

BCS: Northern Ireland Computing Education Committee

Minutes of meeting of the BCS: Northern Ireland Computing Education Committee held on **29th March 2023** at 3.30pm via Microsoft Teams.

PRESENT

Irene Bell (IB), Michaela Black (MB), Eamonn Brankin, Bill Connor (BC), Pamela Cowan, Michael Douthart (for Graeme Wilkinson), Michael Gould (MG), Philip Hanna (PH), Ian McChesney (IM, Chair), Michael McEnery (MM), Grainne McGowan, Gareth O'Hare, Daniel O'Reilly, Jonathan Wallace, Nicola Ward

1. APOLOGIES

Andrew Douglas, Ruth Foster, Tim Gamble, Jonathan Hegarty (JH), Alastair Irons, Anthony McCourt, Roisin Rice, Rachel Steenson, Colin Turner, Graeme Wilkinson.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (14th December 2022)

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

3. MATTERS ARISING

3.1 To Review Terms of Reference

The Chair, Vice-Chair and conveners of the two working groups met on 17th February 2023. It was concluded that no changes to the Terms of Reference were required at this stage. The breadth of the main committee's membership was noted as a strength. As it continues to explore programmes of work, it was **AGREED** to review its role to ensure it complements other activity in the NI computing education sector (Action: IM, PH, MM).

3.2 WG1 activity

Actions from the previous meeting will be carried forward to the next meeting.

3.3 WG2 activity

Further guidance was sought on the wording of survey question 4 via JH and also the Ulster University Equality Office. The wording of the question was updated accordingly.

It had not been possible to progress further external support for survey publicity.

Other progress on the schools survey was reported under item 6.

4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

The BCS NI Branch IT Educator of the Year Awards were now open for applications. The categories are: Computing (Primary), Computing (Post Primary), Digital Skills (Primary) and Digital Skills (Post Primary).

Committee noted the successful Barefoot Ciena NI Celebration event which had taken place in Belfast on 14th March. A number of committee members had been able to attend.

The availability of the CCEA Employer Video was highlighted, giving insights from software professionals in local companies on career opportunities and study options.

Finally, the upcoming CyberFirst Educational Conference for Teachers (25th May 2023) was noted.

5. THE SOFTWARE ALLIANCE – POST-LAUNCH UPDATE

MG updated the committee on Software Alliance (SA) activity. The launch event held on 2nd March 2023 highlighted the scope of the group to engage with stakeholders in NI as well as Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

Regarding education, SA was working with CCEA on data analysis concerning qualification uptake in schools and the implications for skills supply. An initial teacher event and schools event had been organized SA to promote career opportunities and attractiveness.

It was hoped the SA could play in role in coordinating local company engagement with teachers and schools to make effective use of expertise and provide a valuable resource to help teachers with their delivery of the computing curriculum.

6. WG2 – SURVEY UPDATE

Post-primary pupil attitudes to computing education and careers.

MB reported that the distribution of the survey to schools began on 9th March 2023 via the Sentinus Career Teacher mail list along with a notification to teachers on the c2k daily noticeboard facility. This was followed up on 13th March 2023 via the Department of Education directory of schools, for the attention of Head Teachers.

It was AGREED that (i) a follow up email to Computing/ICT Heads of Department would be issued by CCEA after the Easter Holidays (Action: MM) and (ii) a further notification be sent to teachers after Easter on the c2k daily noticeboard (Action: IB).

MB presented some overview statistics from the sample so far. To date just over

1400 responses had been received. The low response rate from the non-selective secondary category was noted. It was AGREED Sentinus would use their contact database after the Easter Holidays to encourage uptake (Action: BC).

MB reminded committee that members of the Young Persons' Advisory Group had contributed to the development of the survey questions. Approval was confirmed for sending an e-voucher to each YPAG member as agreed at the meeting of 28th September 2022. (Action: MB, IM)

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed.

Actions:

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| 3.1 | Review alignment of ToR with other activity in NI computing education sector. | IM, PH, MM |
| 6.0 | Survey follow-up email to be sent to ICT/Computing HoDs | MM |
| 6.0 | Second c2k noticeboard notification be sent to teachers | IB |
| 6.0 | Follow up email to Secondary (non-selective) schools | BC |
| 6.0 | Issue e-vouchers to YPAG | MB, IM |