

British Computer Society
Leicester Branch
2024 AGM



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting on Monday 25th November 2024, at 6:30pm, by webinar.

Present:

Glynn Beeken (Treasurer)	Mohan Sundaram Chockalingam	Roy Crole
Andy Carruthers (ECA)	Robert Humphreys	Isibor Kennedy Ihianle
Kwasi Gyamfi Kodie	Chinedu Korie	Suki Mann
Marie Massaquoi	Chidimma Oguledo	Udoka Okonta
Kayode Owa (Chair)	Colin Price	Israr Raja
Kamal Rajput	John Rendall (Secretary)	Teghvir Singh
Samuel Soleye	Salisu Wada	Steve Williams

1. Welcome and Introductions

Kay, as Chair, introduced himself and thanked everyone for attending.

2. Apologies

Formal apologies were received from Eerke Boiten and Paul Stevens.

3. The 2023 AGM

3.1. Minutes of previous AGM

Motion to accept the minutes

Prop: Colin Price Sec: Glynn Beeken Motion carried: ratified copy to be sent to HQ

3.2. Matters Arising from AGM

There was a spelling mistake in Andy's surname.

Secretary's Note: corrected for the ratified copy for HQ.

4. Chairman's Report

4.1. Report

Motion to accept the Chairman's Report

Prop: Glynn Beeken Sec: Andy Carruthers

4.2. Matters Arising

Glynn highlighted that we did submit a budget for the 2023-2024 year, however due to workloads we did not for the 2024-2025 year.

Secretary's note – Report clarified

The report states we ran 6 meetings in one place (including the AGM) then 5 open meetings in another.

Secretary's note – clarified as 5 meetings, plus the AGM

Glynn advised that when he was chairman, he believed he was being sent a list of attendees after the meetings, showing who did attend and for how long.

Secretary's note – HQ have advised that zoom does not record who joined in the meeting or for how long, however Teams may do. Accordingly, we have no metrics for how many people did actually take part in our open meetings.

Meeting did not identify anyone who we thought merited special recognition for long or special service, as the Branch had only been back in operation for 4 years.

John mentioned that a number of interesting people (who appear on the BBC programme "The Sky at Night") are associated with Leicester University, and jokingly suggested we may like to try to sign-up Dame Maggie Aderin-Pocock. Roy advised that he had approached her to give us a talk, which had been declined, however was unfamiliar with how to persuade her to join the BCS!

It was agreed that anyone who identified someone who had significantly contributed to the aims of the BCS could be nominated for one of a three-level 'Recognition of Appreciation' award, and they should email groups@bcs.uk in order to achieve this and to collect the application forms.

5. Treasurer's Report

5.1. Report

Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report
Prop: John Rendall Sec: Kayode Owa

5.2. Matters Arising

Last year we requested £2,090.00, however HQ allocated us only £459.70. This year we failed to raise the request in time and so HQ allocated us £375 for room hire and £90 for catering.

Colin highlighted that we need a more strategic approach to requesting budget, we need to collectively put together a bid that includes enough events in time, but wondered how to go about putting in place a mechanism that enables us to annually achieve this so we have enough budget for meetings.

Glynn confirmed that we need to submit our budget request for 2025-26 by the middle of March 2025; we need a strategic plan in place to budget against, this needs to be formulated by January. With regards this year's budget, the challenge was that we have spent none of it yet (it is for room hire and catering); we need to spend our budget to put us in a better place (with HQ) for next year's budget request.

John highlighted that we have only had online events. Glynn confirmed we had taken part in some hybrid events - joint with the Nottingham branch at the Nottingham and Trent university - but the uni had kindly paid for the events.

Glynn also confirmed that the Chair and Treasurer get an email mid-February with the budget application form attached which needs competing by mid-March. Accordingly, we need to get together, get some events planned and get some quotations for room hire.

6. Election of Officials

Prior to the meeting the following people advised that they wished to stand down from the committee:

Eerke Boiten†

Paul Stevens

6.1. Elected Officials

Post	Nominee	Proposer	Seconder	Result
Chair	: Owa Kayode Olayemi	John Rendall	Isibor Ihianle	Nem. Con.
Treasurer	: Glynn Beeken	Kay	Andy Curruthers	Nem. Con.
Secretary	: John Rendall	Kay	Isibor Ihianle*	Nem. Con.

Kay confirmed that he is happy to carry on and make the branch grow.

*Colin Price also Seconded John as Secretary.

Before the meeting Glynn had advised that due to the pressure of work, he has little time to perform Treasurer activities and would like to stand down. However, as no other nominations were forthcoming, he agreed to again accept the post however has requested more support for when the budget application needs completing (mid-February 2025). Andy highlighted that we need to be more strategic about planning events and financing, this being a big challenge that the committee must support him [Glynn] on.

Secretary's note: Post-meeting John Woodward, our Loughborough ELO advised that the new contact should be Syeda Fatima, however he confirmed that he would still like to be "in the loop"

6.2. Committee

Mandatory Committee Members:

Andy Carruthers – Early Careers Advocate

Robert Humphrys – Industrial Liaison Officer

General Committee Members:

Syeda Fatima – ELO – Loughborough University

Eerke Boiten† – ELO – DeMontford University

Leena Sodha - ELO – Leicester University

Richard Otuka – ELO - Nottingham Trent University

Colin Price

†Secretary's Note: Eerke has confirmed that he would like to stand down from the committee, however the replacement he had lined up is currently off sick.

The following member is yet to confirm that they wish to remain on the committee:

Pedro Machado

The following posts are unfilled:

Events Co-ordinator

Publicity & Social Media Officer

Membership Secretary

Secretary's note: these will default to the Secretary

7. Ideas for Branch Programme

It was noted that it would be beneficial for the BCS and local universities if someone from the BCS/industry could talk to students about what we do in our daily tasks. Some of the academic members are always looking for guest speakers so the students can see that their lecturers are bringing in people from industry. This helps motivate and inspire the students and gives them an insight into the world of work beyond education...and possibly get them to join as members.

Robert agreed that it is always nice to see examples of when people are putting this into practice: informing students what industry fields people are going into. Robert asked for ideas for particular types of industry that are resonating with the students and their particular courses, e.g. cyber security and AI, this depends on the courses and the wants and needs of students.

The branch could offer to sponsor events hosted at the universities on an agreed topic like AI. If there's enough notice, industry partners could also be invited to collaborate on an event and show their products.

Some ideas of topics (we would need to find suitable speakers):

Cyber Security

AI and Generative AI

diversity in tech

future of IT careers

sustainability of technology

industry experts - specific domains - invite them to talk to branch

Practical/Applied examples of

- Cyber Security awareness
- Automated Testing Tools
- Risk Management
- Digital Products vs. Project Management

Robert reported that he has attended an event run by the Computer Science department on the emergence of Generative AI, a popular and in-person event; very topical at the moment. He encouraged branch to consider similar in-person topical events would be helpful to draw in an audience which could link in to other events. Further we should have a bit more of an understanding of what the Computer Science departments of our local universities offer and liaison with them to get an alignment of what they are teaching with what practical applications we can show them, notably from industry.

Mohan advised that he was looking to switch career from retail & the wholesale clothing industry into cyber security (having read Business Studies at Nottingham-Trent). He has attended expos in London on cyber security to understand how it is progressing and offered to share his experiences with Branch suggesting we could discuss "how Cyber Security has changed our life", how we can grow our branch and network effectively.

As all our emails are secured within BCS HQ/Eventbrite, Kay asked Mohan to email the Leicester Branch to allow us to progress this. John shared the chair's email: leics-ch@bcs.org.uk

Kay shared the link <https://www.bcs.org/membership-and-registrations/become-a-member/#join-now> to allow people to join the BCS prior to joining the Leicester Branch.

Chidimma advised that she is an IT Administrator, has been a project manager, has been in application support and IT service management, and is currently training programme on Cyber security with The Learning People, and hopes to progress further with BCS. She is keen to find out how BCS operates and the activities branch offers. Kay invited Chidimma to suggest topics/share ideas via the email address supplied.

As we had a few people new to the BCS within the meeting, Kay actioned John to provide a quick reference guide showing how to “join” the Leicester Branch so members would be added to our mailing list.

Secretary’s note: John has provided this guide and asked Branches Support (Beccy) to send this out to all those who registered (on Eventbrite) for the AGM.

Following a question as to the size of the Branch, it was noted that we currently have 26 Affiliate members, 38 Associate members, 57 Student members, 492 Professional members and 45 Fellows (15 under 20 and 49 over 70).

The question was raised “who are the events targeted at, branch members or wider than that?” This was not discussed in the meeting.

Secretary’s note: Although Branch open meetings are mainly aimed at branch members, traditionally we have publicised them widely to encourage members of the public to engage with branch/the BCS. When they register with Eventbrite, they are offered the option to receive emails from branch about other meetings etc. They are also gently invited to consider joining the BCS.

Kwasi suggested we should encourage students to set-up meetings amongst themselves, bringing in speakers they would be interested in.

Secretary’s note: In the past “Student Chapters” of the BCS have been found to be very successful, almost operating as an autonomous branch, with their own budget. This does, however, require the students to organise themselves, form a committee, and have someone running the chapter. Experience has shown, however, that the chapter tends to fall apart when the keep organiser graduates.

It was also suggested that we could run a poll to ask our members what topics they are interested in. John reported that a few years back Coventry Branch committee put quite a few hours in creating a poll for their members, but only some 15 members actually bothered to complete the poll (John suspected that these were mostly the committee members!) John took an action to investigate how we might poll our members in an engaging way.

8. Best Day/Week for Branch Meeting

John highlighted that when we first resurrected the Branch, we nominated the second Thursday of each month for our meetings, mainly because Coventry Branch had been holding their meetings on the third Wednesday of the month for years by way of getting “mental set” in their members, to help them remember when branch meetings occurred. Latterly, however, he had found that this was less convenient for everyone (including many committee members) and so he had nominated this item for the agenda. Kay concurred that Thursdays was not good for him now.

Robert highlighted the good turnout for the AGM, and this was on a Monday. Kay agreed that Monday would be good for him, and John agreed that, as the Coventry Branch meeting was the third Wednesday, the third Monday would be good for him too. No-one else commented. While John took an action to include this in any poll to the members, in the meantime we will run with the third Monday of the month for our meetings.

9. Any Other Business

Kamal asked if it was possible to condense these meetings in the future; as fair question as the meeting had taken some 2½ hours. Kay explained that our normal (Branch open) meetings usually only take some 1½ hours, but this was our AGM and we had a lot to discuss.

Following a question as to if the demand for the inter varsity event was from the students, or was it worth spending more time within each university, Kay confirmed that the idea was originally driven from the BCS, and it would require willingness within the 3 universities to make it work; it needed an inner drive from them to make it work.

Colin confirmed that it was clear that connections had been made between the BCS and the unis, however if we cannot get tripartite agreement with them, we may get to a point where we have to accept it's not going to happen and we perhaps should in that case strive to strengthen the connections with the individual universities.

Kay explained that the intention of the inter-varsity suggestion was to create a "one-ness" between the unis, by way of getting students more interested in the BCS and what the institution has to offer them. Kay confirmed that at the moment our approach is 'top-down' and requires the academics to 'gel', the branch-uni representatives (i.e. the Education Liaison Officers) need to see this event as something they need, to make the students more involved and engaged. If there is another way of doing this, if we can make this happen bottom-up with drive from the students, then this would allow us to overcome some of the stumbling blocks we have seen so far.

Secretary's note: these last three paragraph are a major paraphrase of the discussion, to the best of my ability; pulled into a semblance of order which conveys the spirit of the discussion. If I have mis-represented anyone, I humble apologise.

Meeting closed 21:02 with thanks to the attendees.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Rendall', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

John Rendall, CEng. MBCS CIP MIET
Leicester Branch Secretary
6th December 2024