

UKCRC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the UK Computing Research Committee held on **Friday 4 December 2020** between 14:00 – 15:00 via video/teleconference.

Attendees:

Jane Hillston	UKCRC Chair
Ann Blandford	Executive Committee Member
David Hutchison	Executive Committee Member
Christopher Johnson	Executive Committee Member
Kevin Jones	Executive Committee Member
Bashar Nuseibeh	Executive Committee Member
m.c. schraefel	Executive Committee Member
Jie Xu	Executive Committee Member
Nadia Berthouze	Membership Panel Chair
Peter Andras	Member
Russell Beale	Member
Alan Bundy	Member
Anthony G Cohn	Member
David Duce	Member
Stephen Furber	Member
Jeremy Gibbons	Member
Cliff Jones	Member
Michael Luck	Member
Andrew Martin	Member
Derek McAuley	Member
Morris Sloman	Member
Danae Stanton Fraser	Member
Tim Weyrich	Member
#Maxine Leslie	UKCRC Secretariat

Apologies:

#Erol Gelenbe	Member
V Anne Smith	Member
#unable to join due to technical issue	

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM [UKCRC/AGM2019/06]

The Chair welcomed Members to the AGM. The apologies for absence were received as above and the minutes of the AGM held on Friday 6 December 2019 were recorded as a true record.

2. Matters arising from minutes

All actions from the previous Annual General Meeting had been completed.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT – J Hillston

RECEIVED & APPROVED – [Appendix 1](#).

EPSRC/UKCRC Workshop (December): J Hillston reported that the second UKCRC/EPSRC workshop had been well attended, particularly by early career researchers, and that some good conversations are continuing in areas such as the culture and health of the discipline. It was helpful to seek views of the rising

stars and future members of UKCRC and keep them engaged. As such events are run in collaboration with EPSRC, it is a valuable opportunity for CS researchers to feed into the big ideas agenda and look for possible programmes to bid into government such as autonomous systems. Hubs and Nodes in Nottingham and Southampton hubs had been announced this autumn. EPSRC had indicated that they were happy to collaborate on future workshops, contributing funding and attending, provided there is a compelling rationale. Members were invited to make suggestions for possible future workshop topics. **ACTION: UKCRC Members**

Interaction with government: The Chair added her voice to that of Chris Johnson, to encourage more Members to get involved in consultations, as currently there is a very small subset of Members that contribute. Chris Johnson does a sterling job of responding on UKCRC's behalf and it is recognised that the nature of the responses required are specialised and often the government has a limited understanding of the digital world. NCSC has asked UKCRC how civil servants can better their understanding and a small working group is being formed to take this further, but we all have a responsibility. Members were reminded about the [Policy Engagement workshop](#) on Friday 15 January 2021 and were invited to:

- a) let the UKCRC Secretariat know (ukcrc@bcs.uk) if they wish to be included in the UKCRC Directory of Expertise for Consultations and Advisory work, as published on the [website](#)
- b) and/or let the Chair know if they would like to volunteer to join the Working Group. **ACTION: UKCRC Members**

It is noted that sometimes it is difficult to see the effect of responses on the published outcomes, however there is evidence that UKCRC Member input is being taken into account. There is also a period of delay while responses are being considered and the results cannot be published immediately as they are confidential. It is crucial to continue to engage with consultations as, if we do not engage with policy makers and give evidence to committees, then decisions might be made that are detrimental to the discipline including decisions about future funding.

Membership: The Chair expressed her gratitude to Kevin Jones for his service as Chair of the Membership Panel, which had now been taken over by Nadia Berthouze (UCL). The Executive Committee had discussed the predominance of those with an academic background in the membership and noted that in the UK now there is a lot more research activity in industry. It would be good to increase the industrial base of UKCRC to contribute to the sort of discussions above. Colleagues are actively trying to recruit contacts from industry, but it is noted that the criteria remain the same (including international renowned research – see [website](#)). Members are invited to make suggestions for possible industrial members, bearing this in mind. **ACTION: UKCRC Members**

New webpages launched: the IET has done a great deal of work to migrate to a much improved website, however this is a work in progress and more content is needed. Ann Blandford is liaising with the IET to look at making pages easier to navigate, and would be grateful to receive comments from Members on the useability of the website, to feed in to the IET. **ACTION: UKCRC Members**

4. CONSULTATIONS & RESPONSES REPORT – C Johnson

RECEIVED & APPROVED – [Appendix 2](#).

In addition to the discussions detailed in Item 3 above, C Johnson reported that the CPNI initiative in trusted research is relevant to UKCRC as it looks at the defence of UK research against external nation state interest, and also research in terms of role within digital sovereignty in the UK. The kind of issues arising from CPNI guidance includes the role of Chinese companies in 5G. In other areas of science and engineering, this may not actively prevent involvement in research, but early career researchers working in 5G with research supported by their company, will need to reconsider their career trajectory in liaison with their head of school. It is therefore proposed that UKCRC, with support from UKRI/EPSC will put together some guidance on issues arising from CPNI's report. This could be a topic for a further workshop with UKRI to get parameters around what trusted research means. See also <https://www.cpni.gov.uk/trusted-research>.

Members had been polled in order to build a Directory of Expertise as a resource for committee secretaries and for the parliamentary office of science and technology. This is now live but uses the ACM classifications rather than civil servant terminology and further work is required to work out a map to translate these terms for civil servants over the next year.

As mentioned in Item 2 (above), the [Master class](#) on engagement in policy is to be held on Friday 15 January. There is not really any choice in this as in future, any uplift will be hypothecated and if UKCRC does not engage with BEIS/DfT then will struggle to realise a significant contribution to UK science and engineering.

All consultations listed may be found on the UKCRC website [submissions page](#).

If any Members have any ideas or would like to get involved in the work are asked to contact Chris Johnson.

5. MEMBERSHIP PANEL REPORT – N Berthouze

RECEIVED & APPROVED – [Appendix 3](#).

N Berthouze reported that since she had taken over as Panel Chair in the summer, the Panel had considered five membership applications using the online process. There had been some discussion between Panel Members on the interpretation of the membership criteria, either strictly looking for those with an international leading CV who have a high global reputation in their field or opening it up to a broader range of nominees. N Berthouze plans to convene the Panel as soon as possible to discuss this following input from the previous Panel Chair, Kevin Jones.

Members were asked for their views and D Hutchison indicated that, following recent discussions about inviting applications from researchers in industry, he would welcome a conversation with the Panel about how to approach potential nominees as those that he has approached recently have raised questions about the importance of academic qualifications within the membership criteria. D Hutchison and N Berthouze undertook to take this conversation offline.

Action: D Hutchison/N Berthouze

It was noted that UKCRC has been seen as being too exclusive and it is therefore important to encourage engagement, but to recognise that new Members will be senior and therefore will not be able to give too much time. This issue comes up cyclically and it depends on the purpose of UKCRC and where to draw the line between appropriateness, usefulness and seniority. It is difficult to reach a consensus between Members on this. It is important to be clear about where the line is drawn including what is and isn't required as this is crucial for industrialists applying for membership, particularly to avoid any misunderstandings. Although the criteria are publicly available on the website, the interpretation of them is key and it would be tricky to tighten them. UKCRC membership does not confer postnominals or a change in status, but UKCRC's key role is to be an expert body so it is important to avoid approving non-experts due to the reputational risk. It was suggested that perhaps the list of criteria is less important than what a member does during their membership.

N Berthouze undertook to liaise with interested parties and discuss this further with the Membership Panel. **ACTION: N Berthouze**

6. CALL FOR SUGGESTIONS OF FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The Chair was interested to hear ideas for future UKCRC activities, particularly from non-Executive Committee members.

R Beale suggested looking at the future for good university education post-Covid, particularly things that worked well and things that didn't. This specifically relates to computing and technology as an infrastructure for education and the significant shift that has resulted meaning that there are lots more challenges and opportunities. The Chair noted that UKCRC work is focussed on research, leaving the educational aspects to CPHC, but these divisions are slightly artificial and UKCRC and CPHC are looking to work more closely together. CPHC is holding online coffee table discussions, so a joint CPHC/UKCRC session could be an avenue or a Working Group (with a specific goal) could be set up if UKCRC Members are interested. R Beale undertook to look into the CPHC option.

Action: R Beale

Appreciation was expressed for the recent CPHC seminar series on inclusivity organised by m.c. schraefel and follow up sessions to this and a dedicated mailing list/discussion forum are being planned. This also took the approach of experts from the US, Canada and Europe sharing examples of what worked. Recordings of the sessions are available on the CPHC website [seminar page](#).

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Following on from the discussion above, m.c. schraefel expressed her delight at the level of engagement in the recent seminar series *Building the UK Women into Computer Science Experience* and is interested to hear from UKCRC members what they thought was useful and what follow up they would like to see in terms of bringing in women into undergraduate CS. **ACTION: UKCRC Members**

The Chair thanked everyone including new Members, AGM attendees, those that have actively engaged, and the Secretariat support.

Appendix 1 – Chair's report
Appendix 2 – Consultations & Responses report
Appendix 3 – Membership Panel report

Actions

2020.1 Chair's report – EPSRC/UKCRC Workshop (December)

Provide any suggestions for topics for future workshops to UKCRC Secretariat ukcrc@bcs.uk. **UKCRC Members**

2020.2 Chair's report – Interaction with government

Let the UKCRC Secretariat know if they wish to be included in the UKCRC Directory of Expertise for Consultations and Advisory work, as published on the [website](#) and/or let the Chair know if they would like to volunteer to join the Working Group. **UKCRC Members**

2020.3 Chair's report – Membership

Make suggestions for possible industrial members, bearing the [published criteria](#) in mind. **UKCRC Members**

2020.4 Chair's report - New webpages launched

Provide any feedback on the useability of the re-launched website (www.ukcrc.org.uk) to Ann Blandford, to feed in to the IET. **UKCRC Members**

2020.5 Membership Panel report

In the context of inviting applications for UKCRC membership from industry, D Hutchison and N Berthouze undertook to liaise offline on the importance of academic qualifications within the membership criteria. **D Hutchison/N Berthouze**

2020.6 Membership Panel report

Liaise on membership criteria with interested parties and discuss this further with the Membership Panel. **N Berthouze**

2020.7 Call for suggestions of future activities

Explore the possibility of holding a joint CPHC/UKCRC coffee table discussion on challenges and opportunities in computing/technology as a infrastructure for education. **R Beale**

2020.8 Any Other Business

Provide any feedback to m.c. schraefel on the recent seminar series *Building the UK Women into Computer Science Experience*, in particular what they thought was useful and what follow up they would like to see in terms of bringing in women into undergraduate CS. **UKCRC Members**

UKCRC AGM 2020: Chair's report

JEH 26/11/2020

EPSRC/UKCRC Workshop (December): The second workshop organized jointly with EPSRC was well-attended and had about 50% overlap of attendees from the September workshop. The morning session was mostly about encouraging participants to look outside the discipline and respond to challenges posed by other disciplines and communities. This included a barn-storming performance from Chris Johnson exhorting more people to become involved in government consultations. In the afternoon we held the AGM and a panel session on regulations and ethics, which was very well-received and provoked a lot of discussion.

Membership: The workshops held in September and December 2019 raised the profile of UKCRC and gave rise to a number of nominations. These took a while to process but we welcomed nine new members in the spring. There was a change in the members of the membership panel over the summer and in the autumn Nadia Berthouze kindly agreed to take on the role of chair. This resolved a hiatus in processing membership nominations, and two new members were recently announced.

Given the increasing number of industrial research labs based in the UK, and the freer flow of researchers between academia and industry, Exec decided that it would be mutually beneficial to increase the number of industrial members of UKCRC. We have identified some companies and individuals that we feel that it would be good to get involved in UKCRC and we are in process of approaching them. Other members are also encouraged to consider nominating industrial members, remembering that the key criterion for UKCRC membership remains internationally leading research.

REF panel: There was a call for nominations for further REF panel members, with particular topic areas and seeking greater diversity in a number of dimensions. UKCRC is a nominating body, so we reconvened the nominating panel that served for the original REF nominations and made some recommendations of UKCRC and CPHC members.

New webpages launched: The new webpages for UKCRC, hosted within the IET pages for expert panels, were launched at the beginning of October. The www.ukcrc.org addresses redirects to these new pages. There has been limited but positive feedback from UKCRC members. There is still scope for further work to populate the pages. Luc Moreau, who was leading on this work has stepped down from Exec due to other commitments, but Jie Xie has agreed to take over the leadership from the UKCRC side, liaising with the IET on this important work. We thank Luc, Ahmed Kotb and Andrew Rylah for all their work on the new pages, which represent a significant and welcome refresh of the UKCRC presence on the web.

Interaction with Government: A key objective this year was to explore further channels for interacting with and influencing Government (in addition to consultations). This led to discussions with the BCS about possible approaches including proactively providing briefing notes and studies related to key topical subjects. We await further communication from the BCS on that. Members of Exec also had discussions with members of NCSC on identifying routes to allow more expert advice to reach Government departments. Concrete progress on this has been delayed by Covid. But as a step towards making expertise more accessible the new webpages do display areas of expertise (for members who responded to the request to identify their matching against the ACM classification). We have also been talking to CPHC about joint work in this area, and a joint workshop Public Consultations is planned on Friday 15th January.

inc 2020 papers

Update on UKCRC Consultations 2019-20

The list at the end of this submission summarises all of the consultations that we have participated in since I took over.

The cumulative effect of UKCRC work in this area, noted in last year's annual report, was slightly curtailed by the effects of COVID. However, we are still being consulted directly by the civil servants assisting on a number of Parliamentary Committees.

There are continuing discussions with the UKRI-EPSC ICT SAT about increased engagement with government. In particular, Rhys, James and I will present a brief request for a UKCRC paper on the issues associated with "Trusted Research" as identified by the CPNI¹. This seems particularly important for our discipline and is reflected in the many topics that we have responded to in the consultations listed below.

We set up the [Directory of Expertise](#) with support from Maxine and our colleagues in the IET – this is now live although further work may need to be done to translate this into a form that is appropriate for POST and the Parliamentary committees.

Together with UKRI-EPSC, CPHC (especially Sally Fincher) and the BCS, we have helped organise a workshop on Policy Engagement²:

"Given the increasing links between research funding and government policy, it is ever more important that the Computing Science Research and Education Communities engage with Westminster and regional governments. This event will explain the links between policy and UKRI funding, it will provide first-hand experience of engagement from Chief Scientific Advisors and it will provide a practical exercise in responding to requests for input in parliamentary and policy consultations".

Anthony Finkelstein has been working behind the scenes to secure participation from government and will himself provide an introduction to the event.

At last year's AGM, we discussed whether it would be possible to put up copies of all responses in a timely fashion. As explained in the meeting, all responses are emailed to the membership and we cannot post submissions that have not been formally accepted by Parliamentary Committees. I will send Maxine/IET the details for the completed consultations, to be uploaded as usual.

I would encourage all members to check the following URL in case there are calls that I may have missed:

¹ <https://www.cpni.gov.uk/trusted-research>

² <https://events.theiet.org/events/joint-ukcrccphcukribcs-workshop-on-policy-engagement/>

<https://www.gov.uk/search/policy-papers-and-consultations>

As mentioned last year, I would again particularly like to thank my predecessor Martyn Thomas who continues to alert me to new calls for evidence. David Hutchison has also provide numerous hints and suggestions for many of the consultations listed below.

inc 2020 papers

Submissions

2020

November

- UK National Data Strategy consultation³

September

- Joint Review of Defence, Security and Intelligence⁴

August

- DCMS Proposals for Regulating Consumer Smart Product Cyber Security - Call for Views⁵

July

- ***Chris moved to Queen's***

June

- Commons Science and Technology Committee: A new UK research funding agency⁶

April

- UKRI Open Access Review Consultation⁷
- Developing Scotland's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategy Consultation⁸

March

- DCMS Open Consultation on Proposed Changes to the Cyber Security Breaches Survey⁹

January-February

- ***Most committees adjourned for General Election***

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/uk-national-data-strategy-nds-consultation/uk-national-data-strategy-consultation>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/integrated-review-call-for-evidence>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proposals-for-regulating-consumer-smart-product-cyber-security-call-for-views/proposals-for-regulating-consumer-smart-product-cyber-security-call-for-views>

⁶ <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/265/a-new-uk-research-funding-agency>

⁷ <https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/open-access/open-access-review/>

⁸ <https://www.scotlandaistrategy.com>

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-changes-to-the-cyber-security-breaches-survey>

2019

December

- DCMS consultation on Cyber Security Incentives and Regulation¹⁰

Completed consultations

November

- Law Commission Open consultation on the Regulation of Highly Automated Road Passenger Services (HARPS)¹¹

October

- DCMS Open Consultation on Reforming Consumer Advocacy in Telecoms¹²

August

- Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy Inquiry into Access to “Safe” Technology: The UK’s 5G Infrastructure and National Security¹³

June

- DCMS Consultation on regulatory proposals on consumer IoT security¹⁴

May

- DCMS/Home Office On-line Harms White Paper¹⁵

April

- DfT/BEIS Consultation on Code of Practice for the Trialling of Automated Vehicles¹⁶

March

- Commons Science and Technology Committee, Commercial and Recreational Drone Use in the UK Inquiry¹⁷
- HMRC. Consultation on Electronic Sales Suppression¹⁸

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cyber-security-incentives-regulation-review-call-for-evidence>

¹¹ <https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/automated-vehicles/>

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/open-consultation-on-reforming-consumer-advocacy-in-telecoms>

¹³ <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/national-security-strategy/inquiries/parliament-2017/access-to-safe-technology-inquiry-17-19/>

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-regulatory-proposals-on-consumer-iot-security>

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/online-harms-white-paper>

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/automated-vehicle-trialling-code-of-practice-invitation-to-comment>

¹⁷ <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/science-and-technology-committee/inquiries/parliament-2017/commercial-recreational-drone-uk-17-19/>

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/electronic-sales-suppression-a-call-for-evidence>

February

- Meeting with Nia Griffiths team, Shadow Defence Secretary
- Meeting with Jo Platt, Shadow Cabinet Office Minister
- HMRC Consultation on Digital Service Tax ¹⁹

January

- Commons Science and Technology Committee, Brexit, Science and Innovation: Preparations for 'No-Deal' inquiry²⁰
- Evidence before Commons Science and Technology Committee

2018

December

- Dept for Education, Improving adult basic digital skills²¹
- HM Treasury, Digital Competition Expert Panel: Call for Evidence²²
- Ofqual Regulating Basic Digital Skills Qualifications²³

**** 2018 AGM ****

September

- Parliamentary Science and Technology Select Committee on Digital Government²⁴
- Commons Science and Technology Committee Consultation on Balance and effectiveness of research and innovation spending²⁵

August

- Dept of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport with Margot James - Creating the environment to develop the cyber security professional in the UK²⁶

¹⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/digital-services-tax-consultation>

²⁰ <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/science-and-technology-committee/news-parliament-2017/brexit-science-and-innovation-preparations-for-no-deal-inquiry-launch-17-19/>

²¹ <https://consult.education.gov.uk/post-16-basic-skills-team/improving-adult-basic-digital-skills/>

²² <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/digital-competition-expert-panel-call-for-evidence>

²³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/regulating-basic-digital-skills-qualifications>

²⁴ <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/science-and-technology-committee/news-parliament-2017/digital-government-inquiry-launch-17-19/>

²⁵ <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/science-and-technology-committee/news-parliament-2017/research-innovation-spending-inquiry-launch-17-19/>

²⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/developing-the-uk-cyber-security-profession>

June

- House of Commons Education Select Committee, Consultation on the Fourth Industrial Revolution²⁷
- Department for Transport, Future of mobility call for evidence²⁸

May

- The House of Lords Select Committee on Communications consultation on Internet Regulation²⁹
- The Department of Culture, Media and Sport consultation on a draft Code of Practice for a 'secure by design' Internet of Things³⁰;
- The Department of Culture, Media and Sport consultation on the Security of Network and Information Systems Directive³¹;
- Higher Education Funding Council for England's consultation on a Knowledge Exchange Comparison Framework³²;
- Joint Parliamentary Committee on the National Security Strategy, consultation on the UK Government's approach to the cyber security of critical national infrastructure³³
- House of Lords call for evidence on Artificial Intelligence³⁴.

²⁷ <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/education-committee/news-parliament-2017/fourth-industrial-revolution-launch-17-19/>

²⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-mobility-call-for-evidence>

²⁹ <https://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/communications/InternetRegulation/Internet-regulation-call-for-evidence.pdf>

³⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/secure-by-design>

³¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-security-of-network-and-information-systems-directive>

³² <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/ke/kef/>

³³ <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/national-security-strategy/news-parliament-2017/cyber-security-cni-launch-17-19/>

³⁴ <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/ai-committee/news-parliament-2017/call-for-evidence/>

MEMBERSHIP PANEL REPORT

The UKCRC Membership Committee has five Members including a representative of CPHC.

The current Panel comprises:

Nadia Berthouze (Chair)	Professor in Affective Computing and Interaction, University College London Deputy Director of UCLIC – UCL Interaction Centre
Erol Gelenbe	Professor in the Dennis Gabor Chair, Imperial College London
Phil Trinder	Professor of Computing Science, University of Glasgow
Fionn Murtagh	Professor of Data Science, University of Huddersfield. Visiting Professor of Data Science, Goldsmiths University of London Honorary Professor of Computer Science, De Montfort University Honorary Professor of Computer Science, Royal Holloway University of London
Carsten Maple	<i>Appointed by CPHC</i> Professor of Cyber Systems Engineering, WMG, University of Warwick

The Panel works electronically, reviewing nominations and voting online. The application process has been streamlined as much as possible, generally requiring only a nomination from a member and an appropriate CV. In circumstances where this is insufficient for an evident decision, the Panel will request additional information. This has not been necessary to date.

Over the last year, the following 11 nominations for membership were received and elected:

Andrew Fitzgibbon
Weiru Liu
Dr Tim Weyrich
Peter Triantafillou
Andrew Martin
Karim Djemame
Danaë E. B. Stanton Fraser
John Shawe-Taylor
V Anne Smith
Amir Hussain
Jeremy Gibbons

Maxine Leslie (on behalf of Nadia Berthouze)
November 2020