

Hereford & Worcester Branch of the BCS

Annual General Meeting Minutes

Venue: The Hive, Sawmill Walk, The Butts, Worcester, WR1 3PD

Date: 13 November 2025

Time: 6:15pm – 6:45pm

Present

David Workman (Chair), Andrew Leeming (Treasurer), Neal Smyth, Grace Ashmore, Chris Farnath, Alice Campbell, Luke Marshall-Watkin, Josh Mizzi, Lisa Ventura, Ellias Forsberg, Adam Smyrski, Martin Farkas (Secretary), and members.

1. Apologies

Dr Derek Barnes, Cheryl Phillips, Keith Buncle.

2. Welcome

David Workman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. Minutes of the 2024 AGM

The minutes of the 2024 AGM are available on the website:

<https://www.bcs.org/media/rgqj4zjc/hw-agm-minutes-2024.pdf>

The secretary noted and apologised that the date on the 2024 AGM minutes requires correction. The title should state 14 November 2024, not 14 November 2023, and the footer should be updated from 2024-11-09 to 2024-11-14. Apart from this amendment, the minutes have been reviewed and confirmed as accurate.

4. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

None.

5. Chairman's Report

- This event marks the 17th consecutive monthly in-person presentation for the branch.
- Presentations during the 2024–2025 financial year included:
 - [Raspberry Pi, History, Current Uses and Future Developments](#) (19 Sept 2024)
 - [Cyber Essentials/Quality Assurance ISO 27001](#) (10 Oct 2024)
 - [The Power of Low Code Software Development](#) (14 Nov 2024)
 - [The Carbon Footprint of Computing](#) (12 Dec 2024)
 - [Ethical AI for Business](#) (9 Jan 2025)
 - [How Neurodiversity Can Solve Talent Scarcity](#) (13 Feb 2025)
 - [The Intellectual Property of Computer-Implemented Products](#) (13 Mar 2025)
 - [Using AI to find hidden threats](#) (17 Apr 2025)
 - [Quantum Key Encryption](#) (8 May 2025)
 - [Robots replacing humans: accounting and finance](#) (12 Jun 2025)

[From early computing, the internet & AI: the cyber security perspective](#) (3 Jul 2025)
[Man-in-the-malware: intercepting adversarial communications](#) (14 Aug 2025)

Event dates for the 2025–2026 financial year:

[Enhancing Threat Analysis & mitigation: using AI, ML & Quantum Tech](#) (18 Sept 2025)
[AI: convenience, control and the hidden risks of data exposure](#) (16 Oct 2025)
[The fundamentals of computing](#) (13 Nov 2025)

Speakers & topics to be confirmed:

4 Dec 2025, 15 Jan 2026, 12 Feb 2026, 12 Mar 2026

The in-room AV equipment was intended for use today; however, last-minute technical issues prevented this. Going forward, the aim is to offer both in-person and virtual meetings to enable more branch members to participate. It is hoped that the virtual option will not negatively impact in-person attendance.

The branch was represented at the following events throughout the year:

- Code Club sessions at primary schools
- Malvern Festival of Innovation
- RGS Careers Fair
- STEAMfest at The Hive
- Summer breaks at two libraries
- University Careers Fair
- University Presentation to Students
- Worcester University Hackathon

Active volunteers are required to support Code Clubs at two to three schools, in collaboration with university students.

6. Treasurer's Report

2024–2025 Budget:

Requested: £8,160* | Allocated: £1,662.

Actual spent: £1,499 | Remaining: £300 (for banners).

2025–2026 Budget:

Requested: £8,560* | Allocated: £2,425.

Costs have been reduced by using outside catering for sandwich provision. Supplementary fund requests ([SFRs](#)) have been used to secure additional funding for two Lego kits and new banners.

The full treasurer's report is attached.

* Corrected from the figure originally reported.

7. Election of Committee Officers

The committee stood down. The secretary thanked David for his hard work and efforts in organising these events, especially during a period of ill health. The secretary then proposed David for re-election, which was seconded by Josh.

The new committee was elected as follows:

- Chair: David Workman
- Treasurer: Andrew Leeming
- BSC Council Liaison: Chris Farnath
- Business Student Ambassador: Ellias Forsberg
- Committee Members without Portfolio: Josh Mizzi & Neal Smyth
- Early Careers Advocate: Vacant
- Education Liaison Officer: Vacant
- Inclusion and Diversity Officer: Grace Ashmore
- Secretary: Martin Farkas
- Student Ambassadors: Adam Smyrski, Alice Campbell & Luke Marshall-Watkin
- University Ambassador: Lisa Ventura

8. Any Other Business

8.1 BCS Council & BCS Academy Report

Chris Farnath has been elected as the Academy representative with a three-year term to the BCS Council. Chris reported that the new Chief Executive Officers have a significant focus on ensuring branches are heard. COVID-19 had a significant impact on membership, resulting in a decline. Corporate sign-ups have been slow, as the value of BCS membership is not always recognised.

The Council is positioned as the “conscience” of the Institute, advising the Trustee Board and representing members’ voices.

National curriculum reform in England: Citizenship is now compulsory, and a broader Computing GCSE replaces the previous Computer Science GCSE. AI and data science are emphasised as core life skills.

BCS highlights community activity and new Regional Hubs as central to membership value.

There are vacancies on the BCS Council; interested parties should contact Chris.

The full BCS Council & BCS Academy report is attached.

8.2 Communication Issue

Luke raised a communication issue when trying to establish contact with the Careers Advocate. It was suggested that he reach out to David and Chris offline, who will aim to assist and establish a communications channel.

8.3 Student Memberships

Take-up of the 65 student memberships has been slow. Of the 17 hackathon attendees, only six offers resulted in sign-ups. David will follow up but requires clearance from the university first. It is hoped that new members can be gained via the planned gaming initiatives.

It needs to be established that Chartered status is synonymous with being qualified, as in other professions.

8.4 Thanks to the Branch Committee

Neal expressed his gratitude and thanks to the branch committee for their efforts in organising these events.

9. Meeting Close

The meeting closed at 6:45pm.

Presentation Following the AGM

[The Fundamentals of Computing](#)

Speaker: Adrian Fern

Appendices

- Chairperson's Report
- Treasurer's Report
- BCS Council & BCS Academy Report

Minutes prepared by Martin Farkas (Secretary)

BCS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Branch: Chairpersons Report Year ending 31st August 2025.

Hello all

Firstly, I would like to express my thanks to all who have contributed to a very busy and eventful year. Whether you suggested and promoted a speaker for one of our presentations, made a presentation yourself, helped out at a careers fair or STEM event, assisted with the plethora of head office administration or simply promoted our branch among friends and colleagues, I thank you for your support and hope I have done enough over the past 12 months to earn your continued support as chair.

There are many positives to take away from the year, not least the unbroken provision of our monthly presentations made in collaboration with Worcester BIPC and supported by The University of Worcester. 'The fundamentals of computing' presentation on Thursday the 13th of November will be our 17th consecutive monthly presentation at The Hive. From train control systems to low code software, neurodiversity to cyber essentials we have covered a broad range of subjects relevant to our diverse audience.

I am pleased that many of the student attendees see the presentations as a social event and an excellent networking opportunity. This was expressed while I was at the Worcester University Hackathon earlier this month. This was our third Hackathon event, held in the university cyber lab on the 5th of November and both prize money and refreshments were sponsored from BCS funds. I used this opportunity to sign up some student members in an attempt to reverse our falling membership, which is of continual concern. I am also presenting to all computer science first year students on the first of December to promote membership. BCS head office have offered 65 free student membership places for the 2025/2026 financial year, with a view to extending the scheme if successful. I am keen to use this offer to encourage students to involve themselves in branch activities but, as I am sure many of you will understand, new first year students have other pressures, not least adapting to a new working and social environment. For some, coming to our presentations at The Hive is not high on the agenda.

In addition to the presentations, both myself and other committee members manned our tabletops at RGS school and The University of Worcester careers fairs, the Malvern Festival of Innovation and STEAMfest held at The Hive in Worcester. These events promote the BCS organisation, give us vital brand exposure and are used to engage with students who are thinking of careers in computing and STEM subjects.

One of the off shoots of the university student involvement is the promotion of Code Clubs. During the Spring term students assisted in supporting an extra-curricular club at Cranham Primary School in Worcester using Turing Tumble and Spintronics equipment purchase using BCS funds. This provision was extended to both St John's and Warndon libraries over the summer holiday and it is hoped that we can increase our presence in local schools and libraries over the coming year. This project is heavily dependent on student involvement, and we have only three or four volunteers currently. I am hoping the numbers will grow as new students settle into the university routine and find time to join the program. I firmly believe that we need to assist in any way possible to promote STEM subjects in early years education.

I am aware that we are still persistently concentrating all of our activities in Worcester and this is of concern. I have however offered to organise a presentation at The Hereford and Ludlow College and

hopefully this can come to fruition in coming months. I would like to make at least one presentation per quarter in Hereford.

BCS are going through a period of re-organisation and many of the provisions they make for accreditation are under review and re-design. I am positive after conversations with the new CEO Sharron Gunn and with Executive Director Julia Adamson that our branch, amongst others across the country will receive the support necessary to assist with improving our membership and also continued financial support for events that we organise in the local community.

Lastly, my apologies for the timing of the report and its proximity to our annual general meeting. I had intended to distribute earlier in the month, but events are moving quite quickly at the moment, and I wanted to include as much detail as possible.

I hope to see you all on Thursday 13th for our AGM and subsequent presentation, the Eventbrite link for which is below.

https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-fundamentals-of-computing-tickets-1838890363579?aff=oddtcreator&gl=1%2A6sx8wo%2A_up%2AMQ..%2A_ga%2AMTAzOTlxNDc5NS4xNzYwNzE1OTQ2%2A_ga_TQVES5V6SH%2AczE3NjA3MTU5NDYkbzEkZzAkdDE3NjA3MTU5NDYkajYwJGwwJGgw

Best Regards

David Workman

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12/11/2025.

Andrew Leeming – Treasurer’s Report

BCS Hereford & Worcester Branch - AGM 13th November 2025

For the year ending 31st August 2025:

Budget applied for	£8600	
Budget approved	£1662	
Actual amount spent	£1499	
Still to be spent	£ 300	(banners)

For the year ending 31st August 2026:

Budget applied for	£8600
Budget approved	£2425

Typical costs:

Catering:	£200 per month	£2400
Membership of the Chamber of Commerce		£ 264
Exhibitor at Malvern Festival of Innovation (SFR July 2025)		£ 300
Hackathon – Autumn 2025 (SFR approved)		£1000
Programmable Lego kit for primary schools (SFR April 2025)		£ 445

BC47 Hereford and Worcester Branch meetings

September 2024	Raspberry Pi, History, Current Uses and Future Developments
October 2024	Cyber Essentials/Quality Assurance ISO 27001
November 2024	The Power of Low Code Software Development
December 2024	The Carbon Footprint of Computing
January 2025	Ethical AI for Business
February 2025	How Neurodiversity Can Solve Talent Scarcity
March 2025	The Intellectual Property of Computer-Implemented Products
April 2025	Using AI to find hidden threats
May 2025	Quantum Key Encryption
June 2025	Robots replacing humans: accounting and finance
July 2025	From early computing, the internet and AI: the cyber security perspective
August 2025	Man-in-the-malware: intercepting adversarial communications
September 2025	Enhancing Threat Analysis and mitigation: using AI, machine learning and quantum technologies
October 2025	AI: convenience, control and the hidden risks of data exposure

BCS. Hereford & Worcester Branch

AGM 13th November 2025

BCS Council & BCS Academy Report

Table of Contents

1. Context of Appointment.....	3
2. Council’s Role: “Conscience” of the Institute	3
Implication for branches & members:	3
3. Academy: Refreshed Remit & Governance	4
Implication for branches:	4
4. Education & Skills Agenda	4
Implication for branches & members:	5
5. Professional Standards, Ethics & Public Trust	5
Implication for branches & members:	6
6. Member Communities, Branches & Hubs.....	6
Implication for branches:	6
7. Key Priorities to Members & Branches	7
Appendix 1 : Membership Data	8

1. Context of Appointment

At the 2025 BCS AGM, Chris Farnath FBCS of Hereford & Worcester Branch, was elected to BCS Council as one of four professional membership representatives, with a term running from the close of the 2025 AGM to the close of the 2028 AGM.

At the same AGM:

- Subscription levels for Fellows, Members, Associates and Students were confirmed for 2025–26 (Membership data in Appendix 1)
- Members approved gender-neutral changes to the Members’ Regulations, aligning governance language with BCS’ wider EDI commitments.
- These decisions directly affect all members and provide immediate context for your Council role.

2. Council’s Role: “Conscience” of the Institute

BCS has publicly re-articulated the role and impact of Council during 2025, positioning it clearly as:

- An advisory body to the Trustee Board representing the voice of the membership across academics, professionals, branches and specialist groups.
- A “conscience” for the Institute, ensuring decisions stay grounded in real-world member experience and professional standards.

Key current focus areas highlighted by the Council Chair are:

- Strengthening Council’s advice function – ensuring Council is a proactive, go-to source of member-driven insight for the Trustee Board and Executive.
- Follow-through on Council input – presenters are expected to come back and show how Council’s advice has been used, reinforcing accountability.
- Bringing in more young professionals and diverse voices – Council is being framed as a pathway into deeper BCS leadership (boards, VP roles, trusteeship).

Implication for branches & members:

- Branches and specialist groups now have a more explicit route to shape BCS strategy via Council: feeding structured feedback, case studies and member priorities through their Council representatives.

3. Academy: Refreshed Remit & Governance

The Academy Board Terms of Reference were updated again in June 2025 (Version 19). Key points that affect members and member groups include:

- The Academy is framed as a co-operative partnership between BCS, CPHC and UKCRC, reporting to the Trustee Board.
- Its purpose is to advance computing knowledge for public benefit, promote computing as a core academic discipline at all levels, and build a cohesive community of scholars, researchers and professionals.
- There is now explicit representation from BCS Council (up to two reps) on the Academy Board, plus an early-career advocate, a student-voice representative and representation from all four nations.
- The Board is charged to co-operate with the Community Board to foster closer links between Academy activity, specialist groups and branches.
- The public Academy page reinforces that the Academy is the hub for computing education, supporting teachers (Barefoot, CAS), scholarships and accreditation, and offering discounted membership for teachers.

Implication for branches:

- Branches are expected to align more closely with the Academy's education and skills focus – for example, through local events with teachers, universities and CAS communities, and by using Council-linked representatives to connect branch initiatives into formal Academy priorities.

4. Education & Skills Agenda

Several 2025 announcements show the direction of travel for computing education and skills, all of which can be translated into branch themes:

- Curriculum reform in England: The government has announced a reformed national curriculum with:
 - Citizenship made compulsory, including media literacy and online disinformation.
 - A new, broader Computing GCSE replacing the narrower Computer Science GCSE.
 - Exploration of a Level 3 qualification in Data Science and AI for 16–18-year-olds.
 - BCS and the Academy provided evidence and are publicly welcoming the focus on digital literacy, AI and data as core life skills.

- AI degree applications: UCAS data shows AI degree applications rising by 15% in 2025, while overall computing degree applications are down 10%, with a still significant but slightly narrowing gender gap.
 - BCS is using this to highlight the importance of a robust, diverse pipeline into AI and related fields.
- Lovelace Colloquium & Awards: The Lovelace Colloquium 2025 attracted over 150 female and non-binary students, with strong messaging around confidence, courage, diversity and green computing.
 - The Lovelace and Society Medals ceremony emphasised computing education, online safety, and accountability (including the Post Office scandal).

Implication for branches & members:

These stories give ready-made content for local talks, panel discussions and outreach, especially around:

- AI careers and skills
- Diversity in computing
- The new curriculum and how schools/colleges can respond
- Ethical and societal impact of technology
- Branches can position themselves as local convenors for these national themes.

5. Professional Standards, Ethics & Public Trust

The AI ethics and professional registrations in the UK report (Sept 2025) is particularly important for member value:

- 85% of surveyed UK adults think IT professionals working on systems that affect the public should be on a public register and follow a code of conduct, “like doctors or lawyers”.
- 82% believe IT professionals in high-impact AI roles should be professionally registered and held to independent standards of competence and ethics.
- 75% say they would trust an IT professional more if they were listed on a public register, and 50% say an independent body such as BCS should uphold these standards.

BCS recommends:

- Making professional registration and a code of conduct an essential condition for public-sector tech roles.
- Creating a public register for high-impact roles, linked to CPD and chartered status.

Implication for branches & members:

- Strong case for branches to promote CITP, RIT Tech and other registrations as a clear public trust signal.
- Provides evidence-based talking points for branch events on AI ethics, professionalism and “building a trusted digital profession”.

6. Member Communities, Branches & Hubs

BCS has been sharpening its narrative around community and local engagement:

- The member communities and community pages now highlight that BCS has over 60,000 technology professionals and that community activity – branches, specialist groups, hubs and online forums – is the core differentiator of membership value.
- The new BCS Hub initiative brings local employers, educators and practitioners together to address digital challenges in specific regions, with the first hub launched in Wales.
- The Faculty of Health and Care has been established as a cross-cutting member community, reflecting demand from members in health and social care informatics.
- London’s Innovation Hubs initiative (though originally launched earlier) is showcased as a branch-led model of community building, cross-hub networking, newsletters and showcases.

Elections and representation:

- The Member Group elections to Council for 2026–2029, opened in October 2025, include dedicated vacancies for Regional (Branches) Representatives, Specialist Group Representatives, International Sections and a Young Professionals Representative. EDI is explicitly called out in the invitation to stand.

Implication for branches:

Clear expectation that branches will:

- Develop hub-style partnerships locally (employers, universities, schools, health/other sectors).
- Identify and support branch-based candidates for Council and other boards.
- Use the Faculty and specialist groups as partners for joint events and campaigns.

7. Key Priorities to Members & Branches

As a summary of the key points, the big “so what?” messages are:

1. Council is being positioned as a more active, accountable voice of the membership.
Opportunity: Branches and groups should systematically funnel insights, local issues and good practice to Council via their representatives.
2. The Academy is doubling down on education, AI and diversity, with formal links to Council and the Community Board.
Opportunity: Branch programmes that support the new Computing GCSE, AI/data qualifications and teacher support will be closely aligned with BCS strategy.
3. Public expectations of professionalism are rising, especially around AI.
Opportunity: Branches can champion professional registration, codes of conduct and ethical practice as part of members’ identity and career progression.
4. Community and hubs are central to the membership value story.
Opportunity: Branches should explore hub-style models, cross-group collaboration and targeted communities (e.g. health, social care, green IT), not just traditional talks.
5. Leadership pipeline and diversity in governance are explicit priorities.
Opportunity: Encourage early-career, under-represented and regional members to stand for Council, Academy Board roles and working groups.

Appendix 1 : Membership Data

Year	Total members*	Fellows	Members	Associates	Students	Change (Total)
2017	72,191	3,262	37,142	19,913	10,058	
2018	65,991	3,249	35,687	15,460	9,677	-6,200
2019	60,902	3,157	35,226	10,930	9,874	-5,089
2020	58,834	3,123	33,127	10,003	10,312	-2,068
2021	57,625	3,293	31,160	8,542	12,230	-1,209
2022	63,969	3,351	31,637	10,079	16,590	+6,344
2023	70,863	3,360	41,551	6,357	17,568	+6,894
2024	70,820	3,598	46,476	3,697	14,941	-43

*Totals are the official figures in the annual reports, which also include Affiliates (and in earlier years a small number of Companions). Those extra grades are not shown as separate columns here but are part of the total.