

# Meeting of UKFN Executive Committee

14:00, Friday 3rd November 2023  
via Zoom

## MINUTES

### Present:

Matthew Juniper (Chair)  
Nick Daish  
Matthias Heil  
Ignazio Viola  
Radu Cimpeanu

### Apologies:

Cath Noakes  
Christina Vanderwel  
Yannis Hardalupas

### 1. Agree last minutes

The EC agreed the Minutes of the previous meeting (1/11/2021).

### 2. Outstanding actions from previous EC meeting

There were no outstanding actions from the previous meeting.

### 3. SIGs

MJ described the results of the review of the 44 extant SIGs, which had found that over two-thirds wished to continue, representing a solid basis for the medium term.

Regarding the proposed new SIG on 'Uncertainty quantification and data analytics in fluid mechanics', the EC agreed that it was sufficiently different to an existing, related SIG<sup>1</sup> and suitable for inclusion.

**Action: ND to arrange for new SIG to be added to the UKFN website and publicised.**

### 4. Talks/Cassyni

ND reported on the background to the UKFN subscription to Cassyni, up to the recent renewal and the provision by Cassyni of three free 1-year licences to distribute, which had been offered to Edinburgh, Southampton and Leeds. IV reported that although he was personally in favour of taking up the licence at Edinburgh, the steering committee for the fluids seminar series were not, and therefore the licence would be surrendered for reallocation. ND noted that Bristol would be the offered the spare licence first as they had already shown some interest earlier.

**Action: ND to contact Cassyni to arrange for Edinburgh's licence to be transferred to another institution and, assuming this is possible, find a new licensee.**

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<sup>1</sup> Data-driven methods, machine learning and optimization in fluid mechanics.

## 5. UKFN newsletter

ND reported that the newsletter was well-established and continued to receive a steady stream of items to advertise. However, the section on PhD studentships, while well-subscribed, may be missing its target audience because not many pre-PhDs were likely to be on the mailing list. It was possible that candidates could be fortuitously alerted by, say, teaching staff on the mailing list, but it would be preferable for students to find the advertisements directly themselves. One option was to make the list of studentships more generally accessible by moving or linking it to the UKFN website. RC suggested that using a form to standardise the information could facilitate this. MJ agreed to investigate the possibilities with the current web developer, Peter Benie (Department of Engineering, University of Cambridge).

**Action: MJ/ND to ask Peter Benie (PB) how to link the list of PhD studentships for the newsletter to the website.**

## 6. Website

MJ noted that Peter Benie had been working on the website, with the objective of revising and improving it. So far, he had created a parallel version with the functionality but with no user-friendly interface, and without any of the planned amendments to the contents, as outlined in the Agenda.

MJ ran through proposed high-level changes to the main sections of the website. Overall, the EC agreed these should be implemented.

One area for discussion was the Researcher Resources section, for which the options were either to remove and archive it, or retain it but recognise its limitations. The EC commented that it was a somewhat eclectic accumulation of material, requiring some effort to curate, and acknowledged that there were other, more comprehensive options for publishing/finding resources, such as GitHub, arXiv and Google. Nevertheless, it had useful content, and the EC agreed it should be moved to the newly-created Archive section, so that the current contents were still accessible. MH noted, incidentally, that the link to oomph-lib was out-of-date, and agreed to forward the correct one to ND<sup>2</sup>.

One other area for further discussion was the Directory, and the need to keep it up to date, which has not been carried out to date. This would involve some work, but automating the process, if possible, could minimise the effort, e.g. an email sent automatically to all users at regular intervals requesting they confirm their details otherwise their entry will be deleted. However, the EC agreed to leave the Directory as it is for now, and to defer any redesign to the UKFN 2.0 proposal.

MJ/ND agreed to implement the top-level changes in the further development of the website.

**Action: MJ/ND to discuss with PB the implementation of various top-level changes:**

- **Add new menu items 'Archive' and 'NFFDy'**
- **Update SIG page to list continuing SIGs only; move the rest to Previous SIGs**
- **Reduce Talks to recorded talks only**
- **Move SRVs and Resources to Archive**
- **Leave the Directory, Gallery and Connect pages unchanged**

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<sup>2</sup>The correct URL is <https://github.com/oomph-lib/oomph-lib>. This change has been made to the relevant item in Researcher Resources.

## 7. NFFDy update

MJ reported on the activities of the NFFDy Hub to date. The Summer Programme in Cambridge was a success, with the NFFDy fellows interacting well, and continuing to do so at regular online meetings. RC reported that one of the fellows had recently visited Warwick, and had reiterated that the fellows were keen to provide input to the organisers of the next Summer Programme in Leeds.

**Action: MJ/ND to contact Claire Savy and Steve Tobias at Leeds to reiterate the NFFDy fellows are keen to provide input in the design of the next Summer Programme.**

## 8. UK Fluids Conference

IV represented UKFN at the recent UK Fluids Conference, and reported that it had been well-organised with excellent facilities, but had been very much a PhD conference, with faculty attendance low, especially after the first day, compared with previous years. RC noted the timing of the conference, in October rather than the usual September, probably had a large part to play. RC also reported that colleagues had commented the content strongly favoured numerical over analytical modelling. MH commented that there might be a clash with the next EUROMECH European fluids conference, scheduled for September 2024<sup>3</sup> and that the UKFC organisers should aim to avoid this. IV also commented that there appeared to be very few sponsors at the conference, in particular no CFD model vendors were present.

MJ/ND agreed to provide feedback on the above points to Ben Evans at Swansea University.

**Action: MJ/ND to send feedback on the 2023 and 2024 conferences to Ben Evans.**

## 9. Thesis prize

MJ ran through the current arrangements for the Thesis Competition, and the EC agreed that these should be left unchanged.

## 10. Finances

Having noted the potential availability of NFFDy funds to support UKFN activities, MJ asked whether there were any suggestions for uses beyond supporting NFFDy fellows to run SIG meetings. Suggestions included:

- Funding ways for academics to find industrial or other non-academic contacts, e.g. by supporting short 'scoping visits'.
- Hosting in-person side meetings at the UK Fluids Conference, possibly including another 'Meet the SIG leaders' event.
- Issuing a Call for 'engagement ideas' to connect people across the UK fluids community.

**Action: All to email any further ideas for UKFN activities that could be considered for funding from NFFDy.**

## 11. Pathways to UKFN2.0

MJ ran through the discussions that had already taken place with members of the UK Robotics and Autonomous Systems Network on their approach to securing follow-on funding, and with Andy Lawrence at EPSRC on what options there might be for a UKFN2.0, from their perspective.

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<sup>3</sup> The [1<sup>st</sup> European Fluid Dynamics Conference](#) will take place in Aachen on 16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> September 2024. This will not conflict with the current tentative dates of 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> September for the 2024 UK Fluids Conference.

Having established UKFN/NFFDy as a platform, EPSRC are enthusiastic for it to be taken forward in new directions, and have invited UKFN to propose a follow-on.

The initial suggestion for the first stage in this process is for the UK fluids community to be consulted, followed by a call for Expressions of Interest, which would be assessed and one selected as the team to prepare the proposal for UKFN2.0.

These next steps were discussed in detail. Some EC members felt that the process of choosing what to include in the proposal and who would write the proposal should be a collegiate one, rather than having several competing teams and someone (who?) selecting the 'best', both of which conflicted with a collegiate ethos. The role of the EC would be limited to offering its support and facilitating this process.

It was agreed to proceed in two stages, coordinated by the UKFN EC.

- (i) Circulate an online survey to the UK fluids community to gather input on what people would like to see included in UKFN2.0, and to find out who would like to be involved in writing the proposal to EPSRC.
- (ii) Organise one or more Zoom calls with interested parties from (i) to discuss (a) the results of the survey and how to turn them into a programme of content for UKFN2.0 and (b) how to build the team to write the proposal.

**Action: MJ/ND to draft an online form to find out who is interested in shaping UKFN2.0 and what they would like to do; refine with EC members and circulate.  
[COMPLETE]**

**Action: MJ/ND to organise one or more Zoom meetings with interested parties to discuss content and procedure in more detail.**

## 12. AOB

MJ noted that the Osborne Reynolds Day, held each year in Manchester to select the UK's nominees for the ERCOFTAC da Vinci competition, featured two invited speakers, and it could be helpful to the organisers to suggest some names early on. MJ invited suggestions and agreed to forward them to the OR Day organisers.

**Action: All to submit suggestions for invited speakers at next year's Osborne Reynolds Day (5/7/2024).**

*NCD/MPJ, 15/12/2023*