

**Minutes from the 15th UK Arctic and Antarctic Partnership (UKAAP) Steering
Committee Online Meeting**

January 17th, 2022, 10:00 to 12:00

Zoom

Participants:

Professor Martin Siegert (MS), Grantham Institute, Imperial College London, Chair

Professor Sheldon Bacon (SB), NOC

Dr Liz Bagshaw (LB), Cardiff University

Professor Robert Baxter (RB), Durham University

Professor Mike Bentley (MB), Durham University

Professor Andrew Brierley (AB), St Andrews University

Professor Ian Brooks (IB), Leeds University

Henry Burgess (HB), Head, NERC Arctic Office

George Clarkson (GC), Polar Regions Department, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Rod Downie (RD), WWF

Dr Duncan Depledge (DD), Loughborough University

Dr Richard Essery (RE), Edinburgh University

Professor Jane Francis (JF), BAS

Dr Lizzie Garratt (LG), NERC

Dr Anna Gebruk (AG), (UKPN Representative)

Dr Kate Hendry (KH), Bristol University

Tatiana Iakovleva (TI), UK Science and Innovation Network in Russia

Professor Anna Jones (AJ), BAS

Dr James Lea (JL), Liverpool University

Dr Marc Macias-Fauria (MMF), Oxford University

Professor Erin McClymont (EM), Durham University

Dr Ingrid Medby (IM), Newcastle University

Sophie Montague (SM), Director, All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Polar Regions Secretariat

Nicola Munro (NM), NERC Arctic Office (UKAAP SC Secretary)

Professor David Pearce (DP), University of Northumbria

Professor Gareth Phoenix (GP), University of Sheffield

Professor Richard Powell (RP), Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge

Dr Clare Robinson (CR), University of Manchester

Hannah Wauchope (HW), University of Exeter

Apologies:

Professor Finlo Cottier, SAMS

Professor Siwan Davies, Swansea University

Minutes:

1. Welcome and Introductions - Martin Siegert

MS welcomed all participants to the 15th UKAAP Steering Committee online meeting and noted the apologies received.

2. Review of Minutes and Actions from the SC14 meeting in May 2021 - Martin Siegert **(Paper: UKAAP 14/01)**

Review of Minutes:

MS presented the minutes from the last meeting. No further comments were made, and the minutes were accepted as a true record of the 14th meeting of the UKAAP SC. These will now be posted on the UKAAP website.

Review of Actions from UKAAP SC 14:

MS reviewed the actions from UKAAP SC 14 and noted the following:

- *UK - Antarctic community exercise - to finalise the Antarctic and Future priorities briefing note and circulate to the Committee when ready (Mike Bentley): **Completed – see item 3***
- *HB to prepare call for applications to host the ASSW 2024 and report on progress at next UKAAP meeting: **In progress, to be discussed later in the agenda - see item 5***
- *HB to approach community at Arctic Science conference to gauge interest in establishing a consortium: **In progress: a session has been proposed at upcoming Arctic Conference***
- *MS and KH to consider code of conduct and how to develop through DiPSI and report back at next meeting: **In progress, to be discussed later in agenda – see item 7***
- *NM and MS to look at potential for an Arctic and Antarctic mailing list – **to be discussed later in agenda***

3. The future of UK Antarctic science: strategic priorities, essential needs and opportunities for international leadership - Mike Bentley (Paper: UKAAP 15/02)

MB gave a brief introduction to this item which stems from the Antarctic future priorities scoping exercise that was held prior to the Antarctic Science conference in March 2021. Over 100 people took part. A writing group was then tasked with producing a paper from this exercise which has now been published and disseminated to all key stakeholders. (See Paper: UKAAP 15/02). Feedback received from NERC, NGOs and researchers has been very positive.

MB reported that there were some key issues that came out of the discussions during this exercise which included the need to have a more integrated approach to accessing polar infrastructure with better international partnerships. There is also a need for further investment in people, to also include more engineers and social scientists within polar research. It was also noted through the discussions that there needs to be a better way to communicate directly with the Polar community, in particular the Antarctic community. It was suggested that the NERC list servers are used for this, but a comment was made that this is something that needs to be addressed by NERC. A comment was also made that registration lists for the polar symposia that are held each year could be used along with dissemination through the UKAAP Steering Committee.

4. Introduction to Arctic Horizon Scanning exercise – Marc Macias-Fauria, Oxford University

MMF introduced this item. The Oxford University Polar Forum is a hub of 60 researchers based at the University of Oxford with interests in Polar research. They are in the process of launching an Arctic horizon scanning exercise which will include a survey asking researchers what they see as being the key priorities in the next 10 years. The survey will be circulated widely within the UK and internationally once ready. This will be followed by a workshop on 18 to 20 May 2022 to discuss findings.

5. Update on Arctic Science Summit Week 2024 – Henry Burgess

HB reported that the UK's invitation to host ASSW 2024 was accepted by IASC in 2021. NERC Arctic Office, together with the FCDO and UKAAP are now inviting applications for UK academic institutions to host this, with a deadline of 29th April. The applications will be assessed with the successful hosts being announced in June 2022. HB commented that ASSW 2024 provides a fantastic opportunity to promote UK Arctic science ahead of the International Conference on Arctic Research Planning (ICARP) in the US in April 2025. Further details about the call are available on the Arctic Office website, including all criteria to be met by the local hosts: <https://www.arctic.ac.uk/news/2385/>

ACTION: HB to update the committee on progress at next UKAAP meeting

6. Update from UK Arctic Science Conference organisers - Bob Baxter, Durham University

RB joined the meeting to give an update on the Arctic Conference planning. Organisers still intend to run this as an in-person conference; however, the option is there to run this as a hybrid meeting or completely online if needed. The conference website is now available with a call for registration and abstracts now open which can be found on the Conference website here:

<https://www.durham.ac.uk/departments/academic/biosciences/research/conferences/event-information>. The Conference is set to take place 11 to 13 April 2022.

MS also noted a quick update from Rob Bingham (Edinburgh University) regarding the next UK Antarctic Science Conference, scheduled for later in 2022. Edinburgh are planning an in-person meeting w/c 29th August 2022 to coincide with the IGSCB meeting. Further details will be announced in due course.

7. Update on 'Code of Conduct' for polar researchers – Martin Siegert

Some progress has been made by the DiPSI Committee on a 'Code of Conduct' for UK Polar Researchers and MS will report back at the next meeting once this has been finalised.

ACTION: MS to report back on this agenda item at next meeting

8. UK/Russia links – update on current activities and future developments – Tatiana Iakovleva, UK Science and Innovation Network in Russia

TI, Head of UK Science and Innovation Network in Russia and the Arctic thematic lead gave an update on recent UK/Russia activities:

Russia holds the current Chairmanship of the Arctic Council (2021 to 2023). This should provide good opportunities through conferences and events where further promotion of UK/Russia links can be made.

In the past year, four science links webinars have been organised to help promote further international collaboration between UK and Russian researchers, with 320 registering for these across the 4 events. Work is also progressing to develop Arctic marine links between UK and Russian researchers and TI is planning on further events to help develop this programme in the coming months.

SIN continue to look for potential funding opportunities and have recently been able to fund a *UK/Russia Postgraduate Research Fellowships programme* which will enable female researchers to spend between three to nine months at a UK university developing their research project under UK supervision.

TI reported that the British Embassy in Moscow was invited to attend an Arctic Conference in St Petersburg in December 2021 where they gave a talk at a session on the Arctic Council which was well received. This provided a great opportunity to further promote the UK/Russian links and TI continues to follow up on opportunities.

2022 will see the launch of UK/Russia Year of Knowledge. MS will be part of a UK delegation going to Moscow during the last week of January and then going to St Petersburg to AARI for further discussions and to help make further connections.

The University of the Arctic Congress will be held in October 2022 in Russia. TI has submitted two proposals, both of which have been accepted. There will be a session on Arctic Science diplomacy with a strong UK/Russia component, working with APECS Russia and UK Polar Network. The second session will work on synergies between local knowledge and academia and local indigenous communities.

The Committee thanked TI for all her work in leading all these initiatives and continued support.

9. Stakeholder reports (written)

Each stakeholder was invited to give a verbal summary of their reports. Full details are available in the meeting papers.

Paper: UKAAP 15/03 – report from the Polar Regions Department, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (George Clarkson)

Paper: UKAAP 15/04 - report from the UK Polar Network (Anna Gebruk)

Paper: UKAAP 15/05 – report from NERC (Lizzie Garratt)

In addition to the report, LG provided the following updates:

- The open email address for SPF ideas is no longer in use but will be replaced soon and LG will keep the committee informed once a new email address is in place.
- It is anticipated that there will be a general NERC capital call for small to medium science kit – LG will keep the Committee informed of this when released.
- NERC have agreed to be a partner in a new programme with international collaboration led by New Zealand called 'The Sensitivity of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet to 2° Celsius (SWAIS 2C)'. There will be a call to go alongside this from NERC in the coming months.

Paper: UKAAP 15/06 – report from the NERC Arctic Office (Henry Burgess)

Paper: UKAAP 15/07 – report from the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Polar Regions (Sophie Montague)

10. Committee membership and mailing lists – Henry Burgess

HB reported that Viv Jones has now stepped down as Deputy Chair of the Steering Committee. MS has also come to the end of his first term as Chair of the Steering Committee.

MS has agreed to stay on as Chair for another two-year term, and Kate Hendry has offered to serve as Deputy Chair. The Committee are asked to inform the Secretariat if they have any objections to this. If any other volunteers wish to take up either of these roles, then please let Henry and Nicola know. The secretariat will manage a voting process if needed, via email. Decisions to be communicated by mid-February.

The call for new membership to serve on the Steering Committee is now open, with a deadline of 28th February. The application form is on the UKAAP website here:

(<https://ukaapartnership.org/committee/ukaap-steering-committee-application-form/>). Completed forms should be sent to Nicola Munro (nalm@bas.ac.uk).

11. AOB:

JF reported that the RRS *Sir David Attenborough* (SDA) is now in Antarctica, conducting sea trials, after a very successful launch at the pre-COP event in London in October 2021. The SDA will then take on the task of testing science equipment over the next couple of years. This season will be very busy supporting 60 projects as well as trying to catch up on the delays to the construction work at Rothera, due to the impact of COVID. Phase two of funding for the modernisation of the Antarctic infrastructure has been secured and will allow for the purchase of a new aircraft to replace the Dash 7. The Polar Research and Operations Board (PROB) are currently looking at the long-term planning of the logistics. JF and MB both sit on this Committee.