

**Minutes from the 18th UK Arctic and Antarctic Partnership (UKAAP) Steering
Committee Meeting**

12th June 2023, 1100 - 1300

Online Meeting

Participants:

Professor Martin Siegert, University of Exeter, Chair

Professor Kate Hendry, BAS, Deputy Chair

Jamie Anderson, APPG

Dr Liz Bagshaw, Cardiff University

Professor Robert Baxter, Durham University

Professor Mike Bentley, Durham University

Dr James Bradley, Queen Mary University of London

Henry Burgess, Head, NERC Arctic Office

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

Dr Caroline Clason, Durham University

Oliver Darke, BAS

Rod Downie, WWF

Professor Richard Essery, Edinburgh University

Professor Jane Francis, BAS

Dr Lizzie Garratt, NERC

Eleanor Honan, Durham University (UKPN Representative)

Professor John Howe, SAMS

Dr Laura Hobbs, SAMS

Dr Ingrid Medby, Newcastle University

Professor Erin McClymont, Durham University

Nicola Munro, NERC Arctic Office (UKAAP SC Secretary)

Pilvi Saarikoski, BAS

Professor Gareth Phoenix, University of Sheffield

Professor Clare Robinson, Manchester University

Jane Rumble, Polar Regions Department, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Apologies:

Professor Sheldon Bacon, NOC

Professor Ian Brooks, Leeds University

Dr Duncan Depledge, Loughborough University

Dr James Lea, Liverpool University

Dr Paola Moffa-Sanchez, Durham University

Professor David Pearce, University of Northumbria

Minutes:

1. Welcome and Introductions – Martin Siegert

MS welcomed all participants to the 18th UKAAP Steering Committee online meeting and noted the apologies received.

2. Review of Minutes and Actions from the SC 17 meeting in November 2022 – Martin Siegert **(Paper: UKAAP 18/01)**

Review of Minutes and actions:

MS presented the minutes and actions from the last meeting. No further comments were made, and the minutes were accepted as a true record of the 17th meeting of the UKAAP SC meeting. These will now be posted on the UKAAP website. The action regarding the SDA in the Arctic will be addressed in this meeting. No further comments or actions noted from UKAAP SC 17.

3. Update on SDA and future plans – Ollie Darke, Interim Director of Operations & Engineering, BAS

OD gave a presentation about the SDA. (Please contact Ollie if you would like a copy of the slides). Key points raised are as follows:

- SDA has just returned from a successful trip to Antarctica and is enroute to first re-fit in Rosyth (June). The trials for the moonpool, coring systems and Erebus' science capabilities are planned for the summer 2023.
- The polar water trials in Antarctica during the 22/23 season were successful and enabled validation and QC data collection from science systems, testing in deep water, testing the trace metal chemistry system, and testing multidisciplinary Antarctic science.
- BAS Ops successfully managed to balance all demands between science and logistics.
- Future work includes the BIOPOLE, PICCOLO (2023/24) and KANG-GLAC (July – August 2024) science cruises. KANG-GLAC is currently the only Arctic science cruise planned.
- June 2025 is the last ship call at Rothera. This is later than normal and will impact dates for potential work in the Arctic.
- There is a proposal to retain the SDA in Southern Hemisphere from Nov 2025 to May 2027 or Nov 2026 to May 2028. This would provide unique opportunities for Antarctic marine science and something that is being reviewed. No decisions have been made at this point in time.

Following the presentation there was a short discussion around the future of the SDA in the Arctic. It was mentioned that NERC are looking to put forward a strategic idea to use the SDA in the Arctic in the late 2020s. In the meantime, the comment was made that the community should submit more proposals for Arctic science. A decision on timings and whether the SDA will remain in Antarctica over winter will be discussed at the next PROB meeting in the Autumn, but OD noted that there is a lot more work to do before any decisions can be made.

4. Update on European Polar Board activities – Jane Francis/Henry Burgess

Key points are as follows:

- The European Polar Board (EPB) has been going since 1995 and 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.

- NERC pays a subscription fee to be part of the EPB and Jane Francis and Henry Burgess are the UK delegates.
- The Secretariat is currently hosted by the Dutch Research Council and a legal entity in The Netherlands. However, it is now looking for a new host which will be announced soon.
- As the EPB is a legal entity, it can apply for EU funding and be a full beneficiary in EU funded calls. This means that as a member of the EPB, the UK still has a good gateway into EU projects through EPB, even though it is no longer a part of the EU.
- Further information is available on the website: <https://www.europeanpolarboard.org/>

5. Update on SIOS – Henry Burgess:

HB gave a quick update on SIOS and UK membership:

- SIOS consists of a group of research institutes that bring together observations, infrastructure, remote sensing and planning in Svalbard, under Norwegian leadership.
- SIOS was originally funded by the EU and is now self-funded through the members.
- The membership fee is 10,000 euros a year.
- The UK is currently an observer. SIOS would welcome an application from the UK to be a member.

A short discussion followed about whether the UK should become a full member of SIOS at this time. There is still some uncertainty amongst the UKAAP SC members as to whether the UK should join SIOS and so it was recommended that SIOS membership and potential funding options be raised at the upcoming Arctic Conference. Two funding options were tabled:

- Ask NERC if they can pay the annual membership fee.
- Investigate the possibility for two or three institutions to share costs on a rotating basis. The Arctic Office would help administer this, and SIOS services would be available to the whole UK community.

ACTION: HB to raise at Arctic conference and seek community input on SIOS membership.

6. ASSW 2024 Update – Richard Essery

- ASSW will run from 21st to 29th March, in Edinburgh. The Local Organising Committee regularly meets and is chaired by Henry Burgess. The aim is to make the meeting fully hybrid, including the business and community meetings.
- The Programme is divided into three parts – Business and Community meetings, the ASSW Science Day and the Arctic Observing Summit.
- The new chair of the ASSW Science Day is Mark Inall. This will be held in the Dynamic Earth building on 26th March and will have a programme of invited speakers for the full day.
- The Arctic Observing Summit will be held at the end of the week. The call for Business and Community meetings is open until 1st September.
- Registration for ASSW is expected to go live in November.
- Lord Provost will host a reception in the City Chambers.

HB thanked Richard and the team at Edinburgh and the FCDO and Scottish Government for the funding received.

7. Update on UK Polar Conferences

UK Arctic Science Conference 2023

The next UK Arctic Science Conference 2023 will be hosted by the British Antarctic Survey in Cambridge, 11 – 13 September. Call for abstracts closed on 16th June and registration closes 25th August. Sessions include science, data, remote sensing, and international cooperation as well as education. There will also be a session on inclusion and Net Zero and sustainability. Further information is on the Conference website here: <https://www.bas.ac.uk/event/uk-arctic-science-conference-2023/>

UK Antarctic Science Conference 2024

The venue for the next UK Antarctic Science Conference in 2024 has not yet been confirmed. If there are no other options, then BAS have said that they are happy to host. Mike Bentley will raise this at the next UKNCAR meeting.

8. Antarctic Extreme Events - Martin Siegert

MS gave a brief introduction to this item and noted the paper that was circulated ahead of the meeting for information and feedback. This paper is currently in review and MS is planning a meeting in the coming months to respond to reviewers' comments ahead of publication. The paper was also mentioned by JR at a Climate Change Day which was held during the ATCM in June. Further to this, JF noted the concern about Antarctic tipping points and pointed to the recent news item on the BAS website about this which can be found [here](#). GP also noted a paper that he and 17 co-authors have just submitted which focusses on extreme events in the terrestrial Arctic and they are just trying to get this published.

9. UK National Committee for Antarctic Research (UKNCAR) update – Mike Bentley

The annual UKNCAR meeting will be held at the end of June. MB mentioned the new SCAR Strategic Plan for the next five years and noted the following: there is more humanities research than seen before in SCAR planning; there is an emphasis on reducing the carbon footprint of SCAR activities; there is stronger emphasis on EDI, with most of the work on this coming from the UK. MB mentioned that more is being done to aid capacity building within countries around junior researchers and for countries with less well-developed Antarctic programmes.

In terms of UKNCAR, MB mentioned that there is now more representation from the humanities on the Committee. UKNCAR have also managed to engage the medical expert groups and these groups will now be more involved in some of the medical research that has been done in Antarctica.

MB also noted that to reduce the carbon footprint, UK delegates joined with colleagues from France and Belgium to attend a recent three-day SCAR meeting in Goa, online. This is something colleagues are keen to do more of in the future where possible.

10. DipSI update – Martin Siegert

MS noted that the DipSI Committee would be meeting in June. Items on the agenda include DipSI presence at upcoming conferences, like the Arctic Conference and the IGS British Branch conference in September 2023. There will also be a discussion on the 5th IPY, recognising how useful the 4th IPY was to ECR networks, and it would be useful if there was a similar legacy on inclusion from the 5th IPY. DipSI are also looking at how to ensure wider sign up to a Code of Conduct for anyone working in Polar Regions. MS noted that this is in place for those working at BAS, however this was more of a challenge for universities. The FCDO are considering how to add this as a permit condition that requires expeditions and organisations going to Antarctica, to have EDI policies in place. FCDO would like to have something similar in place for the Arctic and will be working on this in the future.

11. 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.

Paper: UKAAP 17/03 - report from the UK Polar Network (Eleanor Honan)

Paper – noted and read by committee.

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

Paper – noted and read by committee.

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

Paper – noted and read by committee.

Paper: UKAAP 17/06 – report from BAS – (Ollie Darke)

Paper submitted BAS – noted and read by committee.

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

JA gave a verbal update on recent APPG activities. These include for 2023:

- Environmental Audit Committee Inquiry on the Arctic (report due out in early Autumn 2023)
- Environmental Audit Committee Inquiry on the Antarctic
- Attendance at the Arctic Circle Assembly in October 2023
- SDA exhibition with BAS in February 2023
- New website launch – informing Parliament and APPG polar network.
- Antarctic Parliamentarians Assembly
- Polar Pride Day in November in Parliament

12. AOB

JF reported on a plan for a new major Antarctic expedition. This is being led by AWI and includes several national programme directors and was announced at the ATCM in June 2023. JF will provide further updates at future meetings.

MS reported that he will be stepping down as Chair of the UKAAP SC after the next meeting having served a second term. The Committee will need a new chair and details will be sent out in due course. KH has agreed to stay on as Deputy Chair.