

Minutes from the 8th UK Arctic and Antarctic Partnership (UKAAP) Steering Committee Meeting

Boardroom, Grantham Institute, Imperial College London
10th May 2018, 1045 – 1600

Participants

Professor Phil Wookey (PW), University of Stirling (Chair)
Dr Malu Avila (MA), University of Northumbria
Professor Sheldon Bacon (SB), NOC
Dr Helen Beadman (H.Beadman), NERC Representative
Henry Burgess (H.Burgess), Head, NERC Arctic Office
Professor Siwan Davies, Swansea University
Professor Klaus Dodds (KD), Royal Holloway, University of London
Professor Mary Edwards (ME), University of Southampton
Dr Richard Essery (RE), Edinburgh University
Professor Viv Jones (VJ), University College London
Dr Anne Jungblut (AJ), Natural History Museum
Nicola Munro, NERC Arctic Office (UKAAP SC Secretary)
Professor David Pearce (DP), University of Northumbria
Dr Gareth Phoenix (GP), University of Sheffield
Dr Richard Powell (RP), Scott Polar Research Institute
Dr Jeff Ridley (JR), Met Office
Dr Clare Robinson (CR), University of Manchester
Professor Martin Siegert (MS), Grantham Institute for Climate Change, Imperial College London
Professor Eric Wolff (EW), Cambridge University

Apologies:

Professor Mike Bentley, Durham University
Professor Andrew Brierley, University of Edinburgh
Professor Ian Brooks, Leeds University
Dr Finlo Cottier, SAMS
Dr Duncan Depledge (DD), All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Polar Regions
Stuart Doubleday (SD), Polar Regions Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Professor Jane Francis (JF), British Antarctic Survey
Dr Ruth Hindshaw (R. Hindshaw), University of Cambridge
Dr Richard Hodgkins (R. Hodgkins), Loughborough University
Dr Melanie Leng (ML), BGS
Dr Erin McClymont, Durham University
Dr Jennifer Pike (JP), University of Cardiff
Professor Geraint Tarling, BAS
Professor David Thomas (DT), Bangor University
Professor Martyn Tranter (MT), Bristol Glaciology Centre
Professor David Vaughan (DGV), BAS
Professor Gail Whiteman, Lancaster University

1. Welcome and Introductions (PW):

PW opened the meeting and welcomed all members to the eighth UKAAP Steering Committee meeting. PW also noted the apologies sent from members unable to attend. Participants were then asked to introduce themselves. (A list of participant webpages can be found in Annex 1).

2. Review of Minutes and actions (PW) (Paper: UKAAP 8/01 8)

Minutes from UKAAP 7:

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 seventh meeting in November 2017. These will be posted on the UKAAP website.

Review of Actions from UKAAP 7:

PW made the comment that several actions from the last meeting would be reviewed during the course of this meeting as part of the UKAAP Forward Plan discussions. However, the following actions from the last meeting, not directly related to the UKAAP Forward plan were noted:

Action: To draw up some Terms of Reference for UK representatives on the IASC Working Groups (HB)

Update: HB reported that this was in progress.

Action: ME to investigate with her contacts regarding the 15 minute BBC radio sessions and report back at the next meeting.

Update: ME reported that there will be a session with more of a focus on telling stories about personal experiences of the Arctic, not hard science. ME to inform the SC when this is due to be aired. (This programme was aired in late May, shortly after it was recorded. The recording is available here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0b3d428>)

Action: DGV, together with Arctic Office to write an article for Planet Earth.

Update: This is in progress. Schedule still to be determined though.

Action: H. Beadman to investigate number of successful grants applied through the NERC/NSF scheme.

Update: H. Beadman gave an update on the number of successful grants applied for through the NERC/NSF scheme. This scheme allows researchers from both the US and the UK to put in a joint proposal to NERC and the relevant NSF division (either NSF division of environmental biology (DEB) or the NSF directorate for geosciences (GEO)). In terms of success rates, H. Beadman reported the following:

In 2015, 30 proposals were submitted, of which 7 were funded, giving a success rate of 23%. In 2016, 44 applications were received, of which 4 were funded, giving a success rate of 16% and in 2017, 16 proposals were submitted, of which 2 were funded, giving a success rate of 12.5%. However, H. Beadman noted that this was across all environmental science and that she doesn't yet have figures for polar specific proposals but she will try and have this data for the next meeting to share with the group.

3. Stakeholder reports

NERC update (H.Beadman):

Changing Arctic Ocean Programme (CAOP): An integration meeting was held to bring together the first round of funded projects with those in the funding frame in the second round. The second round was co-funded by Germany. Projects will be confirmed in June 2018.

Role of the Southern Ocean in the Earth System (RoSES): The second call is being delayed by six months due to cruise planning delays. The call will now be in October 2018.

International Ocean Discovery Program (IODP): H. Beadman announced that the expedition to the Arctic (Arctic Ocean Paleoceanography) in 2018 had been cancelled due to communication issues with the Russians. The expedition was relying on a Russian icebreaker.

MOSAIC: NERC will fund six two- month berths during the course of MOSAIC and will award six grants which will be announced imminently.

International THWAITES Glacier Collaboration programme was launched on Monday 7th May. With great support from the BAS Comms team, the launch was announced on the BBC news programmes at 1pm, 6pm and 10pm. Grants have been awarded and there is now a big push to finalise the logistics.

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI): NERC is now a part of UKRI (as of 1 April 2018). Each council and Innovate UK are still own bodies within this, but now have Executive Chairs rather than Chief Executives. UKRI will look after three pots of money:

- The Global Challenges Research Fund which will look to fund ODA activities.
- Strategic Priorities Fund which will support multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary programmes, supporting Government activities and priorities. This is new money.
- International collaboration that will look to non-ODA activities to enable researchers to work with preferred research partners around the world.

Following this update there was a short discussion regarding connections with other Research Councils, like ESRC and it was recommended that Claire Spooner is invited to a future UKAAP meeting. H. Beadman will discuss with Claire.

NERC Arctic Office

- Website: The Office has been working on a refresh of the Arctic Office website that is now ready. The Office will be seeking input from the Community and has a dedicated blog section. It is hoped that this can be used to highlight some of the science and activities that the UK Arctic Community are involved in.
- Update on NERC Arctic Research Station: Following a successful review through NERC Large Research Infrastructure (LRI) Commissioning process, we have secured 10 years of funding to run the station. At the time of this meeting, Arctic Live 18 was up at the station – this project involved Digital Explorer, an education and outreach team, working together with researchers from PML and Exeter looking at plastics and ocean acidification. Digital Explorer linked the researchers to schools across the UK and beyond, reaching thousands of schoolchildren across the globe. This programme is being funded by XL Catlin for the next 3 years.
- Canada Bursaries: H. Burgess reported that nine out of the 18 projects funded during the 2017/18 Bursary Programme were present at ArcticNET in Canada in December 2017 and were well received. He also reported that a further 11 projects have been funded under the 2018/2019 Bursary Scheme plus an additional social science project. Once again, the Office will look to support the attendance of bursary recipients at ArcticNet meetings in December 2018. At the time of this meeting, Jane Francis and Henry Burgess were preparing to join Tim Wheeler on his trip to Canada to talk further about future collaborations between the UK and Canada.
- UK-Russia Early Career Arctic Group: The Arctic Office, together with the Science and Innovation Network, Moscow and APECS Russia, held a workshop in Cambridge in December 2017. There have since been three additional events. Richard Powell hosted a Northern Arctic Federal University (NArFU) at the Scott Polar Research Institute in January 2018. This was followed by a workshop for Early Career Researchers (ECRs) in Moscow, where the Office was able to fund 14 UK ECRs to attend at the beginning of March. A final workshop was then held in Cambridge at the end of March, where again, the Office, together with the Science and Innovation Network, Moscow, were able to fund 14 ECRs to attend from Russia. Following on from these events, the UK Polar Network, together with APECS Russia have drafted an action plan that includes an opinion piece in a journal. There will be a further meeting in Davos.

- Beyond the Ice - Government's new Arctic Policy: The new policy document was launched by the Minister of State for the Polar Regions, Sir Alan Duncan on 4 April 2018. At the launch, Sir Duncan talked about projecting global influence, protecting people and the environment and promoting prosperity, and that these should be supported by strong scientific engagement at national and international levels. The Arctic Office was involved in updating some of the scientific content in the document. This will be current for the next two to three years.
- Environmental Audit Committee: The EAC have relaunched the inquiry. The deadline for submitting evidence was 16th May. UKRI have put in a joint response, which includes input from the NERC Arctic Office.
- Arctic Projects database: This is in progress – the Office hopes that this database will provide current information about projects with UK involvement. Initially it will hold mainly RCUK projects, but will look to wider funding streams in due course.
- MOSAIC: A planning meeting was held at the end of May 2018 for successful projects. Those who were unsuccessful will still have an opportunity to use the Polarstern via the ARICE call (deadline 5th July 2018).
- POLAR2018: The Office will be at POLAR18 throughout the two weeks. It has also supported the travel of the UK IASC Representatives. Each working group will have UK representation except for the Social Sciences group. H. Burgess has put forward his nomination to sit on the IASC Executive Committee. The outcome for this will be announced at the IASC Council meeting in June.
- Update on the Sir David Attenborough: Ray Leakey sent his apologies for not being able to attend the meeting but he hopes to be able to attend the next meeting to provide further details on the progress of the SDA. Sea trials will take place from January next year, with scientific sea trials taking place in June next year. Rehearsal cruises will then take place from June to August 2020 in the Arctic.
- Discovering the Arctic website: The Arctic Office has been engaged in the refresh of the RGS 'Discovering the Arctic' website. It is hoped that this will go live in the next couple of months. Also to note, this year's RGS Young Geographer of the Year competition will focus on the Arctic. This year's Royal Geography competition focused on the Arctic, with the deadline for submissions in October 2018.

Further to this update, MS commented on an analysis of publications on the Polar Regions carried out by Norway which showed that UK had 2nd largest number of publications, with half on the Arctic and half on the Antarctic.

Update from the UKPN – activities undertaken since the UKAAP meeting in November 2017: Malu Avila

- UKPN members, in collaboration with the Arctic Office, APECS Russia and the Science and Innovation Network Moscow organised and participated in the two UK-Russia Early Career events in March 2018.
- Pint of Science events – March/April 2018: These were organised in three cities (Southampton, Cambridge and Sheffield), collaborating with the Polar Pint Series. These were popular and well-received events.
- UKPN members have also been involved in the Edinburgh and Leeds Science Festival. These have been great platforms for the UKPN as the events attract large numbers of people each year. Workshops that included experiments on ocean acidification were held during these events.
- UKPN Committee have been exploring some potential funding opportunities that they hope will be successful. They are currently putting together another FCO grant that will be for further outreach activities.
- UKPN members have recently had two poster presentations, one at the International Glaciological Society (IGS) and one at European Geosciences Union (EGU). The UKPN will also be presenting a poster at POLAR 2018 in Davos and will organise an event together with APECS Russia.
- Ice Alive documentary Film: Dr Joe Cook, UKPN member, looking at microbial life that can be found all over the planet's glaciers and ice sheets. This was launched in March 2018.

PW thanked MA and commented on the number of activities the UKPN are organising and participating in. There was also a discussion about another UKPN representative on the UKAAP SC. It was agreed by the members that this would be useful, but the funding issue was acknowledged.

ACTION: PW and H.Burgess to investigate options.

4. Update on upcoming UK Polar Science Conferences

Mike Bentley confirmed that the next UK Antarctic Science Conference will be hosted by University of Durham and will be held from lunchtime on the 10th to lunchtime on the 12th September 2018. Since the meeting, a website has been launched here: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/uk-antarctic-science/>

R. Hodgkins submitted an update about the next UK Arctic Science Conference which will be hosted by Loughborough University from 11th to 13th September 2019. A website has been set up here: <https://www.arctic.ac.uk/ukarcticconf/>

5. Membership

PW reported that two members have recently stepped down from the Steering Committee. As stated in the ToR, the Committee should look to refresh membership by 1/3 of members every year. Moving forward it was agreed that we should ask people to apply but also encourage nominations.

ACTION: PW and NM to look at membership and a process for enlisting new members.

6. UKAAP SC Terms of Reference

The question was raised as to whether the UKAAP ToR, written in 2014, were still fit for purpose or whether these needed to be reviewed and amended. Several points were raised during the discussions:

- The ToR have not been reviewed in detail since first set in 2014.
- It is not the function of this group to identify gaps in research as stated in Bullet 3 of the ToR (to identify key questions, gaps and opportunities for UK polar research in both the natural and social sciences, ensuring full community consultation.) However it was noted that there is a role for the group to establish structures that enable facilitation of this and to provide a line of sight to NERC, for example. Facilitating a Townhall meeting, or workshops to help generate ideas that can then be submitted to funding bodies would be useful.
- The UKAAP has an oversight of the Polar Conferences and it would be useful for UKAAP to use these conferences to further facilitate community activities.
- It was noted that the UKAAP SC can't claim to represent all communities and research interests however the collective experience of the SC in terms of funding structures, knowing key contacts etc, is useful and should be promoted.
- Bullets 1, 2 and 7, 8 are useful and should be kept as they are, however the comment was made that bullet points 3, 4, 5 and 6 should be amended to show how UKAAP SC could help facilitate these activities and ideas.
- It would be useful to be able to measure outputs against the ToR and use the website to evidence what UKAAP SC has achieved. It was suggested that a testimonial from the Arctic Office and other stakeholders to put on the website would also be useful to highlight how the UKAAP SC has established dialogue with key stakeholders.
- It would be useful if UKAAP facilitated discussions and developed proposals through the ideas process to put forward to the SPAG. The comment was made that communities that do get together and develop ideas tend to be more successful.

ACTION: Review of ToR - PW

7. UKAAP Forward Plan – Breakout groups (Paper: UKAAP 8/03)

Funding Mechanisms and Strategy – group discussion:

Brief summary (Bacon & Siegert).

Opportunity: the two UKASCs, Arctic and Antarctic, could contain (e.g.) half-day workshop sessions, properly planned. Before start, after end, or in middle of conference.

Option 1: run probably a small number of parallel sessions targeting generation of "ideas" to feed into the NERC SPAG. Highlight topics (~£4M) are NERC-only; the large Strategic Programme Areas (~£10-20M) can be cross-council. UKAAP organisation / sponsorship provides a feature desired by NERC, i.e. "line of sight". Canvass / email non-attendees for input / inclusion.

Outcome 1: one or more NERC SPAG idea submissions.

Option 2: workshop(s) to generate UK community response(s) to existing "white paper" or "horizon-scan" documents. Canvass / email non-attendees for input / inclusion.

Outcome 2: a meeting report such as is supported by AGU's *Eos*; see e.g. Bacon & Leakey 2009 *Eos* **90** (44) 400 <https://doi.org/10.1029/2009EO440007>, meeting report following first UK Arctic Sci. Conf.

Suspect Option 1 more appropriate to Arctic, Option 2 to Antarctic.

ACTION: Put in place mechanisms within polar conferences to embed a community discussion within their programmes. The aim will be to attempt to pull together ideas for the Strategic Programmes Advisory Group (SPAG)

ACTION: It would be useful to engage more with the new SCAR Executive Director Chandrika Nath. She would be a good person to participate in future meetings. KD to talk to her and invite her to next meeting.

ACTION: A group to look at the practicalities of pulling together community input for the next Arctic conference in 2019. Action Group: VJ, ME, PW and MA.

7a. Visibility, website and outreach (Group: SD, H Beadman, VJ, AJ, MA, NM)

Key points from this discussion:

1. The UKAAP SC should take the opportunity to have a slot at each of the Arctic and Antarctic conferences to help increase visibility and raise the profile of UKAAP.
2. To maintain the website and ensure it remains up to date.

ACTION: All SC to send NM any news items/events they are aware of to post on website.

3. Look to start a mailing list, although it was acknowledged that this requires resource to maintain the lists.
4. Add members profile pictures to the website with 3 key words to describe each member and links to what each person does.

ACTION – All SC members to send NM photos plus 3 key words and any links to add to the UKAAP website.

5. Set up a tag team on Twitter – each week a new person would be assigned the role to tweet using the UKAAP SC twitter account. There is evidence that this works well for other projects and communities.

ACTION: Start a Twitter team for UKAAP SC – VJ/NM

6. Post DTP projects on the UKAAP website.
7. Post recent publications from SC members on the website.

ACTION: AJ to email SC members once a month requesting recent publications to add to UKAAP website.

7b: UKAAP as a coherent voice for polar researchers and a mechanism to support Early career Researchers (MS, GP, EW, JR, SB)

Key points from the discussion group:

1. The situation with ECRs is different and better now than it was, as a consequence of transferrable skills developed from Doctoral Training programmes across the country. This helps meet the needs of PhD students.
2. BUT, there remains a big problem with the post-doctoral community - we need this community to undertake research, but there are insufficient numbers of permanent jobs available, and hence remains challenging for PDRAs and PD Fellows to take the next step on an academic pathway.
3. There is a growing appreciation of the value of a multidisciplinary approach, as well as disciplinary expertise. 'T' shaped, and 'pi' shaped academics are needed, who have both depth and breadth. Encouraging ECRs to grow their careers in this way would be helpful.
4. New areas of growth in the polar regions include Data Science, and AI - so taking on non-traditional areas of work would be beneficial.
5. UKAAP can help by promoting these ideas at Arctic/Antarctic meetings.
6. UKAAP could also consider mid-career mentoring.

7c: Strengthening the interface between UK Polar science and social science (KD, PW, ME, RP, HB)

Key points from the discussions:

1. Recognition that the human dimension is not an add-on to environmental and physical sciences in the polar regions.
2. Need to recognise funding and incentive opportunities and structures – could there be a UKRI Changing Arctic Ocean programme in future?
3. The intersection of human and physical can be studied through technology, culture, objects, and ideas (the new polar vessel provides one opportunity to think about the ship as a mobile laboratory and expression of polar science diplomacy).
4. It was proposed that UKRI be approached about a UKAAP sponsored presentation/workshop about polar science diplomacy – **ACTION: Working group to present to UKRI: H Beadman, H Burgess, KD and link to ESRC and ESRC.**
5. Possible sessions for future Arctic/Antarctic conferences on objects such as ice, rock, plant matter, and bones as an entrée into an interdisciplinary encounter with polar ecologies and cultures.

8. Next meeting

The next UKAAP SC meeting will be at Loughborough University. A doodle poll will be circulated shortly.

9. AOB

No aob.

To close the meeting, PW thanked Martin Siegert and colleagues for hosting the meeting at the Grantham Institute.