

Minutes from the 16th UK Arctic and Antarctic Partnership (UKAAP) Steering Committee Hybrid Meeting

June 13th, 2022, 11:00 to 13:00

Hybrid Meeting – Grantham Institute, Imperial College London and online via Zoom

Participants:

Professor Martin Siegert, Grantham Institute, Imperial College London, Chair

Dr Kate Hendry, British Antarctic Survey, Deputy Chair

Dr Liz Bagshaw, Cardiff University

Professor Mike Bentley, Durham University

Dr James Bradley, Queen Mary London

Professor Andrew Brierley, St Andrews

Professor Ian Brooks, Leeds University

Dr Caroline Clason, Plymouth University

Henry Burgess, Head, NERC Arctic Office

Professor Siwan Davies, Swansea University

Professor Richard Essery, Edinburgh University

Professor John Howe, SAMS

Dr Laura Hobbs, SAMS

Professor Anna Jones, BAS

Dr Marc Macias-Fauria, Oxford University

Professor Erin McClymont, Durham University

Dr Ingrid Medby, Newcastle University

Dr Paola Moffa-Sanchez, Durham University

Nicola Munro, NERC Arctic Office (UKAAP SC Secretary)

Professor David Pearce, University of Northumbria

Dr Clare Robinson, University of Manchester

Dr Jess Surma, NERC

Floor Van Den Heuvel, BAS (UKPN representative)

Hannah Wauchope, University of Exeter

Apologies:

Professor Sheldon Bacon, NOC

Professor Robert Baxter, Durham University

George Clarkson, Polar Regions Department, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Dr Duncan Depledge, Loughborough University

Rod Downie, WWF

Professor Jane Francis, BAS

Dr Lizzie Garratt, NERC

Dr James Lea, Liverpool University

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

Professor Gareth Phoenix, University of Sheffield

Professor Richard Powell, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge

DRAFT Minutes:

1. Welcome and Introductions - Martin Siegert

MS welcomed all participants to the 16th UKAAP Steering Committee hybrid meeting and noted the apologies received.

2. Review of Minutes and Actions from the SC 15 meeting in January 2022 - Martin Siegert (Paper: UKAAP 16/01)

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 15th meeting of the UKAAP SC. These will now be posted on the UKAAP website.

Review of Actions from UKAAP SC 15:

MS reviewed the actions from UKAAP SC 15 and noted that most actions would be addressed later in the meeting. MS also gave a quick update on the progress on the Polar Code of Conduct which Jane Rumble at the FCDO has current oversight of. MS will report back to the UKAAP Committee once further progress has been made.

MS also gave an update on a UK delegation visit to Moscow and St Petersburg in February 2022 to discuss Arctic and Antarctic polar collaboration. MS reported that the visit went very well, and that Russian researchers are very keen on working together with UK researchers. The intention was for MS to go back in May, and for the Head of the Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute (AARI) to then visit the UK in June. Due to the current situation, there have been no further interactions, but MS commented that the hope will be to re-engage when possible.

HB reported that Tatiana Iakovleva, who was the Head of the Science and Innovation Network in Moscow has now been made redundant. Tatiana has been instrumental in setting up many of the links between UK and Russian collaborators, working extremely hard to set up all the necessary visits. The Committee would like to record in these minutes its collective thanks to Tatiana for all the work she has supported over the last few years.

It was also noted that many NERC grants with Russian collaborators have been affected by the conflict. JS reported that grants are being advised to look at alternative methods of delivery where possible and noted that they are still waiting for further guidance from Government. An action was taken by JS to enquire further about the situation. The response to her queries from colleagues in UKRI looking at this issue are as follows and are to be noted in the minutes:

- *The UKRI Comprehensive Review continues, and focus has moved towards a review of relationships, collaboration, and engagement in non-grant areas of UKRI's business – particularly where Centres, Institutes and Units have ongoing, long-term relationships with the Russian Federation or state-supported entities.*
- *Due diligence analyses have been conducted on grants where payments were initially suspended in March 2022 due to links with Russian institutes or Russian partners. A panel assessment of these grants was conducted in late April 2022 and the majority of grants have been released from suspension as a result.*
- *As regards, future and ongoing collaborations, this remains subject to the guidance issued by Ministers Donelan and Freeman to research organisations [Letter from George Freeman and Michelle Donelan on recent events in Ukraine 27 March 2022 \(officeforstudents.org.uk\)](#) on 27*

March. This letter requests that the research community review partnership with Russia; but, also, that action is to be taken on the basis of governance structure either within their research organisations or the structures in collaborative fora in which they are meeting.

- *The UKRI Comprehensive Review continues to work towards reviewing and updating guidance as the situation develops and circumstances dictate.*

Further to this, HB reported that the Arctic Council had paused all its work in light of Ukraine/Russia situation, however it has now re-started actions where Russia is not leading and so it is hoped that some elements of the Working Groups will start up again in the coming weeks.

3. ATCM Working Paper – Antarctica in a Changing Climate – Implementing ATCM Resolution 8 – Rod Downie (Paper: UKAAP 16/02)

Paper noted. RD was unable to attend the meeting.

4. SIOS Update – Henry Burgess

SIOS is a consortium of universities and research centres that operate in Svalbard. It looks to coordinate and provide new access to facilities and simplify and centralise research in and across Svalbard. SIOS also provides access to funding initiatives, access to office space, logistical support, and networking opportunities in and around Svalbard. The UK currently has Observer status. At the last UKAAP meeting there was a discussion about whether the UK should join SIOS as a member. It was also discussed at the UK Arctic Science conference. The cost for membership is 10,000 euros/year – BAS have agreed to contribute to this, and HB has asked if there were any other universities that would like to contribute. NERC Arctic Office would receive the funds and join the SIOS Consortium on behalf of the UK. The plan is to apply for membership in the Autumn of 2022, at the next SIOS General Assembly.

ACTION: HB to send a note to UKAAP SC to give an update on where we are with this initiative and invite people/institutions to contribute. Currently looking for contributions from another one or two groups.

A question was raised as to whether the NERC DTP funding could be used to potentially support membership of SIOS. JS has checked this with colleagues and the response is as follows:

- *Training grant funds are intended to fund individual studentships, individual project, and training costs, together with cohort level activities. It is unlikely that contributing towards a national or institutional subscription that might only benefit a proportion of students would be considered an eligible use of those funds.*

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

HB reported that there had been an open application process in the Spring of 2022 calling for host venues for the ASSW 2024 and the application from the Scottish Arctic Network was successful. The meeting will be held 23rd to 29th March 2024 in Edinburgh. RE reported that this will be a hybrid meeting but hoping to have as many people in person as possible. HB will chair the local organising committee. Further details in due course

6. Report from UK Arctic Science Conference - Bob Baxter, Durham University (Paper: UKAAP 16/03)

BB was unable to attend the meeting but a report from the conference has been circulated to all members (UKAAP paper 16/03). Further to this, HB noted the success of the session on Diversity and Inclusion held on the main day which was well received. A similar session is being planned at the upcoming Antarctic conference in August. KH also made the comment that whilst most talks were natural science based, most keynote talks were from the social sciences which was a really nice way to broaden the appeal of the conference. A brief discussion followed about the venue for the next Arctic Conference and the potential is for BAS to host this in 2023. Confirmation to be circulated to the community over the summer.

7. Update from UK Antarctic Conference planning - Rob Bingham/Martin Siegert

RB sent a brief note about the next UK Antarctic Conference. The School of Geosciences at the University of Edinburgh will host a joint meeting of the International Glaciological Society British Branch (IGSBB) and the UK Antarctic Science Conference (UKASC) from Tuesday 30 August to Friday 2 September 2022. Further details are available on the conference website which is now live: <https://edinburghcryosphere.org/ncarigsbb2022/>

Venue for the UK Antarctic Conference for 2024 will be discussed at this meeting.

8. Update on 'Code of Conduct' for polar researchers – Kate Hendry

MS reported that progress has been made by the DiPSi Committee on a 'Polar Code of Conduct' for the UK polar community, which is being led by Jane Rumble at the FCDO. This will be an adaptation of the BAS 'Polar Code of Conduct,' however there has been no further update yet and MS will report on progress at the next meeting. In the meantime, KH gave a quick update on the BAS Polar Code of Conduct which is aimed at all BAS staff, collaborators and partners who travel to the polar regions using BAS logistics. The aim of this is to encourage more positive ways of working and to re-enforce acceptable behaviours, leading to a more inclusive community. She noted that a recent highlight is the adoption of a new anonymous reporting system which is now in place. Training will be provided through pre-deployment and information talks, along with soon to be published UK polar community booklets which will be made available on the ships, BAS stations and online. This will be launched internally at BAS over the summer but will also be communicated to all stakeholders as well as in the lead up to pre-deployment training in September 2022.

It was noted that it will continue to be important to keep raising awareness of the Polar Code of Conduct within the polar communities and to encourage engagement with this. This could be done through UKAAP and at the Arctic and Antarctic meetings. MS reported that this will be on the agenda for the Antarctic meeting in August. MS also thanked everyone who has been involved in the process.

9. Update on IASC – Henry Burgess

HB gave an update on the IASC working groups: Atmospheric, Cryosphere, Marine, Social and Human and Terrestrial. Each working group includes two representatives from the UK, with each person serving an initial 4-year term, with the option to do another term. We are at the stage where new membership in some of the Working Groups is needed and the Arctic Office will run an open recruitment process over the summer. It will be important to ensure that there is good representation from across the UK and good gender balance. ECRs are very welcome to apply as well. Further details will be put in the July Arctic Office bulletin.

10. 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 16/04 – report from the Polar Regions Department, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (George Clarkson)

Paper – noted and read by committee.

Paper: UKAAP 16/05 - report from the UK Polar Network (Floortje Van Den Heuvel)

Paper – noted and read by committee.

Paper: UKAAP 16/06 – report from NERC (Jess Surma)

Paper – noted and read by committee.

JS noted that there were a couple of polar relevant ideas that were submitted to the 4th May Highlight Topic call. These will go to the Science Committee to make decisions on which will go forward, and an announcement will be made in November 2022.

Paper: UKAAP 16/07 – report from the NERC Arctic Office (Henry Burgess)

Paper – noted and read by committee.

In addition, MMF gave an update on the Arctic Horizon Scan as noted in the Arctic Office update. The Survey is open until 23 August which will be followed up by a hybrid workshop on 7 – 9 September 2022. The survey is open to everyone. So far about one hundred responses have been received. The Polar Forum have since released a public statement on involvement of Russian participants within this exercise: <https://www.polar.ox.ac.uk/>

Paper: UKAAP 16/08 – report from BAS – (Dave Wattam and Jane Francis)

Paper submitted by Dave Wattam – noted and read by committee.

In addition, a paper was also submitted by Jane Francis, and introduced by Anna Jones, providing information about how BAS/NERC is preparing for future science support and the transformation that is required in future to align science support, logistics, construction requirements, and funding issues. As part of this exercise, and in response to COVID pandemic, the Polar Research and Operations Board (PROB) are also planning for different scenarios and recognising the need to implement prioritisation criteria when planning field seasons. It was also acknowledged that the UK are not alone in this challenge and that several other Antarctic nations face similar issues.

Further to this discussion, MS reminded the Committee that a small team had authored a briefing paper on the UK and the Arctic a couple of years ago with an emphasis on the value of the SDA in the Arctic and from this Martin wrote a Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF) proposal to NERC. JS confirmed that this is currently within the system but noted that the SPF system is no longer available and will be replaced by a new funding stream soon. Once known, JS will inform the committee.

In the meantime, it was agreed that the Arctic SPF proposal should be circulated to the UKAAP committee and that the initial Working Group meet again once the SPF replacement is known to see if the proposal can be re-worked to meet the criteria. JS confirmed that highlighting cross council relevance will be important and something that the SPF proposal had not quite met.

ACTION: Circulate Arctic SPF to Committee (NM)

ACTION: MS to re-activate the original Arctic SPF Working Group and include new members once new funding stream is known and arrange meeting to discuss changes to meet new criteria.

KH also commented that she had put in a proposal for a highlight topic on biogeochemical fluxes in the central arctic ocean, and it built on community discussion. Highlight Topics are another funding route and KH would really like to engage more with the Committee for submitting ideas for Highlight Topics into the future.

Paper: UKAAP 16/09 – Report from the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Polar Regions (Sophie Montague)

Paper noted by Committee. It was also noted that Sophie will be stepping down from her role as Director and the position is currently open.

11. AOB:

○ Report on the UK/Swiss Polar Institute meeting – Martin Siegert

MS reported that he attended a meeting between the UK and Switzerland back in Easter and it was clear that there is a lot of interest to work with UK researchers on both Arctic, Antarctic, and mountain research. There are several ongoing conversations and MS will report back to the Committee where needed. If individuals are looking for Swiss connections, then contact MS or AJ and they can help make the links.

○ COP27 – Martin Siegert

- COP27 will take place in Egypt 7 – 18 November 2022.
- The UK Climate Network will have a presence again at COP27 in November.
- AJ reported that the NERC Centres are planning on an event with the Met Office. Likely to have involvement from DEFIANT (Drivers and Effects of Fluctuations in sea Ice in the ANTArctic) - Jeremy Wilkinson and also Mike Meredith. Still to be confirmed.
- ICCI will aim to have a cryosphere pavilion once again. MS to investigate status of application for formal dialogue on sea level within the process.
- This is likely to be the last UKAAP meeting before COP27 so updates will be circulated to the Committee as and when available.