southern Ocean conservation of which Adrian Howkins (Uni. Bristol) is a key member. There are three Action Groups, on tourism research (Ant-TAG), public engagement with Antarctic research (PEAR), and Antarctic values (AGIVA). SC-HASS members led a major research project on the impact of COVID-19 on Antarctic research, led by Daniela Liggett (Christchurch), including UK-based researchers such as Peter Convey, in addition to continuing to produce new knowledge on all aspects of human activity in Antarctica.
- Group actively involved in SCAR-based conferences, and most notably at the upcoming OSC, there is a session on science-policy interface and another on the histories of the Southern Ocean, which alongside tourism in Antarctica are significant interests of the group.
- The government has committed to publishing the UK Antarctic strategy in the Autumn.
- UK researchers remain well represented within SC-HASS with strengths in literary and cultural studies, history, and tourism research.
- PS: Would like to work with SC-HASS, as part of the SCAR EDI WG, to produce an information paper on ED. KD: EDI will be given more engagement on the area of Antarctic Working Environments. More work to be done on working in Antarctica with disabilities and having a more inclusive and enabling research environment.

Update on Scientific Research Programmes (P)

Written reports provided.

AntClimNow

- Taken as read.

ANT-ICON

- Taken as read.
- KHu: Working with SC-ATS – produced an app to show the distribution and history of all non-native species introduced to Antarctica. Thanks to Louise Ireland (SCAGI) and Helen Peat (SCADM) for collaborating on this for the Committee on Environmental Protection. A great example of different groups working together.

INSTANT

- Taken as read.
- MB and CD: both noted different sub-committees working at different speeds and overall, it's quite hard to manage such a large programme.

Update on SCAR Expert Groups, data products and advisory

Written reports were provided.

ACCE

- PC: ACCE no longer exists as a group.
- TB: There is a meeting at the upcoming OSC and looking at some form of annual climate reporting and reporting to the Antarctic Treaty system. SG noted that a new group may be formed to take on what ACCE did on reporting and this will have wider relevance to SCARs input to the UN's common processes, and making the language accessible to all, including policy-makers.

ICED

- NJ: highlight the group's core work, which has been the marine ecosystem assessment, and encourage everyone to look at their resources. Wanted to highlight important collaborations with other SCAR groups, particularly with InSyNC and SCEG, ANTICON, SOOS and IPY.
- Paper to be circulated → **Action JH**

OpMET

- Steve Colwell has stood down from UKNCAR and therefore ends UK involvement in OpMet.

AntVolc

- Ends as Expert Group after 10 years.

ANTOS

- PC: Upcoming Annual meeting at the OSC. Looking for new steering committee members.

AntArchitecture

- Taken as read.
- RB: It's been a really active year, with the group about to submit a review paper and the first in-person workshop at the upcoming OSC

IPICS

- Taken as read.
- LT: the most significant event was that we held a new workshop at BAS called UK-ICON (UK Ice COre Network) in Autumn 2023. Hosting 40+ UK researchers interested in all aspects of ice core research. It was very well received and helped bring the UK community together.

SOOS

- SH: Joint initiative between SCAR and SCOR, covering the Southern Ocean. SOOS data policy in line with SCAR data policy, making provisions for oceanographical data.
- InSyNC is quickly gaining momentum. There was a Southern Ocean Community workshop to feed scientific needs into the logistical plans for InSyNC.
- SOOS also involved in IPY.
- Released the MEASO (Marine Ecosystem Assessment for the SO) summary for policymakers last year. The final paper is being released imminently.
- Attended UN conferences such as COP28 in Dubai, and plans are underway for COP29.
- SOOS has an EDI group so it's worth discussing with SCARs EDI group to see how they can work together.
- Paper to be circulated → **Action JH**

RINGS

- SJ: RINGS is planning and will be conducting inland and outboard surveys of the Antarctic grounding line
- Tom Jordan is the main UK contact for RINGS.
- There will be a workshop at the OSC.

Geological Heritage and Geo-conservation

- No UKNCAR members currently sit on this so it will be removed as a group from UKNCAR → **Action JH**

Joint Expert Group on Human Biology and Medicine

- JL: discussing and researching HPAI (bird flu) and how we can remain vigilant, protective, and potential implications of mutation. There will be a standalone workshop on this at the OSC.
- Lots of work and research going on in the background to improve the understanding of human performance in extreme cold regions and improve healthcare provision.
- JL asked the community to submit any human performance research questions to them so they can capture this when planning upcoming top 10 priority research items. They will share a paper on this soon.
- PS asked if mental health is also within remit. JL confirmed that, yes, mental health aspects are included and very much should be included in future research and as part of human care resources.

EDI

- Taken as read.

- PS: Lots of activity ahead of the OSC. Preparing an ATCM paper and would like input and support from the whole community over the next year.

11 SCAR OSC and Delegates meeting

- JF and MB are attending the Delegates meeting.
- Full membership applications are coming from Belarus and Colombia.
- Elections for SCAR President and two Vice Presidents.
- More discussion about: joint SCAR-IASC meeting in 2030; ISAES in Chile 2025; SCAR-Biology in the US in 2027; Carbon reduction strategy.
- Proposed new SRP – AGATR – Antarctic Geospace and ATmosphere Research.

12 Diversity in UK Polar Science Initiative (DiPSI)

- No update paper submitted.
- SB update: Had sessions at the Arctic Scientists Summit Week, in collaboration with UKPN, on equitable Arctic research. Still some challenges on doing this in an international environment.
- Made some changes at IGS British Branch, to make that more inclusive.
- Held an in-person meeting where they invited other NERC centres to present their EDI work.
- Focussing on next steps, especially for IPY in 2032/33. Had lots of success with Polar Horizons, and hoping to repeat those if they can find funding.
- SB wants to highlight a socio-economic survey they've conducted, which a report is currently being compiled and will be shared with the community soon. There are decisions to be made on how to use that information and act upon it.
- SCAR has a good process for nominating others for awards, but the Polar Medal is noted as not being an open process. This may be something for the community to consider further.
- PS: Highlights the need to bring together literature from the social sciences to help define and support concepts of EDI action. PS noted that some nations are watering down definitions or using their own definitions which is unhelpful to achieve positive change. Need a robust process to add concrete definitions and points to the Antarctic Treaty.
- MB agreed to share some research papers he's aware of regarding positive EDI action and why it's important to high performance science communities.
- SH noted there's a lot of literature on EDI in research, but that we have a great opportunity in the Antarctic microcosm to inform that literature too.
- HG noted that it will be important to engage and work with experts on EDI in the social sciences because it's important for those who know the terminology and language of this area so that meanings can't be twisted. So, if anyone knows anyone willing to help tighten wording on questionnaires or work with us that would be extremely impactful.
- PS notes for IPY (2032/33) we need to discuss what we want to highlight and how do we work strategically to achieve these things regarding EDI at IPY.
- HG noted that anyone and everyone is welcome to be a member of DiPSI, and that DiPSI is potentially a very useful place for all these

separate EDI action groups to report to so that the whole UK community can be updated on what's happening regarding EDI in the various research areas and communities.

- SH noted that SOOS has had many conversations about various methods of bringing people together and that it favours members from wealthier nations. There's a good example from New Zealand and connecting with the Maori who have hundreds of years of Sub Antarctic experience long before Westerners. Success should be sought through different forms of communication. Zoom or technology-heavy approaches will not always be the best forms of communication. MB added that approaches to work with indigenous peoples should be co-created and collaborated on from the start of a project or idea. NJ raised that we should seek the UN EDI groups for tips or directly for help with this and agreed to seek them out for this purpose. LP raised that he can share Maori contacts if needed.

13 UK Antarctic Science Conference 2024

- JF: BAS to host 1st-3rd October 2024. Looking for volunteers to help organise it and for all to let their communities know about it and encourage attendance
- Likely schedule to be from midday on 1st day to lunchtime on 3rd day to make it easier for travelling and cheaper for accommodation. Keep it cheap and accessible for all.
- MB noted it's a good platform to build up ECRs

14 UK Polar Network (UKPN)

- CNU: Nearing completion of charity registration
- Progressing with the planned training opportunity aboard the SDA for ECRs. 90 applicants, but only space for 5-10
- Last year had a successful field training course on Dartmoor in collaboration with the Clean Planet Foundation.
- >1000 polar flags from 286 schools as part of the Antarctic Polar Flags project
- Successful participation in: Aberdeen tech fest; Cardiff Science Festival; family day at National Maritime Museum in Greenwich; and a festival in Plymouth.
- EDI officers held an EDI funding event in Durham
- Ellie Honan was part of a publication on gender equality in polar science.
- Menstrual hygiene workshops run last summer and more planned.
- Previously run polar pint of science. Pint of Science don't want affiliation anymore, so the UKPN will be running Polar Beers events from now on as an informal and short format science communication format.
- Lots of work into setting up the new charity commission
 - o KH: noted how much work has gone into this and how well they've done to get this setup

15 UK Polar Data Centre (PDC) (P)

- Recently held an open data workshop at BAS and as a webinar to UKPN focussed on open data legislation and data management principles.
- HP: asked if there's any interest from other institutes then they'd be happy to provide more webinars

16 UKAAP

- MB: UKAAP Chair, Martin Siegert (MS), has now finished as chair of UKAAP. New Chair TBC – hopefully by next UKNCAR meeting.
- Arctic Summit Science Week was held in Edinburgh, March 2024 ([Home - assw.info](http://Home-assw.info))
- All-party parliamentary group (APPG) to the polar regions: environmental audit committee, visited Antarctica (Rothera) in December 2023
- RS meeting 6-7th May 2025 in Edinburgh – next generation ice-seabed measurements
- RS meeting on extreme events in Antarctica led by KH 29-30th September 2025, more details to be circulated soon.
- UKAAP members have led a significant international geoengineering paper that's being published soon that MS has been leading
- HB: UKAAP will put a call out for new members soon generally, but also approach some identified potential members directly.

17 International Polar Year (2032/33)

- HB presented IPY timeline and concept note (from October 2023) on the 5th IPY in 2032-33 <https://iasc.info/cooperations/international-polar-year-2032-33>. A new concept note will be published October 2024. Website coming soon.
- Approached the international science council and WMO and others about secretariat support for IPY, because currently this is being filled by SCAR and IASC members.
- Change of governance structure – move to a smaller executive committee at the top and then widen out the planning group below to capture more organisations who want to be involved.
- Asking countries to put themselves forward as potential hosts by July 2025. Currently ca. 5 countries look like they may volunteer.
- Related to IPY, A Paris summit in November 2023 proposed a UN decade of polar science, which is progressing and going through UNESCO approval processes currently. If this happens that IPY would look to align with this but it would be separate.
- CNa: IPY will be issuing a call soon for organisations to join the planning group. IPY will be Kicking off some task groups such as for early career involvement; one on identifying the science and research goals for the IPY; and one for funding and national involvement. There will be an OSC meeting on IPY for more information.
- PS: As a UK community are we contributing directly to the international planning groups, or will we have a UK-specific planning group?
 - o HB: This is a coming discussion and he envisages UKAAP could be a national committee for planning for IPY.
 - o UK secretariat would be a UK institution but the national committee could be UKAAP.
- SH: Will there be two secretariats (one Arctic and one Antarctic?) or just one secretariat?
 - o HB hopes there will be just one secretariat,
- HG: is there an intention to canvas the community and include their input rather than leading it through committees?

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AOB

- KHu noted an increasing loss of terrestrial biological expertise within BAS, the organisation is less able to provide advice to the FCDO on this topic and provide associated expertise in the revision of protected area management plans, etc.
 - KHu asked the committee to pass on names of individuals with this experience and knowledge who would be willing to provide their expertise going forward.
 - SH passed on details of a potential candidate for this.

The meeting concluded at 11:15

UK NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR ANTARCTIC RESEARCH
29th Committee Meeting, 20th June 2024
ACTIONS

Action No.	ITEM	ACTION	BY	STATUS
1	3	Invite representatives of Plastic-AG to UKNCAR: Kath Waller, Claire Waluda	MB, JH	
2	3	Remove OpMet, AntVOLC, and Geological Heritage group from the list due to the end of UK involvement	JH	
3	10	Circulate outstanding papers (ICED and SOOS)	JH	

MB: Mike Bentley (Outgoing Chair)

RB: Rob Bingham (Incoming Chair)

JH: Jack Humby (Secretary)

JF: Jane Francis (SCAR Delegate and BAS Director)