

UKCRCEC/2017/11

Minutes of the 45th meeting of the UK Computing Research Executive Committee on **Tuesday 6 June 2017** at **11:00** at BCS, The Chartered Institute of IT, Davidson Building, 5 Southampton Street, London, WC2E 7HA.

PRESENT

Ann Blandford (Chair)	Anthony Cohn	Cliff Jones
Derek McAuley	Jane Hillston	Christopher Johnson

BY INVITATION

Adam Luqmani (EPSRC)	Kevin Jones (Memb Panel)	Edmund Robinson (CPHC)
Darren Gladwin (IET)		

IN ATTENDANCE

Maxine Leslie (BCS)

APOLOGIES

David Benyon	Martyn Thomas	Joe Winchester
Samantha Francis (EPSRC)	Ahmed Kotb (IET)	Bill Mitchell (BCS)

1. INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME TO NEW PARTICIPANTS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and in particular Kevin Jones, Chair of the Membership Panel.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RECEIVED as above. Members were concerned that Bill Mitchell had not been in touch or attended any recent meetings. The Secretariat undertook to check whether Bill still wished to be involved in the Executive Committee work. The Committee was disappointed that Samantha Francis had been unable to attend the meeting and looked forward to welcoming Sam to the October meeting. **ACTION: Secretariat**

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 14 March 2017 were APPROVED for transfer to the UKCRC website. **ACTION: Secretariat/D Gladwin**

It was NOTED that the terms of office of two Executive Committee Members were complete: Cliff Jones had served his first 3-year term and Martyn Thomas had served 6 years, so would be stepping down. It was further NOTED that a new Member may need to be sought to look after consultations and submissions, in particular as there were difficulties in securing help with these from the wider membership. Secretariat to initiate process for Executive Committee elections and Chair to write to out-going Members, Martyn Thomas and Joe Winchester to thank them for their contributions to the work of the EC.

ACTION: Secretariat/Chair

4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1. Snowbird Conference report (see item 4.4 below)

4.2 Other matters arising

The Action List was reviewed and the following update, which would not be covered elsewhere on the agenda, was noted:

UKCRCEC meeting held on 14 March 2017

Item 1 Welcome and apologies – The Chair reported that she had been in contact with Joe Winchester, who had indicated that he was having difficulty finding time to attend meetings due to work travel commitments and asked whether he should give up his place on the Executive Committee to someone else who is able to give more time and input. Members AGREED to accept Joe's resignation. There was some discussion about the term of office left when a Member resigns mid-term and it was further AGREED that in this sort of circumstance the new Member should serve the remainder of the 3-year term (1 year) plus a further 3-year term to ensure a smooth transition. *[Post meeting Secretariat Note: In the last couple of years the timing of elections as stated in the Constitution 'The Members of the Executive serve for three years, with one third elected each year' had broken down; however as the latest resignation is one of those appointments that is 'out of synch', we can now return to this timing with the three vacancies being for 2017-2020 this time].*

Item 2 Minutes of last meeting – Adam Luqmani had made enquiries about the Brexit figures and found that analysis was being undertaken but there was little he could say at this stage apart from the messages to be conveyed under the EPSRC report item.

Item 6.1 Research funding and policy, EPSRC Update – Adam Luqmani indicated that information related to the hexagon representations were shown as a visualised portfolio on the website, where it was possible to browse by theme and pick up all grants with the appropriate ICT coding. The proportion of the portfolio to be funded will be driven by applicant behaviour rather than controlled by EPSRC. There was some debate about hexagon proportions relating to funds and Adam undertook to send a link to VOP to the Secretariat for circulation, which will help with accuracy.

ACTION: A Luqmani/Secretariat

Following investigation on whether there was a charge for the ORBIT service, Adam Luqmani reported that Renee van de Locht had been in conversation with one of the ORBIT employees who had wrongly assumed that the grant funding was start-up funding rather than for steering groups/workshops. Who will be expected to pay, and what for, will be discussed at a meeting on Friday which Derek McAuley was attending.

ACTION: D McAuley

UKCRC Executive Committee Meeting ACTIONS from 1 November 2016

Item 7 Future activities for UKCRC - Derek McAuley reported that he had been in contact with Maurizio Pilu at Lloyds Register, with a view to taking this work forward.

4.3 Membership Panel and Membership (This relates to items 6.1 and 9.1 on the Agenda but was taken early within the Matters Arising section as Kevin Jones had to leave to attend another meeting)

Kevin Jones, Chair of the Membership Panel, provided an update for EC Members on the status of membership and recruitment. He was keen to ensure that the process was as simple as possible, in particular that the trajectory for membership was transparent for early career researchers. There were two distinct issues: ensuring that the membership criteria were flexible and more importantly ensuring that the right people are nominated in the first place. It seemed that potential nominators were unsure who could be nominated. There is a widely-held view that membership is for professors only and it would be good to attract genuine high flyers as well. It had been noted that in the City there was a livery scheme which attracted early career employees who were on a trajectory, a similar 'fall-back' scheme might be attractive to early career researchers who could not yet achieve full membership.

Members discussed writing a draft proposal for this and defining a more streamlined procedure for recruitment. Several sources of possible recruits, identifying genuine high flyers were discussed such as EPSRC early career fellows, attendees at Royal Society events, advisory committees with industrial members (CDTs), advertising via CPHC and employers via BCS and the IET.

Jane Hillston suggested that one way to reshape perceptions could be to showcase profiles of UKCRC Members on the website such as non-professors and under-represented groups such as women.

Members AGREED to establish a Working Group to address this and Kevin Jones, Cliff Jones and Derek McAuley volunteered to be included with Adam Luqmani as a non-Exec Member. Kevin Jones undertook to ask Erol Gelenbe from the Membership Panel to be involved also. **ACTION: K Jones**

In the meantime, it would be important to strongly encourage people to send in CVs using the more streamlined process of one piece of documentation. If potential members are nominated this would be more straightforward than if self-nominated, where more scrutiny would be required. Kevin Jones undertook to send an amended wording for the membership application part of the website to Darren Gladwin for posting. **ACTION: K Jones/D Gladwin**

The Chair informed Members that the nominations for Membership Panel from BCS and the IET had been outstanding for years; however a nomination had been received from CPHC, who was currently going through the application process. Members queried the need for Membership Panel members to come from BCS/IET.

It was therefore AGREED that the constitution for the UKCRC Membership Panel should be updated to ensure that elections are straightforward and positions are easier to fill, by:

- extending the term from 2 to 3 years
- removing the requirement to have a fallow year after two terms
- saying that the minimum membership is 4 elected UKCRC members, and that UKCRC host organisations may add one further member each but that's not a requirement.

Tony Cohn undertook to circulate an amended wording for EC approval (already circulated). **ACTION: Members**

[Kevin Jones left the meeting at this point]

Item 4 Consultations and Submissions – it was reported that the driverless vehicle consultation progress had stalled due to the General Election.

4.4 Snowbird Conference report (previously item 4.1)

Members RECEIVED and NOTED the report. Tony Cohn indicated that Snowbird was in some ways more like CPHC than UKCRC. It had been an interesting conference with industry, rising enrolment and the challenges of getting graduates into research at an early stage being particular areas discussed.

[Darren Gladwin left the meeting at this point]

5. CHAIR'S REPORT

Members RECEIVED and NOTED the report.

6. MEMBERSHIP PANEL AND MEMBERSHIP/NETWORK DISCUSSION (& see Item 4.3 Matters arising above)

6.1 Key findings from draft EPSRC E&D report

There was some discussion about Athena SWAN and how staff members in institutions are not always recognised internally. Frequently smaller institutions do not feel they can apply but it was important for institutions to implement a pipeline to deliver greater diversity into the community. It would be helpful if UKCRC could offer support for Athena SWAN applicants, although Members noted the support already being offered by Carron Shankland from the University of Stirling through the CygnetS initiative.

Members AGREED that UKCRC and CPHC should work together in consulting their respective memberships on a proposal that computing departments/faculties should have at least a bronze Athena SWAN within 5 years. Chris Johnson agreed to liaise with the CPHC Chair, Carsten Maple, regarding this issue. **ACTION: C Johnson**

6.2 Draft proposal for UKCRC Research Network initiative (this item was deferred to the end of the meeting – see 10.1 below)

7. CONSULTATIONS AND SUBMISSIONS

Martyn Thomas was unable to attend the Executive Committee meeting; however Members RECEIVED and NOTED the report.

8. RESEARCH FUNDING AND POLICY

8.1 EPSRC Update

Adam Luqmani provided a verbal update for Committee Members on what is happening in the following areas of EPSRC work:

There are five community-related areas (on which Adam can give more details separately). There are 3-4 proposals within a new approaches to data science call. Another is a dragon's den pitch process to allocated £300k of funding for a feasibility study in the area of human computing. Adam will circulate a hyperlink with further information about this. **ACTION: A Luqmani**

Adam reported that bids for 5-year fellowship Research software engineering specialisms closed yesterday and robotics and AI, part of industrial strategy, was also closing in June. Members asked why so many deadlines gave only short notice and were informed that the industrial strategy challenge fund and other central government priorities had imposed a very aggressive spend profile on the councils which in turn had led to short deadlines. Concern was expressed by Members that short deadlines could affect bid quality and be discriminatory. It was suggested that EC writes to the minister in question to flag this concern, but the Chair undertook to consult Samantha Francis first. **ACTION: Chair**

It was reported that the 2nd reading of the Bill about UKRI coming into effect is imminent. On the subject of Brexit and international issues, a subgroup of SAT has been set up to consider this with its specific role to be defined at the first meeting. There were opportunities for funding of organisations and on-going relationships with the EU. The message from UKRI was that it wishes to maintain all collaborations with the EU wherever possible. The Treasury had indicated that it would underwrite projects started before Brexit with the intention being for business as usual to be maintained along with autonomy of the Research Councils. Chris Johnson indicated that there was a strong possibility that UK will be given observer-only status until the UK exits the EU.

RCUK had been collecting data on the impact of Brexit on the research community, but as mentioned above, EPSRC reps were unable to share the figures at this stage as it could impact Brexit negotiations. Adam undertook to circulate the key messages from RCUK, including the message that graduates starting in 2017 will be eligible for PhD funding. **ACTION: A Luqmani**

There will be a CDT call in January 2018, and colleagues were currently designing what the call will look like. There were three vacancies on SAT, which EPSRC was asking the research community to think about.

On the subject of UKRI, it had been agreed that there would be an emphasis on leadership in the future. Polaris House was to stay and in addition they were looking into having a London presence, a shared model for HR and support functions and the strategic centre of the organisation as small as possible with strategic thinking to be delegated to different Research Councils. A new organisation, Research England, would have a variety of roles, including providing an interface with devolved authorities and organising the REF. David Sweeney had been appointed CEO and Adam undertook to forward information on this and the announcement by the government on the internet. **ACTION: A Luqmani**

9. REPORTS

9.1 Membership Panel (*see Item 4.3 Matters arising above*)

9.2 European Matters

UKRO: Adam Luqmani reported on this as above.

IE: Jane Hillston reported that there had been no IE meetings since the last UKCRC Executive Committee meeting in March. There was an EC-type meeting coming up and the annual conference in mid-October in Portugal which is based on a Snowbird-type format and involving mostly Heads of Department from around Europe. Jane undertook to report back on this under the regular reports item at the November EC meeting.

9.3 CPHC

Edmund Robinson reported that the CPHC Conference had taken place at Microsoft Reading in April at which the elections for Committee were held. Some time was being spent on assisting with the Shadbolt delivery plans with other stakeholders, but progress was slower than they would wish. Sally Fincher's graduate report had been published and this could be found on the CPHC website at <https://cphcuk.files.wordpress.com/2017/05/thegeccoworkshopsreport.pdf>. Three Members of Committee had been appointed to the Institute of Coding Panel and bids were being prepared.

9.4 BCS Academy

No report submitted.

9.5 IET

Nothing to report.

10. AOB

There were no items of any other business.

10.1 Draft proposal for UKCRC Research Network Initiative *(previously item 6.2)*

The Chair introduced the second attachment to her report suggesting a way of initiating activities where the bulk of the work on providing research leadership in the UK Computing research community could be undertaken by rising stars who would benefit from the experience while being mentored by senior members of the community. Members AGREED the contents of the Chair's outline and further AGREED that the Executive Committee would liaise with Samantha Francis on the possibility of a sub-committee comprising 2-3 Executive Committee Members plus representatives from SAT, CPHC, BCS Academy and young career researchers to write a proposal based on the outline.

The Chair and Derek McAuley (or Cliff Jones) would meet with EPSRC reps (Samantha Francis and John Baird) to discuss this prior to the next EC meeting in late October (Secretariat to liaise with Adam Luqmani and diary holders for involved parties).

ACTION: A Luqmani/Secretariat

10.2 UKCRC/CPHC co-located meetings

Executive Committee Members were reminded that the next EC meeting would be co-located with CPHC. The Chair undertook to liaise with Carsten Maple and Edmund Robinson on the running order of the two agendas to see if there would be an opportunity to have meeting time together.

ACTION: Chair

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2017

***Tuesday 31 October 2017 – BCS Offices, London**

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2018

Tuesday 13 March 2018 – IET Offices, London

***Tuesday 5 June 2018 – BCS Offices, London**

Tuesday 30 October 2018 – IET Offices, London

*Co-located with the CPHC Committee meeting to be held in the afternoon (TBC). Opportunities to network will be available over lunch at 1pm.