UKCRCEC/2017/07

Minutes of the 44th meeting of the UK Computing Research Executive Committee on **Tuesday 14 March 2017** at **11:00** at the **IET, 2 Savoy Place, London, WC2R 0BL**

PRESENT

Ann Blandford (Chair)	Anthony Cohn	Cliff Jones
Derek McAuley	Jane Hillston	Christopher Johnson
David Benyon – via telecon		

BY INVITATION

Adam Luqmani (EPSRC)   Darren Gladwin (IET)

IN ATTENDANCE

Maxine Leslie (BCS)

APOLOGIES

Martyn Thomas	Liam Blackwell (EPSRC)	Paul Davies (IET)
Joe Winchester	Bill Mitchell (BCS)	Edmund Robinson (CPHC)
Michael Barclay (EPSRC)		

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed Jane Hillston to her first Executive Committee meeting and apologies were received as above.

Concern was expressed that Joe Winchester had not been receiving the Executive Committee communications via JISCMail and the Chair undertook to contact Joe to check if he was and whether he would be able to attend future meetings.

ACTION: Chair

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 1 November 2016 were APPROVED for transfer to the UKCRC website, with one amendment to item 4 Chair's Report where figures about the likely impact of Brexit had been published, without specifying these figures. Adam Luqmani undertook to send the link to the published figures on the EPSRC website for inclusion in the November minutes. **ACTION: A Luqmani/Secretariat/D Gladwin**

Whilst checking the UKCRC webpages for information on the Grand Challenges, the Chair noticed a number of dead links which could have been due to external website changes and caching. It was AGREED that the dead links should be removed, keeping the links that worked. D Gladwin completed this action during the meeting.

3. MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Constitution amendment

Members APPROVED the amendment to the constitution which stated that in the event of a vacancy arising before the end of a Member's three year term, then the position will be filled by election; the Member so elected may still serve a further two consecutive full 3 year terms (as an exception to the rule above only allowing one re-election).

3.2 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 1 November 2016

Item 6.4 Reports: IET – Darren Gladwin reported that following a re-organisation of the IET, Paul Davies has left and Gordon Attenborough is the new Head of Department. Ahmed Kotb is the responsible contact following Alan Berry's retirement and will come to future meeting. Darren will let Cliff Jones know the relevant email addresses for the JISCMail updates when available.

ACTION: D Gladwin

Women in STEM & STEM returners document URLs were provided by Darren Gladwin:
http://www.theiet.org/policy/collaboration/index.cfm
http://www.theiet.org/policy/collaboration/stem/index.cfm and
http://www.theiet.org/stem-returners

It was noted that JISCMail queries and amendments should be sent to both Cliff and Muffy Calder routinely.

Item 7 Future Activities for UKCRC – It was further noted that John Baird, from the Digital Economy programme of EPSRC is included "by invitation", but will only attend once a year.

UKCRC Executive Committee Meeting held on 16 March 2015

Item 6 Matters Arising – There had still been no response from BCS about nominations to the UKCRC Membership Panel. In addition, the IET had not nominated anyone to the Panel. The Chair undertook to follow this up with Gordon Attenborough at the IET, once Darren Gladwin had provided contact details.

ACTION: Chair

4. CHAIR'S REPORT

Members RECEIVED and NOTED the report.

REF 2021: Tony Cohn reported that CPHC had confirmed its support. James Davenport from the BCS Academy was not sure whether support could be confirmed by today but Tony had indicated that he would delay the response until Thursday 16 March at 5pm.   The Chair thanked Tony for co-ordinating the response.

Membership Panel: The Chair reported that no volunteers had come forward for the UKCRC MP elections, other than Kevin Jones who had indicated his willingness to stand again. It was

suggested that Members that have joined in the last 3 years could be approached by the Chair to establish whether they would be willing to be nominated. Secretariat to send a list of recent new UKCRC Members to the Chair.

ACTION: Secretariat, Chair

CPHC: Members welcomed the announcement that the UKCRC Executive meeting on 31 October 2017 will be co-located with CPHC. The Chair, in collaboration with the CPHC Chair (Carsten Maple) had written a letter of welcome to Professor Sir Mark Walport following his appointment as the first Chief Executive of UKRI.

5. CONSULTATIONS AND SUBMISSIONS

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

It was acknowledged that the research integrity consultation deadline had passed and that no-one had expressed an interest in dealing with the open consultations. Members had received an email from Martyn Thomas regarding the cyber security UKRI changes (dated 24 February 2017). Derek McAuley will attend this meeting.

Chris Johnson reported that he had met with the Science & Technology Committee representative who has written a draft report which will be published in next couple of weeks.

6. RESEARCH FUNDING AND POLICY

6.1 EPSRC Update

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

Balancing Capability – this has been running for the last 18 months, finishing in mid February. There has been an update of EPSRC strategy and new descriptions of the research areas, which are being well received as they are being rolled out following consultation and use of an evidence based approach. The strategic objective in research areas may help in writing proposals and making arguments about national importance.

Adam would send Members a link to the EPSRC website which details the amount of funding for each research area (VOP). **ACTION: A Luqmani**

Equality & Diversity study – Adam reported that there has been a very positive response to the study, a lot of data has been collected which will analysed and provided to EPSRC in May 2017. Following receipt of the data, EPSRC will develop a plan for dissemination and actions based on the results.. It was acknowledged that there were challenges related to the different layers of computer science research. It was felt to be important to re-visit Grand Challenges with a fresh approach reviewing what value there is in increasingly global and interdisciplinary context.

It would also be important to keep an eye on whether research funds in 2019 will come via UKRI rather than from the EU.

Early career activities – Adam thanked the Chair for advertising the early career research event and for her attendance. 90 delegates attended the two events, on which very good feedback was received. Each event was attended by 45 delegates and in total there were 7 mentors including the Chair, running sessions on specific areas. There appeared to be

a good appetite for information particularly via mentoring from senior colleagues in the community. The Chair indicated that there was a good mix of representation from HEIs across the country, not just research-intensive institutions.

Members discussed the possible role of UKCRC in helping, perhaps linked to a grant proposal. It might be possible to recruit a subset of ECRs to do the legwork with mentorship from UKCRC membership, providing mutual added value and creating a network that brings on the next generation. There was some discussion about the definition of an ECR which could be on a spectrum, eg, Senior Research Assistants about to become lecturers or SLs/Readers.

Adam Luqmani indicated that EPSRC was planning further activities which could possibly include another event next year if this was deemed appropriate. Some of the other teams in EPSRC have established an early career forum to engage directly with their early career researcher communities. ICT have no plans to create such a forum at present.

ORBIT service – this was a service which had been introduced via EPSRC related to responsible innovation. There was some confusion as whether there was a nominal fee or whether it was free to access ORBIT. Adam undertook to investigate and Derek McAuley (who is on the Steering Group) will also make enquiries about this.

ACTION: A Luqmani/D McAuley

CDT call – this is planned for late 2017/early 2018 and is based on outcomes of balancing and theme-level activities plus boundaries between cross-cutting themes eg, ICT with engineering. The areas of safe and secure ICT and trust & privacy are being examined to ensure that digital economy roles are co-funded, in a continuum that people can apply against.

UKRI – it is understood that the Haldane principle is to be made law, ensuring that decisions about research funding will be made by researchers (and not by politicians). Prof Sir Mark Walport was keen that portfolio managers inspire the research community, and reinforced the need for autonomous RCs to remain following the UKRI merge.

7. **REPORTS**

7.1 Membership Panel

Nothing to REPORT from the Membership Panel Chair.

The Executive Committee Chair expressed her wish to work out how to bring in the next generation, somewhere between Early Career Researchers and senior/mature mid-career researchers, seen as the rising stars that are nudging at the bottom of UKCRC. There was some discussion on how this could be achieved including how to counter the perception that if prospective Members do not have a Chair, they will not succeed in their applications. It was felt that UKCRC should try to attract colleagues on the trajectory towards become Chairs for Membership, placing less emphasis on job titles and encouraging representation from diverse groups. It was suggested that a call could be put out to the current membership to invite nominations, ensuring that the criteria for appointment are transparent to avoid unsuccessful applications.

The Chair undertook to invite Kevin Jones to the next Executive Committee meeting to discuss ideas in relation to this. It would be important to check any wording of communications to Members against the unconscious bias guidance.

ACTION: Chair

7.2 European Matters

Nothing to REPORT.

There was some discussion as to the relevance of this regular report in the light of the imminent Brexit. It was noted that Euronets was still relevant as this was outside of the EU and Adam Luqmani undertook to report on this from a Funding Council perspective (UKRO). The Chair undertook to check with Chris Hankin on the continued need for a regular report.

ACTION: Chair

Jane Hillston informed Members that she was a Member of Informatics Europe (IE) which was a version of CPHC but in Europe. IE had been established by Bertrand Meyer and was now administered by Linda Hardman. IE responds to European consultations, has working groups, works with ACM Europe on the schools curriculum and produces an annual report on HEI data across Europe.   Jane volunteered to provide updates on IE work as part of the regular reports section for future meetings.

ACTION: Secretariat

7.3 CPHC

No report received.

7.4 BCS Academy

Report RECEIVED and NOTED.

7.5 IET

Darren Gladwin indicated that there was nothing to report until the re-organisation was bedded in and that he would be the first point of contact for the time being. The IET was just about to release a document to advise on how to encourage career breakers to come back into STEM.

8.   UKCRC EC 2018 Meeting Dates

Members NOTED the dates. Secretariat to liaise with CPHC on the proposal to co-locate the 5 June 2018 meeting.

ACTION: Secretariat

9. AOB

9.1 Membership Panel elections

See Item 4 above.

9.2 SICSA

This item of AOB was raised by David Benyon in relation to research pooling and the experience in Scotland with SICSA, following a request from BCS. It was reported that all 14 HEIs in Scotland are in SICSA and its development is now into phase 2 of a subscriptions model with HEIs paying in to get mutual benefit.   David informed Members that BCS was to visit SICSA to talk about research pooling, for example via graduate academy themed meetings and he had undertaken to raise this with the UKCRC EC to

see if Members wanted to look at this any further. It ties in with Early Career Researchers and extending the membership of UKCRC.

SICSA has two full time officers on the payroll and some academics volunteering some time with some subject areas which have activities organised, eg, distributing systems and networking. An advantage was that it has helped smaller universities get access to international speakers via SICSA, which has provided funding to bring speakers in. In addition, due to the range of different types of Computer Science work, researchers may not get exposure to other areas if there is no activity in their own HEI. Government working group involvement works well in Scotland, whilst this is much more piecemeal in England (and possibly also in Wales).

Members agreed that the SICSA funding model was something to think about but reproducing it would require resourcing. Members AGREED to start to think about actions on this, with key ideas linked to Grand Challenges, ECRs and getting the next generation into UKCRC.

ACTION: All

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2017

Tuesday 6 June 2017 – BCS Offices, London
*Tuesday 31 October 2017 – BCS Offices, London

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2018

Tuesday 13 March – IET Offices, London
*Tuesday 5 June – BCS Offices, London
Tuesday 30 October – 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.