

Minutes from the 6th UK Arctic and Antarctic Partnership (UKAAP) Steering Committee Meeting

Tuesday 9th May, Aurora Conference Centre, British Antarctic Survey
Room: Conference Theatre

Attendees:

Prof Julian Dowdeswell, SPRI (Chair)
Prof Philip Wookey, Heriot-Watt University (Deputy Chair)
Prof Sheldon Bacon, NOC
Prof Ian Brooks, Leeds University
Henry Burgess, Head, NERC Arctic Office
Prof Dame Jane Francis, BAS
Dr Ruth Hindshaw, University of Cambridge
Prof Vivienne Jones, University College London
Dr Anne Jungblut, Natural History Museum
Dr Melanie Leng, BGS
TJ Young, UKPN Representative
Prof David Pearce, University of Northumbria
Dr Jennifer Pike, University of Cardiff
Dr Richard Powell, SPRI
Dr Jeff Ridley, Met Office
Jessica Surma, NERC
Prof David Thomas, Bangor University
Prof David Vaughan, BAS
Nicola Munro, NERC Arctic Office (Secretary)

Invited participants:

Stuart Doubleday, FCO

Apologies:

Prof Siwan Davies, Swansea University
Dr Duncan Depledge (APPG)
Prof Klaus Dodds, Royal Holloway
Prof Mary Edwards, University of Southampton
Dr Richard Essery, Edinburgh University
Prof Andy Hodson, Sheffield University
Dr Erin McClymont, Durham University
Dr Clare Robinson, University of Manchester
Prof Martin Siegert, Grantham Institute for Climate Change, Imperial College London
Prof Martyn Tranter, Bristol Glaciological Centre
Prof Gail Whiteman, Lancaster University
Dr Jeremy Wilkinson, BAS
Prof Eric Wolff, University of Cambridge

Minutes:

Welcome and Introductions (JD):

JD opened the meeting and welcomed all new members to the UKAAP SC meeting. JD also noted the apologies sent from members unable to attend. Participants were then asked to introduce themselves. (A list of participant webpages can be found in Annex 1).

Review of Minutes and actions (JD) (Papers: UKAAP 6/01 and UKAAP 6/02)

JD presented the minutes and actions from the last meeting. No further comments or amendments were made and the minutes were accepted as a true record of the fifth meeting in December 2016. These will be posted on the UKAAP website.

2017 UK Arctic Science Conference (JD) (Paper UKAAP 6/03)

The UKAAP SC noted the paper from Finlo Cottier which provides an update on the planning for the next UK Arctic Science Conference, 19th to 21st September 2017. This will be held in Oban, hosted by SAMS. JD encouraged all members to register by the deadline of 31st July 2017. The link to the Arctic Conference can be found on the Arctic Office website (www.arctic.ac.uk)

UK Government polar priorities and activities (Stuart Doubleday)

Stuart Doubleday (SD) was invited to the UKAAP SC meeting to meet with members and provide an update on UK Government polar priorities and activities. SD is the Deputy Head of the Polar Regions Department (PRD) within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). He reported that the next Antarctic Treaty Meeting will be held in Beijing which would be China's first time hosting this meeting. SD commented that the main priorities at the moment are focussed on Specially Protected Areas and how these are mapped in the Antarctic. SD reported that the PRD will continue to review the Environmental Impact Assessment process to see whether further improvements can be made. He also noted the wider issues relating to tourism and the likely impacts of these.

SD mentioned the work of The Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) in the establishment of the Marine Protected Area in the Ross Sea which will commence in December 2017 and be in place for 35 years. CCAMLR had also made progress in providing – at the UK's instigation – outline protection for areas subject to ice-shelf collapse. Both these issues will continue to be a priority moving forward.

SD reported that the Arctic Council Ministerial would take place later in the week. It was expected that the 'Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation' would be signed at this meeting by the Ministers of the eight Arctic States. There is a clause within this that encourages the Arctic Council members to engage further with Arctic Council Observers, and which allows the provisions of the Agreement to be extended to them.

The Arctic Council Chairmanship is now with Finland and the four priority areas identified are Environmental Protection, Meteorological Cooperation, Connectivity in the Arctic and Education. The PRD will continue to monitor the work in the six Arctic Council working groups.

SD went on to report that there is no change to the UK Arctic Policy Framework document; however, he noted the increased interest in Arctic Policy, with three Parliamentary Inquiries having been launched prior to dissolution of Parliament on 3rd May. The Policy will be reviewed once the Inquiries have been completed (if re-established by the incoming Parliament).

The UK has re-signed the MoU with Norway with further polar cooperation for another two years. In relation to the Antarctic, the UK has signed a MoU with Chile and is also in discussions with Argentina.

SD also reported that there is currently a big review being undertaken on how the UK handles oceans policy. SD is keen to see this filter through and to promote ocean science. Further to these discussions, a comment was made about plastics in the oceans and the need for more work to be done on this topic. SD reported that the UK Government are keen to do this, however at the moment there are gaps in the ocean policy and plastics fall within one of these gaps. HB made the point that at the recent AMAP meeting in Washington (April 2017) plastics were increasingly on the agenda so likely to be more on this in future.

SD reported that the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands are developing their new five year strategy and are keen to encourage more science at South Georgia, KEP in particular. SD also noted that HMS *Protector* goes down to the Antarctic every season and they have the capability to support science on board – SD encourages those who may wish to use HMS Protector to contact him, BAS or the MOD for further details.

Further to this discussion, the point was made about how some groups within the cruise ship industry are interested in engaging with scientists and offering the opportunity to conduct science from their vessels, with some having already set up small science labs. HB made the comment that one area within EU-PolarNet was to look at the opportunities and provide a database of what is available and what could be provided by commercial vessels. HB suggested that it might be useful to invite a representative from EU-PolarNet to give an update on current progress. It was also suggested that we engage with IAATO and AECO.

ACTION: HB to work with SD to invite a member from IAATO/AECO to present to the UKAAP SC meeting.

In relation to Brexit, SD noted that general impact on UK policy is likely to be minimal. He acknowledged, however, that there is likely to be an impact on polar science. However the PRD will continue to engage in discussions.

JD thanked SD for attending the meeting and providing the update on current priorities.

IASC Working Group reports

HB reported that he is now the UK representative on the IASC Council and that Allen Pope is the new Executive Secretary. The IASC Secretariat is based in Akureyri in Iceland. It was decided at the last UKAAP SC meeting that the Arctic Office would look at the UK representation on the IASC Working Groups to see if they could strengthen the groups. A call went out for nominations and we received a good response. As a result, the UK now has two UK members on each working group apart from the Social and Human Working Group, where an additional member will be appointed. Members are as follows:

Atmospheric Working Group: Jo Browse from Exeter University (she was previously an IASC Fellow) and Stephen Arnold from Leeds University

Cryosphere Working Group: Poul Christoffersen, SPRI and Richard Essery, Edinburgh University. Thanks go to Julian Dowdeswell for all the work he has done on this WG in the past.

Marine Working Group: Sheldon Bacon was at the ASSW in April 2017 but has now stepped down, Jeremy Wilkinson, BAS and Andrew Brierley, University of St Andrews are current members, however Jeremy will step down after the next UKAAP meeting and will be replaced by Finlo Cottier from SAMS. Henry thanked Sheldon for his contribution to this group.

Social and Human Working Group: The current UK representative on this group is Michael Bravo, SPRI. However, we will aim to recruit another individual to this group in due course.

Terrestrial Working group: Philip Wookey, Heriot-Watt University (who was elected Chair of this WG at the ASSW in 2017) and Mary Edwards, University of Southampton.

The aim is for people to serve a maximum of two terms of four years on the WGs to try and ensure there is overlap between new members. HB will be drawing up some Terms of Reference for the Working Group representatives in due course.

ACTION: HB to draw up Terms of Reference for UK representatives on IASC Working Groups.

HB also reported that the new IASC Fellow on the Marine Working Group is Tom Armitage from the UK. He is currently working in the US but it is good to have further UK involvement in IASC.

HB attended the IASC Council as the UK representative and noted that there was a lot of discussion around the draft of the strategic plan which would give IASC more impetus in implementing the ICARP 3 process. There was also much discussion focussed around the formation of three action groups. These groups have been established by the IASC Council and are as follows:

Communicating Arctic Science to Policymakers: This group will focus on connecting Arctic scientists with policymakers and will put forward a set of recommendations for IASC to enhance its provision of advice on issues in the Arctic and communication of this to policymakers. HB was asked to sit on this group and has accepted. HB noted that they hope to have a session on this at Arctic Circle and is happy to take input from the wider community and feed this in.

Scoping Group on Indigenous Involvement: This group will focus on indigenous participation in IASC and incorporating traditional knowledge into IASC activities. There was a lot of discussion on this topic and there will be more to come. There were no real outcomes from the meeting at this stage.

Arctic Science and Business/Industry Cooperation: This action group will look at how to promote discussions on how Arctic Science can facilitate business and vice versa. This group will be convening a session at Arctic Circle 2017.

In other UK related news, HB reported that Terry Callaghan received the IASC Medal at the ASSW 2017. This was well deserved and Terry gave a good, very well attended lecture.

Further to this update, PW highlighted the fact that IASC is not a funding agency; however, he informed the SC that each Working Group receives a small budget, and, if targeted, can be very valuable. It can help bring a group of people together to meet and discuss a topic, which in turn can lead to endorsed proposals that can be submitted to national funding agencies, resulting in high impact science. PW noted these are not necessarily oversubscribed, and encouraged people to apply and work with the national contact for the relevant working group.

Reports from the IASC Working groups:

The following papers were submitted which provide updates on discussions from the IASC Working Groups:

Atmospheric Working Group – Paper: UKAAP 6/04

Cryosphere Working Group – Paper: UKAAP 6/05

Marine Working Group – Paper: UKAAP 6/06

Terrestrial Working Group paper (no number as circulated at meeting)

At the time of writing, the Human and Social WG report had not been received but this will be circulated in due course. However, as we search for another representative to sit on this Working Group, HB made the comment that we need to look across the range of social sciences as many issues discussed at the moment relate to health and medical issues. HB reported that the Arctic Office will circulate an overview from the ASSW to the wider community after the General Election.

Further to the Working Group updates, TJY mentioned that there had been a discussion at the APECS meeting about why the number of nominations for fellows to sit on the Atmospheric Working Group was much lower compared to other groups. HB commented that traditionally there hasn't been anyone from the UK on this Working Group but that the Arctic Office will continue to promote these opportunities which will help raise the profile amongst the UK Community.

A question was also asked about the extent of Russian engagement within these Working Groups. HB noted that there is a separate Working Group focussing on Russia called the 'International Science Initiative in the Russian Arctic' (ISIRA) and the UK representative on this is Gareth Rees from SPRI. The aim is to increase engagement further and for ISIRA to become more active. PW made the point that there was more Russian engagement at the ASSW in Prague and also commented that there are several Russian infrastructures involved in the new EU Trans National Access programme INTERACT. One mechanism to engage with the Russians would be through INTERACT. This engagement would also be further supported when the science co-operation agreement comes into force.

Future funding and demand management

JD opened the discussions by saying that UK researchers are still winning EU grants, giving an example of a recent success at Cambridge.

JF made the comment that the Polar Regions have been well-funded recently through the Strategic Programme Area. The Polar Community now needs to think of ways of how to adapt their expertise for use in non-polar areas, for example, glacial projection, submarine fans, microplastics etc. JS noted that the maximum funds for Highlight Topics are £4 million, and in the region of £5m and £20m for Strategic Programme Areas, the deadline for which is September.

DGV commented that EU-PolarNet is tasked to advise the Commission on opportunities that arise from the Polar Regions that need to be addressed by further research. There will be a meeting in Madrid later this year to scope out priorities for research that would benefit from EU funding. As a precursor to this meeting, there has been a call out to the wider community for input on current priorities in polar research. The deadline is 2nd June and the survey can be found here:

<http://www.eu-polarnet.eu/project-themes/polar-research-for-science-and-society/public-consultation-on-research-priorities/>

DGV also noted that the European Polar Board will take on the legacy of EU-PolarNet at the end of the project. An important point to note is that the EPB is independent of the EU – it is funded by national institutions and the UK is a member and will continue to be a member post Brexit. HB noted that the Commission is full of praise for the work that is being done in EU-PolarNet.

No further comments were made by other Committee members; however, this item will remain on the agenda for future meetings.

UKAAP Forward Plan

JD gave a brief overview about how the UKAAP SC meetings tend to run, explaining that there is an element of information sharing with various groups reporting back to the SC. The SC should always make sure that it looks to reflect the diversity of polar science and social science and to ensure that information is shared adequately. To inform this, the SC has the Terms of Reference to refer to. One of the Committee's most recent outputs is the '*United Kingdom and Arctic Science*' document, which provides an overview of current and recent UK Arctic research. The question was raised about what else the Committee could do to benefit the wider Community.

One suggestion was made as to whether there is more the SC can do to engage with the Social Science Community. It was noted that having social science research in the Polar Regions is very important and that most Arctic meetings now have a strong indigenous peoples component. JF reported that a Polar Governance Workshop was held at BAS in March 2017; this was very well attended and showed that there is a huge community of social sciences within the UK.

After a short discussion it was agreed that it would be useful to produce something similar to the '*UK in the Arctic*', highlighting the areas of expertise, the main challenges faced and also to look at how to bring the Social Science Community, as well as health related research and engineering, together with other stakeholders.

ACTION: RP, KD and a UKPN representative to discuss whether a 'vision document' would be a useful vehicle for the Social Sciences and to draft a short document with recommendations on how to proceed. This should be reported back at the next meeting and should aim to be as inclusive as possible.

It was also suggested that it might be useful to invite a representative from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) to attend a future UKAAP meeting to present on current opportunities and see if there is a way to further engage with this Community.

ACTION: HB and RP to liaise with the view to inviting a representative to the next UKAAP meeting.

There was a short discussion about how to engage more with the UK Antarctic and Arctic conferences. RH made the comment that it would be useful to have a session at the next Arctic Conference that could perhaps focus on cross disciplinary topics that would result in recommendations to take forward in how to engage wider communities. RH to contact David Pond and discuss further. It was also agreed that this should remain a standing item on the agenda.

ACTION: To have, as a standing agenda item, a discussion on what interdisciplinary sessions would be useful to include at the annual polar conferences. RH to investigate potential for this at the upcoming Arctic conference in liaison with the local Science Organising Committee.

Public engagement was also discussed, highlighting the importance of informing the general public on where UK science is engaged. Having TH speak at the Arctic Conference would be a good opportunity to launch a document highlighting why polar research is important.

ACTION: PW, DGV, TJY and HB to discuss and draft a document which lays out the importance of polar research. This should be available on the website/YouTube etc with the view to launch this during TH's session at the Arctic Conference.

There was also a short discussion on how to engage with non-polar communities and how the UKAAP SC could potentially act as a portal to the Polar Community for these other communities. As a result of these discussions, the following actions were set:

ACTION: DGV, VJ, ML and UKPN Representative to draft a document for discussion at the next meeting that looks at how polar research crosses with non-polar areas with the view to engaging this wider community and how the UKAAP could act as a portal to the Polar Community.

ACTION: HB to investigate possibility of engaging with members from the Cross-Whitehall Network and inviting members to future UKAAP meetings to further explore science into policy possibilities.

All Party Parliamentary Group on the Polar Regions: aims and achievements (HB)

HB spoke to this item as Duncan Depledge was unable to attend the meeting. HB gave the following update:

The APPG is an all-party interest group. It aims to inform and educate Members of Parliament. It is not a decision making body. However, it is influential, with over 100 members and chaired by James Gray MP. The APPG run a series of events which are open to the general public, and also produces bulletins and polar notes with updates on what is happening. DD is very active within this group, providing the Secretariat. There is also an Advisory Board and it would be useful to note that JD, JF, KD and HB all sit on this. HB encouraged members of the UKAAP SC to engage with this group as it allows direct access to MPs and the opportunity to inform on current research.

Stakeholders

NERC (JS)

JS reported that a pre-announcement was made about the second call for the Changing Arctic Ocean programme just before the General Election purdah so the call will go out as planned. The call will be a joint call with Germany and any proposal must have a German PI/CoI listed. (Since the meeting, the call has been released and further details can be found here:

<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/funded/programmes/arcticocan/news/ao2/>)

JS reported that the THWAITES proposals for Antarctic research are currently being reviewed with a meeting set for June. A further meeting will be held in September/October at BAS to determine feasibility and appropriateness of what's required.

With regards to 'The Role of the Southern Ocean in the Earth System' (RoSES), JS commented that the panel meeting was held just before Easter and those who applied should find out the outcome in the next couple of weeks. (Since the meeting, the outcomes from the RoSES programme have been announced).

JS also commented that at the last meeting we discussed the NC commissioning of services. JS reported that Council did consider and approved the process and an announcement is likely to be made later in June.

NERC Arctic Office (HB)

HB gave an overview of recent Arctic Office activities:

- The Arctic Vision document and video continue to be used at events that the Arctic Office attends and both products have been well received.
- The first UK-Canada Arctic Bursaries programme has been successful; the Arctic Office received about 20 applications and was able to fund 18 projects. The projects range across most disciplines (not including social science, however) with fieldwork taking place across the Canadian Arctic, with strong partnerships with Polar Knowledge Canada, ArcticNet and Canadian universities. The projects will be in the field this season.
- MOSAiC – A workshop was held for MOSAiC during the ASSW which was well attended by UK representatives. HB reported that the Science and Implementation plans are already in place. The UK is a partner and the money that has been allocated is enough to pay for a berth on the *Polarstern* but we will need to find other sources of income to support travel costs, equipment costs etc. A science coordination meeting will be held in St Petersburg later this year which HB and others will seek to attend.
- NERC Arctic Research Programme – we have now completed the series of events outlined in the ‘End of Programme Communication’ plan.
- Parliamentary Select committees – HB reported that the NERC Arctic Office helped coordinate the RCUK response to the Environmental Audit Committee sustainability inquiry. BAS and others also submitted evidence. It is not known whether the inquiry will re-open after the election.

HB also reported on the next steps:

- The Arctic Office will be refreshing the Arctic Office website, updating the content and modernising the design to bring it more in line with current websites. The Office is also working with the RGS to modernise the ‘Discovering the Arctic’ website to bring this more in line with the sister site ‘Discovering Antarctica’. It is hoped that both websites will be up and running by the end of this year.
- The Arctic Office will continue to provide support for the UK Arctic Conference which will be held in Oban later this year. We will provide approximately £4000 to help with the running costs to ensure there is no registration fee.
- The Office will continue to develop the visits programme, aiming to visit more universities again this year as we did last summer. Visits to Cardiff and Swansea have already been arranged and we will be contacting other universities in the near future.
- The Office will continue to further develop the links with BEIS and other Government departments and will also establish close cooperation with the new NERC Changing Arctic Ocean programme.
- In terms of international engagement, the Arctic Office will look at how UK groups can further engage with the Arctic Council Working Groups and will continue to act as the liaison for MOSAiC. With regards to Russia, the Office put in a bilateral proposal to the UK Embassy in Moscow. This is to hold two events, one in the UK and one in St Petersburg in Russia for early to mid-career researchers.

- The next Arctic Circle General Assembly will be held in Reykjavik 13 to 15 October 2017. There are opportunities for both a plenary and breakout sessions which we are working with the Embassy in Reykjavik on. The deadline for sessions was 12th May so the outcome should be known in June/July. There will also be an exhibition stand at the Assembly. Details of this will be circulated in due course.

Further to this update, members of the Steering Committee thanked HB for his work to date.

UK Polar Network Report (TJY)

TJY provided an update from the UK Polar Network (see paper UKAAP 6/07 for a full report). Key points are as follows:

TJY confirmed that Archana Dayal will be the new representative for UKPN for the next two years. Archana attended the last UKAAP meeting in Manchester in December 2016 but was unable to attend this meeting due to fieldwork commitments.

The UKPN members are keen to participate in scientific meetings and ask the UKAAP to bear in mind early career representatives when opportunities arise to sit on committee or organisational boards, even if only in an observer capacity, as this would provide valuable experience and assist with career development.

The UKPN conducted a survey during January and March 2017 and the statistics can be found in the report. This survey showed that, in terms of geographical distribution of members, there is a good range across the UK, with Cambridge, Bristol and Southampton having higher numbers. TJY also noted that there is a growing number of social scientists joining the UKPN at the moment and getting more engaged in UKPN events.

The UKPN continue to organise and participate in many events; a list of recent events can be found in the report and includes Antarctica Day and the Leeds and Edinburgh Science Festivals.

Further to the update, JD thanked TJY and the UKPN for their continued efforts and set the following actions:

ACTION: NM to continue to circulate relevant funding calls as when they are announced and ensure the UKPN are aware of these.

ACTION: UKPN to let NM know about upcoming events where they would like a member of UKAAP to attend. NM to circulate request to members.

Appointment of new Chair

JD reported that he had now completed his term as the Chair of the UKAAP SC. JD set out the terms for the appointment of a new Chair as was agreed at the last meeting in Manchester in December 2016. Further to this, the Committee agreed to elect Prof Philip Wookey, currently Deputy Chair, to become the new Chair of the UKAAP SC.

ACTION: Members to email PW and NM if they would like to be considered for the role of Deputy Chair. If more than one nomination is received, then SC members will vote on the nominees. Nominations to be made by the end of May 2017.

Membership

There were no further discussions at this stage regarding membership; however, it was agreed that this should remain a standing agenda item.

Next meeting

SD offered to potentially host the next meeting. NM to liaise with SD regarding dates; the meeting will likely be held end of November/early December.

AOB

ACTION: NM to confirm where the next Antarctic science meeting will be held.

JD closed the meeting by thanking members for attending and also thanking the Arctic Office for hosting the meeting. NM was also thanked by JD for her support over his tenure of the Chair.

Close of meeting.

Annex 1: Participant Webpages

[Prof Julian Dowdeswell, SPRI \(Chair\)](#)
[Prof Philip Wookey, Heriot-Watt University \(Deputy Chair\)](#)
[Prof Sheldon Bacon, NOC](#)
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