UK
COMPUTING
RESEARCH
COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 65th meeting of the UK Computing Research Executive Committee on Monday 25 March 2024 at 12:00, held online

PRESENT

Kevin Jones (Chair)	Andy Gordon	*Amir Hussain
Simon Dobson	Jie Xu	

BY INVITATION

Nadia Berthouze (Membership Panel Chair)	Alex Taylor (IET)	*Rob Aspin (CPHC)
*Laura McDonnell (EPSRC)	Ben Scott (EPSRC)	

IN ATTENDANCE
Maxine Leslie (BCS)

APOLOGIES

David De Roure	David Hutchison	Julie McCann
Michael Fisher	Alastair Irons (BCS Academy)	Julia Adamson (BCS)

*Joined for part of the meeting

1. WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed Executive Committee members to the meeting. The new member Alex Frangi and returning member, Michael Fisher had sent their apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (UKCRC/2023/13)

The minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 24 October 2023 were APPROVED and are now ready for transfer to the UKCRC website. *[Post meeting note: action complete]*

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

UKCRCEC meeting held on 24 October 2023
International Matters inc IE (item 7.2) – for the action for J Xu to liaise with K Jones on reviewing UKCRC's international engagement activities, J Xu reported that IE activities are currently quiet. J Xu will let K Jones know if anything relevant arises and the action is therefore closed with future activities to be considered on a case by case basis.

UKCRCEC meeting held on 7 March 2023
Chair's report: consultations & submissions coordinator volunteer (item 4) – A Hussain volunteered to jointly coordinate the consultations alongside a second volunteer. Members were urged to volunteer to co-coordinate.   **ACTION: Members**

UKCRCEC meeting held on 25 October 2022
REF results (Item 8) – this action related to meeting with EPSRC to discuss REF results. At a previous meeting it had been reported that resources were not available at EPSRC to engage on this. B Scott reported that there is likely to be more availability from April and it was agreed that this area for discussion be added to the agenda for the next meeting in June.

4. CHAIR'S REPORT [K Jones – verbal]

K Jones expressed his regret that some of the actions from previous meetings had not been progressed. Some of this was due to his change of role and current undertaking of two jobs at the University of Plymouth. This will continue to be a challenge until a replacement Dean has been appointed in July 2024. Any offers from Exec members willing to support or take over the Chair would be really welcomed.

Weekly meetings of the joint Summit committee are on-going in advance of the Coventry University event on 16/17 April. The degree of interest from the UKCRC membership is quite low, maybe in part due to there being only a few UKCRC-specific events and the BCS Academy and CPHC sessions being of limited interest. Conversely, it was difficult to arrange sessions with more research community objectives where there is a lack of interest. K Jones encouraged Exec members to register for the Summit, indicating that he will be in attendance and will report back on how the integration of the three organisations' activities works in practice.

5. CONSULTATIONS & SUBMISSIONS [TBA]

See item 3 matters arising above.

6. RESEARCH FUNDING AND POLICY (UKCRC/2023/12)

6.1 EPSRC Update – members RECEIVED and NOTED the report. B Scott reported that there had been some delays with Round 1 due to the large volume of submissions (300 for ICT alone). B Scott thanked members that are contributing to panels. The timescale is May-July with outcomes to be notified 2-4 weeks later. The timescales should return to normal over the next couple of rounds. The Chair volunteered to circulate a review request on EPSRC's behalf for round 2 if needed.

7. REPORTS

7.1 Membership Panel [N Berthouze] – N Berthouze reported that there had been no applications for membership since the AGM in December 2023. In addition, the recent call for nominations for the March 2024 elections has resulted in no new nominations. As discussed at the last meeting, it would be beneficial to include an industrialist on the Membership Panel to complement the academics. It was noted that the UKCRC constitution states that full and co-opted Membership Panel members need to be drawn from the UKCRC membership. It might be easier to co-opt a UKCRC member, given that the time commitment is only for one year. As per the action from the previous meeting, K Jones and N Berthouze undertook to liaise offline on possible members to approach for co-opting.

7.2 International Matters inc Informatics Europe [J Xu] – J Xu reported that in IE's contact with the IEEE, a greater emphasis on Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning had been noted. J Xu will be attending this year's conference in Singapore and will report back to the Exec at a subsequent meeting.

7.3 CPHC – R Aspin indicated that planning for the joint conference was in the late stages and encouraged members to share the invitations with their networks. The three Chairs are due to meet to finalise the vision to be presented at the event.

7.4 /7.5 IET / BCS Academy [A Taylor] – there was no specific report from BCS Academy as A Irons had sent apologies. However, A Taylor was able to provide a joint update from IET and BCS.

Following the previously reported re-organisation within the IET Policy team, it has been agreed in principle that the current support to UKCRC jointly provided by IET and BCS, should migrate entirely to BCS. There are lots of reasons for this, but it has come to the fore as both IET and BCS go through their annual planning and prioritisation processes. IET is also undergoing a big internal structural change at the moment which is likely to reduce further the engagement that UKCRC has been getting from the IET. It is therefore felt that UKCRC will be far better served by BCS alone as the IET hasn't been adding any value for a while now.

The next stage is to work through the implications of this with the Executive Committee with a view to bringing a proposal including timeline and milestones when the UKCRC Exec Committee next meets in April or June. The milestones proposed at this stage are phase 1 the transition from the IET, and phase 2 a co-creation between BCS and UKCRC in the support model for 2024 onwards.

A Taylor emphasised that the IET will remain strong allies and supporters of UKCRC, but acknowledged that BCS is a far better natural fit home for UKCRC moving forward. UKCRC is of great importance to BCS and there are many important activities coming up that BCS would like to continue to work closely on with UKCRC, such as the upcoming UK Computing Summit and the reformed Reward & Recognition programmes (Lovelace Research & Education Medals etc).

The Chair noted that UKCRC is currently an expert panel of the IET and philosophically speaking, hoped that this would continue to be the case. All three bodies have changed in the last 20 years, so it was important to review how the strands of the partnership work. On a practical note, it had not been long since the UKCRC website had been migrated to sit within the IET family of sites and K Jones expressed his concern about what it would look like if the primary host was BCS. It will continue to be important that UKCRC isn't seen as a subset of BCS/IET but a stand alone expert group for the entire computer science research community. A wider discussion with the interested parties will be welcomed. A Taylor undertook to liaise with Julia Adamson and Alastair Irons to bring a proposal to the next meeting.

ACTION: A Taylor/J Adamson/A Irons

8. JOINT 2024 CONFERENCE WITH CPHC AND BCS ACADEMY

See above.

9. Trusted research - to discuss how to address this issue and influence DSIT to give it adequate attention

This item had been raised at the last meeting by A Irons. It was agreed that this discussion be deferred until A Irons is in attendance.

10. RS Sectional Committee nominations working group – volunteers needed

The Chair noted that this was a relatively new annual activity whereby a small working group of about 3-4 members from the Exec make recommendations to the RS0 Sectional Committee Chair (currently Samson Abramsky) suggesting possibilities for consideration by the nominations group. The time commitment for this work is minimal: a few email exchanges and a one-hour online meeting. Exec members were invited to volunteer for this working group and/or suggest possible UKCRC members to approach for this. Nominees can be from within and outside of the UKCRC membership. The timeline is May 2024 and interested members should contact the Chair. **ACTION: Members**

11. Any Other Business

11.1   Potential relationships with the National Engineering Policy Centre (NEPC) & Advanced Research + Invention Agency (ARIA)

There was some uncertainty as to who had raised this item for discussion and the Chair undertook to investigate whether a collection of contacts would be useful.   **ACTION: Chair**

[Post meeting note: this item was raised at the AGM in December 2023. From the AGM minutes: A question was raised on the relationship between UKCRC and the National Engineering Policy Centre (NEPC). This could be a good connection to build (see NEPC webpages) particularly to feed into reports in areas of common interest. It would be important to include BCS and the IET in any co-operation with NEPC. A link with ARIA may also be helpful. The Chair undertook to raise these possible connections with the Executive Committee.]

10.   DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair flagged the date of the next Exec Committee meeting on Tuesday 11 June and hoped that there would be a good turn out of members and observers to be better able to discuss the points above.

2024 Joint Conference (CPHC/UKCRC/BCS Academy)
Tuesday 16 and Wednesday 17 April – Coventry University

2024 Executive Committee meetings
Tuesday 11 June (11:00-13:00) – Online
*Tuesday 8 October (11:00-14:30) – BCS London
to include networking lunch and joint meeting with CPHC Committee

AGM 2024
Friday 6 December (12:00-13:00) – Online

**UKCRC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
SUMMARY OF ACTIONS TAKEN AT MEETINGS 2022-4**

Outstanding Actions in Red

No.	Item	Item No.	Decision/Action	Responsibility	Complete
UKCRC Executive Committee Meeting ACTIONS from 25 March 2024					
3	**MATTERS ARISING: Consultations & submissions (7 Mar 2023)**		Consider volunteering to co-coordinate consultations and submissions with A Hussain	Members	On-going
7	**REPORTS: IET/BCS Academy**	7.4/7.5	Liaise on building a proposal including timelines and milestones for UKCRC Exec consideration at the next meeting	A Taylor/ J Adamson/ A Irons	On-going
10	**RS0 Sectional Committee noms WG – volunteers needed**		Contact the Chair if willing to join the RS0 Sectional Committee nominations working group	Members	On-going
11	**Relationships with NEPC & ARIA**	11.1	Check with Exec members whether a list of contacts would be useful at the next meeting	Chair	On-going

UKCRC Executive Committee Meeting ACTIONS from 24 October 2023					
3	**MATTERS ARISING: Membership Panel report (7 Jun 2022)**	7.1	Include N Berthouze in membership of mission statement task and finish group	M Leslie	On-going
4	**CHAIR'S REPORT**		Consider volunteering and/or nominating UKCRC member colleagues to help with UKCRC Mission Statement task and finish group	Members	On-going
5	**CONSULTATIONS & SUBMISSIONS**		Write to A Hussain's contact at the Turing Institute to initiate UKCRC-level engagement	K Jones	On-going
7	**REPORTS: Membership Panel**	7.1	Liaise on the composition of the UKCRC Membership Panel *[added 25 Mar 24: look to co-opt an industrialist from the membership]*	N Berthouze/ K Jones	On-going
	IET	7.5	Liaise on how the IET can support UKCRC in future eg, in the area of policy and reaching out to government	A Taylor/K Jones	On-going
UKCRC Executive Committee Meeting ACTIONS from 26 June 2023					
3	**MATTERS ARISING: Chair's report (8 Mar 2022)**		Establish a task and finish group to draft a new UKCRC mission statement for circulation to the Exec and then members *[added 24 Oct 23: set up in 2024 Q1 with 6-8 members]*	M Leslie/K Jones	On-going
5	**CONSULTATIONS & SUBMISSIONS**		Forward any consultations that would benefit from a UKCRC-wide response to either K Jones or M Leslie	Members	On-going
UKCRC Executive Committee Meeting ACTIONS from 7 March 2023					
3	**MATTERS ARISING: International matters (25 Oct 2022)**	7.2	Provide any points of contact which might help to improve the visibility of UKCRC, especially in government	Members	On-going
UKCRC Executive Committee Meeting ACTIONS from 25 October 2022					
3	**REF results**	8	Contact Secretariat if interested in meeting with EPSRC to discuss REF results	Members	On-going
	Strategy day	10	Arrange online strategy day for all of Exec and invited parties *[24 Oct update: to be held early in 2024]*	M Leslie/K Jones	On-going
UKCRC Executive Committee Meeting ACTIONS from 7 June 2022					
7	**REPORTS**	**7.1**	Exec to think about potential members and communicate names to N Berthouze	Exec members	On-going