

**Minutes from the 13th UK Arctic and Antarctic Partnership (UKAAP) Steering
Committee Online Meeting**

Thursday 3 December 2020, 1300 to 1500

Attendees:

Professor Martin Siegert, Grantham Institute, Imperial College London, **Chair (MS)**
Professor Sheldon Bacon, NOC (SB)
Professor Mike Bentley, Durham University (MB)
Prof Andrew Brierley, St Andrews (AB)
Professor Ian Brooks, Leeds University (IB)
Henry Burgess, Head, NERC Arctic Office (HB)
George Clarkson, Polar Regions Department, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Department (GC)
Professor Finlo Cottier, SAMS (FC)
Dr Duncan Depledge, Loughborough University (DD)
Rod Downie, WWF (RD)
Dr Richard Essery, Edinburgh University (RE)
Dr Anna Gebruk (UKPN Representative) (AG)
Professor Jane Francis, BAS (JF)
Dr Lizzie Garratt, NERC (LG)
Dr Kate Hendry, Bristol University (KH)
Professor Vivienne Jones, University College London (Deputy Chair) (VJ)
Dr James Lea, Liverpool University (JL)
Professor Erin McClymont, Durham University (EM)
Dr Ingrid Medby, Oxford Brookes University (IM)
Nicola Munro, NERC Arctic Office (UKAAP SC Secretary) (NM)
Professor David Pearce, University of Northumbria (DP)
Professor Richard Powell, SPRI (RP)
Professor David Thomas, Bangor University (DT)
Professor Gareth Phoenix, University of Sheffield (GP)
Professor Geraint Tarling, BAS (GT)
Professor David Vaughan, BAS (DGV)
Hannah Wauchope, University of Cambridge (HW)

Invited:

Dr Bob Baxter, Durham University

Apologies:

Dr Liz Bagshaw, Cardiff University
Professor Siwan Davies, Swansea University
Dr Clare Robinson, University of Manchester

Minutes:

1. Welcome and Introductions (Martin Siegert)

MS welcomed all participants to the 13th UKAAP Steering Committee online meeting and noted the apologies received.

MS also noted the recent Antarctic Place Names Committee (APC) announcement and congratulated Prof Jane Francis and Prof David Thomas who have been recognised in this list. The full news story is available from the APC website: <https://apc.antarctica.ac.uk/news/2020/12/announcement-news-200anniversary/>

2. Review of Minutes and Actions from the SC12 meeting in June 2020 (Martin Siegert)

Paper: UKAAP 13/01

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

Review of Actions from UKAAP SC 12:

MS reviewed the actions from UKAAP SC 12 and noted the following:

- *UKAAP article for Planet Earth*: this is still in progress. **ACTION: HB to think about a specific topic to include and to prepare a paper for the next meeting.**
- *UKRI SPF for use of the SDA in the Arctic*: Martin Siegert to lead a small working group on preparing proposal to use the SDA in the Arctic through the UKRI Strategic Priorities Fund. This group includes David Vaughan, Henry Burgess, Duncan Depledge, Sheldon Bacon, Stuart Doubleday and Kate Hendry. **Completed – SPF has been submitted – see item 3**
- *Arctic Office to follow up with Durham regarding dates for the conference and to ensure these don't clash with the Challenger meeting*. **Completed – see item 6**
- *Antarctic Conference*: this is in progress. DGV has offered BAS support in running an online event. Bob Bingham (Edinburgh) to lead on the science and set agenda, review abstracts etc. **ACTION: MS to confirm with Rob Bingham that Edinburgh are still happy to run the Antarctic Conference in 2022 as well. Completed – Edinburgh to host the 2022 in person Antarctic Conference.**
- *COP26*: **ACTION: Item to be kept on agenda for next meeting.** DT commented that the Changing Arctic Ocean Programme (CAOP) will also have a big presence at COP26. Details will be announced in due course. All universities are part of the COP26 university network and so there will be plenty of opportunity for the academic community to engage with this event.

Further to the review of the minutes, RE raised a point on IUGG conference in Korea which was scheduled for July 2020. This was eventually cancelled and the next meeting is due to take place in Berlin in 2023, with the next Atmosphere, Cryosphere and Ocean meeting to take place in 2025 in Bhusan, Korea. There will be a series of seminars being held in July 2021 and further details will be released in due course.

MS also noted the recent online workshop on the RRS *Sir David Attenborough* (SDA) which was well received. However a comment was made that coordination of the science and cruise planning will be

required, as well as how to engage and involve the other Research Councils. LG noted that this is being looked into. Further information about the ship is available here: <https://www.bas.ac.uk/polar-operations/sites-and-facilities/facility/rrs-sir-david-attenborough/>

3. Update on the SPF proposal for use of the SDA in the Arctic (Martin Siegert)

MS gave an update on the SPF proposal for the use of the SDA in the Arctic. Following a cross Government Departmental meeting BEIS, Defra and DFT provided a statement of support which was included in the proposal. This has now been submitted to NERC.

ACTION: MS to circulate final version of SPF as submitted to NERC to UKAAP SC members. (Circulated with minutes)

4. Presentation - WWF activities in the Polar Regions (Rod Downie)

RD gave an overview presentation of what WWF do in the Polar Regions. Main focus of WWF is on four key areas:

Global action on climate change: the focus is on engaging with the business and finance sectors, but also the food sector. WWF will have a pavilion within the Blue Zone at the COP26 and will use this as a focus for various events, lectures and talks to help engage with world leaders and influencers.

Sustainable development: the focus is on energy and extractives. WWF is also working on shipping at the International Maritime Organisation with a focus on the Polar Code and also to a lesser extent on fisheries and blue economy.

Good Governance: WWF is an Observer to the Arctic Council and work to help shape the agenda across the Working Groups, with a particular focus on integrating biodiversity in to these groups. WWF are engaged with Antarctic Governance mechanisms as well with RD forming part of the UK Government Delegation to the Antarctic Treaty.

Protecting biodiversity: Species focus ranges from krill to polar bears. Main focus of work at the moment is around circumpolar networks and Marine Protected Areas both in the Arctic and Antarctic. Through this, WWF support a lot of policy relevant science. Across both regions, focus on science is around implications of climate change on biodiversity.

Further information on the science projects supported by WWF can be found in the presentation. Anyone wishing to get involved directly should contact Rod Downie in the first instance.

5. UK - Antarctic community exercise (Mike Bentley/Martin Siegert)

MB provided a short introduction to this item and asked whether the UKAAP Steering Committee has a role to play in providing a map/vision for the UK Polar Community to help maximise access to funding for the polar community. MB commented that the funding landscape has changed and it is not clear that the polar community are fully aware of this. He commented that identifying the next big science questions and using townhall meetings to get community buy-in, with peer reviewed publications could be a useful way in which to address this and engage with NERC more.

Following the discussion it was agreed that MB, MS and LG should have an initial meeting to do a scoping exercise to help identify a plan based on current resources available to UK researchers (this includes international connections, logistics, recent results from scoping exercises etc). The aim will be to provide NERC with a clear picture of some of the big science questions coming up in the future. MB also commented that the next Antarctic online meeting will be a good opportunity to start working with the community in navigating the new funding landscape.

ACTION: MS, MB and LG to have an initial scoping meeting before the next Antarctic meeting to identify next steps.

6. Update on the next UK Arctic Science Conference 2021 (Bob Baxter, Durham University)

Bob Baxter joined the meeting to give an update on planning for the next UK Arctic Conference. This will be held from lunchtime on 11 September to lunchtime on the 13 September 2021. The timing of the conference coincides with the Leverhulme Trust Arctic Doctoral Programme, with the last 15 PhDs now in post. As part of the programme, Durham also plan on holding a summer school on the Thursday – Saturday before the meeting and will invite five key note speakers from outside of the UK to help lead this, but who will then also attend the conference. Durham will hold interdisciplinary sessions as has been done for recent Arctic conferences and happy to host a UKAAP panel discussion if this is what UKAAP would like to consider. There will be no registration fee to attend this conference.

ACTION: Bob Baxter to join the next UKAAP meeting to update the Committee on the Conference planning.

7. Update on COP26 (Martin Siegert)

MS reported that there are no further updates at this time, but he will provide an update at the next meeting.

8. External Engagement and Stakeholders (Martin Siegert)

FCDO, NERC, NERC Arctic Office, BAS and the UK Polar Network all submitted written reports and were invited to comment further during the meeting:

- Polar Regions Department, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (Paper: UKAAP 13/02)
 - Arctic: It was reported that work is ongoing to renew the UK's Arctic Council Observer status which is due to be reviewed and renewed in 2021.
 - Antarctic: GC reported that planning for the ATCM in 2021 is in progress and they are keen for this to go ahead in some form.
 - Diversity in Polar Science: The first phase of the initiative is due to come to an end at the end of March but FCDO are keen to see this continue and looking at how to do this in conjunction with BAS. Also to note that the first Polar Pride day was a huge success.
- NERC (Paper: UKAAP 13/03)
 - Highlight topics have been released and can be found on UKRI funding finder: <https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/nerc-highlight-topics/>
 - Also to note that despite it taking a while for the UK/Canada FIC to finalise, it is moving in a positive direction and NERC hope to get a call out in 2021.
- Arctic Office (Paper: UKAAP 13/04)
 - Kirsty Crocket (CAOP Science Coordinator) has moved to a new position and NERC have asked the Arctic Office to take over the coordination role. This is supported by both Henry and Nicola.
 - It is hoped that the NERC Arctic Station will open this season. The Station was successful in the recent NERC capital call and is the process of procuring new equipment that includes a new boat, AUVs, ROV which should be in place for the start of this season.
 - 3rd Arctic Science Ministerial will hopefully take place in Tokyo in 2021 and it is hoped that a UK Minister will be in attendance.

- BAS Operations (Paper: UKAAP 13/05)

It is important to note the major challenges BAS is operating under with COVID which will impact future seasons which may well extend to 2027/2028 season.

- UKPN (Paper: UKAAP 13/06)

AG reported that there have been recent changes to the committee with the introduction of two EDI officers on the Committee. UKPN are also working with APECS Russia to move the February field course to an online course in February 2021. The UKPN continue to scope out activities for the coming year and hope to support the CAOP ECRs with their conference in the autumn of 2021.

9. AOB

DT reported that there will be a special issue on the Changing Arctic Ocean in Ambio. 16 papers will be included with each paper concluding with a statement on the relevance of the science to policy. Although the final copy won't be ready for COP26, the draft papers should be.

KH commented that she has had conversation with Donna Frater about potential for UKAAP to engage more with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives in future and will bring a paper to the next meeting on this.

ACTION: Include on the agenda at the next meeting.

HB noted that the UK has been invited over several years to be part of the Svalbard Integrated Observing System (SIOS) and would like to have a discussion on this at the next meeting to understand how the UK can contribute

ACTION: Include SIOS on the agenda for next meeting.

10. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held using Zoom and NM will circulate a doodle poll with suggested dates.

MS closed the meeting and thanked all participants for their contributions.