

Minutes of the 47<sup>th</sup> meeting of the UK Computing Research Executive Committee on **Tuesday 13 March 2018** at **11:00** at the IET, 2 Savoy Place, London, WC2R 0BL.

**PRESENT**

Ann Blandford (Chair)  
Derek McAuley  
Luc Moreau

Anthony Cohn  
Jane Hillston  
David De Roure

Cliff Jones  
Anthony Cohn  
Christopher Johnson

**BY INVITATION**

Adam Luqmani (EPSRC)  
Edmund Robinson (CPHC)

Samantha Francis (EPSRC)  
Ahmed Kotb (IET)

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Maxine Leslie (BCS)

**APOLOGIES**

David Benyon

Bill Mitchell (BCS)

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting, in particular L Moreau and D De Roure who were attending their first meeting. Apologies for absence were noted as above.

**2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 31 October 2017 were APPROVED for transfer to the UKCRC website. **ACTION: Secretariat/D Gladwin**

**3. MATTERS ARISING**

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

**UKCRCEC meeting held on 31 October 2017**

Item 4 Matters arising from 6 June 2017 meeting, ORBIT (4.2) – it was reported that the situation with ORBIT was still on-going. Sam Francis reported that a Steering Group meeting and launch event had been held and that there were still some concerns about the resourcing and costing. There were a number of complex issues to be worked through including marketing and it was possible that CDTs would use the service.

Item 4 Matters arising from 6 June 2017 meeting, Athena SWAN (6.1) – the Chair reported that the action of producing a summary of responses from the mailing list on Athena SWAN was still outstanding. Sam Francis indicated that a plan was in place for EPSRC to have high level discussions with ECU to explore opportunities.

Item 4 Matters arising from 6 June 2017 meeting, EPSRC update (8.1) – Sam Francis and Adam Luqmani undertook to look at what could be done to help with the short consultation deadlines. Concern was expressed that complaints about the short deadline dates might result in a withdrawal of available funds. It was noted that within UKRI it appeared that other sectors were not having the same issues as the Research Councils as they were able to give notice of bids earlier in the cycle. The trend for computing was troubling as the sector may not get the best outcomes if the system does not encourage quality responses. Sam Francis indicated that occasionally notifications would be delayed due to other priorities and invited Members to make suggestions on the best way to disseminate information. The Chair and D McAuley agreed to liaise on a plan of action for making the most of available time for calls. **ACTION: S Francis/Chair/D McAuley**

Item 6 UKCRC roles including consultations – J Hillston reported that she had been unable to find anyone to report on IE as there were no overlapping members between the Executive Committee and the IE Board, but undertook to ask her contacts at IE if anyone was willing to provide a report in future. *[Post meeting note: Luke Ong agreed to provide reports in advance of each meeting, to be requested by the Secretariat.]*

Item 5 Chair's Report – concern was expressed that only half of the REF Panel had been appointed due to cost saving measures, although there was uncertainty whether other communications were taking place behind the scenes. It was hoped that there would be an announcement on who will be involved in advance of the first meeting. It would be good to see some new faces to help with succession planning. The Chair thanked Morris Sloman for the work that he had put in on behalf of the Executive Committee.

#### **4. CHAIR'S REPORT**

Members RECEIVED and NOTED the report, points on which had been discussed during the previous item.

#### **5. CONSULTATIONS & SUBMISSIONS**

C Johnson gave a verbal report which Members NOTED.

Four consultations had been submitted and a further one was in progress. Following feedback from UKCRC Members, a response was sent to BEIS on the consultation on the UK implementation of the EU NIS Directive. A joint UKCRC/CPHC HEFCE response had been made on the Knowledge Exchange Framework consultation and a further response on Cyber Security: Critical National Infrastructure. A response had been made to the House of Lords call for evidence on Artificial Intelligence and lastly, DCMS had issued a request for comments on a draft Code of Practice for a 'secure by design' Internet of Things, building on foundations laid by the Petras consortium, the deadline for which is the beginning of April.

Chris expressed his thanks to Martyn Thomas for identifying and supporting with consultations that are not issued through the normal channels and asked that Exec Committee Members forward any relevant consultations to him, for which not all would be appropriate to provide a response. The Chair thanked Chris for his work in this area.

#### **6. RESEARCH FUNDING AND POLICY**

##### **6.1 EPSRC Update [S Francis/A Luqmani – verbal]**

S Francis informed Members that the government had opened a competition calling for ideas for topics as part of "Wave 3" of the UK Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, which

they were looking to encourage and influence. For Wave 2, there had been two main activities: the audience of future and next generation challenges. John Baird was leading on one of the areas which had three parts including a research co-creation activity (£4M) and an IKC model of three centres to invest to focus on legal, insurance and accountancy. Innovate UK will deliver this call and there will be collaborative R&D projects through Innovate UK also with an expectation of matched funding.

The official launch of UKRI will be on 1 April. The EPSRC Council has been refreshed.

A Luqmani reported that the EPSRC Big Ideas initiative was a response to top-down thinking. The aim was to develop a stable of ideas to use for big activities. An open call had been published on the website <https://epsrc.ukri.org/research/ourportfolio/epsrc-big-ideas/> including a form to fill in with no deadline. Guidance was also available on the website on the detail required for application. S Francis gave some examples of computer-related activities and invited the Executive Committee to air any ideas. While there is no funding attached to this initiative, it is expected that they will be used in relation to upcoming opportunities such as the Strategic Priority Fund (SPF) and other "calls for ideas".

A Luqmani introduced the Connected Nation Pioneers Competition for PhD students. Competition topics span digital economy, mathematicians and ICT. 500 words of text were required from PhD students with a deadline of end of April (<https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/calls/connectednationpioneers/>). This initiative has attracting sponsorship from industry (eg, Facebook, Amazon, NVidia) and would involve a high profile event to celebrate value of PhD work. The final stage was planned for November 2018 in Manchester.

S Francis would be on maternity leave during the next meeting but hoped that her colleague Anna Angus-Smyth who would be covering would be able to attend.

## **6.2 Network Proposal**

D McAuley informed Members that the Workshop was being held on the next two days (14/15 March), with the purpose of finding a team of next generation leaders to take over and lead the network bid. It was hoped that some big ideas would be generated, focussing on positives rather than problems, and that the ideas are turned into actions which are taken forward. Members would be updated on progress.

## **7. REPORTS**

### **7.1 Membership Panel**

The Chair reported that there had been approximately 17 new members since the new process had been put in place and thanked Kevin Jones and the rest of the Membership Panel for their work.

### **7.2 European Matters [TBA (IE)/Adam Luqmani (UKRO) – verbal]**

IE: There was no report on Informatics Europe (see item 3, Item 6 UKCRC roles including consultations above).

UKRO: A Luqmani reported that EPSRC was working with European Research Area Networks (ERA-NETs), specifically CHIST-ERA for ICT in staggered calls for bids in 2018. The topics for 2019 are currently being defined and it wasn't yet clear whether both of either of AI and PUC would be funded. For matters beyond Europe, EPSRC was in negotiations on party-to-party collaborations, such as with the US. The engineering

section in EPSRC was also keen to collaborate. The National Science Foundation (NSF) was also keen to collaborate. It was agreed that this item would be re-titled 'International Matters' in future to consider the wider research issues.

### **7.3 CPHC [verbal]**

A Cohn had been unable to attend the last meeting of CPHC, so E Robinson provided an update. The CPHC Conference would take place on 23/24 April in Newcastle. Members were welcome to attend or encourage colleagues at their institutions to attend. Committee elections would take place during the Conference and Carsten Maple would become Immediate Past Chair. Activity is focussed on the workstreams generated by the Shadbolt Report but this was proving challenging, partly because of difficulties in engagement with other stakeholders, including those that are being wound up such as the Tech Partnership. It was acknowledged that some of the work that CPHC had been planning to do in this area, may be incorporated into the Institute of Coding. UKCRC Executive Committee Members were encouraged to contribute to the Edinburgh Napier work on inclusion and this could be discussed at the next joint UKCRC/CPHC meeting in June 2018.

### **7.4 BCS Academy [B Mitchell]**

No report had been supplied. Concern was expressed that the BCS Academy had not fed into Executive Committee discussions for some time. Members felt it was important to re-establish this dimension to discussions. The Chair undertook to contact Julia Adamson (Director of Education at BCS) to see if a representative such as Julia herself or the Academy of Computing Board Chair (James Davenport) could attend in the future.

**ACTION: Chair**

### **7.5 IET [Ahmed Kotb – verbal]**

A Kotb reported that since January 2017, IET's existing policy panels and sectors which were industry-focussed, had been joined together in a new department. Volunteer panels are being brought together to focus on areas such as inspiring innovation and influencing public opinion. Cybersecurity is a big area, on which the IET held an exhibition with industry talks and engagement with over 1000 people attending. 20% female attendance had been recorded at the event which may be attributed to the neutral messaging in social media. Data had been collected on career changes to cybersecurity with the plan of raising awareness with the government and with the Scottish parliament approach. The IET website was being refreshed and it was hoped that new members would be brought onto panels ensuring diversity and spreading the messages widely. D De Roure reported that the IET/GCHQ Conference at Savoy Place had been very successful. The Chair asked A Kotb to send any announcements of future IET events to the Secretariat for dissemination to the UKCRC Membership and A Kotb offered to send information on this to D McAuley.

**ACTION: A Kotb**

### **7.6 UKCRC/CPHC REF Committee**

Members RECEIVED and NOTED the paper.

## **8. UKCRC EC 2019 Meeting Dates**

Members APPROVED and NOTED the 2019 dates and also APPROVED the date of the 2018 AGM for **Friday 7 December 2018 at 13:00** for approximately 1 hour.

## **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **9.1 Snowbird Conference**

It was reported that J Hillston and C Johnson would attend the Conference and Members were asked to supply any objectives to be met at the event on behalf of the Executive Committee. **ACTION: Members**

### **9.2 UKRI roadmap and survey**

D De Roure informed Members that the UKRI Research and Innovation (RII) roadmap was designed to inform future funding and was alongside a parallel business as usual way to get funding. The exercise will first map what we already have, then what is needed looking ahead (to 2030). The first wave of the exercise is the survey. There is good engagement with the arts and social sciences sector and it would be good to have a similar level of engagement from computer science. Information on an open call to submit was due in the next few days, on which D De Roure would message the mailing list. *[Post meeting note: this action was completed on the day of the meeting.]*

### **9.3 Equality & Diversity paper**

This paper had been circulated by the Chair. Sam Francis explained that this has originated from discussions 12-18 months ago and led to the commissioning of a study in partnership with (amongst others) UKCRC, CPHC, BCS and the IET. Edinburgh Napier University undertook a study on under-represented groups, which will be published once an action plan for the partners has been agreed. The paper which had been circulated was an edited version of priorities. Plans were being made to organise a workshop to raise awareness (driven mainly by BCS and the IET). One area of interest was to gain a better understanding of bullying and harassment, particularly in an HE context of which EPSRC does not have direct experience.

## **COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2018**

**\*Tuesday 5 June 2018 – BCS Offices, London**  
**Tuesday 30 October 2018 – IET Offices, London**

## **COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2019**

**Tuesday 12 March – BCS Offices, London**  
**Tuesday 4 June – IET Offices, London**  
**\*Tuesday 29 October – BCS 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.

NB: BCS and IET rooms subject to availability

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR 2018**

**Friday 7 December 2018 at 13:00 (virtual meeting)**