

Administration by BCS
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COUNCIL OF PROFESSORS AND HEADS OF COMPUTING

Minutes of the Committee meeting of the Council of Professors and Heads of Computing held on **Tuesday 29 June 2021** as an online meeting

PRESENT

Edmund Robinson (Chair)	Rob Aspin	*Steven Bradley
James Davenport	Ray Farmer	Sally Fincher
Mark Griffiths	Nick Savage (Vice Chair)	
Jessica Phillips (EPSRC)	Iain Phillips (BCS Academy Board)	

IN ATTENDANCE (Secretariat)

Maxine Leslie (BCS)

APOLOGIES

m.c. schraefel	Atif Waraich	Paul Sant
<i>*attended part of the meeting</i>		

(A) UKCRC-CPHC COLLABORATIVE WORKING

[UKCRC Executive Committee members in attendance: Jane Hillston (Chair), Jie Xu, Chris Johnson, Nadia Berthouze (Membership Panel Chair)]

E Robinson opened the meeting by talking about previous, current and future collaboration on running workshops and communications (such as the letters to the University of Leicester over redundancies), helping to serve the same sorts of communities in a coordinated way and with a similar voice. Also, tying in with the BCS Academy of Computing through Alastair Irons and I Phillips. Each Chair outlined current priorities.

UKCRC priorities – J Hillston reported that she will be stepping down as Chair in October 2021, leaving the agenda open for whoever takes over. There is an ongoing mission to get UKCRC Members to be more active and engaged. Part of this is to answer the question 'what is UKCRC for and what does it do?'. The joint workshop in January, organised by S Fincher and C Johnson aimed to inform the community on why it is important to get involved in consultation work. The workshop was very enthusiastically received and well attended (over 80 sign ups and over 60 attendees). However, in spite of being an interesting and useful workshop, it has not resulted in Members stepping forward to assist C Johnson with responses. The plan is to run the workshop again in October/November.

In addition, UKCRC is setting up a small working group and is talking to Anthony Finkelstein to see how UKCRC can promote services into the CSA network and work more proactively with government rather than reactively responding to consultations. The working group will start its work in the autumn too, when Anthony steps down as National Security CSA, so there will be no conflict of interest.

UKCRC is also talking to the Society of Research Software Engineers (SRSE) to explore how UKCRC and SRSE might work together to try to establish both the careers of research software engineers and the role of software underpinning research on a more sound footing with EPSRC/UKRI. There are also conversations with Informatics Europe.

CPHC priorities – E Robinson explained that CPHC Committee sees itself as an advocate on behalf of the community and would like to do more in this area. There are various areas of community support including running community building workshops and m.c. schraefel's workshops to support the increase of women in CS departments.

The programme of mentoring workshops 'A Chair in 10 Years' is continuing to be run by N Savage. S Fincher has run a whole series of projects on various aspects of CS education and there is scope for more of these. There will be a further round of the series of workshops for HODs/DoRs/DoTs to help build the community.

CPHC has been liaising with the BCS Academy and with the Institute of Coding. A number of Committee Members are involved in the IoC so there is good insight into the academic departments developing teaching programmes. The aim is to spread outside of IoC projects, into the broader community over the next 12-18 months. Overall the aim is become more visible, better publicised and more useful for the community. One of CPHC's assets is the mailing list which includes a lot of members in senior positions in CS departments around the country and this is a good way to distribute information such as EPSRC/UKRI updates. There is also access to HODs of CS Departments.

Ethics – there have been previous discussions on a joint workshop in this area. C Johnson (via the chat) is involved in an MoD project with Thales on the military application of AI with the role of ensuring ethical clearance. J Davenport is involved in an AI Masters project and noted that the challenge is that because the subject is relatively new there is no consensus on what works best. He is chairing an IoC work package to produce some resources and one question being considered is whether ethics should be taken as a stand-alone or embedded subject. They are still awaiting the website launch followed by public resources including public lectures. Members discussed whether it makes sense to both embed ethics and make it a stand-alone topic and the pros and cons of these options. One concern is that too many institutions tick the ethics box if it is included in the final year project. The CPHC Chair queried whether we should be doing a joint serious package of work in this area.

UKCRC membership – E Robinson welcomed the intent to broaden the UKCRC membership and asked if there is anything that CPHC can do to help with this. J Hillston explained that a year ago, the Exec decided to react to the change in the landscape which sees cutting edge research much closer between industry and academia. In order to foster more dialogue on shared concerns, it will be useful to increase the industrial membership to include those that have influence on research in industry. Industrial members may also have the ear of certain government departments. N Berthouze indicated that the membership criteria have been reviewed to include this dimension. The [application process](#) is very straight forward, either self-nomination or nomination of others and she would welcome CPHC's help in securing more applications from industry. J Hillston indicated that there are two types of people: those in industry that *do* research and research leaders that may have originally worked at an HE institution. Alternatively those that commission research or have an interest in how research is conducted without conducting it themselves. This type of member is valuable as they have shown leadership in way in which research is conducted.

E Robinson thanked colleagues from UKCRC.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed J Phillips to her first meeting and apologies for absence were received as above.

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING (CPHC/2021/14)

The minutes of the last meeting held on Thursday 13 May 2021 were accepted as a true record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Matters arising, not covered elsewhere on the agenda were as follows.

13 May 2021

Chair's communications (Item 5.1): the action for the Chair to liaise with A Irons and I Phillips on the future of the DisDis award is complete. The process to appoint a new award committee chair is under discussion between E Robinson and A Irons. I Phillips had sent a list of volunteers to E Robinson, which might help with potential appointments. Committee Members that are interested in getting involved or who might know someone who is interested, to contact E Robinson or Alastair Irons.

ACTION: Members

Programme of work: Outreach network (Item 8.3): S Fincher apologised that the Outreach report is not ready to share with the Committee at this meeting, but it should be ready to circulate in 2-3 weeks.

Any Other Business (Item 12.2): Secretariat to check if a list of non HODs/non-profs on Committee is still maintained and had found that it is, undertaking to circulate it to the Committee.

ACTION: Secretariat

9 December 2020

Regular reports – BCS Academy report (Item 5.10): As R Farmer and S Fincher are soon to stand down from representing CPHC on the BCS Academy Board, two new representatives will need to be nominated. The Chair undertook to see if he can attend the forthcoming Academy Board meeting on 12 July and M Leslie agreed to liaise with the Board Chair on arrangements [*action complete*].

4. EPSRC Update (CPHC/2021/16)

Members RECEIVED and NOTED the report. J Phillips reported that the budget allocation for 2021/22 is still the same for EPSRC but the ICT allocation is not yet known although it is assumed this will be similar to last year's. There is no starting gun yet on the new Spending Review and the requirements from the community are not yet known, but Members are asked to note that there are likely to be short notice requests soon.

The new Chair of UKRI is Sir Andrew Mackenzie. SAT recruitment for a refresh is underway and applications are encouraged from anyone. Members are encouraged to spread around the vacancy information in the report, not just to senior professors but to those at different career stages including early career and from business as well as academia as EPSRC is looking for a diverse range of people.

A call for prosperity partnerships is about to be announced, further details will be published on the EPSRC website.

J Phillips indicated that she is happy for her reports to be circulated to the full CPHC Membership and the Secretariat undertook to send out the June report [*action complete*].

5. REGULAR REPORTS

5.1 Chair's Communications

Leicester – The Chair updated Members on the situation. No-one had been made redundant in the Informatics department, but the Maths department had not fared as well. The community response and areas of research could have contributed to this outcome.

SB left the meeting at this point

If any Members are contacted by institutions with similar problems, the Chair is more than willing to write to them also, as this sort of situation risks reputational damage, threatens staff morale and often brings very little in the way of cost savings. There was some concern that drivers in government might view the process as desirable.

EPC – no meeting since the last CPHC meeting in May.

IoC – in terms of government policy, it is looking increasingly like training will be a big part of next Spending Review, but not necessarily in a form that is palatable to traditional universities. There is likely to be a lifelong learning emphasis with collaborations between universities and also boot camps to be the main thrust with a high level of genuine employer involvement. This will often be delivered in small dollops to non-conventional students. In addition, there is likely to be a change to the university fee structure in England with CS fees to be capped at £7.5k. This will have an impact on many universities that may be faced with the choice of profit-making departments subsidising loss-making or restructuring, neither of which is good news for CS.

If the government redirects funding from universities to boot camps, this may impact traditional courses. CPHC could take a position on this, but needs to be careful with any messaging. The Chair will continue to liaise with Rachid Hourizi to push for a more open community-based model approach.

- 5.2 Treasurer's Report** – R Farmer reported that the current account balance is £122K.
- 5.3 Learning Development Group Report** – No report.
- 5.4 Secretary's Report including Committee membership** – A Waraich had sent his apologies and the Chair undertook to take this offline. **ACTION: Chair/A Waraich**
- 5.5 UKCRC Report** – see [item \(A\) Collaborative working above](#).
- 5.6 EPC Report** – see [Chair's report above](#).
- 5.7 Welsh HoS** – MG reported that Wales Tech Week had taken place the previous week and was in its second year after being launched last year by the First Minister. The theme was how academia and government can work together in future in areas such as cybersecurity and Covid. A lot of science departments in Welsh universities have helped out eg, by producing lateral flow tests. The aim is to get to a 'business as usual' rather than an emergency approach. In addition, some measures had been expected to be launched the day before, but new guidance on classrooms and social distancing has emerged. Restrictions are quite tight in HE compared with secondary schools and with England, so there are some inconsistencies. Come September, it should be possible to move back to normal footing.

Members discussed how their respective institutions are approaching teaching and learning this/next term.

- 5.8 NI HoS** – no report, pending co-opting representative.
- 5.9 Scottish HoS** – no report, pending co-opting representative.
- 5.10 Reports from Other Organisations & Activities (IE/PICTFOR; Distinguished dissertations; IoC; DisDis)**

See [IoC above](#).

DisDis – I Phillips reported that this year's winner has been chosen and he will be writing the press release to announce this shortly.

6. OUTSTANDING SUBSCRIPTIONS (CPHC/2021/17)

RECEIVED and NOTED the report. The Secretariat undertook to forward outstanding subscriptions to R Farmer for chasing. **ACTION: M Leslie/R Farmer**

7. CONSULTATIONS & RESPONSES – no longer relevant and removed from agenda.

[main items of business]

8. PROGRAMME of WORK

8.1 Planning for the year – S Fincher introduced the paper that had been circulated before the meeting on CPHC Special Project Grants. Members had been charged with looking at the SIGSE website from a CPHC perspective. S Fincher is of the view that it needs an LDG to work properly. The proposed process is very lightweight, requiring a panel (assembled by the LDG Chair) to make judgements twice a year. It would be good to link it to the Durham conference in January of each year and the CPHC Conference could be used to showcase it. Rather than dealing with invoices for small amounts of money, it is proposed that, once the grant application is approved, the institution spends, accounts for the expenditure and then claims it back from CPHC.

The definition of a 'group' was discussed as this was thought to be vague and S Fincher undertook to look at this. Twice a year could be the end of September and the end of March as it would be better to make judgements in batches.

The Chair agreed that two panels a year would be sensible and, as a number of Members were not present, suggested that S Fincher re-distribute the proposal to the Committee and proceed if no objections are received by mid-July. It was further agreed that S Fincher look after the process until a new LDG Chair is appointed *[action complete]*.

8.2 2021 Further Conference event(s) – See [8.1 above](#).

8.3 Workshop Programme:

LDG [TBA]/Pipeline [N Savage]/EDI Seminar Series inc embedding EDI master class [m.c. schraefel]/Outreach Network [S Fincher]

Chair in 10Y – N Savage reported that the workshop planned for July is not now taking place, but workshops are planned for September and October. Last year there had been three workshops but two is thought to be a good target. It is hoped that S Bradley will attend these and contribute to the October session.

The Chair indicated that UKCRC is looking to run a further government/advocacy workshop at the end of the calendar year. In addition, from the end of the July it would be good to run another series of HoD/DoR/DoT coffee table sessions.

M Leslie (via chat) reminded Members about the Zoom meetings account, which can be used for such sessions.

Members discussed workshop formats and it was agreed that government guidance should be monitored but any F2F meetings would need to be of a reasonable length to justify the travel, otherwise online would be the preferred format.

9. MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS – July, August, September 2021

This item was not discussed.

10. 2022 MEETING DATES

Future meeting dates were AGREED as [below](#).

Members continued to discuss meeting formats for Committee meetings and Conference including what to include to ensure that any F2F meeting is of a sufficient length to justify the travel involved. Suggestions included opportunities to work on a particular problem, such as where CPHC is going, or specific workshops with UKCRC or the BCS Academy of Computing. It was agreed that it was useful to have F2F meetings once in a while. For conferences, it has been particularly useful to visit other universities and explore new ways of doing things, particularly those with interesting layouts such as Sunderland or Glasgow Caledonian.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS – The Chair suggested that the Committee regularly nominates individual members for Honours on a regular basis – see [Nominate someone for an honour or award - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). Members agreed and the Chair undertook to investigate.

ACTION: Chair

12. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 5 October and will be online.

Outstanding Actions from Committee Meetings – 29 June 2021, 13 May 2021 & 1 February 2021

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM COMMITTEE MEETING – 29 JUNE 2021				
MATTERS ARISING 13 May 2021 Chair's report (5.1)	3	Members interested, or knowing someone who might be interested, in getting involved in the DisDis Committee to contact E Robinson or Alastair Irons Circulate the list of non HODs/profs on Committee to Committee Members	Members M Leslie	On-going Complete
REGULAR REPORTS Secretary's report	5.4	Liaise on co-opting members to Committee for Scotland and NI and others with a view to trialling to potentially fill vacancies at April 2022 AGM	Chair/ A Waraich	On-going
OUTSTANDING SUBSCRIPTIONS	6	Forward outstanding 2020/21 subscriptions to R Farmer for chasing	M Leslie/ R Farmer	On-going
ANY OTHER BUSINESS	11	Investigate how the Committee might set up a system to regularly nominate members of the community for UK Honours	Chair	On-going
OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM COMMITTEE MEETING – 13 MAY 2021				
MATTERS ARISING 1 Feb 2021 Treasurer's report (5.2) 9 Dec 2020 MEMBER COMMS (10)	3	Forward the LJMU project report to the Committee and ask project manager to share standards of practice with Members Contact Anne Nortcliffe (Canterbury Christchurch) about interesting data about whether secondary school students are able to learn CS in particular areas	A Waraich Chair	On-going On-going
REGULAR REPORTS Chair's communications	5.1	Circulate information on BCS Academy/Alan Hayes mentoring scheme	Chair	On-going
	5.4	Draft a guidance note on committee position roles for elections and circulate to Committee	A Waraich	On-going
COMMITTEE ROLES	9	Liaise on assigning roles within new Committee structure	Chair/ A Waraich	On-going
PURPOSE & VISION STATEMENT – ANNUAL REVIEW	10	Review statement	Chair	On-going

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM COMMITTEE MEETING – 1 FEBRUARY 2021				
REGULAR REPORTS Chair's communications	5.1	Draw up a specification for a CPHC-funded diversity in CS project to help the community with curriculum, recruitment and retention through site visits	m.c. schraefel/ Chair	On-going
Reports from Other Organisations & Activities	5.10	Liaise to work up proposal for projects arising from IoC workstreams	Chair/ R Farmer	On-going
2021 Conference events	8.2	Liaise to poll CPHC Members on event activities they would like to see Draft an email about the series of events being planned, without committing to timescale for the next full F2F CPHC conference	R Aspin/ m.c. schraefel Chair	On-going On-going
ANY OTHER BUSINESS	10.2	Work on a privacy notice for the website with the Chair, A Waraich and J Davenport	M Leslie	On-going

FUTURE MEETINGS

All online and commencing at 11.00am, unless otherwise stated

COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2021	CONFERENCE DATES
Tuesday 5 October 2021 Wednesday 8 December 2021	To be confirmed
COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2022 [#]	
Monday 7 February 2022 Thursday 12 May 2022 Monday 4 July 2022 *Tuesday 25 October 2022 (1.30-4.30pm) Wednesday 7 December 2022	

**to be co-located with UKCRC Executive Committee meeting if possible*

NB: F2F/online format TBC; BCS London rooms subject to availability on these dates