

## SoBRA AGM – 10 December 2025

### Chair's Report

#### Executive Committee 2025

Kate Baker (Antea Group UK)	Chair
Jo Wilding (Freelance)	Outgoing Chair
Mel Evans (Soilfix)	Secretary (outgoing)
Sarah Bannon	Secretary (incoming)
Rachel Dewhurst (Stantec)	Treasurer
Fiona Townley (RSK RAW)	Website and membership
Tim Rolfe (YES Environmental)	Ordinary Member
Sarah Harris (neé Paulton) (NRW)	Ordinary Member
Greg Gibson (Leeds CC)	Ordinary Member
Sarah Bannon (Ramboll)	Ordinary Member
Melanie Lyons (Shell)	Ordinary Member
Christopher Taylor (National Grid)	Ex-Officio Member (Accreditation)

- The tenures on the Executive Committee of Jo Wilding, Mel Evans and Greg Gibson expire at the end of 2025 and none of the members stood for re-election.
- Nomination invitations for five seats on the Executive Committee for 2026 (for a three-year term) were advertised to members in September and were confirmed at the AGM.
- Five nominations were received – from Stephanie Cox (E3P), David Dyson (AECOM), Laura Garland (Arcadis), Kimberley Neville (CGL) and Dominic Young (Renfrewshire Council).
- All were invited to join the Executive Committee.
- Christopher Taylor resigned as ex-officio member in July 2025. The Accreditation Lead role has been taken on by the Executive Committee. Administration of the August accreditation window was also managed by the Committee with a longer term view to contracting CL:AIRE to administer the bi-annual application windows of the scheme. CPD checks would continue to be administered by the Executive Committee CPD Co-Ordinator.

#### Membership

We currently have 624 members of which 64 are regulators/not for profit. Of these, 104 are accredited members (50 ASoBRA). Eight accredited members are not for profit.

#### Finances

According to the audited accounts for the financial year 2024-2025 the society's finances were as

follows for our financial year ending 30 September 2025:

Bank (current account) £34,600.93

Bank (savings account) £41,564.25

PayPal £1,082.26

Total **£77,247.44**

Future anticipated liabilities:

Cost of Winter Conference at Burlington House in partnership with RSC Toxicology Group TBC.

Payment of two research grants of £25,000 each (£50,000)

Costs to administer Accreditation Scheme TBC

The outcome of the independent audit of the society's finances was uploaded to the SoBRA website on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026. Members were alerted by email that the Audited Accounts were available for review and given one week to raise any concerns or that approval would be assumed. No concerns were raised so the Accounts were considered duly approved. This year the audit has been kindly carried out by Tatiana Cocerva of WSP.

## Society Publications & Events

- Executive Committee organised a summer workshop on *Advanced DQRA – Dealing with non-standard risk assessments* held at the Priory Rooms in Birmingham in July. 71 attendees including committee members and speakers.
- Executive Committee organised a December 2025 conference jointly with the RSC Toxicology Group and held the SoBRA AGM.
- Early Careers sub-group arranged six early careers webinars throughout 2025. Recordings available on our website <https://sobra.org.uk/resources/early-careers-webinars/>.
  - *The SoBRA Accreditation Scheme – RSoBRA* (Tom Parker & Hannah White 21/01/25)
  - *Introduction to Coal Mine Gas Risk Assessment and Protection Design* (Amy Juden 18/2/25)
  - *Acute Human Health Risk Assessment* (Becky Whiteley 15/4/25)
  - *PFAS toxicology* (Meera Cush & Jesse Davies 17/06/25)
  - *Contaminant Distribution In Soil* (Barry Mitcheson 30/09/25)
  - *Assessing risks to surface water receptors from land contamination sources* (Helen McMillan & Frances Gregory 25/11/25)
- Ground Gases sub-group published '*Ground Gas Flux*' version 1.0 in February 2025.

All publications are available on the resources pages of the SoBRA website at <https://sobra.org.uk/resources/reports/>.

## Sub-Groups

SoBRA currently has the following sub-groups:

Sub-group	Group Lead	EC Sponsor	Activities/Progress
Ground Gases (with radon working group)	Steve Wilson (EPG)	Greg Gibson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Ground Gas Flux</i> published February 2025.</li> <li>▪ <i>Earthworks and Ground Gas</i> in final review.</li> <li>▪ Future work items include: gas movement through different foundations, carbon monoxide and hydrogen sulphide risk assessment.</li> </ul>
NAPL	David Holmes (Geosyntec)	Mel Evans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>1. Introduction</i> (web page) – to be drafted.</li> <li>▪ <i>4. NAPL Monitoring Options and their Merits</i>. In production.</li> <li>▪ <i>6. Residual Saturation</i>. Ready for publication.</li> <li>▪ <i>7. Choosing a Sustainable Remediation Approach</i>. In final review.</li> </ul>
Early Careers	Kirsty Tolley (RSK Geosciences) Alyssa Glen (WSP)	Sarah Harris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Six webinars.</li> <li>▪ Drafting a glossary of risk assessment terms.</li> <li>▪ Planning an Early Careers workshop, working through a case study from desk study to GQRA.</li> </ul>
Controlled Waters and Climate Change	Helen McMillan (RSK Geosciences)	Mel Lyons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Update of <i>2022 Guidance on Assessing Risk to Controlled Waters from UK Land Contamination Under Conditions of Future Climate Change</i> to take into account new guidance on climate change predictions published 2025 and consideration of extreme weather predictions in CSMs.</li> </ul>
Vapour Intrusion and Risk	David Dyson (AECOM)	Tim Rolfe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Newly formed for 2025, commenced in March. Initiated by the review of the SoBRA Groundwater Vapour GACs in 2024 and recognition of the conservatism and uncertainty in modelled groundwater vapour GACs.</li> <li>▪ <i>Vapour GAC derivations</i>. Close to first draft.</li> <li>▪ <i>Screening distances</i>. Making good progress.</li> <li>▪ <i>Vapour DQRA</i>. At an early stage.</li> <li>▪ Will also review the previous Vapour sub-group 2022 publications 1A, 1B and 1C.</li> </ul>

Details of the sub-group activities can be found on the sub-group pages of the SoBRA website at <https://sobra.org.uk/about-us/sub-groups/>.

## Other Activities

Since January 2025 the SoBRA Executive Committee has also:

- Held four committee meetings – January, March, July and September.
- Held two Accreditation Scheme application windows (February and August). There were seven applicants in total, all for RSoBRA.
- Supported a joint SoBRA, IES, RemSoc and Geological Society Early Careers networking event in Birmingham in June.
- Represented SoBRA at the National Brownfield Forum and NQMS steering group meetings. This included active input into the NBF publication *Interactions Between Government Policies Affecting the Planning and Development of Brownfield Land in England*, July 2025.
- Maintained collaborative working with other industry organisations by ongoing collaboration with RemSoc, and during 2025 with the Geological Society and the Institution of Environmental Sciences for an Early Careers networking event.
- With Chris and Marlene stepping down from running the Accreditation Scheme, discussions have progressed with CL:AIRE to take on the administration of the scheme, initially for the two application windows in 2026, with a view to a permanent contract.
- Continued to support a research project at the University of Greenwich on NAPL mobility to support the work of the NAPL sub-group, following an award in 2022. Final payment in relation to the grant award was made in 2024, and the final report is due imminently.
- Awarded two research grants in August:
  - *Advanced PFAS transport modelling for groundwater contamination risk assessment* - Cranfield University and Geosyntec. Awarded £25,000.
  - *Early stage NSZD: Evaluation of microbial community response and NAPL degradation and change* – Anthera Remediation Technologies, Geosyntec, Soilfix and Socotec. Awarded £25,000.
- There were no applications for any bursaries or scholarships during 2025.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all those SoBRA members who have actively participated in our Society over the past year. From the Executive Committee who volunteer their time to ensure that it continues to be the well-respected organisation that it is today, to the committee members' employers who kindly support us by allowing, at least a proportion of that voluntary time, to be conducted during their working hours. The members who are actively involved in sub-groups which produce documents and technical guidance that support the entire brownfield community (including non-members), the members and non-members who have volunteered their time to participate in our Early Careers

webinars, 2025 Summer Workshop and Winter Conference. In particular, Barry Mitcheson for suggesting the idea for the Summer Workshop and for his input into arranging the programme and making the day a success. This is a great example of active membership.

I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable contribution and dedication of our Scrutineers who continue to volunteer their time to drive our Accreditation Scheme and recognise the risk assessment skills of their co-professionals, and to those members who realise the important of robust brownfield risk assessment and put the time and effort into applying for accreditation. I extend special thanks to Chris and Marlene Taylor who have operated the scheme for the past decade and who recently stepped down to pursue a life beyond brownfield risk. Also, retiring Scrutineers Andy Singleton, Craig Hampton and Tom Parker who have given dedicated service to the Accreditation Scheme for many years.

I am grateful to all new and renewing members. Your fees allow us to put on events and fund bursaries, scholarships and research grants which help us to share knowledge, and drive forward research and progression in brownfield risk assessment.

Finally, a huge thank you to Jo Wilding who is leaving the Executive Committee at the end of 2025 after seven years, first as Secretary and then Chair. You have been a fantastic mentor and are a hard act to follow. I hope that you will enjoy more time to swim in 2026.

### **Future Activities**

The SoBRA programme of activities for next year will be determined by the newly constituted Executive Committee when it meets in early 2026. Our sub-groups have a number of documents in the final stages of production which should be ready for publication over the course of the year, as will be the four reports from the Summer Workshop. We will be looking at ways to boost our membership numbers, to renew interest in the Accreditation Scheme, both applications and scrutineering and ensure that we stay relevant to our members.

### **Closure**

The past 12 months have flown by and I am looking forward to my second year as Chair in 2026. I look forward to more active participation from our wider membership to continue our Society's collaborative approach to quality risk assessment.

Kate Baker  
SoBRA Chair 2025-2026  
3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026