

**Minutes from the 17th UK Arctic and Antarctic Partnership (UKAAP) Steering
Committee Meeting**

November 30th, 2022, 1000 - 1200

Online Meeting

Participants:

Dr Kate Hendry, British Antarctic Survey, Deputy Chair

Jamie Anderson, Director, All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Polar Regions Secretariat

Professor Sheldon Bacon, NOC

Dr Liz Bagshaw, Cardiff University

Henry Burgess, Head, NERC Arctic Office

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

Rod Downie, WWF

Professor Richard Essery, Edinburgh University

Professor Jane Francis, BAS

Dr Lizzie Garratt, NERC

Professor John Howe, SAMS

Dr Laura Hobbs, SAMS

Professor Anna Jones, BAS

Dr Kirsi Latola, UArctic

Dr Marc Macias-Fauria, Oxford University

Nicola Munro, NERC Arctic Office (UKAAP SC Secretary)

Pilvi Muschitiello, BAS

Professor David Pearce, University of Northumbria

Professor Gareth Phoenix, University of Sheffield

Dr Outi Snellman, UArctic

Floor Van Den Heuvel, BAS (UKPN representative)

Apologies:

Professor Martin Siegert, University of Exeter (Chair)

Professor Robert Baxter, Durham 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

Dr James Lea, Liverpool University

Professor Erin McClymont, Durham University

Dr Ingrid Medby, Newcastle University

Dr Paola Moffa-Sanchez, Durham University

Dr Clare Robinson, University of Manchester

Minutes:

1. Welcome and Introductions – Kate Hendry

KH welcomed all participants to the 17th UKAAP Steering Committee online meeting and noted the apologies received.

2. Review of Minutes and Actions from the SC 16 meeting in June 2022 – Kate Hendry (Paper: UKAAP 17/01)

Review of Minutes:

KH presented the minutes from the last meeting. No further comments were made, and the minutes were accepted as a true record of the 16th meeting of the UKAAP SC meeting. These will now be posted on the UKAAP website.

Review of Actions from UKAAP SC 16:

Update on SIOS – Henry Burgess:

SIOS has been discussed in recent UKAAP meetings and at the UK Arctic Conference in April in Durham and a decision was taken by UKAAP to form a consortium to join SIOS. However, there have been some difficulties in recent months with how things are in Svalbard in relation to a Norwegian led consultation on environmental provisions and permitting which threaten to make things difficult to operate in Ny-Alesund, and for researchers more generally in Svalbard. Therefore, the approach for now is to wait and see how this develops before taking a final decision on whether UKAAP put together a consortium to approach SIOS for the UK to join. The outcomes of the consultation should be known in early 2023.

Reactivating Arctic SPF Working Group:

There has been no update on this since the last UKAAP meeting however LG commented that there is now the Big Ideas process which might be one way to reactivate the proposal. JF also added that it could also be submitted through the Highlight Topics process.

ACTION: To reactivate the proposal and engage with the Big Ideas and/or Highlight Topics processes – Martin/Arctic SPF Working Group

3. Update on Ukraine/Russia – Henry Burgess

HB commented that the advice from UKRI and UK Government to not start new collaborations and not engage in work that provides credit to the Russian State remains in place. However, it is possible to continue personal contacts and links where appropriate. There is evidence that Russian colleagues are now able to participate in some international meetings - for example at the SCAR meeting there were colleagues from Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. In terms of the next IASC/ASSW meeting in Vienna, the understanding is that Russians will be able to participate in their own personal capacity, rather than representing an organisation which is a decision that has been taken by the Local Organising Committee. It is also important to note that from the UK and from IASC, there is thinking around what activities can be re-started when the time is right. One of the items being discussed between IASC and SCAR is the next International Polar Year in 2032/2033 which might potentially be the timescale to keep in mind for restarting activities with Russia. An announcement about the next IPY will be made before Christmas.

Since the meeting, the joint statement from IASC and SCAR on the planning for the 5th International Polar Year has been released: <https://bit.ly/3htPKlg>

4. Presentation from the University of the Arctic – Scott Forrest and Outi Snellman (UArctic)

Presentation given by Scott Forrest and Outi Snellman – Secretary General of UArctic.

UArctic is a network of universities, college, research institutes concerned with education and research in and about the North. UArctic builds and strengthens collective resources and infrastructures that enable member institutions to better serve their constituents and their regions. Through cooperation in education, research, and outreach, UArctic enhances human capacity in the North, promotes viable communities a sustainable economy and forge global partnerships.

UArctic's mission is to develop knowledge to address local and global challenges of relevance to Arctic peoples and societies by providing unique educational, research, and innovation opportunities through collaboration within a powerful network of member institutions.

Currently, UArctic has 173 different members (this does not include the 55 Russian members as their membership has been paused for now).

Current members from the UK include:

- Durham University
- Glasgow Caledonian University
- Glasgow School of Art
- Heriot-Watt University
- Leeds Beckett University
- Robert Gordon University
- Scott Polar Research Institute
- University of Aberdeen
- University of Edinburgh
- University of St Andrews
- University of Strathclyde
- University of Highlands and Islands

Also, to note, that The Polar Forum at University of Oxford is currently in the process of joining UArctic.

Member services include promoting member activities, support member networking and collaboration through the website (www.uarctic.org) through the annual magazine, social media, monthly member bulletins, member profiles and resource catalogues.

UArctic has also created approximately fifty thematic networks with over two hundred organisations involved – each network focuses on various aspects e.g., tourism, energy, research projects, outreach publications, Arctic law and typically involve between ten to fifteen institutions. The networks function well because of the local representatives and scientists all working together on a common goal. Three of the networks are led by UK institutions with another seventeen that have UK involvement.

All members are represented in the UArctic Assembly which meets annually. The next meeting will be in Quebec City, Canada 22-26 May 2023.

UArctic annual membership fee is scaled based on the member's annual operating budget. Members are expected to participate in the annual Assembly meeting and should have a primary and alternate Assembly representative.

For information on how to apply to become a UArctic member, please see the website: www.uarctic.org/members/join/ - the deadline for 2023 is February 28 2023.

Further information about UArctic can be found at www.uarctic.org and by contacting secretariat@uarctic.org

Outi Snellman also made the point that UArctic would be happy to visit UK institutions to inform further in the lead up to Edinburgh 2024.

5. ASSW 2024 Update – Richard Essery

ASSW will be held in Edinburgh, 21 – 29 March 2024 and will incorporate:

- IASC workshops
- IASC Working Groups Business meetings
- IASC Council meeting
- IASC Medal presentation
- Science Day plenary presentations
- Arctic Observing Summit
- In person and online participation

The venue will be based around the John McIntyre Conference Centre, University of Edinburgh where there is space for break-out rooms. Henry Burgess will chair the Local Organising Committee, with representation from APECS, Edinburgh University, IASC Secretariat, Scottish Arctic Network, Scottish Government Nordic and Arctic Unit. The Science Committee will be chaired by Finlo Cottier, Chair of Scottish Arctic Network along with representatives for each of the IASC Working Groups. The next ASSW will be in Vienna in February 2023. There will then be more information to share about ASSW 2024 at the next UKAAP meeting.

6. Update on UK Polar Conferences

The next UK Arctic Science Conference 2023 will be hosted by the British Antarctic Survey in Cambridge, 11 – 13 September. Timings are as follows:

- Call for sessions is now open and will close on the 16th of January
- Call for abstracts and registration will open on 20th February
- Call for abstracts to close on 9th June
- Conference registration to close on 25th August

Currently the Organising Committee includes Henry, Nicola, Pilvi and Beatrix Schlarb-Ridley – additional members will be invited in the coming weeks.

Liz Bagshaw also noted that the next IGS British Branch Meeting will meet in September in Cardiff, but dates not yet set.

UK Antarctic Science Conference 2024

The venue for the next UK Antarctic Science Conference in 2024 has not yet been confirmed. There has been interest from one group to host the conference, however if there are other potential bids, please contact Martin Siegert in the first instance.

7. Update on ‘Polar Code of Conduct’ for polar researchers – Pilvi Muschitiello

PM sits on the SCAR EDI Action Group and reported on the Polar Code of Conduct that is being developed for the SCAR community – this is in the process of being finalised and the hope is to have this available by the end of 2022. In addition, a set of resources for the SCAR activities will be

developed and made available and will include expectations on behaviour, Code of Conduct for meetings and events with considerations for people to be aware of in these settings.

The SCAR EDI Action Group are also working with COMNAP to identify best practice recommendations for national Codes of Conduct. However, it is important to note the ultimate responsibility lies with employers.

Also to note, the BAS Code of Conduct for those working in polar regions has been adopted by FCDO and into their permitting processes. However, it should be noted that this is very much focused on operating in the Polar Regions, rather than for activities like online meetings and events etc.

8. Update on European Polar Board activities – Jane Francis and Kirsi Latola

The European Polar Board (EPB) is an independent organisation focused on major strategic priorities in the Arctic and Antarctic. The 29 EPB Members include research institutes, logistics operators, funding agencies, scientific academies, and government ministries from across Europe. UK is a member of EPB with Jane and Henry as the UK delegates. The Secretariat is hosted by the Dutch Research Council and a legal entity in The Netherlands. This means that the EPB can apply for EU funding and be a full beneficiary in EU funded calls (examples of projects include INTERACT III, Arctic Passion and SO-CHIC). EPB's work is implemented through Action Groups for example on International Collaboration, Policy Briefings, and Infrastructure. There is a new resource being developed called PolarDex - <https://polarDEX.org/> which is an interactive polar infrastructure database. Further information on EPB: <https://www.europeanpolarboard.org/>

9. Stakeholder reports

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

Paper: UKAAP 17/02 – report from the Polar Regions Department, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (George Clarkson) Paper – noted and read by committee.

To note in addition to the paper - FCDO joined in celebrating Polar Pride on the 18th of November and pleased to see the widespread engagement across the polar community. One of the roles in the FCDO is to provide permits for British expeditions to Antarctica. This year, the FCDO have been inviting permit holders to sign the Polar Code of Conduct which commits them to ensuring that everyone on that expedition feels safe to be themselves, welcomed, respected and free from discrimination. Feedback on this process has been very positive.

Paper: UKAAP 17/03 - report from the UK Polar Network (Floortje Van Den Heuvel)

Paper – noted and read by committee.

Paper: UKAAP 17/04– report from NERC (Lizzie Garratt)

Paper – noted and read by committee. In addition, LG highlighted the following:

- Update on the ninth round for Highlight Topics – the call is due to be out between 5th and 12th of December.
- The NERC Grants Handbook has now been updated with the information relating to the UKRI-Research Council of Norway collaboration agreement.

Paper: UKAAP 17/05 – report from the NERC Arctic Office (Henry Burgess)

Paper – noted and read by committee. In addition, HB highlighted the following:

- The Arctic Station now has a new Station Manager – Iain Rudkin - following the retirement of Nick Cox.
- With thanks to NERC, the Station has been able to run an ‘Arctic Access Scheme’ this season. We have supported one project already, with another heading up in March.

Paper: UKAAP 17/06 – report from BAS – (Dave Wattam and Jane Francis)

Paper submitted by Dave Wattam – noted and read by committee. In addition, JF highlighted the following:

- BAS have worked hard to keep COVID out of Antarctica in the past couple of years, however Rothera has now reported a few cases.
- The SDA is on its way to Antarctica, to supply stations and testing science equipment along with some science projects. It will leave Antarctica in May.
- BAS is working closely with NERC to streamline the operational planning with science planning. Key message is if you want to do research in Antarctica, contact BAS operations as soon as possible. BAS still working through projects funded pre COVID.
- Construction is still going on in Rothera for many years to come. Unfortunately, weather has caused some delays this season. Next season, the runway will be out of action for some of the season as it will need to be resurfaced to prepare for the replacement for the Dash-7. This needs to be taken into consideration when planning the season.

Report from the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Polar Regions (Jamie Anderson)

2022 Key activities:

- Start of Environmental Audit Committee Inquiry – this will happen for Arctic in 2023 and Antarctic in 2024, it is a fantastic opportunity to highlight UK polar science.
- Arctic Circle Conference
- Presentations from Icelandic, Chilean and Norwegian Ambassadors to Parliamentarians
- MOD UK Military strategy in the Arctic committee meeting
- Arctic Tasting evening
- IMO Polar Shipping Conference
- There was also a visit to Greenland earlier in 2022 with ten parliamentarians.

APPG 2023 objectives:

- To keep Parliament engaged and aware of the importance of the polar regions
- Continue to draw links to global events, climate, politics and the Polar Regions
- Assist with the EAC inquiry
- Deliver the 3rd Antarctic Parliamentarians Association
- Impress on Parliament the Wow of the Polar Regions

10. AOB

National Strategy for Maritime Security – link to the published report is as follows:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1097981/national-strategy-for-maritime-security-web-version.pdf

Update on EDI survey focusing on socioeconomic backgrounds and DiPSi – Kate Hendry:

Martin Siegert led a survey on social economic backgrounds at both polar UK conferences that took place in 2022 and there are some interesting findings. MS is collating the information and can report more about this at the next UKAAP meeting.

KH also noted that there have been recent reports published from both the US and Australia on EDI related issues that have arisen over the years. Both publications reported on what has happened in the past and included recommendations about how to improve things in the future. There is recognition within the Diversity in UK Polar Science (DiPSi) that the UK also has issues that need addressing and there is an ongoing discussion on whether some recommendations highlighted in the two reports can be implemented by DiPSi, but also what we can do in terms of publishing a report of our own. NERC and BAS Operations And Safety Assurance Advisory Group have taken this onboard and are collating information and identifying what more is needed. There is also a discussion within the BAS Executive Team to form an Action Group to produce recommended priority actions to take this forward. BAS is starting to run EDI training for all BAS teams. Further information on this will be given at the next UKAAP meeting.