

Minutes from the 9th UK Arctic and Antarctic Partnership (UKAAP) Steering Committee Meeting

Thursday 17th January 2019, 1045 - 1600, [Loughborough University](#)

Room: Bridgeman Building, Room 2.08

Participants

Professor Philip Wookey, University of Stirling (Chair) (PW)
Professor Andrew Brierley, University of St Andrews (AB)
Professor Ian Brooks, Leeds University (IB)
Dr Helen Beadman, NERC Representative (H. Beadman)
Henry Burgess, Head, NERC Arctic Office (H. Burgess)
Dr Finlo Cottier, SAMS (FC)
Professor Siwan Davies, Swansea University (SD)
Dr Duncan Depledge, All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Polar Regions (DD)
Professor Klaus Dodds, Royal Holloway, University of London (KD)
Professor Mary Edwards, University of Southampton (ME)
Dr Richard Hodgkins, Loughborough University (RH)
Professor Vivienne Jones, University College London (VJ)
Professor Melanie Leng, BGS (ML)
Nicola Munro, NERC Arctic Office (UKAAP SC Secretary) (NM)
Robynne Nowicki, UKPN Representative (RN)
Professor David Pearce, University of Northumbria (DP)
Professor Gareth Phoenix, University of Sheffield (GP)
Dr Richard Powell, Scott Polar Research Institute (RP)
Dr Jeff Ridley, Met Office (JR)
Dr Clare Robinson, University of Manchester (CR)
Professor Martin Siegert, Grantham Institute, Imperial College London (MS)
Professor Geraint Tarling, BAS (GT)

Apologies:

Professor Mike Bentley, Durham University
Archana Dayal, UKPN Representative, University of Sheffield
Dr Richard Essery, Edinburgh University
Professor Jane Francis, BAS
Dr Erin McClymont, Durham University
Dr Jennifer Pike, University of Cardiff (JP)
Professor David Thomas, Bangor University
Professor David Vaughan, BAS
Prof Gail Whiteman, Lancaster University

Minutes:

1. Welcome and Introductions (PW)

An introduction and welcome to Loughborough University was given by Professor Rachel Thomson, Pro-Vice Chancellor of Teaching. PW then proceeded to open the meeting and welcomed all members to the ninth UKAAP Steering Committee (SC) meeting. PW also noted the apologies sent from members unable to attend. Participants were then asked to introduce themselves.

2. Review of Minutes and Actions from SC8 meeting in May 2018 (PW) (Papers: UKAAP 9/01 and 02)

Review of Minutes from UKAAP 8 (UKAAP 9/01):

PW presented the minutes from the last meeting. No further comments or amendments were made and the minutes were accepted as a true record of the eighth meeting in May 2018. These will be posted on the UKAAP website.

Review of Actions from UKAAP 8 (UKAAP 9/02):

PW went through the actions from UKAAP 8 and identified the following actions that are still in progress:

- Planet Earth article (which stems back to UKAAP 7) – the UKAAP SC are keen to see this completed.
ACTION: H. Burgess will discuss with D Vaughan and report back at next meeting.
- PW acknowledged issue of funding for UKPN representatives to attend these meetings. PW agreed to write a letter of support if needed and the Committee will continue to look at funding for UKPN representatives to attend these meetings.
- Ongoing action to review membership. PW urged members to think about people to nominate and to inform PW and NM.
- Ongoing action for members to continue to send information for the UKAAP website – events, news items etc. to help keep the website up to date. Members were also asked to send photos and links to profile pages for the membership page.
- Update on action from UKAAP 8, agenda item 7c – *UKRI to be approached about a UKAAP sponsored presentation/workshop about polar science diplomacy*: KD, H. Burgess and H. Beadman had a useful discussion with representatives from ESRC and also met with representatives from the UKRI Head Office in Swindon. It was agreed that Claire Spooner should be invited to future meetings and she is keen to attend (Action on H. Beadman to invite C. Spooner to next meeting). KD and HB are also due to attend an event on science diplomacy at the House of Commons (29th January) to discuss polar science diplomacy. The NERC Arctic Office will have a stand at this event showcasing recent work as well as promoting the UK-Russia work.

3. Review of the UKAAP Terms of Reference (ToR) (Paper UKAAP 9/03) (PW/All)

Further to the action set during the UKAAP 8 meeting, PW reviewed and edited the ToR (Paper: UKAAP 9/03) taking into consideration the points raised during UKAAP 8.

After some discussion, the following items were agreed:

- UKAAP needs a mission statement. A small working group were tasked with writing this and circulating a draft to the Committee.
 - **ACTION: Draft a mission statement that can then be used in presentations and on the UKAAP website. Working group: PW, VJ, ME, GP**
- It was agreed that the first two points and the last two points in the ToR were still valid and should remain part of the ToR with the edits from PW.

- The Members also agreed with the new wording for points 3 and 4 (see Paper UKAAP 9/03).
- Regarding point 5, the SC felt it important that a list of critical issues that might be faced by researchers in the next 10 to 15 years should be identified. To do this, it was agreed that a questionnaire should be developed and circulated to the Community for their input. It was also suggested that BAS gives a presentation on how to access the new infrastructure. MS to contact Jane Francis on this point. The point was also made that it would be useful to understand the channels of communication and provide clarification to the Community on where to access relevant information.
 - **ACTION: A small working group (KD, ME, RN, PW) was tasked with developing this questionnaire to then circulate to the wider UK Polar Community.**
- The SC agreed to keep points 6, 7 and 8 and the final paragraph, including the minor edits suggested by PW.
 - **ACTION: PW to make the changes as discussed and circulate final version to the Committee.**

4. Discussion about the role of UKAAP at the upcoming Arctic Conference at Loughborough University (All)

After some discussion the UKAAP SC agreed to run two sessions at the UK Arctic Science Conference in September 2019:

1. A session that will focus on UKAAP and how it is designed to support and catalyse research in the Polar Regions. This session should take part early on in the conference.
 - **ACTION: It was agreed that PW, RH, HB and MS would look at what this session would include and report back at the next meeting.**
2. A plenary session that will focus on science planning – identifying thematic programmes and setting key priorities. A morning or afternoon should be set aside for this session.
 - **ACTION: ME, PW, VJ, SD were tasked with planning this session and to report back at the next meeting.**

The SC also agreed to explore a session focused on elements and processes that would allow for further engagement with attendees, perhaps at the end of the day.

- **ACTION: RH and KD to review this idea and look at how it might work. RH to report back at next meeting.**

5. Discussion on Antarctic Funding and current UKRI initiatives (H. Beadman/All)

H. Beadman reported that NERC has been successful with both the Strategic Priorities Fund (results from the call to be released in the next few weeks) and the Fund for International Collaboration (FIC). A proposal was put forward for this fund with other Research Councils focussed on the Arctic. The result of this is expected soon. H. Beadman has been involved in the FIC bid and made the comment that having groups like UKAAP is useful as it gives access to experts. There is a big push for interdisciplinary work and all Research Councils are currently developing strategic development plans. NERC is also engaging more in the Industrial Strategy Fund and have a Futures team in NERC to work with business.

H. Beadman reported that NERC are currently undergoing a change to the organisation's structure. This is a work in progress and NERC will have two Directorates; one overseeing Research and Skills and the other focussing on Strategic Partnerships. Two new Directors will be recruited to these roles.

All governance structures have now changed and these all sit at the UKRI level and not at Council level. The NERC Science Board will transition to the Science Committee. There will now be a NERC Advisory Network rather than having Advisory Groups. SPAG will have one last activity which will be to oversee the 5th round of highlight topics.

H. Beadman noted that it is important to really engage with the ideas processes and keep talking to the Research Councils.

Update on current large programmes:

- Changing Arctic Ocean Programme: The Annual Science Meeting was held in January. All is going well and all UK/German projects have now started.
- Role of the Southern Ocean in the Earth System (RoSES): there has been a delay to one of the cruises due to ship scheduling.
- International Thwaites Glacier Collaboration (THWAITES): the first season is well underway now and going well.
- The Multidisciplinary drifting Observatory for the Study of Arctic Climate (MOSAIc): preparations are ongoing.

6. Stakeholder reports (Standing Agenda Item)

Update from the NERC Arctic Office (H. Burgess)

- H. Burgess noted that the Office has four main roles: to support researchers in the Arctic and high north; to provide advice to policy and decision makers; to connect to new initiatives; and to help manage the process of the NERC Arctic Research Station. The Office does this by looking for new funding opportunities for the community; ensuring access to policy makers; and representing the community at both national and international events.
- The Office is currently administering the third year of the UK-Canada Arctic bursaries programme funded by BEIS. The scheme has been popular, with over 30 teams receiving funds. The Office has also been able to showcase the projects at the ArcticNet meetings in Canada. This has been very successful and a good model to work with other countries.
- The Office has been involved in the FIC bid. This is being led by NERC with PW, ME and GP. A workshop was held during the ArcticNet meeting in December 2018 to bring together Canadian funders to discuss matching funds. This was a very positive meeting.
- MOSAIc: BEIS and NERC have funded six teams to join MOSAIc. Preparations are ongoing with a science implementation meeting in March. The MOSAIc team will have photographers and will aim to have a large social media presence.
- International Arctic Science Committee (IASC): we are in the process of recruiting two new UK representatives for the Social and Human Working Group. Decisions will take place shortly on who will fill these roles. H. Burgess is now a new Council member on IASC. This is important to ensure that the UK can get access to partnerships in the Arctic. The next ASSW will take place in Arkhangelsk 22 to 30 May 2019.
- Environmental Audit Committee (EAC): The EAC produced a report in late November 2018. This was the fourth report in the last seven years. There are a range of science recommendations and also a recommendation to NERC to broaden the remit of the Arctic Office.
- NERC Arctic Station: The management of the Ny-Ålesund facility is being taken on by the Norwegian Polar Institute. We have a strong 2019 Arctic season planned with a range of teams that will be supported by the Station. We are also hopeful to be able to host the BBC Radio 4 Today programme at the Station in March. *(Since the UKAAP meeting, this visit was confirmed and the BBC Radio 4 Today programme did a series of live reports from the Station with Martha Kearney and Tom Feilden).*
- The NERC Arctic Office and BAS will host a Station Day on 21st February – this is to promote the use of the station and to highlight some of the work that has been carried out from the Station in recent years.
- There is a big focus on the work with UK and Russia with Tatiana Iakovleva from the Science and Innovation Team in Moscow supporting UK researchers at the Early Career level. There was an event at Arctic Frontiers with Finlo Cottier speaking as well as UKPN President, Chelsey Baker together with Russian and Norwegian colleagues funded through the FCO.

- The second Arctic Science Ministerial meeting took place in Berlin on 25-26 October 2018. There were no direct outcomes but this is a way of keeping this on the political agenda.
- The Office will participate in a policy event on 29th January, promoting the work of the Arctic Office.

Update from UK Polar Network (Robynne Nowicki)

RN commented that the UKPN is working hard to ensure representation at international events. RN recently attended an APECS workshop in Turkey on how to better engage with the public. RN noted that most of the Education and Outreach work is currently aimed at children but one of the biggest issues is translating this to the parents. UKPN are looking to host more events that encourage adults to participate, such as the Pint of Science events.

Recent and upcoming activities include:

- UKPN Antarctic Flag initiative: 233 flags have been sent to Antarctica so far. This initiative continues to be very popular so if you are heading to Antarctica and are willing to take a flag then please contact RN.
- Arctic Map: The UKPN have also contributed to the Arctic Map which is a project being led by the BAS Mapping team and the NERC Arctic Office.
- Arctic Science Ministerial meeting: RN represented the UKPN at this meeting in Berlin in October 2018 and was part of the UK delegation.
- Polar Pen Pal initiative: The UKPN receive many requests to visit schools, and unfortunately are unable to respond to all the requests. They have therefore developed a polar pen pal initiative where school children can write a letter to a polar scientist.
- Arctic Frontiers meeting, January 2019: Chelsey Baker, UKPN President attended the Arctic Frontiers meeting and presented on the UKPN's involvement in Russia. In February 2019, the UKPN will be running a workshop at the Kola Centre, together with APECS Russia.
- UKPN will also be taking part in the Southampton Science Festival and World Music Arts Festival.

Update from All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) (D. Depledge)

DD gave a quick introduction to the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Polar Regions (APPG). The focus of this group has been to put on events to inform and promote understanding of the Polar Regions and these are held approximately once every month. All events are open to everyone and parliamentary attendance is good with 140 MPs registered with the APPG. In 2018, the APPG held 11 of these events, with the most recent event focussing on the *RRS* Sir David Attenborough. The APPG also organised a trip for MPs to visit Greenland together with Jo Bullard and Clay Prater from University of Loughborough. This provided an excellent opportunity to showcase UK based researchers out in the field. This summer, the APPG hope to organise a trip to Northern Canada. The events for 2019 have been agreed but the timings are still to be confirmed.

The Group is very London focussed however the events don't always need to be held in London. If there is an opportunity to link with another event somewhere else in the country, the APPG can be flexible if given enough notice.

DD also announced that he will be leaving the APPG and there will be a new Director. DD will still remain involved with the APPG activities however and will be joining the Advisory Board.

Update from NERC (H. Beadman)

The NERC update was covered under item 5. In addition to this, H. Beadman mentioned two upcoming funding calls for the Antarctic; the NERC Standard Grant Round and the Collaborative Antarctic Science Scheme (CASS).

7. Report on DIMA group activities (ME)

DIMA stands for Developing Innovative Multi-proxy Analyses. The Network has grown since its start in March 2018 and consists of 15 institutions in Russia and 3 in the UK. Working with the Science and Innovation Network in Russia has been really successful as they have been able to tap into small funds to run workshops and fund Early Career researchers to go to Russia to help set up the networks.

Funding over the next two years has been secured via the NERC Global Partnerships Seedcorn Fund. This money will be used for more workshops and training opportunities for Early Career Researchers. The DIMA Network is open to any UK scientists interested in collaborating with Russian investigators on long-term environmental change in Siberia and the Russian Far East.

8. Membership – Identify priority nominations (PW/All)

The Steering Committee were asked to send nominations to PW. It was also agreed that a call should go out for new members. This would need to be a new call.

- **ACTION: To identify gaps within membership and encourage nominations from within these areas (PW and NM)**

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place at University College London on 18th June and will be hosted by Viv Jones.

10. AOB

PW made a comment about T-MOSAIC – this land-based programme has been developed to coordinate complementary activities that will support and benefit from MOSAIC. The Secretariat is based in Portugal at the University of Lisbon but it doesn't have a big research budget. Further information can be found on the website: www.t-mosaic.org

PW closed the meeting by thanking RH and Loughborough University for hosting the meeting.