

Meeting of UKFN Executive Committee

14:00, Monday 23 March 2020

via Webex

MINUTES

Present:

Matthew Juniper (Chair)

Nick Daish

Anne Juel

Paul Linden

Neil Sandham

Steve Tobias

Yannis Hardalupas

1. Minutes of last EC meeting (18/7/19)

The EC agreed the minutes from the last EC meeting.

2. Outstanding actions from previous EC meetings

n/a

3. Website

MJ reported that the website developments since the last meeting (Gallery page, SIG page reorganisation, Network News, Directory page with interactive tags) completed the main website functionality. The web developers, Javi Arias and Pedro Cardoso, will continue to work on the website over the next 6-9 months, adding new features if required, but mainly focusing on making the website faster and smoother.

4. Special Interest Groups

MJ ran through the new SIGs that had been added in the third call agreed at the last EC meeting, as well as those that had decided to wind up. The remaining ca. 40 SIGs were currently keen to continue and would do so under their own initiative. UKFN would monitor the activity and liaise with inactive SIGs to check whether they wished to continue.

YH noted that some SIGs overlapped in subject area, for example Sprays and Multiphase Flows, and therefore merging of SIGs might usefully be considered. MJ agreed to review the list of SIGs for overlaps, and ask the relevant SIG leaders whether it might be beneficial to merge their groups.

Action: ND/MJ to draw up list of possible SIG mergers and contact relevant SIG leaders by 30/4/20.

5. Short Research Visits

MJ noted briefly that almost twice as many SRVs as originally planned had been completed for around 50% more money. The SRV reports would be left on the website for another year.

6. Future of UKFN

Overall expenditure

MJ ran through the overall funding figures. A total underspend of around £70K would be returned to EPSRC.

Continuing role of UKFN

MJ outlined the main activities of UKFN into the future.

- MJ would continue to lead UKFN for now, with support from ND at 10% FTE for the next year.
- The newsletter had been successfully taken over by Mark Allen at Leeds.
- The website would continue, with modifications and main content additions carried out from Cambridge, although there could be scope for Leeds to handle some of the latter.
- UKFN would continue to be the UK Pilot Centre for ERCOFTAC, with its associated responsibilities, for at least another 1-2 years.
- Competitions would continue as currently – the supplementary funds contributed by institutions were enough for around another 4 years. The thesis competition would be run this year, although without presentations by the winner and runners-up at the next UK Fluids Conference, since this had been postponed to 2021.

Action: ND to announce new fluids thesis competition by 3/4/20, closing date for nominations 30/4/20.

Action: All to review nominated theses and choose winner by 31/5/20.

Future interaction of UKFN with Leeds Institute of Fluid Dynamics & UK Fluids Conference

MJ noted there was a desire to continue with all three working collaboratively. Currently, LIFD ran the UKFN newsletter and UKFN contributed prizes for student presentations at the UK Fluids Conference, and this would continue.

As discussed at the previous EC meeting, a major new component of the collaboration will be a report or booklet, with working title 'Our Fluid Nation', focusing on the importance of fluid mechanics research to the UK. This was motivated by a report commissioned from the UK Acoustics Network entitled 'UK Acoustics: Sound Economics', which considered in detail the economic benefit to the UK of the discipline of acoustics.

There had been a scoping meeting held at Leeds on 10/2/20, involving UKFN and LIFD, at which many different options for the content and format of the report were discussed, leading to the conclusion that these needed to be narrowed down, and an important part of this process would be to consult with UKFN members on the aims, content, etc. of the report. The SIG leaders, together with the institutional points of contact set up at the start of the project, would be a suitable starting point.

Action: ST to draft email requesting input on aims/content/etc of the booklet, and circulate to EC for comment by 30/4/20.

Action: ND/MJ to send agreed email to SIG leaders and institutional points of contact by 15/5/20, with deadline for input of 31/5/20.

Future funding

Speaking from personal experience of the Low-energy Ventilation and Urban Fluid Mechanics SIGs, PL noted that industrial members of the SIGs had found the meetings valuable, and suggested there might therefore be a case for asking such members to contribute funding for future meetings. YH commented that in view of the currently unsettled economic situation it would be wise to wait before further action. MJ agreed to contact SIG leaders at an appropriate time to encourage them to pursue such options.

Action: ND/MJ to contact SIG leaders, when appropriate, to encourage them to seek industrial support for their SIG.

7. EC membership

MJ observed that the end of the 3-year grant was an appropriate time to refresh the membership of the EC, by finding replacements for 2 or 3 of its 5 members, thereby also maintaining continuity into the next phase of UKFN.

The EC discussed whether the current composition offered satisfactory geographical and subject coverage, or whether new institutions should be considered. YH suggested any such institution should have a significant presence in fluids research; ST noted representation of a range of research councils would also be beneficial.

Based on the Directory page of the website, it was concluded that overall the coverage was good, although the duplication of Cambridge (MJ and PL) provided an opportunity to add a new institution. PL offered to step down and MJ agreed to represent Cambridge, and the EC proposed that the University of Edinburgh be added to the EC to increase geographical coverage and agreed to suggest candidates.

AJ and ST also offered to step down and agreed to propose replacements at their respective institutions.

Action: AJ to propose replacement candidates from University of Manchester by 30/4/20.

Action: ST to propose replacement candidates from University of Leeds by 30/4/20.

Action: All to propose replacement candidates from University of Edinburgh by 30/4/20.

Action: MJ/ND to contact candidates and select 3 replacements with help of EC by 31/5/20 (to start 1/6/20).

8. Any other business.

The next meeting would be arranged for September 2020, with the new EC membership in place.

Action: ND to organise next EC meeting for September 2020.

ND/MJ, 14/4/20