

Minutes of the 68th meeting of the UK Computing Research Executive Committee on Tuesday 25 March 2025 at 11:00, held online

PRESENT

Kevin Jones (Chair)

Michael Fisher

BY INVITATION

*Nadia Berthouze (Membership
Panel Chair)

Dharam Shadija (CPHC)

IN ATTENDANCE

Maxine Leslie (BCS)

APOLOGIES

Simon Dobson

Alex Frangi

Amir Hussain

David Hutchison

Julie McCann

Daniela Tresoldi (EPSRC)

Alastair Irons (BCS Academy)

Julia Adamson MBE (BCS)

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed Executive Committee members to the meeting, noting that a number of Exec members had sent their apologies and therefore suggested that the meeting agenda should be limited to reporting any updates since the last meeting, deferring any issues to be discussed by the wider Exec group to the next meeting.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (UKCRCEC/2024/10)

The minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 8 October 2024 were APPROVED and are now ready for transfer to the UKCRC website *[action complete]*.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising and it was agreed that all actions from the previous meetings will be carried forward.

4. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

4.1 UKCRC Constitution update [UKCRCEC/2025/02] – this item was deferred to the following meeting.

4.2 Committee roles [UKCRCEC/2025/03] – this item was deferred to the following meeting.

5. CHAIR'S REPORT

K Jones reported that one meeting of the Mission task and finish group had been held to date and conversations had been held with BCS on the UKCRC mission. A second meeting is due to be held, following which an updated mission statement will be circulated to members.

M Leslie reported the state of play with UKCRC elections. The November 2024 Executive Committee member call did not yield any nominations, therefore two of the nine Executive Committee positions remain unfilled. A call has been circulated for the March 2025 Membership Panel elections. There are currently three UKCRC-elected members and the Constitution states that there should be a minimum of four. The Chair suggested a more proactive approach with existing Exec members making approaches to contacts that may be interested in giving time to serving and contributing to this area. N Berthouze was keen to see a wider distribution of institutions represented on the Exec Committee and Membership Panel and K Jones undertook to send a note to the full Exec to ask for suggestions for those that might be willing to stand for the two vacant Executive Committee positions. *[See min 8.1 Membership Panel for further discussion on elections.]*

ACTION: K Jones

6. CONSULTATIONS & SUBMISSIONS

A Hussain had sent apologies for the meeting, but sent the following written report on the UKCRC's response to the recent government consultation on Copyright and Artificial Intelligence.

This consultation, which received widespread media coverage, aimed to address the complex interplay between copyright law and the rapidly evolving field of AI. In particular, it focused on the training of AI models using copyrighted material and the protection of AI-generated outputs. The government presented several options, ranging from maintaining the status quo to significantly altering copyright law. Notably, Option 3 proposed a data mining exception with an opt-out mechanism for copyright holders.

After careful deliberation and consultation with UKCRC and CPHC members, A Hussain synthesised and submitted a response advocating for a modified version of Option 3. The full submitted response can be accessed here: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TuIyzwGGd36BUmg5lVxzIfkSHeWZKOUSuyshB05NNTU/edit?tab=t.0>.

UKCRC's position, in essence, is that:

1. **The default for data mining should be opt-in, not opt-out.** This ensures a fairer balance between the rights of creators and the needs of AI developers, aligning with established copyright principles.
2. **Robust transparency measures are crucial.** AI developers must be held accountable for the data they use, and AI-generated outputs should be clearly labelled.

It is believed that this approach fosters innovation while safeguarding the rights of creators and researchers. UKCRC has also emphasized the government's role in facilitating collective licensing, setting clear standards, and ensuring effective enforcement. UKCRC has also stressed the need for the government to broaden their focus beyond the creative industries, and to consider the impacts on the research sector in particular.

The government's response to this consultation will continue to be monitored and members will be kept informed of any developments.

Members are asked to advise if there are any other forthcoming consultations to which the UKCRC should respond.

ACTION: Members

7. RESEARCH FUNDING AND POLICY

- 7.1 EPSRC Update** – D Tresoldi had been unable to attend the meeting from the start and subsequently provided the following written report. Members are asked to note in particular the last point about the ICT Horizon Scanning Survey, which EPSRC will keep members updated about.

Spending Review – Phase 1 of the spending review has been concluded, but negotiations are still ongoing for UKRI and subsequently EPSRC allocations for phase 2. For this reason, EPSRC has decided to adopt a prudent financial planning approach for the 2025-2026 year, assuming a flat cash until further confirmation (potentially in autumn).

Funding opportunities – the Terahertz and the Neuromorphic funding opportunities are now closed and completed. Successful grants announcement (a Neuromorphic centre, and a Network in the space of Terahertz, is still under embargo due to internal controls, but they will be announced soon.

Other news – the ICT team has started thinking about future activities, such as engaging with the computer science community to understand the needs, see the gaps, design a landscape, highlight moonshots and challenges in computer science and beyond. This is a work in progress. As a first step of a series of activities, the team is preparing an ICT Horizon Scanning Survey for the scientific community, to be published in April/May. Once ready, members will be asked to share the survey link with the Learned Society in the computer science space via relevant stakeholders.

8. REPORTS

- 8.1 Membership Panel** – N Berthouze sought advice on a membership application received last year which had not been processed due to one of the Panel having a conflict of interest. K Jones noted that, as conflicts of interest are very common in the CS research world, rather than remove the person with the conflict, it may be better for it to be declared and that person's judgement to be included, provided there is objective evidence in reaching that judgement. N Berthouze undertook to contact the other Panel members to finish processing the application on this basis.

ACTION: N Berthouze

As discussed in min 5 Chair's report, it would be helpful to ensure that the Membership Panel membership is large enough to facilitate its work without concerns such as conflicts of interest. It was further noted that Executive Committee members cannot be members of the Membership Panel. N Berthouze undertook to communicate any gaps in the current membership to K Jones so that, if the call for nominations is unsuccessful, potential contacts can be approached to be co-opted for a one year term of office. **ACTION: N Berthouze/K Jones**

- 8.2 International Matters inc Informatics Europe** – no report.

- 8.3 CPHC** – D Shadija was representing CPHC at the meeting as Nicky Danino is out of the country and noted that the main item to report was the Summit preparations which were progressing well. D Shadija stated that at the joint UKCRC/CPHC/BCS Academy meeting in October 2024, members discussed the common and different purposes of the three groups and asked about the progress in developing a combined voice. K Jones outlined how the three groups currently communicate, which is via Chairs' meetings held every 2 months or so. The Venn diagram drawn up by Rob Aspin had been jointly agreed and joint work conversations are on-

going. However, since the Venn diagram was agreed, there had been a change in UKCRC sponsorship. Previously financial sponsorship was provided by BCS and the IET and now BCS is sole financial sponsor. Consequently, the Venn bubbles may need re-visiting. Most of the discussions between the three groups is focussing on the Summit in April.

8.4 BCS Academy – No report as A Irons and J Adamson had sent apologies.

9. Date of 2025 AGM

This item was deferred to the following meeting.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of other business.

2025 Executive Committee meetings

Tuesday 10 June (11:00-13:00) – Online *[postponed to Monday 28 July (11:00-12:00)]*

*Tuesday 14 October (11:00-14:30) – BCS London

**to include networking lunch and joint meeting with CPHC Committee*

AGM 2025

TBC (1 hour, online)

UKCRC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SUMMARY OF ACTIONS TAKEN AT MEETINGS 2022-5

Outstanding Actions in Red

No.	Item	Item No.	Decision/Action	Responsibility	Complete
UKCRC Executive Committee Meeting ACTIONS from 25 March 2025					
5	CHAIR'S REPORT		Send a note to the full Exec to ask for suggestions of those that might be willing to stand for the two vacant Exec positions	K Jones	On-going
6	CONSULTATIONS & SUBMISSIONS		(First raised at June 23 meeting) Let Amir Hussain know if there are any other forthcoming consultations to which the UKCRC should respond	Members	On-going
8	REPORTS: Membership Panel	8.1	Contact Membership Panel members to finish processing the outstanding application	N Berthouze	On-going
			Communicate any gaps in the current membership to K Jones so that, if the call for nominations is unsuccessful, potential contacts can be approached to be co-opted for a one year term of office	N Berthouze/ K Jones	On-going

UKCRC Executive Committee Meeting ACTIONS from 8 October 2024					
3	MATTERS ARISING: RS0 Sectional Committee nominations Working Group	3.1	Volunteer to participate in working group to make suggestions to the RS Sectional Committee 0 for CS for possible nominations to RS Council for election to the Fellowship	Members to contact M Leslie	On-going
4	CHAIR'S REPORT		(First raised at June 24 meeting) Consider volunteering to represent UKCRC on the BCS Academy of Computing Board	Members to contact M Leslie	On-going
UKCRC Executive Committee Meeting ACTIONS from 24 October 2023					
7	REPORTS: Membership Panel	7.1	Liaise on the composition of the UKCRC Membership Panel <i>[added 25 Mar 24: look to co-opt an industrialist from the membership]</i>	N Berthouze/ K Jones	On-going
UKCRC Executive Committee Meeting ACTIONS from 7 June 2022					
7	REPORTS: Membership Panel	7.1	Exec to think about potential members and communicate names to N Berthouze	Exec members	On-going