

MINUTES OF THE FIRST UK ARCTIC AND ANTARCTIC PARTNERSHIP¹ STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday 15th October 2014, Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge

Attendees:

Prof Julian Dowdeswell (JD), Scott Polar Research Institute, Chair

Prof Phil Wookey (PW), Heriot –Watt University, Vice-chair

Tun Jan Young (TJY), Scott Polar Research Institute, UK Polar Network representative

Dr Ned Garnett (NG), NERC

Alex Tate (AT), Polar Data Centre, BAS

Mike Dinn (MD), Operations, BAS

Prof Ray Leahey (RL), Scottish Association for Marine Science

Prof Mary Edwards (ME), University of Southampton

Prof Klaus Dodds (KD), Royal Holloway, University of London

Prof Mike Meredith (MM), BAS/SAMS

Dr Bart van Dongen (BvD), University of Manchester

Prof Colm O’Cofaigh (CO), Durham University

Dr Anne Jungblut (AJ), Natural History Museum

Prof Tavi Murray (TM), Swansea University

Prof Jane Francis (JEF), BAS

Dr Sheldon Bacon (SB), National Oceanography Centre, Southampton

Dr Clare Robinson (CR), University of Manchester

Dr Kate Hendry (KH), Bristol University

Dr Stephanie Henson (SH), National Oceanography Centre, Southampton

Prof Martyn Tranter (MT), Bristol Glaciology Centre, University of Bristol

Dr Cynan Ellis-Evans (JCEL), BAS

Dr Jeremy Wilkinson (JW), BAS

Nicola Munro (NM), BAS, Secretary

Apologies:

Prof Eric Wolff, University of Cambridge

Dr Ed Hawkins, NCAS, University of Reading

Dr Claire Hughes, University of York

Prof David Hopkins, Heriot-Watt University

Welcome and Introductions (JD):

JD welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited those round the table to introduce themselves (ANNEX 1). Following the introductions JD commented on the broad mix of people that currently sit on the Committee, representing a wide range of science disciplines, HEIs and career stages within the UK Polar Research Community. There are currently 28 members in total (including ex-officios and co-opted members) and JD made the point that several other people have expressed an interest in being a part of this Committee who were not selected this time round. JD also made the comment that this

¹ The initial working title for this was the UK Polar Partnership (UKPP), but the SC expressed a wish to amend this, which was carried.

is an independent group, with no money at the current time and therefore unable to cover travel expenses. JD thanked the HEIs and labs for providing funds for members to attend the meeting.

JD noted that both Ed Hawkins and Eric Wolff had sent comments and these would be incorporated at the appropriate points during the meeting.

Background: the antecedents of the UKAAP (MM)

MM discussed the background to the formation of the UKAAP, and argued that it is recognised that the quality of UK Polar Science is high; however, there has been an historical issue with maintaining strategic coherence between the various groups. There have been some notable efforts to draw a community together, including the Antarctic Funding Initiative (AFI), which was very effective at providing cohesiveness for the Antarctic community; however, this ended in 2010. Other activities include the UK National Committee on Antarctic Research (UKNCAR), chaired by Prof David Hopkins, which coordinates the UK's interest in the activities of the Scientific Committee for Antarctic Research (SCAR).

For the Arctic, there is the NERC Arctic Research Programme, which is a large scale programme addressing specific questions in the Arctic; however, the funding for this finishes in 2016 and there is currently nothing planned to maintain an Arctic research focus thereafter.

A few groups have looked at this issue in the past; however, there has not been a central body to consider the strategic coordination of polar science across the UK Community. In the marine sphere, there is the Challenger Society which has built a community – it has strengths in outreach and communication but does not necessarily coordinate strategic links. The NOC Association reviews strategic aspects relating to marine science within the UK and internationally but neither of these necessarily provide a suitable model for the polar sphere.

MM postulated that we needed something that is owned by the polar community, *for* the polar community, and it was from this idea that the concept of building a UK Arctic and Antarctic Partnership originated. One task MM could see this group doing would be to try and draw together UK researchers in a strategic context, to develop large-scale ideas on the timescale of years and decades, and to identify means and mechanisms to achieve them. MM stressed that these were his own views, and that it was now for the UKAAP Steering Committee to take the lead collectively in determining its priorities and modus operandi.

Discussion of Mission and Strategy of UKAAP:

JD invited members to comment on the idea of a UKAAP and what it should try and achieve, a summary of those discussions follows.

The Committee welcomed the launch of a UK Arctic and Antarctic Partnership and recognised that there was a need to work together in a more coherent manner. There were several discussions on how this could be achieved and how this group could help promote UK Polar Science to key stakeholders. JEF commented that, in her role as Director of BAS, she is often asked what the UK's

view is on certain aspects of polar science. The recently published 'UK Science in the Antarctic – 2014-2020' (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-science-in-antarctica-2014-to-2020>) has been a useful document to address some of these questions; however, what is also needed is a document that outlines the UK's activities and interests in both the Arctic and Antarctic.

KD reminded the Committee about the UK Arctic Policy Framework document published in October 2013. This was an attempt by Government to set out its overall approach to the Arctic. There is a cross-Whitehall group to coordinate the Arctic and the UK is an observer to the Arctic Council. KD commented that the Canadians have requested that observer countries have their activities in the Arctic assessed, as 'observer status' is not permanent. The UK's observer status is to be reviewed in 2017 and it would be useful to map where UK science is being conducted, including the social sciences, as well as to highlight the UK's contribution to international polar research, and the Committee could potentially help with this.

Several comments were also made on the current membership of the Steering Committee. Some members felt that it would be useful to invite representatives from NGOs, industry and the FCO. KH commented that there is a significant number of early career scientists who do lack a broad contact network in the UK polar science community, and it is important that this Committee engages with this group.

Further to this, PW commented that one of the remits of a UKAAP should be to try and connect with the NERC SPAG and SISB. As mentioned by NG, it will be important to look at the key challenges and opportunities and highlight to NERC the strategic importance of the science that is required. One of the key recommendations that came out of the Polar Science Working Group a few years ago was that more work was needed in the Arctic. This helped in setting up the £15 million Arctic Research Programme. NG commented on the fact that NERC has a new strategy involving a Strategic Programme Advisory Group (SPAG). The SPAG will play a role in prioritising strategic research opportunities. This group consists of 12 people, chaired by Prof Michael Ellis, and one of the members is Dr Emily Shuckburgh from BAS, representing polar science. There was a process earlier in the year to collect ideas from the NERC community and 150 ideas were submitted. The SPAG will consider the ideas and recommend priority areas to NERC which, once agreed by SISB, will provide funding opportunities to the UK science community. NG wanted to make the Committee aware that the UKAAP can still feed into this process.

The point was also made that this group should not only look to NERC, but also investigate opportunities with other Research Councils and beyond. The interface with the social sciences is very important. JW stated that similar approaches have been incorporated within EU programmes, with several projects bringing-in the social sciences, which have been very successful. RL noted that there is a lot of infrastructure that the UK has access to and key expertise within science and technology that other Arctic nations don't have. The crossover of funding from expertise outside of polar research should be investigated.

A comparison was made to the US 'NSF Polar Programs', which manages a highly organised set of polar projects. One of the issues in the UK is the difference in the approach to coordinating activities by different science communities. ME commented on the importance of bilateral and trilateral collaborations that make it more feasible to interact with and access other international field stations.

Several members stressed how important it was to take senior politicians to the Polar Regions as this gives them a face-to-face opportunity to see exactly how things work in these extreme environments, and to understand the connectivities with the mid-latitudes, including the UK. This face-to-face impact is invaluable.

Members also commented on the importance of communication and social media and that these platforms should be used as widely as possible to engage with the community.

How should a UKAAP be structured and operate:

After discussion, the Committee agreed in principle that the remit for this group needs to be broad and needs to incorporate both the Arctic and the Antarctic, with the major focus initially on the Arctic.

JD commented that, in the Antarctic, we have BAS as the UK Antarctic operator and we also have UKNCAR. However, for the Arctic, the geopolitical, social, economic and cultural context is fundamentally different, and there is no national focal point for the UK science community and wider society (which includes a very broad suite of stakeholders, from industry, through NGOs, government agencies, and including the general public). Discussions therefore moved on to the Arctic Office and how this could possibly play a role. JCEL commented that the Arctic Office already provides a secretariat in a sense – providing financial and administrative support for the bi-annual Arctic Conferences for example. There was also mention of the Canada-UK MOU and that this is yet to be properly exploited. Following on from this, MD made the observation that there are niche capabilities that can be aligned with a polar strategy; the new polar vessel is an example. One of the difficult issues is that BAS is not funded for Arctic work.

It was agreed that there needs to be further thought on how to bring the Arctic into this, and having the NERC-funded Arctic Office is a useful resource. However, it will be important to maintain independence from the research councils.

In view of the discussions regarding the Partnership, the Steering Committee agreed on the new name: ***UK Arctic and Antarctic Partnership – UKAAP.***

SCAR 20 year horizon scan - MS

MS gave a brief update on the Horizon 20 year scanning exercise. In April, SCAR convened 75 international scientists and policy-makers to agree on the priorities for the next 20 years and beyond. This exercise was led by Chuck Kennicutt (Texas A&M University). The aim was to think beyond the immediate issues and look at what research in the Antarctic might be like in 20 years time. A paper was published in *Nature* in August 2014 (<http://www.nature.com/news/polar-research-six-priorities-for-antarctic-science-1.15658>) which lists the 6 priority areas identified. The next task will be to see how the UK should/will respond to this. There will be a meeting on the 27th October at the Royal Society which MS has emailed the Committee about separately with an invitation to attend. Chuck Kennicutt will provide more detail on the next steps and there will be a discussion on how to take this forward. MS tried to keep 50% of the spaces for early career scientists as this is something for them to take on as they will be the scientific leaders in 20 years time. MS to keep the UKAAP informed on progress.

JD commented on the fact that there are several strategies already in place and we need to utilise the work that has been done and see how we can address these in a UK context. MS is doing this for the Antarctic and maybe this is something we can look at for ICARP III (International Conference on Arctic Research Planning) in the Arctic. It would be useful to review what the UK can bring to the table to complement the international efforts. The Committee agreed that having a coherent document with core questions would be very useful. This would need to be aimed at a wide audience.

Discussion of UKAAP Terms of Reference

The Committee addressed the points listed in the draft Terms of Reference and a revised version will be circulated for further comment to the Committee in due course.

ACTION: JD and PW to draw up revised ToR and send to NM to circulate to the Committee. The Committee members are asked to add their comments/changes in track changes and send these back to NM to collate. Deadline to send out revised ToR: 31st October 2014

Discussion on Work plan and roles and responsibilities

Following on from the various discussions during the meeting, it was agreed that small task groups were required to start moving forward with some of the ideas suggested. To this end, the Committee agreed on the following five task groups and initial actions:

1. **Communications task group (KH, MM, NM):**

The Committee agreed that a website was required as soon as possible. The Communications task group will be led by Kate Hendry with Mike Meredith and Nicola Munro. The Committee asked that a draft be circulated for comment before the site is made public. Twitter and Facebook accounts to also be set up as part of this. **Deadline for the website draft: 30th November 2014.**

2. **Conference task group (JEF, TJY, MS):**

In previous conferences, HEI's have volunteered to host the Arctic and Antarctic Conferences. The first Arctic Conference was organised by NOC, the 2nd by Leeds, the 3rd by SPRI and the next will be in Sheffield (**16th to 18th September 2015**). The first Antarctic Conference was organised by BAS in Cambridge, the 2nd was in Bristol. However, there is no formal process in selecting a conference venue or date. It was agreed that these meetings are very important for the UK polar community and they need to continue. The group is tasked to look at how the UKAAP could potentially contribute/influence oversight and content for future conferences. **Deadline: 17th November 2014.**

3. **Task group to look at the current state of UK Arctic activity (RL, JEF, PW, SB, TM, JCEL):**

The Committee agree that a document (no more than 4 to 5 pages long) is required to identify the current state of UK Arctic science - who is involved, what science is being undertaken and where, and see if any gaps can be identified. We need to identify the next big questions, and to consider how to achieve funding and access infrastructure to enable them to be answered. **The Committee ask that a paper be presented on the findings at the next Steering Committee meeting in May 2015.**

4. Funding Support task group (JD, JEF, MT, PW):

The aim is for the UKAAP to be independent. This group is tasked with considering how best to build up some level of activity that might enable access to small amounts of funding to enable the group to operate independently on behalf of the UK polar community. **Deadline: draft by end of December 2014**

5. Task group to look at Stakeholder engagement (JCEL and JW):

It will be important to encourage engagement from major stakeholders for example from Shipping (IMF), OGP, Lloyds etc. One way would be to invite representatives to the Conferences and to have sessions dedicated to this. However, before we approach these groups, we need to know what we can offer and how we should engage. This group are tasked with considering this issue and bringing forward a short discussion paper aimed at determining what approach to take. **Deadline: draft by End of December 2014**

Next meeting:

The Committee agreed that they should meet in London in May 2015.

ACTION: NM to liaise with MS regarding available rooms and NM to send out a doodle poll to the Committee. Deadline: 14th November 2014

JD thanked the Committee again for coming to Cambridge and for their contributions during the meeting.

Close of Meeting

ANNEX 1:

Steering Committee webpages:

Prof Julian Dowdeswell (JD), Scott Polar Research Institute, Chair:

<http://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/people/dowdeswell/>

Prof Phil Wookey (PW), Heriot –Watt University, Vice-chair:

<http://www.env.hw.ac.uk/people/philip-wookey.html>

Tun Jan Young (TJY), Scott Polar Research Institute, UK Polar Network representative

<http://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/people/young/>

Dr Ned Garnett (NG), NERC – Head of Atmospheric and Polar Science

Alex Tate (AT), Polar Data Centre, BAS -

http://www.antarctica.ac.uk/about_bas/contact/staff/profile/ajtate/personal/

Mike Dinn (MD), Operations Manager, BAS -

http://www.antarctica.ac.uk/about_bas/contact/staff/profile/138d293462a9c22e8dd84ed09d4d5d33/

Prof Ray Leakey (RL), Scottish Association for Marine Science:

<http://www.sams.ac.uk/ray-leakey>

Prof Mary Edwards (ME), University of Southampton:

<http://www.southampton.ac.uk/geography/research/staff/mee.page>

Prof Klaus Dodds (KD), Royal Holloway, University of London:

http://pure.rhul.ac.uk/portal/en/persons/klaus-dodds_fb99b223-7661-4aa1-95f6-1cd527dd0fc7.html

Prof Mike Meredith (MM), BAS/SAMS:

http://www.antarctica.ac.uk/about_bas/contact/staff/profile/mmm

Dr Bart van Dongen (BvD), University of Manchester:

<http://www.manchester.ac.uk/research/bart.vandongen/>

Prof Colm O’Cofaigh (CO), Durham University

<https://www.dur.ac.uk/geography/staff/geogstaffhidden/?id=1008>

Dr Anne Jungblut (AJ), Natural History Museum

<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/research-curation/about-science/staff-directory/life-sciences/a-jungblut/index.html>

Prof Tavi Murray (TM), Swansea University

<http://www.swansea.ac.uk/staff/science/geography/t.murray/>

Prof Jane Francis (JEF), BAS

http://www.antarctica.ac.uk/about_bas/contact/staff/profile/8055ae8ed82c79f4e08e30cd7c7f2be2

Dr Sheldon Bacon (SB), National Oceanography Centre, Southampton

<https://noc.ac.uk/people/shb>

Dr Clare Robinson (CR), University of Manchester

<http://www.manchester.ac.uk/research/clare.robinson/>

Dr Kate Hendry (KH), Bristol University

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/earthsciences/people/kate-r-hendry/index.html>

Dr Stephanie Henson (SH), National Oceanography Centre, Southampton

<https://noc.ac.uk/people/sah1e09>

Prof Martyn Tranter (MT), Bristol Glaciology Centre, University of Bristol

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/geography/people/martyn-tranter/index.html>

Dr Cynan Ellis-Evans (JCEL), BAS

http://www.antarctica.ac.uk/about_bas/contact/staff/profile/Cynan_Ellis-Evans/

Dr Jeremy Wilkinson (JW), BAS

http://www.antarctica.ac.uk/about_bas/contact/staff/profile/02af10f600dd73f559129e5ef12a0dd6

Nicola Munro (NM), BAS, Secretary

http://www.antarctica.ac.uk/about_bas/contact/staff/profile/1fd1a2c4429aac8deec3a049a472dda4

Apologies:

Prof Eric Wolff, University of Cambridge <http://www.esc.cam.ac.uk/people/academic-staff/professor-eric-wolff>

Dr Ed Hawkins, NCAS, University of Reading <http://www.met.reading.ac.uk/~ed/home/index.html>

Dr Claire Hughes, University of York <http://www.york.ac.uk/environment/our-staff/hughesc/>

Prof David Hopkins, Heriot-Watt University <http://www.sls.hw.ac.uk/staff-directory/david-hopkins.htm>