

Meeting of UKFN Executive Committee

10:30, Friday 5 January 2018
Royal Society

MINUTES

Present:

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

1. Minutes of last EC meeting (22/9/17)

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 (22/9/17) and earlier meetings (see Agenda). Almost all of these would be discussed in subsequent items; exceptions were:

- Encouraging registration – most SIG leaders had indicated to MJ they would be happy for UKFN to register SIG members in an effort to speed up consolidation of the Directory.
- Setting up SIG ‘media champions’ – this would be given low priority until the UKFN website has set up and populated a page for media.

3. Website

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

Home page

There was support for changing the box at the top of the home page from text to images. There was majority support for a ‘slideshow’ style display (of the type used on the UK Acoustics Network website home page). Examples of content include:

- ‘Click here for...’, highlighting some aspect of UKFN
- ‘Focus on SIG’, featuring a specific SIG
- Photo/video (still) from competitions, plus description

Action: ND/MJ to investigate revising the top of the Home page.

SIG pages

According to discussions with the SIG leaders¹, MJ noted that around 6 had edited their individual pages; a further 8-10 had created or were planning their own website, which would be linked to their individual pages.

Researcher Resources

The Researcher Resources (RR) pages were in need of new material, and this was another priority topic in MJ's discussions with the SIG leaders. Around half of those asked confirmed immediately they could contribute to the RR, which ND/MJ would follow up.

Action: MJ/ND to follow up on offers of Researcher Resources from SIG leaders.

Several members of the EC asked when resources previously mentioned would appear on the website. These are

- Hydrodynamic stability course from the MAGIC Taught Course Centre
- 'Lectures in Turbulence for the 21st Century' online book
- Oomph-lib (object-oriented, open-source finite-element library for the simulation of multi-physics problems)

ND confirmed these were due to be added, but one obstacle had been the lack of a facility for adding Resources to the web page – this was being addressed and would be available soon. AJ reported that a resource on Non-Newtonian fluids would also be available once copyright issues had been addressed.

Action: ND to ensure resources proposed by EC members are added to the website.

ND also noted that new resources could be created by constructing lists of 'useful links' in specified areas, and encouraged the EC members to each nominate an area and then provide a list of links using a common set of headings.

Action: ND to liaise with EC members to develop one list of useful links each.

MJ noted that another group of new resources we would like to feature are the QNET Wiki test cases (see Item 8(c)), which again would be added as link-type resources. NS commented that there may be a charge to access some material and recommended checking this further.

Action: ND to check which parts of QNET content require payment to access them.

Competitions

The latest photo/video competition (whose winner would be decided in Item 7) had again been a success. In particular, use of a competition theme had been interesting, and would be adopted in future competitions. Ideas for the theme of the next one would be welcome.

Action: all EC members to suggest new themes for the competition.

Directory page

MJ noted that the searchable directory of researchers was in place but needed feedback to realise its full potential, for example how it is used and which features are useful/missing.

- AJ suggested that an option to search by geographical region could be attractive to, for example, industry looking for individuals with specific expertise in the local area. MJ suggested a map on the right-hand side of the page could be used to display user locations.
- AJ also suggested that it would be helpful to display the SIGs for each user, as this would be an alternative way to reach users in the search results.

¹ MJ is undertaking a periodic review of all the SIGs with their leaders/co-leaders. The current review was around one-third complete at the time of the EC meeting, and 'discussions with SIG leaders' here and elsewhere refers to this.

- PL suggested that displaying results in alphabetical order would be preferable to the current option of listing by date of registration.
- ST suggested it would be useful if the tags displayed with each user could be interactive, so that clicking on a tag would list all users with that tag.
- YH suggested the Directory could have a brokering function for SRVs, to help prospective applicants find researchers with similar interests. This approach could be highlighted in future publicity activities for SRVs (see also Item 5).

Action: ND/MJ to investigate feasibility and best options for changes to Directory page, namely

- (i) allowing search by UK geographical region**
- (ii) changing the display order to alphabetical**
- (iii) making the displayed tags into links**
- (iv) showing which SIGs a user belongs to**

NS gave an updated appraisal of the UKFN website, and was generally content with the current status. There did however appear to be an issue with the Talks page, in that some of the links in the introductory box pointed incorrectly to the UKFN home page.

Action: ND to check links on Talks page and either remove or ensure they point to appropriate targets (e.g. seminar listing page on institutional website).

In terms of other proposed developments:

- Thesis directory – the EC discussed the addition of a directory of doctoral dissertations in fluid mechanics, which would be in effect a pilot scheme on behalf of JFM. There was broad agreement with the proposals, as set out in the agenda notes, and it was noted this would further strengthen the UKFN/JFM symbiosis.
- Jobs page – the EC agreed it would be useful to have an RSS feed of jobs, as derived from the *jobs.ac.uk* feeds. There was also support for adding an online form to post new jobs to the website, along the lines of CFD Online (<https://www.cfd-online.com/Jobs/jobform.php>).

Action: ND/MJ to investigate adding an online form for users to submit job details.

4. Special Interest Groups

SIG status

On the basis of the ongoing discussions with SIG leaders, MJ concluded the SIGs were going well.

The Aeroacoustics SIG had indicated it was likely to wind itself up and members transfer to the eponymous SIG in the newly-formed UK Acoustics Network. The EC suggested that, once confirmed, the SIG should still be listed on the UKFN website, but with a link through to the UKAN site.

Action: ND/MJ to adjust the entry on the website for the Aeroacoustics SIG.

SIG spending

The remainder of discussion on this item focused on spending. Reviewing the graph of total SIG spending with time, it was clear that the rate of spending needed to increase from the early, relatively slow rate in order to utilise funds fully. SIGs would therefore need to adhere to their proposed meeting schedule to avoid a significant underspend.

MJ reported that in discussions with SIG leaders some stated they had found other sources of funding for meetings and may underspend their UKFN allocation. MJ had emphasised the need

for them to report any underspend as early as possible, to optimise use of this money before the end of the grant. A few SIGs have agreed to consider doing this now. The winding-up of the Aeroacoustics SIG would additionally free up around £12K.

The EC discussed ways to utilise any potential underspend. There was little appetite for a third round of proposals to create more SIGs because they would also have insufficient time to establish fully. However, there was enthusiastic support for a **SIG workshop** bringing together some or all the SIGs, and there followed discussions on the timing and content.

- The event should be scheduled adjacent to another event, to save time and cost, and to boost attendance. However, it should aim to be complementary to, rather than in conflict with, the other event.
- One part of the workshop could be a plenary session, focusing on sharing experiences between SIGs, such as running a SIG successfully or what makes a good resource, and helping to build a sense of community; while another part, run in parallel sessions, could be dedicated to scientific aspects of the SIGs, bringing together groups with common research interests.
- It may be good to invite industrial people to the event to give them a feel for what UKFN does.
- For 2018, both the Osborne Reynolds Day meeting and the UK Fluids Conference will take place in Manchester in September, on the 3rd and over 4th-6th, respectively. Thus one possibility is to schedule a SIG workshop between the two, for example on the morning of the 4th (since the UKFC does not begin until midday).
- For 2019, the ERCOFTAC Spring Festival is planned for the UK (Cambridge) in April, presenting the opportunity to hold another SIG workshop adjacent to this ERCOFTAC meeting, for example in the form of a 'meet the ERCOFTAC SIG leaders' event. The format may be informed by the experiences of the September 2018 workshop, including discussions on ERCOFTAC (see also Item 8(c)).

Action: ND/MJ to remove mention of a third call for proposals from the SIG page on the UKFN website.

Action ND/MJ to contact OR Day organisers and UKFC organising committee to discuss proposals for adding a SIG workshop in between the two.

5. Short Research Visits

Despite enthusiastic support for the SRV scheme, there is still likely to be an underspend, and the EC discussed ways in which this could be addressed, principally through increasing the number of SRVs awarded.

- The frequency of calls should be reduced from four months to two months with the aim of stimulating a more constant supply of proposals.
- If there were a large response then the number of proposals approved could be high initially but then tapered off later on to compensate.
- Publicity of the scheme should be increased to reach as wide an audience as possible. In particular, the help of the institutional Points of Contact should be enlisted to reach out beyond the SIGs (the origin of many SRV proposals to date).
- Use of the Directory page should be encouraged to find potential collaborators.

Action: ND to contact institutional PoC's soon to ask them to publicize SRVs.

6. Supplementary funds

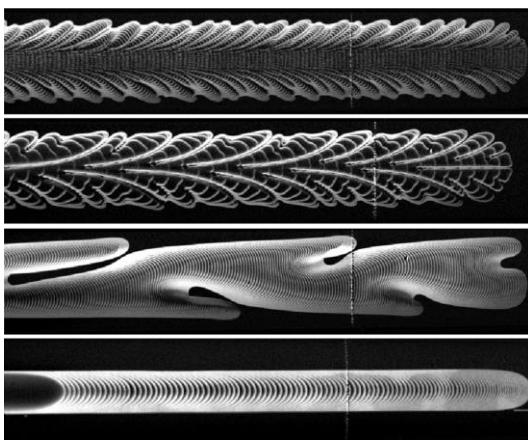
MJ outlined the current state of the supplementary funds received from institutions and the spending to date, which so far has been exclusively on competition prizes. One new competition to be launched in 2018 is the fluids dissertation prize, and the EC reviewed and approved the proposed eligibility criteria and timeline for the competition, additionally agreeing that the prize would be £500.

Action: ND/MJ to promote the dissertation prize across UKFN and the wider UK fluids community (via the institutional PoCs)

7. UKFN photo/video competition #2

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

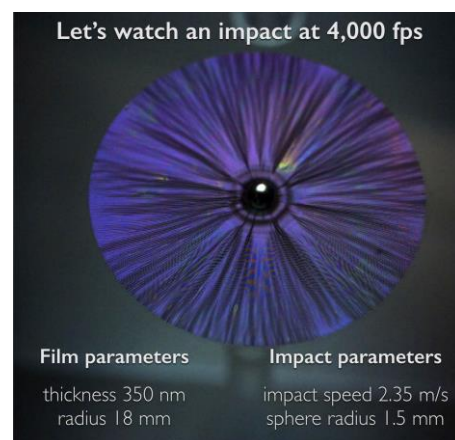
PHOTO WINNER



'Spatio-temporal feathering in elastic channels'

Callum Cuttle, University of Manchester

VIDEO WINNER



'Wrinkly impact'

Maxime Inizan, Finn Box, Alfonso Castrejón-Pita & Dominic Vella, University of Oxford

8. Engagement with other UK activities

MJ ran through the various organisations and events with which UKFN has an ongoing interaction.

(a) EPSRC

MJ confirmed that a meeting would be arranged for February or March following completion of the current round of individual discussions with SIG leaders, and by which time the relevant EPSRC personnel would also be in a position to engage.

(b) UK Fluids Conference

The EC agreed that UKFN would participate in broadly the same ways as last time, i.e. contributing a booklet, stand and SIG-related event, as well as the conference prizes.

- The booklet would still be focused on the SIGs, but may be a more 'glossy' production (which would require more preparation time).
- The stand would remain the focal point for UKFN.
- The SIG-related event this time would be the SIG workshop (see Item 4), which this year would be well-timed to take advantage of attendance at the conference (and the preceding Osborne Reynolds Day).

(c) *ERCOFTAC*

There are two main ways UKFN and ERCOFTAC plan to work together.

- Interaction between UKFN SIGs and ERCOFTAC SIGs – a preliminary survey suggests there are many potential commonalities between the two sets of SIGs. PL suggested the proposed SIG workshop in September 2018 (Item 4) would be a good opportunity to discuss this common ground further and could help with planning the SIG workshop scheduled to tie in with the ERCOFTAC Spring Festival in April 2019.
- QNET Wiki – this was covered under Item 3, *Website*, in the discussion of Researcher Resources.

(d) *Osborne Reynolds Day*

This was essentially covered under Item 4, *Special Interest Groups*. There was a slight concern whether there was sufficient time available for nominations to the Da Vinci competition if the deadline is only 2 days after the OR Day.

Action: ND to check on Da Vinci nomination procedure to assess work required if OR Day application cannot be reused.

(e) *JFM/Tom Crawford*

MJ reviewed the current status of TC interviews at APS, etc, and noted this was a good example of teamwork between UKFN and JFM.

(f) *UK Acoustics Network*

MJ noted the UKAN website includes photos of the key players, and the EC agreed this would be something to try for UKFN to increase the visibility of the key people behind the network.

Action: ND to arrange for photos of the EC to be added to the UKFN website.

(g) *Government Office for Science*

The EC discussed whether there was a place for UKFN to supply advice to the government, given it has an ongoing need for experts it can contact to respond to questions on a variety of timescales. It concluded that there may be scope for this, but it would be best to begin through personal contacts, such as the Chief Scientific Advisers to individual departments, and see whether this bears fruit before making a broader approach to the government. This would be an additional incentive to develop the user-friendliness of the Directory to a high level.²

Action: MJ to continue discussions with relevant parties.

9. Long-term vision for UKFN

There was wide-ranging discussion on how UKFN could continue beyond the end of the current grant.

Benefits of UKFN to the UK fluids community

The EC agreed that there should be a consultation with the UK fluids community, canvassing opinion as widely as possible, on how UKFN can be of most benefit. An online questionnaire would be a convenient way to do this, with say two versions depending on the target:

- a short version for general circulation, through the institutional Points of Contact
- a longer version, with more detailed questions, for those more closely involved in UKFN, such as SIG leaders and perhaps also SIG members

² The Science Media Centre (<http://www.sciencemediacentre.org/working-with-us/for-scientists/>) is another organisation that could be approached for advice on taking these ideas forward (suggested by Martin Rees).

Questions could include:

- * How do you use UKFN?
- * What is the most useful/best activity of UKFN?
- * Is the website useful?

Action: ND/MJ to develop online questionnaires about UKFN and circulate throughout the UK fluids community.

How to maintain UKFN's activities

The main UKFN activities are the website, SIGs, SRVs and outreach/publicity. ST suggested it would be helpful to come up with some ballpark figures for each of these activities to get a feel for the level of funding required to support specified outcomes in each activity.

Action: MJ/ND to estimate the cost of the main UKFN functions at various levels of activity.

Long-term funding options

The EC proposed a number of different potential sources of funding. There may be particular activities to which a given source is best suited. Suggestions included:

- Research Councils, not only EPSRC but also NERC and BBSRC, either independently or wrapped into other proposals (see below)
- Isaac Newton Trust, e.g. for the website
- Learned Societies, such as IMechE, ICE, IChemE, etc, e.g. to sponsor relevant SIGs or SRVs
- Other societies, such as ILASS³, RAS⁴, The Combustion Institute⁵, again to sponsor SIGs or SRVs

Funding for SIGs could also be wrapped into CDT proposals: the SIG would receive support from the CDT in return for providing course materials for the CDT programme. This could work particularly well if there is a CDT member in the SIG: the CDT member could take responsibility for the course, but ask others in the SIG to deliver it. MJ agreed to approach the existing CDTs (Peter Jimack in Leeds and initially Christos Vassilicos in ICL) to get their feedback on this idea.

The results of the consultation exercise described earlier could be used to determine which activities should be given priority in efforts to secure continuation funding.

Action: MJ to investigate possibility for support of UKFN activities from various sources.

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 late March/early April 2018.

³ Institute for Liquid Atomization and Spray Systems (<http://ilasseurope.org/>).

⁴ The Royal Astronomical Society (<https://www.ras.org.uk/>).

⁵ British Section (<http://www.combustion.org.uk/>).