

**UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE TWENTY FIRST MEETING OF THE
UK NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR ANTARCTIC RESEARCH**

Friday 6th May, 2016, 13.00

British Antarctic Survey, Cambridge

Present:	Prof. David Hopkins	Chair, Royal Agricultural University
	Dr J. A. Jackson	Secretary, British Antarctic Survey
	Prof. P. Convey	British Antarctic Survey
	Prof. M.J. Siegert	Imperial College London
	Mr. S. Colwell	British Antarctic Survey
	Prof J. E Francis	British Antarctic Survey
	Dr A. Leeson	UKPN/APECS, University of Leeds
	Mr H. Burgess	Arctic Office, British Antarctic Survey
	Prof. J. Turner	British Antarctic Survey
	Dr T. Bracegirdle	British Antarctic Survey
	Dr R. Larter	British Antarctic Survey
	Dr J. Baeseman	SCAR Executive Officer, Cambridge
	Dr E. Griffin	SCAR Executive Officer, Cambridge
	Dr D. Bakker	University of East Anglia
	Dr A. Jungblut	Natural History Museum
	Dr R. Bingham	University of Edinburgh
	Prof J. Smellie	University of Leicester
	Dr K. Hendry (by Skype)	University of Bristol
	Dr P. Whitehouse (by Skype)	University of Durham
Apologies:	Prof. J.A. Dowdeswell	Scott Polar Research Institute
	Prof. E. Wolff	University of Cambridge
	Dr S. Doubleday	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
	Ms. R. Cooper	Royal Society
	Dr. A. Hicks	Medical Director, BASMU
	Prof. J. Wadham	University of Bristol
	Dr. N. Garnett	Natural Environment Research Council
	Prof L. Peck	British Antarctic Survey
	Dr H. Griffiths	British Antarctic Survey
	Prof E. Murphy	British Antarctic Survey

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

David Hopkins welcomed everybody to the meeting and led a series of short introductions around the table.

2 TWENTIETH MEETING OF THE UK NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR ANTARCTIC RESEARCH ON 3th JULY, 2015 (*paper*)

The Chair presented the minutes from the last meeting. No amendments were requested and the minutes were accepted as a true record of the twentieth Committee Meeting.

3 MATTERS ARISING INCLUDING ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING (*paper*)

All actions arising from the 20th meeting have now been completed. The group noted that the planned COP fringe Antarctic Science event took place, and that two Antarctic events were organised, using the ACCE climate report as a highlight document. The Antarctic Panel included SCAR members Julian Gutt, Jeremy Wilkinson (BAS), Frank Pattyn and Arctic colleagues. The 2015 Muse Prize winner

gave a talk at the event on the importance of the polar regions. UKNCAR noted that with more advance planning these events could have been better developed to draw more attention to the importance of Antarctic research in understanding climate change. A paper on this topic will be considered by SCAR delegates at the upcoming SCAR Open Science Conference (OSC).

Polar Partnership minutes have been circulated, though these are still in draft form. Confirmed minutes will be circulated when they are available.

4 UKNCAR MEMBERSHIP AND ELECTION OF NEW CO-OPTED MEMBERS (*paper*)

This year we gain four new co-opted members to UKNCAR, and one membership will expire. Group representation in terms of SCAR disciplines has also improved. The UKNCAR lacks a Royal Society representative since John Croxall retired from this role last year, and awaits a decision from the Royal Society to appoint his successor. The Chair noted that both Chair and Secretary positions in UKNCAR are due to expire next year. The new Chair will be sought from within the Committee's past and present members. Any members who are interested in this role should put their names forward to the Chair for consideration by UKNCAR and the Royal Society. It would be helpful for nominees to have capacity to fund their own travel in order to attend the requisite SCAR, Royal Society and associated meetings. A new Secretary for UKNCAR will be sought within BAS since part of the role involves organising the annual meeting held at BAS.

A job description for the new UKNCAR Secretary will be constructed and circulated by Jane and Jen within BAS to get nominations for a new BAS-based secretary to UKNCAR. Prospective UKNCAR chairs were asked to put their names forward for consideration by the current Chair and Royal Society, noting that it is helpful if person has capacity to fund their own travel. Jen and David will circulate information regarding this role and the nomination process.

Following some discussion regards the expansion of UKNCAR to include UK chairs of SCAR research programs, action and expert groups, the UKNCAR also agreed to invite the UK representatives to Standing Antarctic Committees to provide annual updates. These committees are: SCATS (Standing Committee on the Antarctic Treaty System), SCADM (Standing Committee on Antarctic Data Management) and SCAGI (Standing Committee on Antarctic Geographical Information).

5 REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF BAS

Jane Francis provided an update on recent and upcoming changes at the British Antarctic Survey and across NERC. She noted that the new ship name has just been released with much positive press attention. The first piece of keel will be laid at a keel laying ceremony in September. Following construction the ship should be ready for sea trials in 2018, and her first polar season in 2019. An 'Associated Projects' team at BAS is preparing for the shift from two polar vessels to one and the logistical challenges that will come with this change.

Plans to move the current Halley station to the landward side of a crack in the ice shelf are ongoing. Heavy equipment was shipped in this season, the living quarters will be moved next season 2016/17 and the science will be moved 2017/18. Funding has not yet been confirmed by the government but is

anticipated shortly.

The new partitioned budget, funded by BIS, provides five years guaranteed support for a partition which covers Antarctic logistics and infrastructure. The other partition (BAS science and work outside of Antarctica) is a small budget under increasing pressure. Money saving measures are sought in all areas. The main cost in Antarctic operations is fuel price so BAS are currently looking at greener ways to operate which could reduce costs.

UKNCAR also noted that in the press release regarding the new polar ship the Science Minister Jo Johnson also announced government investment of up to £1 million in a new Polar Explorer program to engage young people and 'inspire the scientists, engineers and explorers of the future'. To date BAS and UKNCAR do not have any further news on this program but are keen to remain informed as this program develops.

6 UPDATE ON UK ANTARCTIC SCIENCE CONFERENCE (*paper*)

Dorothee Bakker presented an update on the UK Antarctic Science Conference and circulated a first draft conference agenda. The UK Antarctic Science conference will run from 5-6th July 2016, immediately following a UK Polar Network (UKPN) meeting 4-5th July. Three additional meetings will be held on the 7th July (UKAAP, ANTVOL and a climate model workshop). Antarctic logistics will also be visible via a stand manned by James Wake (BAS) and additional presentations during the meeting. Currently 60 people have registered, and total expenditure is expected to be £9000, matching an anticipated income of £9000 from 90 attendees. With more than 90 attending there will be funds to support the next conference. Dorothee noted that at least 90 attendees are expected, in line with previous meetings.

7 SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON ANTARCTIC RESEARCH

7.1 Standing Scientific Group (SSG) Reports

7.1.1 Geosciences SSG

No report on Geosciences was received. It is hoped that Fausto Ferraccioli will act as UK delegate for Geosciences at the next SCAR OSC. Kate Hendry will take on this role from 2017.

7.1.2 Life Sciences SSG (*paper*)

Pete Convey presented highlights from recent Life Sciences activities. He also chairs the SCAR Development Council, a group which identifies external funding sources for SCAR. He noted that external funding which could support SCAR is mostly advertised within countries and not communicated internationally. The Development Council have therefore written to SCAR national delegates and heads of science programs to get information on available funding sources within their countries. If SCAR national delegates can be mobilised to regularly seek such funding opportunities it would greatly assist SCAR development; for example, supporting additional SCAR fellows, workshops and early career scientists. The Development Council will receive feedback from this approach in terms of funding opportunities at the next SCAR OSC. It was commented that SCAR has a

unique and valuable international role, connecting up regional science and logistics to achieve interconnected, interdisciplinary polar science. It is hoped that this approach to seeking funds will be very fruitful and the UKNCAR looks forward to progress updates in this area.

Pete also noted the proposal for a South Georgia Future Science Plan, coordinated by SAERI, has been approved for development by Mr Paulsen and the Mamont Foundation, so there will be considerable planning around that, with positive implications for some of the Life Sciences groups (see Item 7.3.6).

7.1.3 Physical Sciences SSG (*paper*)

Steve Colwell provided an update on activities within the Physical Sciences SSG. He noted that the SSG-PS recently part-funded an Antarctic Gravity Wave Instrument Network workshop, held in Cambridge in April and including 33 delegates from 10 countries. He noted that the Physical Sciences SSG is currently reviewing their budget streams in order to streamline their activity.

7.2 Update on Scientific Research Programmes (*paper and oral reports*)

7.2.1 Past Antarctic Ice Sheet Dynamics (PAIS) (*oral report*)

Rob Larter provided an update on PAIS, the chief aim of which is to improve understanding of sensitivity of ice sheets to climate change by studying their response to past changes over a range of timescales, up to tens of millions of years ago. The work is mostly achieved using drill cores. ANDRILL outputs are also still on-going, including a very high impact modelling paper which draws on Pliocene ice sheet and climate records to estimate future sea-level changes. Rob noted that this is an exciting time for PAIS with a number of future drilling exercises coming up. These include shallow drilling on the Amundsen Shelf, now scheduled for 2017 on the Polarstern, which is a German-UK collaboration. There is also an International Ocean Discovery Program (IODP) mission-specific platform expedition scheduled for George V Land margin in the 2017/18 season. Two of the three further IODP proposals for expeditions on the JOIDES Resolution drilling vessel (for Ross Sea, Amundsen Sea, and southern Bellingshausen/ Antarctic Peninsula margin) have passed scientific review; the Ross Sea and Amundsen Sea expeditions are recommended for scheduling in early 2018 and 2019 respectively with the southern Bellingshausen/ Antarctic Peninsula expedition to be possibly included in the program for 2019/2020. A PAIS symposium is planned for September 2017 in Trieste, Italy. PAIS has been building up good interactions between the Antarctic community and non-Antarctic players. Rob highlighted the long lead time on outputs, particularly from early drilling projects which are still yielding fruitful work, sometimes in ways that were not anticipated when the data were collected.

7.2.2 AntClim²¹

Tom Bracegirdle provided an update on AntClim²¹, noting that he will become chair of AntClim²¹ following the next SCAR OSC in autumn 2016. This will be over the final two years of the program, an important time where the group will be developing inputs into the global climate model community and constructing a synthesis report as they reach their final goals. AntClim²¹ also contributes to many other OSC sessions, linking into a number of other SCAR groups. For example recent highlights included a large cross-program workshop (in Barcelona, September 2015) with Ant-ERA and Ant-ECO, which discussed

improvements in interdisciplinary Antarctic and Southern Ocean research. There were 38 scientists from 14 countries invited by the SCAR SRPs AnT-ERA, AntEco and AntClim²¹. There are three AntClim²¹ events now upcoming, including (1) a session at the SCAR OSC on the evolution of the physical and biological environment of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean over the 21st and 22nd centuries, (2) a mini-symposium on the “Antarctic Ice sheet from past 2 future”, co-hosted with PAIS and SERCE, and (3) A workshop on AntClim21 Theme 3: “Earth System Model Projections of the Role of Antarctic and the Southern Ocean in the Global Climate of the 21st Century”. This workshop will consider how climate projections data can be used across the broader SCAR community and aim to develop a set of Antarctic community diagnostics for evaluating the representation of Antarctic climate in the climate models that will be used for the next major IPCC report.

7.2.3 AntEco (paper)

As mentioned in Item 7.2.2, Ant-Eco co-hosted a large cross-program workshop in September 2015 in Barcelona, supporting 12 delegates to attend. They also had a presence at the ‘VIII Southern Connections Congress 2016’ in Chile, where they ran a science session and Pete Convey gave an invited plenary talk. The major research highlight for this year has been the SO-AntEco ‘South Orkneys State of the Antarctic Ecosystem’ research cruise, a BAS-led expedition which took place in February-March on the *RRS James Clark Ross* and included 22 participants from 9 countries and 16 institutes. The objectives were to identify seafloor species around the South Orkney Islands, to look at habitat diversity, map vulnerable species and contribute advice to CCAMLR. Eighteen phyla of animals were found, and over 7,000 seafloor habitat photos and over 38,000 invertebrates and fish collected. The expedition provides a good example of how national polar institutes can develop international cooperation in policy relevant polar science under the umbrella of a SCAR research program.

7.2.4 AnT-ERA (paper)

AnT-ERA were the primary organisers of the recent cross-program workshop held in Barcelona (described in Item 7.2.2). They were also involved in the recent COP21 meeting in Paris, with chair Julian Gutt giving a talk at one of the polar side events on ‘Irreversible Thresholds and species conservation in a changing climate’.

7.2.5 SERCE (paper)

SERCE supported three events in 2015: (1) a glacial isostatic adjustment training school in Ohio (September 2015) which had 45 participants from 16 countries and 31 virtual participants via online link-up, (2) a workshop on autonomous GPS and seismic stations in the polar regions, in conjunction with ISAES 2015, (3) a symposium on ice load changes and earth deformation in Alaska (May 2015), as well as various thematic sessions on earth cryosphere interactions at EGU, IUGG and ISAES, including a plenary lecture. Upcoming activities include a thematic session on earth-cryosphere interactions at the SCAR OSC, a joint mini-symposium on the Antarctic ice sheet with AntClim21 (see item 7.2.2) and a side-meeting at the next SCAR OSC where Pippa Whitehouse (UKNCAR) will become one of the new co-chief officers of SERCE.

7.3 Update on SCAR Expert Groups

7.3.1 ACCE

John Turner noted that ACCE has been running as an advisory group for a decade. The Wikipedia project ACCE developed to share information on climate change has over 13,000 hits to date and has been a very successful piece of public communication. However eliciting regular wiki-updates from members is hard. The key challenge facing ACCE is how to distil research into digestible information for politicians. The ACCE book was very successful for informing the scientific community but getting key feedback to politicians and decision makers requires very different packaging of information, and a format that is simple and short. It was suggested that ACCE data could be distilled down to a single page of information to provide politicians at Treaty meetings, with assistance of the SCAR community. This would be time-consuming to get right and potentially very beneficial for the community. UKNCAR agreed that a document of this form would be useful. Eoghan Griffin pointed out that there will be a paper on climate change communications presented at the next SCAR OSC to stimulate further discussion in this area.

7.3.2 ICED (*paper*)

The 'Integrating climate and ecosystem dynamics in the Southern Ocean' (ICED) program has been running since 2008 and is led by UK scientists. The objectives are to understand how climate processes affect the structure and dynamics of Southern Ocean ecosystems, to understand how ecosystem structure and dynamics affect Southern Ocean biogeochemical cycles, and to incorporate these into approaches for sustainable management of Southern Ocean resources. The program has held a series of workshops to date and developed a number of models. Upcoming activities include a set of ICED community papers on the topic of change in the Southern Ocean (scenarios of change, historical data rescue and synthesis, stakeholder engagement, polar food web diversity and functioning), and input to a range of meetings, including a joint CEP-CCAMLR workshop, input to the 'high CO₂' symposium in May 2016 and two upcoming events: an ICED-led workshop on projections of change in 2017 and an ICED international conference on assessing status and trends of habitats, key species and ecosystems in the Southern Ocean in Hobart in 2018.

7.3.3 IPICS (*paper*)

The second IPICS Open Science conference was held in Hobart in March 2016, with over 200 attendees. Science priorities were also discussed, and will continue with an expanded focus on the last interglacial, an evolution of the IPICS 40K project to millennial events and transitions more generally, and a new initiative on ice dynamics. A newly formed early career group, the Ice Core Young Scientists, is very active and has just held a one-day workshop at the recent conference with over 80 attendees, discussing career development and communication.

7.3.4 OpMet

OpMet and SSG-PS are part funding the next Antarctic Meteorological Observation, Modelling and Forecasting workshop in Ohio this June 2016, also including a half day on the Year of Polar Prediction, a World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) initiative. OpMet and the WMO task team have compiled an information paper for the ATCM on the state of operational meteorology in Antarctica.

7.3.5 AntVOLC

AntVOLC is a joint UK/Italian initiative which came about because the UK volcanic community has been in decline. This expert group was developed to help rebuild the community, and is a very active group, with 80 current participants and 100 expected in the coming months, many early career researchers. AntVOLC held a three day workshop in July 2015 in Catania on key research issues, as well as a small meeting at ISAES 2015. These discussions will contribute towards a white paper on the current state of research, program strategic direction and deliverables, summarising also the past 40 years of research into Antarctic volcanism. John Smellie intends to chair the meeting for two years and anticipates the group will last for four years. He noted that most of the interest in joining this initiative has come from early career scientists, a mixture of PhD students and post-doctoral researchers, with 12 countries represented.

7.3.6 ANTOS (*paper*)

The Antarctic Near-Shore and Terrestrial Observation System (ANTOS) is an Action Group established in 2014, to coordinate a cross continent and cross national program scale assessment of environmental variability and change. In August 2015 they held a workshop (in New Zealand) to develop an implementation plan, attended by researchers from 12 countries. The South Georgia Future Science Plan (item 7.1.2) is also planned to be a centre for ANTOS activity.

7.4 Update on SCAR Activities

Jenny Baeseman explained that the SCAR structural review is still ongoing, with research programs under review and outsiders working in related fields asked to provide constructive feedback on the programs and their outputs. The 'Southern Ocean Observing System' was recently reviewed and the feedback for this was very good. The Monaco Assessment was also a significant recent activity, as well as the development of a Code of Conduct for geothermal areas presented to the Antarctic Treaty. She referred to the discussion under ACCE (item 7.3.1) regarding public communication of science, and noted that it is an important goal for SCAR to improve their public communications, including providing digestible information on key Antarctic research. Some fundraising is needed to support this activity. SCAR are currently designing an internship program to run within the Secretariat to provide training and experience for interns, who will be not paid salary but will hopefully receive travel expenses.

SCAR is gearing up for the next OSC, as the deadline for early-bird registration is the 19th May. There will be lots of side meetings at this event, including a SCAR Wikibomb for female Antarctic scientists (there are 150 nominations so far and a celebration event also planned). SCAR will also hold a poster session throughout the OSC, with posters summarising SCAR research groups and national committees. The outcomes from the COMNAP Antarctic logistics meeting in Tromsø last August (the logistics version of the Antarctic Horizon Scan) will be part of the SCAR lecture this year at the Antarctic Treaty Meeting. This 'Roadmap challenge' also provides another example of the importance of community engagement. It was noted that the Antarctic Funding Initiative email list (held by Martin Miller) might be useful for quickly contacting the UK Antarctic community to keep them informed of SCAR activities.

Jenny noted that a new Action group on 'Geoheritage and Geoconservation' has recently been formed. Dorothee informed the group that the SCAR Working Group on 'Ocean Acidification' will present their final report at the next SCAR OSC, 'Ocean Acidification in the Southern Ocean'. This is currently in review and includes sections contributed by UK scientists.

In discussion, UKNCAR agreed that it would be useful for the UK to contribute a poster to SCAR summarising UKNCAR activity. The Secretary will draft this and the group can contribute information on Halley and the new polar ship as well as UK SCAR related science.

8 NEXT SCAR OPEN SCIENCE AND BUSINESS MEETING AND TRAVEL EXPENSES

UKNCAR were reminded that there are funds available from the Royal Society to support travel to SCAR for members who represent the UK in SCAR activity groups. Any member who would like to apply for this money should contact David Hopkins providing details of their funding needs and role within SCAR.

9 UK POLAR NETWORK (*paper*)

9.1 Updates (*paper*)

The UKPN membership continues to grow and is now over 600 members and a very active organisation, supporting a number of events over the past year. Amber highlighted that the UKPN had a significant role in the 'Sea Ice, Shackleton and science' project, which was delivered at three high profile public engagement events around the UK in the past two years. She also highlighted that UKPN now has a very active blog (<http://www.polarnetwork.org>) to keep members updated about news and activities within the community. UKPN are now constructing an online shop for UKPN merchandise, expected to open in the next two months. The intent is to keep the UKPN brand visibility high within a community which has rapid turnover. The UKPN are also formalising their partnership with the Challenger Society and holding two events at their 2016 meeting, (1) a UKPN poster workshop on 'what makes a successful research project' and (2) a jointly organised breakfast networking event. Upcoming events include two days at the next UK Antarctic Science Conference dedicated to training and networking opportunities for UKPN members, and the next British branch meeting, to be held in October 2016.

9.2 Results of UKPN post-doc survey (*paper*)

This survey was conducted in 2015 and received 49 responses, mostly from PhD students and post-doctoral researchers. Results showed that members are happy with development activities provided by UKPN and SCAR but not happy with development opportunities provided by RCUK. Members felt they were not well informed about job and development opportunities and that more training activity could be provided. Short contracts are a particular challenge affecting many post-docs at present. These force researchers to spend significant time during one job applying for further funds rather than focussing on research, while unable to make any long-term plans, and limit their access to supporting facilities such as parental leave if they have children. UKPN members also noted the problem of access to information services (i.e. journals and Web of Science) outside of institutions. UKPN have taken these issues to NERC for comment. They would like to work with NERC to (i) have more formal involvement in the

development and training programs, (ii) ensure training is a good fit to needs, and (iii) improve the signposting of job opportunities and provide better links and information regarding available internships. They also want to highlight the problems associated with short contracts and request that a contract length of 2 years is imposed as a minimum.

UKPN asked UKNCAR to assist with this initiative and provide a formal statement of support for their position.

In discussion it was noted that responsibility for fulfilling employee contracts falls to employers. Since the employer is the university rather than the funding body (aside from NERC research institutes), contract based concerns may be more successfully addressed to universities rather than NERC, who do not have responsibility for contract setting. Using UKPN links to university contacts will be helpful in this regard, to bring these problems to the attention of University committees.

It was noted that there have been periods of very limited funding in the past, for example during the Thatcher era no post-doctoral positions or lectureships were available at all. The UKNCAR reflected on the difficult route from PhD student to research scientist, noting the strongly pyramidal structure of the science hierarchy and the great attrition of early and mid-career scientists along the way. They wondered if it was helpful to increase expectation awareness within UKPN regarding alternative career opportunities as well as those in academia, since budgets are currently very tight and chances of successfully pursuing an academic career are relatively low. In addition, perhaps communicating more overseas research opportunities within the UKPN network (as done by APECS) could be helpful. Understanding that moving abroad is difficult for some, the group agreed that dividends in terms of access to research opportunities, funds and career growth can be substantial.

David Hopkins agreed that the UKNCAR could draft a letter to NERC summarising their perception of the problem and pointing out types of damage done to the sustainability of research effort in the UK.

10 THE UK ANTARCTIC AND ARCTIC POLAR PARTNERSHIP, UKAAP

David Hopkins noted that the membership of UKAAP is about to be adjusted, to assist the efficient development of the group into a mature partnership. The UKAAP is currently devising plans to obtain funding in support of its activities. This is a significant challenge for the Partnership and there will be a series of visits to Centres of Excellence around the UK to build connections and share information, and feedback the response to RCUK. UKAAP are working to strengthen current connections with NERC/Swindon. There has been a decrease in the number of science programs running from Ny-Ålesund which they hope to reverse.

The next UKAAP meeting will happen on the 7th July at UEA. A VISION statement about Arctic Science in the UK is also due to be circulated soon. Henry Burgess is happy to receive suggestions from UKNCAR to add to the agenda for the July meeting. He also noted that with the next UK Arctic Science meeting happening in 2017, there is a chance for UKAAP members to be involved from an early stage in the planning of the Arctic meeting, and to ensure there is good connectivity

between that meeting and its Antarctic counterparts. The UKAAP have been discussing a data recovery project, for example using sea ice data from submarines. Data 'recycling' approaches (whereby data are analysed using approaches that were not available when the data were first collected) can be extremely valuable especially for time sensitive data. If such an approach could be developed, it could provide a roadmap for other data mining projects. NERC may be interested in funding such activity, as long as the original data collection was not made under conditions of accessibility, i.e. nowadays NERC grants always include conditions that data are already made accessible for future work. Otherwise the work could be construed as being funded twice.

Jenny Baeseman noted that there is a 2018 Polar conference planned with both SCAR and IASC. Following the SCAR Horizon Scan, IASC has also had an international research planning meeting along similar lines, and SCAR and IASC are working together following these to develop a series of polar research priorities. Henry Burgess noted that there is a dramatic difference between UK representation in SCAR working groups and in IASC groups, where it is very limited- the Arctic Office and UKAAP will discuss ways to increase UK representation. UK scientist Phil Wookey (Heriott-Watt University) will become the Chair of the IASC Terrestrial Working Group in July 2016.

Henry Burgess noted some key dates for upcoming Arctic related meetings, including a Royal Society Arctic Event on the 18th October and the Arctic Circle Assembly in Reykjavik, also in October. An Arctic Science ministerial event will also be held in Washington this year and Jo Johnson is being encouraged to attend (not yet confirmed). He will need to receive good policy briefing for this meeting, so members attending the upcoming UEA meeting will need to develop a set of accessible policy bullet points to assist. An All Party Parliamentary Group on the polar regions has been formed under James Grey, supported by Duncan Dupledge. Next Wednesday 11th May a party meeting on climate change in the polar regions is also scheduled, reflecting parliamentary interest in this topic, (although the focus is primarily Arctic). On Tuesday 10th May there will also be a Parliamentary meeting on Antarctic science. Henry noted that many influential people attend these events and have a great interest in these topics. He is happy to share more details with UKNCAR members interested to follow up regarding these events.

11 ROYAL SOCIETY

11.1 COMMUNICATIONS

No communications were received from the Royal Society. Jon Croxall resigned as Royal Society representative in 2015 and no FRS has yet been elected to replace him (Eric Wolff has been proposed). The group noted that there are currently two FRS in the UK Antarctic research community, Eric Wolff and Corinne Le Quéré.

UKNCAR member Eric Wolff is now the chair of the Royal Society's Global Environmental Research Committee (GERC) and has changed the structure of this meeting, so that it now explores a few key themes: climate, air quality, land use and food, oceans and polar, biodiversity, carbon and energy, with each distilled into a briefing paper describing the research agenda in each topic. The GERC meeting 5th May focussed on the climate theme, and Antarctic science was

strongly represented. David Hopkins will circulate the discussions of this meeting to UKNCAR.

11.2 SCAR SUBSCRIPTION

The Royal Society continues to support the UK's subscription to SCAR. David Hopkins noted the importance of maintaining a UKNCAR presence at the GERC in order to keep the Royal Society informed and aware of Antarctic and SCAR related activities. It was queried whether it might be possible that Royal Society University Research Fellows could also be co-opted to this meeting and contribute their expertise to the GERC. Eric was not present at the meeting but will be contacted by email to comment to the UKNCAR about the meeting structure and procedure for co-opting participants.

12 NERC UPDATES (*paper*)

The group reviewed the success rate data for polar grant success 2013-2015, broken down into grants with a 5-50% polar component and those with a >50% polar component. Analyses show disappointing success rates (<10%) for polar grants, and in addition do not appear impacted by demand management applied in the last round. It was commented that it would be useful to know the relative sizes of the funded and unfunded grants.

UKNCAR discussed in 2015 whether high scoring proposals rejected in one round might be retained for subsequent rounds. This point was raised again, and it was noted that NERC are now rejecting some proposals graded at 9. An option for grants to remain in the system and given the opportunity to be enhanced with feedback would be very helpful. Martin Siegert commented that this idea was put to NERC for consideration at the last UKNCAR meeting.

No university-led grant application including polar fieldwork has been funded since 2013, so Antarctic logistics may soon be under-supplied. This is a major concern and it was proposed that the upcoming UK Antarctic Science Conference should include a session where BAS pitch their facilities and logistic support available to collaborators. Dorothee Bakker and Martin Siegert will liaise to arrange a suitable time during the event for this presentation, to highlight the importance of Antarctic proposals and the facilities and logistical support available. On a more positive note, Hendry commented that NERC are currently considering a proposal for a strategic Southern Ocean call, which could provide a funding boost for Southern Ocean research.

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Antarctic Circumpolar Expedition is likely to go ahead and will include various UK led projects, some of which overlap considerably with SCAR priorities. A SCAR Environment Portal is also being developed www.environments.aq which includes substantial contributions from UK scientists. David Walton at BAS is chief editor for texts submitted to the Environmental Portal.

Jen noted that the UKNCAR website is still in transition following the BAS website overhaul, and is currently a 'legacy' site associated with the BAS website. Jen, Jane and the BAS web team will work on finding a solution, which will probably involve developing a Wordpress site to host UKNCAR information which will be

kept updated by the UKNCAR Secretary in future.

Rosemary Nash would like UKNCAR members review the SCAR Strategic Plan and provide her any comments they have. Next year UKNCAR will consider whether the UK should bid to host a future SCAR meeting.