

Meeting of UKFN Executive Committee

12:00, Tuesday 1 May 2018
via Webex

MINUTES

Present:

Matthew Juniper (Chair)
Nick Daish
Yannis Hardalupas
Anne Juel
Paul Linden
Neil Sandham
Steve Tobias

1. Minutes of last EC meeting (5/1/18)

The EC unanimously accepted the minutes from the last EC meeting.

2. Outstanding actions from previous EC meetings

MJ noted there were various ongoing actions from both the last EC meeting (5/1/18) and earlier meetings (see Agenda) and indicated when they could be expected to receive attention, either in a subsequent agenda item or later in the course of the project.

3. Website

MJ reported on the current status of the website, in particular developments since the last EC meeting, under the headings of Mailing lists, Home page, SIG individual pages, SRV page, Researcher Resources, Competition page, Directory page and Connect page. Of particular note were the following.

Mailing lists

A set of mailing lists had been created using *mailman*, with two per SIG – one for general-interest members and another for core members – plus a general UKFN mailing list, which has greatly simplified communications with the almost 1500 members of the network.

Home page

MJ described the new carousel that has replaced the text at the top of the home page, and noted there is an editing interface available allowing easy addition or removal of items in the carousel to maintain interest.

SIG individual pages

The main advance since the last meeting was the appearance of a members list on most SIG pages, as a result of ND working with the SIG leaders to compile lists and then register their members (with a minimal set of personal data) in the UKFN database. This had the added benefit of increasing the number of registered users to over 1000, who are then accessible to Directory searches. Adding users' missing details, such as research interests, where required, was an ongoing task involving the SIG leaders.

Researcher Resources

The number of resources was growing steadily, and now included the contributions from EC members and some SIGs. There were still a number of sources to pursue (see Agenda), which ND/MJ would continue to follow up. The editing interface is in place allowing easy addition of new resources of many different types.

At some stage, as the number of resources continues to grow, it will be necessary to reorganise the list of resources with headings.

Competitions

MJ reported the latest photo/video competition (whose winner would be decided in Item 7) had again been a success, although with fewer entries than previous competitions. The next competition, which according to the current schedule will close 31 July 2018, would probably be an open one without a theme.

Directory page

MJ noted that several of the recommendations made by the EC at the last meeting to improve the search functionality had been implemented (search results in alphabetical order, SIG membership shown) or were in progress. In the latter case, the current focus was to add an interactive map showing the location of the people in the search results, which could be used to search by geographical region.

NS gave an updated appraisal of the UKFN website, commenting that it appeared to be growing steadily, functioned correctly and in particular the Directory had improved noticeably.

NS enquired about the status of the Jobs page. ND reported this was still on the list of developments, and would be pursued in due course, through *jobs.ac.uk* RSS feeds and/or an online form.

4. Special Interest Groups

SIG status

MJ reported he had completed the task of talking to every SIG leader. It had been a lengthy but very worthwhile exercise, giving a good global picture of the many diverse SIG activities, and allowing a coherent approach to sharing SIG best practices.

The Aeroacoustics SIG had now formally wound up, and as suggested by the EC, it was still listed on the UKFN website, with a link through to the UK Acoustics Network site.

SIG spending

The remainder of discussion on this item focused on spending. Reviewing the graph of total SIG spending with time, including a comparison with the situation at the last EC meeting, it was clear that an underspend was not only likely but may also be increasing.

It was therefore imperative to review spending with the SIGs and so their spending plans were being revisited: ND had sent an email to all SIG leaders requesting an updated spending plan by the end of May 2018. Following this, a re-allocation of resources between the SIGs would be agreed over the summer.

Action: ND/MJ to gather updated spending plans by 31/5/18, and re-allocate funds, as required, by 31/7/18.

The SIG leader workshop would go ahead in September 2018, and the details were to be discussed under Item 8. The possibility of holding another similar event in the UK in association with the 2019 ERCOFTAC Spring Festival was no longer an option, as this event will now take place in Belgium.

5. Short Research Visits

MJ reported that the actions to eliminate the predicted underspend for SRVs, discussed at the last meeting, had been successful in increasing the rate of spending substantially to the desired level. Spending would continue to be monitored, with adjustments as required to keep this very popular part of UKFN active. MJ and ST commented that although the SRV grants were relatively small they had made a significant difference to many of those who had participated in the scheme.

6. Supplementary funds

Income and spending

MJ and ND outlined the current state of supplementary funds received from institutions and the spending to date, giving a current net balance of £4,500 (allowing for the current photo/video competition). If all 9 institutions who have contributed so far also make payments in Years 2 and 3, this will result in a total income of £15,000. The EC agreed that now would be an acceptable point to follow up on Year 2 contributions.

Action: ND to contact institutions who contributed in Year 1 to arrange invoicing for their Year 2 contributions, by 31/5/18.

Fund uses

Regarding use of the supplementary funds, the EC agreed the current set of competitions already established would continue, while the fund could be used in any transitional period after the end of the project to cover small-scale activities, such as updating the website.

The EC discussed the details of the thesis prize. ND outlined a procedure and timeline:

- The thesis nominations would be allocated between MJ plus the 5 EC members, with two reviewers per nomination. ND had already made an allocation, so distribution could be carried out immediately.
- Each reviewer would rank their allocated dissertations and return the results to ND by 18 May 2018.
- The results of the review would be combined and discussed at a meeting during the week beginning 21 May 2018, where a shortlist of 3 finalists and the overall winner would be decided.

The EC agreed that this was a reasonable approach.

Action: ND to distribute nominations for dissertation prize to MJ + EC members by 4/5/18. Each nomination goes to two different reviewers [completed].

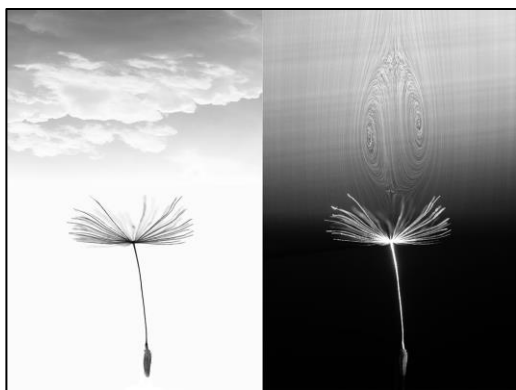
Action: MJ + EC members to rank nominations and return results to ND by 18/5/18.

Action: ND to arrange meeting during w/b 21/5/18 to decide shortlist and choose winner and 2 runners-up.

7. UKFN photo/video competition #3

The EC agreed that the winners of the competition, and the recipients of £200 each, were as follows.

PHOTO WINNER



“‘Halo’ vortex ring lifts dandelion seeds”

Cathal Cummins, Madeleine Seale, Enrico Mastropaolo,
Naomi Nakayama & Ignazio Maria Viola

University of Edinburgh

VIDEO WINNER



‘Wake partita’

Lian Gan

Durham University

8. Engagement with other UK activities

MJ ran through the various organisations and events with which UKFN has an ongoing interaction. The main points of note in the discussion were the following.

EPSRC

MJ reported that he had had a positive telephone conversation with Judith McCann and Tom Robinson, who were very supportive of UKFN. They would aim to attend the UK Fluids Conference and the SIG leaders event.

PL and AJ reminded the EC they were both on the Mathematical Sciences SAT, which was due to meet in July 2018, and they would therefore return any news relevant to UKFN.

Action: PL/AJ to report back after July 2018 Mathematical Sciences SAT meeting.

AJ commented that EPSRC had just published a knowledge exchange report that mentioned the UK Fluids Network (together with ERCOFTAC) in a positive light, and agreed to circulate the link¹.

Action: AJ to forward EPSRC/KTN report by 4/5/18 [completed]

UK Fluids Conference

MJ noted the juxtaposition of the UK Fluids Conference and the Osborne Reynolds Day for the first time had received a positive response from all parties, who had been generous in their efforts to allow it to happen.

Regarding UKFN activities around the conference, the EC agreed the main UKFN SIG leaders event would be a workshop taking place over 2-3 hours on the morning of Tuesday 4 September. This would be followed by lunch, where conference delegates could meet SIG leaders informally (in the spirit of last year’s ‘Meet the SIG leaders’ event). To optimise the available time at the

¹ *The era of mathematics: an independent review of knowledge exchange in the mathematical sciences* – see <https://epsrc.ukri.org/newsevents/pubs/era-of-maths/>.

workshop, it was suggested that full use be made of the preceding evening (after Osborne Reynolds Day, which concludes at 17:00) to meet, make introductions and start informal discussions over drinks followed by dinner. The EC agreed to facilitate this by covering the costs of travel and one night's accommodation for SIG leaders attending the workshop.

PL and AJ noted they intended to attend the conference.

Action: ND/MJ to contact SIG leaders by 4/5/18 with outline plans for SIG Leaders' Workshop [completed] and to gather their comments and suggestions for programme by 21/5/18.

Action: All EC to discuss and finalise plans for programme during the first half of June 2018.

ERCOFTAC

MJ reported briefly on the Spring Festival in Thessaloniki (26-27 April 2018). In particular:

- The QNET Wiki stood out as a carefully-managed and valuable asset, one that should be included on the UKFN Researcher Resources page.
- Not all of the 26 ERCOFTAC SIGs are equally active, so there are clear opportunities for UKFN SIGs either to transform into new ERCOFTAC SIGs or to revitalise existing ones.

AJ asked whether it would be worth contacting other organisations that were not exclusively UK-based, such as IUTAM, to investigate forging links with UKFN. MJ agreed to follow this up.

Action: MJ to explore possibilities for UKFN to associate with other international organisations besides ERCOFTAC, e.g. IUTAM, EUROMECH.

ERCOFTAC Osborne Reynolds Day

MJ noted UKFN is in the process of seeking sponsorship for this event, and is in contact with the organizers.

9. Long-term plans for UKFN

MJ gave an update on current activities concerned with the future of UKFN.

CDT proposals and SIGs

MJ reported that the conversations with the current CDTs at Leeds and ICL had been positive on using CDT bids to provide some degree of regular funding for SIGs after the end of the project.

ST reviewed some ways in which the CDT/SIG relationship would operate, where in return for continuation funding the SIG would be a resource to the CDT, providing an element of the students' training in a particular area of interest. This could extend beyond the CDT, e.g. through online content. PL noted that such content could become Researcher Resources, contributing to Impact; the lectures could even be made available online, subject to overcoming any technical issues.

The process of involving the right SIGs in new CDT bids could begin once the successful outline CDT proposals were known. At that stage, YH suggested that it would be useful to involve all members of the EC in finding good matches between CDT proposals and SIGs, and MJ agreed the proposals would be circulated when they became available. AJ suggested that all CDT proposals with a possible fluids element should be included, even if the main thrust of a CDT was in another area, for example, in materials.

Action: ND/MJ to circulate the list of successful outline CDT proposals to EC members when available at the end of May 2018.

Action: EC members to review proposals and suggest matches with SIGs, and agree who should approach them, within 2 weeks (mid-June 2018); contact with SIGs made within further 2 weeks (end June 2018).

10. Any other business.

No further items were proposed for discussion.

11. Next meeting

The next meeting would be via Webex in approximately 3 months' time.

Action: ND to organise Webex meeting for the end of July 2018.

ND/MJ, 10/5/18