Minutes of the 49th meeting of the UK Computing Research Executive Committee on Tuesday 30 October 2018 at 11:00 at the IET, 2 Savoy Place, London, WC2R 0BL.

PRESENT

Cliff Jones (Acting Chair)	Ann Blandford	Derek McAuley
Luc Moreau	Jie Xu	Bill Mitchell (BCS)
Ahmed Kotb (IET)		

BY INVITATION

Edmund Robinson (CPHC)   Anna Angus-Smyth (EPSRC)

IN ATTENDANCE

Maxine Leslie (BCS)   Amber Clabburn (IET)

APOLOGIES

Jane Hillston (UKCRC Chair)	Chris Johnson	David Benyon
David De Roure	Anthony Cohn	m.c. schraefel (tried to join
James Davenport/Tom Crick (BCS Academy)		but connection failed)

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

C Jones commenced the meeting by reporting that the Chair, Jane Hillston, had given her apologies for personal reasons and that he would be acting as Chair on Jane's behalf. The Chair welcomed Jie Xu as a new Executive Committee Members and Ann Blandford for continuing as a Committee Member having stepped down from the Chair. C Jones also welcomed Amber Clabburn who had taken over from Darren Gladwin in providing IET administrative support.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6 June 2018 were APPROVED for transfer to the UKCRC website.   **ACTION: Secretariat/A Clabburn**

3. MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Athena SWAN Executive summary

A Blandford introduced the paper and asked A Angus-Smyth whether there had been any outcome following the submission of the Executive summary to EPSRC following the last meeting. A Angus-Smyth reported that she had passed it on to colleagues. The Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity agenda was very important within UKRI activities and the summary was really useful evidence in supporting this agenda, particularly in terms of setting expectations.

E Robinson indicated that he had attended an Institute of Coding Diversity Board with representation that was external to academia. IoC had its own diversity targets which are heavy on Athena SWAN and the external representatives, particularly those from technical companies, were confused about the emphasis on Athena SWAN rather than a more general inclusive approach.

A Blandford was the UKCRC representative on the ED&I initiative which had been led by Nigel Birch who had now retired. A Angus-Smyth felt it important for this group to re-convene as it could be powerful in the future in ensuring that momentum isn't lost following the publication of the report. Natasha Richardson was the replacement for Nigel Birch and it was agreed that A Blandford should continue as the UKCRC representative, rather than the role being taken by the UKCRC Chair.

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

UKCRCEC meeting held on 5 June 2018

Item 6 – following discussions with A Angus-Smyth about the issue of short deadlines for calls, it was agreed that now would not be the optimal time to ask for this to be addressed. A Angus-Smyth undertook to let Members know when there is a good opportunity to influence senior managers most effectively about this issue.

Item 7.5 – A Kotb indicated that for those interested in obtaining more information about IET events and activities following his updates at EC meetings, the best source of information was the Events listings page on the IET website.

Item 9 – A Angus-Smyth undertook to find the URL for the Bond Report for Members: https://epsrc.ukri.org/newsevents/pubs/era-of-maths/
Adam Luqmani's replacement would be starting the next day and would be likely to attend the EC meetings with S Francis when she returns from maternity leave.

ACTION: A Angus-Smyth

4. CHAIR'S REPORT

Members RECEIVED the report and noted that the more detailed CRA Snowbird Conference report would be deferred until the next meeting when J Hillston and C Johnson should be in attendance.

C Jones indicated that for the Royal Society's new sectional committee, nominations had been requested within a very short timescale. As a result, J Hillston had formed a small working group to make some suggestions to put forward to the Chair of the Section Committee for Computer Science (SC0), Steve Furber. If there was no conflict of interest, it would be helpful for J Hillston to lead this process again in future. It was AGREED that how to proceed for next year should be included on the March 2019 agenda. *[Post-meeting note: action complete]*

It was noted that the excellent UKCRC Member recruitment figures during the year had dipped and it would be important to keep the momentum up to compensate for previous inattention and to address ED&I. This would also be included on the March 2019 agenda.

Members joined the Chair in thanking outgoing Members Tony Cohn and David Benyon and also A Blandford, in her return to the EC for a further term after stepping down from the Chair.

5. CONSULTATIONS & SUBMISSIONS

RECEIVED and NOTED the report.

6. RESEARCH FUNDING AND POLICY

6.1 EPSRC Update [Anna Angus-Smyth – verbal]

A Angus-Smyth asked Members if they had any specific questions. In response to a question from A Blandford about the UKRI leadership, she indicated that a new EPSRC Executive Chair (rather than a CEO) had been appointed who was Lynn Gladden, a chemical engineer from the University of Cambridge. Tom Rodden would be continuing for a further 6 months to smooth the transition.

A Angus-Smyth undertook to supply Members with a list of Council Members and indicated that the role of Council had changed from a governing to an advisory one. Mark Smith from Lancaster University will chair the EPSRC Council.

ACTION: A Angus-Smyth

EPSRC is currently developing its Strategic Delivery Plan, which will set out its strategy for 2019/20, and look forwards towards the upcoming spending review. Broad community and stakeholder engagement, including learned society engagement, has been undertaken during the development of the Strategic Delivery Plan. It is likely that the essence of the current key strategies will be retained with the purpose more strongly articulated, especially in the areas of ED&I, public engagement and infrastructure. The Strategic Delivery Plan will be released in April 2019.

Significant changes have occurred within the ICT team at EPSRC over the last few months, with new staff starting work in the next few weeks, and Samantha Francis returning from maternity leave before Christmas. A Angus-Smyth undertook to send a list of ICT Team contacts to Jane Hillston for distribution to UKCRC Members and Edmund Robinson for CPHC Members.

ACTION: A Angus-Smyth/J Hillston/E Robinson

A Angus-Smyth agreed that it would be good to work on communications with UKCRC and E Robinson flagged that data on research directors in CS departments was also kept by CPHC which might help with dissemination of UKCRC/EPSRC messages where relevant for the respective audiences.

C Jones recorded the thanks of the Executive Committee to Adam Luqmani for his openness, which Members had found really useful. He also thanked A Angus-Smyth for her engagement, in case this was her last meeting.

In response to questions about the changes which have followed the formation of UKRI, A Angus-Smyth indicated that the biggest practical change which has been seen has been the activities around UKRI funds, including the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF), Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF), Talent and Skills, Strength in Places Fund (SIPF) and Fund for International Collaboration (FIC). A Angus-Smyth informed the group that these funds are primarily working via an internal bidding process, with EPSRC bidding into central UKRI funds. A Angus-Smyth, updated the group on the development of current potential Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF) bids relevant to computing. EPSRC would update the Committee on the progress of bids to these funds at the next meeting. **ACTION: EPSRC representative**

Interview panels for the next round of CDTs were being held at the Oval in the next week with a view to achieving a balanced portfolio.

6.2   Network Proposal [Derek McAuley – verbal report]

D McAuley outlined what had happened to date, with 2-3 Big Idea proposals emerging from the workshop held earlier in the year. There was a 4th Big Idea by Matthew Chalmers but this had already received some funding, so was removed from the list. It had been hoped that, following D McAuley's initiation, some mid-career colleagues would take the proposals forward but there had only been a couple of volunteers. Members were asked for any suggestions on how to proceed. C Jones suggested putting out a message to the UKCRC Membership to request help with the bid. The concern was that the Membership was ageing, which while good in terms of experience, was an indicator that it was not doing enough for younger members.

E Robinson indicated that he would report on the CPHC workshops under the relevant item; however the Chair in 10 Years workshop was designed to help younger academics understand the routes available. D McAuley stated that the proposal had many goals, one of which was to get the younger generation involved in UKCRC activities and look at the career advice needed. E Robinson flagged that there was also a problem of increasing age profiles in Computer Science departments.

D McAuley suggested that an annual workshop (cost around £6k pa) might be the best approach and Members asked A Angus-Smyth if that was feasible as a proposal. A Angus-Smyth indicated that she could see the benefit of it, and undertook to discuss this with D McAuley offline. A Angus-Smyth also suggested that someone from EPSRC could contribute to the CPHC Chair in 10 Years event.

6.3   REF 2021 *(additional item)*

C Jones introduced this extra item and A Blandford informed Members that she was on the REF 2021 Panel and that the consultation on the criteria had closed on 15 October. There had been a great deal of divergence in the online discussions. The next panel meeting for the SC sub-panel was to be in mid-November and then there would be one more main panel meeting before the end of 2018. There were some broad issues and other specific topics around Computer Science. It was expected that it would then go quiet, with the criteria set, waiting for the submission process (the schedule for this has been defined). The members of the final assessment panel have mostly been appointed and announced, but a few last-minute appointments are expected when the exact areas of submissions are known (eg, AI and ethics).

7.   REPORTS

7.1   Membership Panel [see Chair's report above]

7.2   International Matters [Luke Ong (IE)/TBA (UKRO)]

IE: RECEIVED and NOTED the report. A Blandford reported that UKCRC had been invited to send a representative to ECSS and although the invitation was circulated in April, as the dates were in early October, there was no-one available to attend. It might be helpful to prioritise this in future. C Jones took an action to discuss with J Hillston whether to invite Luke Ong to the next meeting for an update.

ACTION: C Jones

UKRO: Adam Luqmani had previously supplied this report, so no update was available.

7.3 CPHC [Edmund Robinson – verbal]

E Robinson reported that the first set of CPHC Workshops had been announced: *A Chair in 10 Years* in Sheffield in December and *North of 300: Dealing with Significant Growth* at QMUL in January 2019. Further Workshops would follow, examining these and other topics. The CPHC Chair, Sally Fincher had invited J Hillston to the CPHC Conference in late April to talk about UKCRC activities.

7.4 BCS Academy [Bill Mitchell – verbal]

B Mitchell reported that the BCS Academy was completing the three year strategy to articulate its top priorities. ED&I was a top priority across BCS including being more vocal in supporting BCS Members to be ethical. The EPSRC report was an eye opener for this. Other work included supporting Artificial Intelligence initiatives in the context of ethical issues and discussing machine learning and AI with HEIs offering placements.

The School Curriculum Committee, chaired by Muffy Calder, had held its first meeting and BCS was running a scheme for lecturers (300) to run workshops.

A Blandford asked if the UKCRC representative to the Academy of Computing Board was required to be the Chair. B Mitchell undertook to consult the ACB Chair on this and heard back during the meeting that James Davenport was happy to welcome a representative from the wider Executive Committee membership.

It was reported that the MRC London Institute of Medical Sciences runs a Suffrage Science Scheme and last time 4 or 5 Computer Science nominations were Members of UKCRC. Congratulations were extended to J Hillston for her nomination and the question was asked whether UKCRC could support the Scheme more actively, maybe alongside EPSRC. A Blandford undertook to put some thought into this and A Angus-Smyth would check whether anyone at EPSRC was involved.

ACTION: A Blandford/A Angus-Smyth

7.5 IET [Ahmed Kotb – verbal]

A Kotb reported that the IET was also looking at strategy with topics including ethics and the carbon society which would be presented to the Trustees with three topics selected to be taken forward. There would be a new logo and website by late January and nominations were invited for the Working Group set up to address topical issues and chaired by Steve Schneider (Surrey).

The Communications Policy Panel was spearheading a Working Group on 5G, looking at coverage, details of which were on the IET website. In January 2019, there was Cyber Security Challenge on career pathways and work with DCMS, (ISC)[2], CREST, BCS (etc) as part of the Alliance which was due to meet on the following Thursday.

Engineering Shorts were being posted on social media to engage the public and the topics were very generic. Members were asked to make any more specific suggestions for future Engineering Shorts.

7.6 CRA Snowbird Conference [Jane Hillston/Chris Johnson]

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

8. EC UKCRC Roles

RECEIVED the paper. E Robinson recorded his thanks to Tony Cohn for representing UKCRC at CPHC for the past few years as his input had been really helpful for the CPHC Committee.

Members discussed the vacant roles and agreed that, as the UKRO report had only been added as Adam Luqmani had been able to report and Adam had moved to ESRC, this would be removed from the agenda in future. Further thanks were expressed to Tony Cohn who had agreed to continue to advise on UKCRC constitutional issues.

C Jones undertook to discuss the other gaps with J Hillston. **ACTION: C Jones/J Hillston**

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

D McAuley was interested in how the IET and BCS could work together, perhaps at an annual event or conference to look at ethics and machine learning and to encourage the production of peer reviewed publications. A Kotb undertook to talk to the IET events team and B Mitchell indicated that he would be keen to support this. D McAuley undertook to send information on this idea to the IET and BCS. **ACTION: D McAuley**

The IET and BCS would liaise to establish whether such a conference should be organised say, in 6-8 months time. **ACTION: A Kotb/B Mitchell**

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next EC meeting would be held at BCS London on Tuesday 5 March 2019 and the UKCRC AGM (virtual) on Friday 7 December 2018 (see below for other dates).

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR 2018
Friday 7 December 2018 at 13:00 (virtual meeting)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2019 *Commencing 11:00 unless otherwise stated*
Tuesday 5 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. Opportunities to network will be available over lunch at 1pm.
NB: BCS and IET rooms subject to availability