

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE THIRTIETH MEETING OF THE
UK NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR ANTARCTIC RESEARCH**

14:00-16:00, 10th July 2025

Online Zoom meeting

Present:

Prof Robert Bingham	Chair, University of Edinburgh	RB
Prof J Francis	Director, British Antarctic Survey	JF
Prof Richard Powell	Director, Scott Polar Research Institute	RP
Dr Helen Peat	British Antarctic Survey	HP
Dr Huw Griffiths	British Antarctic Survey	HG
Dr Susie Grant	British Antarctic Survey	SG
Prof Eric Wolff	Royal Society	EW
Jessica Surma	NERC	JS
Dr Anne Jungblut	National History Museum	AJ
Dr Sammie Buzzard	University of Northumbria	SB
Prof M Bentley	University of Durham	MB
Dr Sian Henley	University of Edinburgh	SH
Dr Thomas Bracegirdle	British Antarctic Survey	TB
Prof Lloyd Peck	British Antarctic Survey	LP
Eoghan Griffin	SCAR	EG
Ruth Cooper	Royal Society	RC
Dr Nadine Johnston	British Antarctic Survey	NJ
Dr Bethan Davies	UKAAP	BD
Prof Stewart Jamieson	University of Durham	SJ
Dr Adrian Howkins	University of Bristol	AH
Prof Pete Convey	British Antarctic Survey	PC
Sam Hartharn-Evans	UK Polar Network (UKPN)	SH-E
Dr Tom Jordan	British Antarctic Survey	TJ

Apologies:

Dr Jack Humby	Secretary, British Antarctic Survey	JH
Prof Bernd Kulesa	Swansea University	BK
Natalie Allen	FCDO	NA
Dr Rachel Cavanagh	British Antarctic Survey	RC
Pilvi Saarikoski	British Antarctic Survey	PS
Dr Matt Warner	BASMU	MW
Dr Claire Waluda	British Antarctic Survey	CW
Prof Kate Hendry	British Antarctic Survey	KHe
Dr Chandrika Nath	SCAR	CN
Dr Henry Burgess	British Antarctic Survey	HB
Dr Kevin Hughes	British Antarctic Survey	KHu
Dr Julie Jones	Sheffield University	JJ
Dr Claus-Dieter Hillebrand	British Antarctic Survey	CDH
Dr Louise Ireland	British Antarctic Survey	LI
Dr Liz Thomas	British Antarctic Survey	LT
Prof Klaus Dodds	Royal Holloway University London	KD
Dr John Lowe	BASMU	JLo

- 1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES and AGENDA (P)**
 - Introductions, welcome to all.
- 2 MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-NINTH MEETING, 2024 (P)**
 - The minutes of the 29th 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 is now a member
 - AntVolc had ended its term, but has reformed under the leadership of Dr Maximillian Van Wyk de Vries (Uni. of Cambridge)
 - OpMet, and Geological Heritage and Geoconservation have been removed as groups in UKNCAR.
- 4 UKNCAR MEMBERSHIP AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS (P)**
 - New members today. Welcome to Richard Powell, Director of SPRI; Bethan Davies, as committee lead for UK Arctic and Antarctic Partnership (UKAAP); Natalie Allen (FCDO); Sam Hartharn-Evans and co-president of UKPN; Bernd Kulesa, new Groundwater SCAR group; Claire Waluda, Plastic Action Group.
 - Leaving as members: Steve Colwell (OpMet), John Smellie (AntVolc).
 - RB gave a brief summary of membership structure and raised the issue of co-opted membership being out of date and the need to revisit the terms of reference, which will be reviewed and reported on at next year's UKNCAR committee meeting → **Action RB**
- 5 Report from the Director of BAS**
 - JF noted that reports should be shorter so that they are accessible for all to read.
 - Antarctic Infrastructure Modernisation Programme (AIMP) is ongoing. The ship (SDA) has had a successful last season, with many science days and multiple projects able to take place on one cruise.
 - For the first time, the SDA has been able to support science through winter, leaving Rothera just before Midwinter's day. This has been the longest season BAS has ever supported from November, through to late June
 - At Rothera the Discovery Building has been finished this season, with just snagging and handover to happen next season (2025/26)
 - New aircraft is being tested and BAS are working on how science will be supported in future
 - NERC funding: spending review 1 has been completed, leading to 4.5% cuts to BAS. Spend review 2 is pending, and unclear how it will affect BAS budgets
 - Attended the Antarctic Treaty Committee Meeting (ATCM) in Milan recently. On the whole, the AT was widely supported, with conversations on rapid climate change in Antarctica.
 - Antarctica-InSYNC (2028/29 season), important for future forecasting, to feed information to policymakers. It will be one of the largest-scale Antarctic collaborations.

- SH asked about how the 4.5% cuts may affect BAS' national capability. JF clarified that those cuts were made last financial year, and did not affect anything drastically.

6 Outcomes from the SCAR Delegates Meeting, Punta Arenas August 2024 (P)

- Report taken as read.
- New SCAR president, Gary Wilson. This may see a change in reporting to delegates, moving from an activity-focus to a strategic objective. This could be worthwhile applying to reporting to UKNCAR
- Two new Programme Planning Groups: Antarctic Geological Evolution (AGE) and Changes in Circumpolar Antarctic Gradients in Ecosystems (C-CAGE), which HG is leading on. RB noted that there are papers submitted to UKNCAR for both new groups.
- RB asked if Science groups are to report to SCAR this year as this has not been requested yet. EG noted that reports for the SCAR leadership meeting held in April 2025 will be considered as the submitted reports for this year. In future, SCAR president is keen to promote reports are aligned strategically, rather than reporting of chronological activity. Reports should be focussed on setting goals that are addressing the SCAR strategic plan.
- EW noted that the SCAR Delegates Meeting report had an emphasis on carbon emissions. EW asked what the terms of reference for that are, and if that was just for the emissions of SCAR activities only. MB agreed that SCAR are looking at the carbon emissions of SCAR activities, not dictating to national programmes. SCAR are keen to review emissions associated with travel and holding meetings and events.

7 Report from the Royal Society

- RS' contribution to UKNCARs subscription to SCAR is reliant on the RS receiving sufficient funding from DSIT, which currently looks okay.
- The RS no longer has a Global Environmental Research Committee (GERC), which means there is no longer a formal interaction between the RS and UKNCAR. However, there is a new science policy committee for Biodiversity, Environment and Climate (BEC). EW sits on that committee.
- The RS is involved in G-Science Academies, inputting into G7 and G20 summits. For reference: <https://royalsociety.org/about-us/what-we-do/international/international-work/g-science-academies-meetings/>
- JF noted that the RS has held or is holding two large meetings this year. One organised by Martin Siegert - Next generation ice-sheet bed measurements – which occurred in May. The second event - Global impacts of climate extremes in the polar regions: is Antarctica reaching a tipping point? - will be held 29-30th September 2025 and hosted by Kate Hendry, Jane Francis and other BAS colleagues: <https://royalsociety.org/science-events-and-lectures/2025/09/polar-regions/>

8 NERC Updates (P)

- Paper taken as read.
- RB asked for an update on NERC Highlight Topics. JS noted that last year was the 10th year of Highlight Topics, and is currently being re-evaluated. An announcement will be made by NERC imminently.

- RB noted that the usual reports from NERC on number of grants funded could not be submitted this year due to reporting issues on the NERC system. JS confirmed that this is due to the switch from the old system to the new Funding Service. The issues are being resolved and that should be possible for next year's committee meeting.

9 FCDO update

- No update.

10 International Polar Year (2032-33)

- EG: WMO officially approved their involvement as part of partnership for the IPY.
- EG: IPY talking with Decade of Cryospheric Sciences (starting this year) to make sure they are aligned, and no duplication of initiatives
- There will be more to come on IPY at the next SCAR OSC in 2026

11 UK Polar Data Centre (P)

- Report taken as read.
- HP: the PDC has been recertified, for the next three years, by the Core Trust Seal (an internationally recognised certification for data repositories).
- PDC involved with BEDMAP, all kind of underlying data is published with a DOI
- PDC are very keen to work with other SCAR groups who would like advice around data management and good practice, similar to BEDMAP
- PDC have published a Data Publishing guide for researchers. Link: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15167022>

12 UK Polar Network (P)

- Report taken as read.
- Highlight of At sea field work for ECRs
- Training survey, identified a winter field skills course.
- RB asked about where Polar Beers events may be held. SH-E noted there will be one in Newcastle alongside the UK Arctic Science Conference in September. More planned in Cambridge as well. And other events, including public outreach events, around the country are planned.
- JF asked about the winter field skills training course. SH-E answered that it's being planned in October in the Peak District. JF noted that Henry Burgess potentially has some money from the FCDO for field training in Svalbard March 2026.

13 Diversity in Polar Science Initiative (P)

- Report taken as read.
- SB noted there is new leadership. SB thanked Martin Siegert and Bea Schlarb-Ridley for their many years of service to DiPSI. Bethan Davies has joined. And Millie Harding has joined as an ECR co-chair.
- SB noted that DiPSI needs funds to enact plans they have, and raised a general call for help with this, particularly towards planning events for IPY.
- SH asked how DiPSI can make IPY as effective as possible. SB answered that they are on the InSYNC national committee. The approach is to understand what others are planning and then build on those with an

EDI-specific activity. HG noted that there are examples where connections are string between groups and EDI committees, but it appears to be down to luck. A strategic approach would help with linking EDI with other groups across SCAR. EG noted that there should be someone in SCAR to connect this up. EG also noted that EDI doesn't explicitly sit anywhere in IPY as of yet, so effort should be made over the next year to find it a home.

- RB offered any help with any of these issues.

14 SCAR Science Reports

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Group

- HG noted that the EDI AG are looking for new members generally, but also a new secretary as PS has stepped down.
- EDI AG are looking into barriers to attending conferences, asking not just attendees to the SCAR OSCs but also those who didn't attend. Cost a major issue.
- The last SCAR OSC EDI sessions were incredibly well attended. HG recommended watching Meredith Nash's talk that she gave at the OSC: https://www.youtube.com/live/vUWAUzod_sg?si=Thd6YmoNkwDpK3sE
- EG noted that a SCAR code of conducted should be published soon

Standing Scientific Groups and Standing Committee Reports

i *Geosciences*

- Report taken as read.
- KHe – SCAR Expert Group on Geological Heritage & Geoconservation is part of the Geosciences group. They're seeking to identify a series of sites of exceptional geological heritage value within various Geo themes, having made good progress on Archean cratons and meteorites. It's worth noting that this is not a process for seeking legal protection of the site, but simply trying to find sites with high scientific value. If wanting to contribute, contact Mike Bentley (MB).
- The Group are heavily involved in InSYNC
- There was a call to increase UK leadership on the topic of pollution in Antarctica, including plastics, heavy metals and other chemicals.

ii *Life Sciences*

- Report taken as read.
- PC raised an issue on the SCAR biology Congress 2027, planned to be held in the US. There are concerns in the community, especially for the EDI community and others with protected characteristics, but also more widely for access through visas for members from other parts of the world. The community worries if it's inappropriate for SCAR to continue to support.
 - o PC also noted anecdotal incidents of Australia not providing visas to conference attendees recently, so this could be a wider global geopolitical issue currently.
 - o SJ noted that aside from visa issues right now, there is a wider issue of scientists not wanting to travel to the US right now anyway.

- JF shared a link to UKRI advice for travelling to non-risk countries, relevant to travel to USA: <https://ukri.sharepoint.com/sites/thesource-stfc/SitePages/Guidance-for-travellers-to-non-risk-countries.aspx>
- RC noted that SCAR is part of the ISC, which has a commitment on Freedom and Responsibility and the conduct of science.

iii *Physical Sciences*

- Report taken as read.
- TB noted that the group a successful meeting at the OSC, and at the SCAR leadership meeting in April 2025. They've been working on a strategy document for physical sciences and leadership of the physical sciences.

iv *SC-ATS*

- Report taken as read
- SG noted a wide range of areas that were covered at the ATCM including climate change, tourism, avian influenza, advice on geoengineering, Emperor penguins, microplastics, etc. Lots of different SCAR groups involved in the development of advice towards these topics.
- Cassandra Brooks has now taken over as the chair of this group, who will be in touch with the relevant SCAR groups in future.
- Two early career fellows through SC-ATS and ANT-ICON science fellowship scheme presented papers at the ATCM, which has been very successful in getting ECRs involved in the team.

v *SC-AGI*

- Report taken as read.

vi *SC-ADM*

- Report taken as read.
- EW: asked if there are any concerns of any international databases that are at risk because of what's happening in the USA, and any remedial actions that we could take to minimise the risk? HP confirmed that they are having discussions about this, but there are a number of activities in place to make sure there are copies of datasets. They are talking with US colleagues to ask if there's anything at risk and they can do to help.

vii *SC-HASS*

- AH noted that the committee had a successful meeting at the OSC. The decision was made to move their SC-HASS 2-yearly meetings online. The community is growing within SCAR.

Scientific Research Programmes (P)

i *AntClimNow*

- Report taken as read.
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ii *Ant-ICON*

- Report taken as read.

- AH noted that they had ~80 people attend their successful Ant-ICON workshop in Paris this past week. Good discussions about science-policy interface.
 - o Good discussions held about what the core goals of the last three years of Ant-ICON should be.
 - o PC noted how interdisciplinary the group is.

iii **INSTANT**

- Report taken as read.
- SJ noted that due to INSTANT being halfway through it's programme they had a refresh of their subcommittee leadership, with ECR and senior co-leads on all subcommittees.
- Bedmap3 will underpin what science INSTANT can do in the remaining timeframe
- There was good interaction with the Royal Society meeting in Edinburgh on next generation ice bed measurements.
- There is a push for more engagement with the INSTANT seminar series that are ongoing.
- A large number of UK INSTANT members that contributed to the UK parliamentary inquiry on the UK Arctic and Antarctic environment.
 - o JF added that inquiry published and then she and NERC responded to the comments, which have now been submitted.

iv **Scientific Research Programme Planning Groups (AGE, C-CAGE)**

a ***Antarctic Geological Evolution (AGE)***

- Report taken as read.
- SJ noted that not too many UK members are directly involved yet. It's being developed and proposed at the moment. A full proposal will be submitted by the 2026 OSC.
- There was a well-attended splinter meeting at EGU, with a focus on solid earth, but also joining in aspects of ocean, cryosphere, atmosphere, and hydrosphere. There is a large overlap with INSTANT, but timing-wise this could work well as the programme will start as INSTANT finishes.
 - o SJ noted that they will be expanding the international steering committee in due course and encouraged UK members to get involved in this.

b ***Changes in Circumpolar Antarctic Gradients in Ecosystems (C-CAGE)***

- Report taken as read.
- HG noted that approximately 120 community members have responded to a questionnaire showing their interest and helping to structure the proposal that went into SCAR EXCOM for the 1st round of reviews.
 - o C-CAGE will also put in a final proposal at the 2026 OSC.
 - o HG asked the UK community to get involved in this to help shape the proposal and science focus.
- MB noted that SCAR has a finite budget and so when the SRPs overlap that has financial implications. He also noted that SRPs are not the same size, and don't have to be similar to each other in terms of scale or budgets.

Expert Groups, Action Groups, Data Products and Advisory**i Antarchitecture**

- Report taken as read.
- The group is scheduled to end summer 2026.
- The major highlight is that they've had a paper accepted that outlines the to-date activities of the group, and presents a vision of the future.
- The group had two annual meetings over the past year, at the OSC and EGU. The group plan to continue and will submit a proposal to the 2026 OSC.
- SH noted that the group has really good representation from ECRs, including authorship on big papers.

ii ANTOS

- No paper submitted.
- PC noted that ANTOS was approved for a two-year extension as a closing period.
- ANTOS is under new leadership from Sharon Robinson in Australia, and Ian Hogg in New Zealand
- Papers published that document the extent of biological monitoring across Antarctica (Adams et al, and Robinson et al)
- There's an aim to produce a working paper to the ATCM to establish a current state of Antarctic monitoring and visualise the ambition for this.
- ANTOS report to be circulated → **Action JH**

iii Bedmap

- TJ noted that Bedmap3 is published, which is a massive step forward.
- There are ongoing discussions at the recent Royal Society meeting about whether future Bedmaps can be automated, and if it will be updated iteratively after each new survey i.e. Bedmap-3.1, -3.2, -3.3, etc. Discussions are ongoing.
- RB, MB and others noted their recognition of an enormous amount of work and achievement for Bedmap in the last year.

iii Geological Heritage and Geo-conservation

- Will be removed from agenda for the next UKNCAR committee meeting.

iv ICED

- Report taken as read.
- NJ highlighted ICEDs involvement in InSYNC, particularly at the 2024 EU Polar Science Week in Copenhagen September 2024. As part of this, NJ presented on a core theme of InSYNC: "improving knowledge and protection of Antarctic life". Similarly, in collaboration with SOOS and colleagues at AWI and BAS, NJ presented at InSYNC science webinars held in May 2025, again on the theme of improving knowledge and protection of unique Antarctic life
- In collaboration with the SCAR Krill group, held a workshop 2 years ago, which ECRs have now taken forward by publishing a fantastic and collaborative paper in the Journal of Marine Science. This was on novel network analyses to look at Antarctic Krill, with more papers to come.

- v IPICS**
 - Report taken as read.
- vi JEGHBM / BASMU**
 - Report taken as read.
- vii Plastics**
 - Report taken as read.
- viii RINGS**
 - Report taken as read.
 - A meeting took place at the OSC. A workshop held off the back of the recent Royal Society meeting. Airborne geophysical radar and modelling communities supported the RINGS idea and concept of how to conduct surveying in future. There is a paper submitted on this.
 - Neil Ross is leading the white paper for the Weddell Sea region. There are multiple UK members who are involved in outlining the science ideas for that RINGS type survey.
 - SJ added that Kate Winter is leading on the Peninsula white paper. Both of these white papers will be finalised at the IGS symposium in Durham shortly.
- ix SOOS/MEASO**
 - Report taken as read.
 - SH noted that the last year has seen significant development in the SOOS data portal and SOOSmap. SH encourages all to use and share that resource.
 - SOOS has a special issue, close to completion, about the Southern Ocean in a changing climate system.
 - SOOS is a programme partner for Antarctica InSYNC, helping to coordinate the efforts of many international partners.
 - SOOS has had a project funded by the Crown Prince of Monaco Foundation to look at current observational coverage, particularly for supporting policy outcomes.
 - SOOS has been very active in policy efforts. They were involved at the recent UN Ocean Conference, with many philanthropists in attendance, so hoping to have a pay-off in terms of policy and funding. SOOS were also involved in COP29 and planning for the upcoming COP30 later this year.
- x Other Groups with UK leadership**
 - a BIOPOLE**
 - Report taken as read.
 - HG and SH noted that NJ is a good contact for BIOPOLE if any members have followed up questions.
 - b Groundwater Action Group**
 - SJ noted that Bernd Kulesa is a UK co-chair
 - The group is to recognise that groundwater may have influence on ice sheet dynamics, ecosystems, carbon and methane cycling and water cycling.

15 Upcoming Science Meetings**i UK Antarctic Science Conference**

- SJ noted that the next UK Antarctic Science Conference is preliminarily booked for 9-11th September 2026 in Durham. Durham have booked a venue and 90 beds in college accommodation to keep it as cheap as possible for attendees.
- SJ asked for UKNCAR members to contact him if they think there should be a specific element organised for either part of the event, or attached to it. Any ideas or requests, contact SJ: stewart.jamieson@durham.ac.uk
- SJ agreed to try and speak to other groups or events that are happening around the same time to attempt to avoid clashes.

ii SCAR Open Science Conference

- Planned for 10-14th August 2026 in Oslo. With weekends either side booked for side meetings. The delegates meeting is planned for 17-18th August 2026.
- The OSC are looking for suggestions for sessions for the OSC.
- There is a call for organising room bookings for side meetings, RB can circulate details if required.
 - o MB noted that this is the first time the sessions lists will be refreshed since 2020.

16 Any other Business

- EG stated there are upcoming deadlines for fellowships at the end of July 2025, and visiting scholar schemes at the end of August 2025.
- EG stated that various members will be contacted to act as reviewers for fellowships. There is a voluntary sign up for reviewers that EG can share.

The meeting concluded at 16:02

UK NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR ANTARCTIC RESEARCH
30th Committee Meeting, 10th July 2025
ACTIONS

Action No.	ITEM	ACTION	BY	STATUS
1	4	Review membership (e.g. co-opted members terms) and terms of reference. Report back at the next UKNCAR committee meeting.	RB	Done. RB provided an update on this at UKNCAR 2026.
2	4	Remove OpMet and Geological Heritage group from the list due to the end of UK involvement	JH	Done.
3	14	Circulate any outstanding papers (ANTOS)	JH	Done.

RB: Rob Bingham (Chair)

JH: Jack Humby (Secretary)

JF: Jane Francis (SCAR Delegate and BAS Director)