

## **BCS: Northern Ireland Computing Education Committee**

Minutes of meeting of the BCS: Northern Ireland Computing Education Committee held on **14<sup>th</sup> December 2022** at 3.30pm via Microsoft Teams.

### **PRESENT**

Donna Bennett, Irene Bell, Michaela Black (MB), Gerard Hughes (for Bill Connor), Pamela Cowan, Andrew Douglas, Ruth Foster, Michael Gould (MG), Jonathan Heggarty (JH), Alastair Irons, Ian McChesney (Chair, IM), Michael McEnery, Gareth O'Hare, Jonathan Wallace, Graeme Wilkinson.

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Eamon Brankin, Bill Connor, Philip Hanna (PH), Anthony McCourt, Grainne McGowan, Averil Morrow, Rachel Steenson (RS), Colin Turner.

### **2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022)**

The minutes of the previous meeting (previously circulated) were approved.

### **3. MATTERS ARISING**

Matters arising from the previous meeting will be discussed under agenda item 5 (Updates from working groups).

### **4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR**

The Chair and Vice-Chair suggested to the committee that we should reflect on the work of the committee to date and review the terms of reference if appropriate. It was AGREED that the Chair, Vice-Chair and convenors of working groups would meet to discuss. (Action: IM, PH, RS, MB)

Committee was pleased to note that Professor Alastair Irons' tenure as Chair of the BCS Academy of Computing Board has been extended to 2026.

Committee noted the new BCS Academic Membership package for higher education institutions.

### **5. UPDATES FROM WORKING GROUPS**

#### **5.1 WG1 - Barriers To Uptake Of Computing In Schools**

(a) Action from previous meeting.

Action: Meeting to consider dissemination of the video via c2k. Department of Education were approached regarding options for dissemination of the marketing

video “Computer Science can take you anywhere” via the c2k network. It was AGREED that WG1 would continue to follow up (Action: RS).

(b) Paper 2022-12-14-WG1

Paper 2022-12-14-WG1 (previously circulated) was presented and discussed.

The marketing video has been shared by a number of local companies but to date no data is available regarding extra traffic to the BringItOn website. BringItOn have been approached regarding (i) website traffic since the video release and (ii) to explore options for hosting on the BringItOn website itself. It was AGREED that WG1 would follow up (Action: RS).

It was reported that the NCCE mapping activity is ongoing.

Ideas for WG1 activity in 2022/23 were presented including the role of a central hub for IT teachers and further promotion of coding clubs.

Committee noted that the existing CAS Computing at School resource is well established and relevant to NI schools. It was also noted that the value of activity such as coding clubs would be significantly enhanced by the presence of a coherent professional development programme for NI primary and post-primary computing teachers, enabling sustainable engagement with such resources and initiatives.

It was AGREED that WG1 explore how the Computing at School resource and related established initiatives such as Digital Schoolhouse could be further promoted to NI teachers. It was noted that the Department for the Economy are open to discussion on resource needed to enhance any such promotion initiative. (Action: RS).

## 5.2 WG2 - The Student Voice in Computing Education

(a) Action from previous meeting.

Action: Survey to be submitted for approval to an Ulster University ethics committee before distribution. The survey has been submitted to the first stage of this, namely the Faculty of Computing, Engineering and the Build Environment Ethics Filter Committee. The submitted paperwork, circulated as Paper 2022-12-14-WG2 for committee review and discussion, was presented.

(b) Paper 2022-12-14-WG2

IM and MB presented the above to the committee, outlining the key artefacts which constituted the application for ethical approval, include the draft survey itself. The role of the YPAG (Young Persons Advisory group) in the design of the questions was outlined and their positive engagement was noted.

How best to distribute the survey was discussed. It was AGREED that the invite email be distributed to schools with the assistance of Sentinus NI via their NI

Careers Schools and Colleges Careers Association email list, with an initial one month completion window for pupil responses (Action: MB)

It was also AGREED that the c2k message board facility be used to promote awareness of the survey to school teachers and to encourage completion (Action: MB)

Survey question 4 “What is your gender” was discussed and it was AGREED further guidance would be sought on wording (Action: JH, IM).

It was the committees’ view that the live survey was potentially a newsworthy story and that such publicity could increase uptake. It was AGREED to further enquire on the viability of this (Action: MG, IM).

Committee also noted:

Data arising from the closed questions in the survey would hopefully be made available as an open data set, enabling, for example, local companies or agencies to undertake data analysis.

The YPAG continues to be available for any other committee related review or advisory work.

## 6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

## 7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was AGREED the next meeting will be held on Wednesday 29th March 2023 at 3.30pm via MS Teams.

### Actions:

4.	Review Terms of Reference	IM, PH, RS, MB
5.1(a)	Contact DoE to explore dissemination of the promotional video via c2k.	RS
5.1(b)	Contact BringItOn to obtain website traffic update and video hosting.	RS
5.1(b)	Explore how the Computing at School resource and related established initiatives such as Digital Schoolhouse could be further promoted to NI teachers.	RS
5.2(b)	Survey dissemination via Sentinus.	MB
5.2(b)	Promotion of survey via c2k message board.	MB
5.2(b)	Obtain further guidance on survey question 4 “What is your	JH, IM

	gender”?	
5.2(b)	Enquire on viability of publicity regarding survey.	MG, IM