

Meeting of UKFN Executive Committee

15:00, Friday 22 September 2017
via Webex

MINUTES

Present:

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

Apologies:

Steve Tobias

1. Welcome to new EC member

The EC welcomed Yannis Hardalupas to the Executive Committee, who is taking over from Berend van Wachem, including responsibility for reviewing SRV proposals.

2. Minutes of last EC meeting (30/6/17)

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

3. Outstanding actions from previous EC and AB meetings

MJ noted there were a number of ongoing actions from the last EC meeting (23/3/17) as well as earlier EC meetings (see Agenda). These were noted, but the EC did not discuss them further.

4. Website

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

- The individual SIG pages were now editable, and instructions on how to edit them had been sent to SIG leaders as part of the SIG manual (Item 5).
- Although the Researcher Resource (RR) pages had been live since the last meeting, there had not been any additions so far. This state of affairs would be addressed by the EC as a group (Item 5).

NS gave an updated appraisal of the UKFN website, and was pleased with the continued development, and looked forward to the SIG content increasing.

In terms of next developments:

- the Directory page, which will provide users with the ability to search the UKFN database, will go live soon. This should provide an incentive for SIG members, etc who have not already registered to do so. (PS: this went live on 25/9/17.)

- the ability to manage mailing lists will be developed once mail server security issues have been resolved.

5. Special Interest Groups

MJ gave an update on the overall statistics for how many SIGs had held their kick-off meeting, claimed expenses and provided spending plans.

Monitoring SIGs, and SIG manual

MJ reported he had completed the first round of conversations with SIG leaders and as a result had been able to finalise the best practice 'SIG manual', which summarises the experiences of the SIGs to date in terms of meetings, websites, outputs, publicity & news and organisational matters. A copy had been sent to all the SIG leaders and co-leaders. The SIG manual was now complete, although future revisions were possible.

Action: ND to send a copy of the SIG manual to EC members.

EC and Researcher Resources

In the course of the conversations with SIG leaders, MJ noted that it had been a valuable exercise, in terms of giving a connected overview of the SIGs and their operations, and this suggested there could be some benefit in MJ taking over this role from the EC members, cycling through all the SIGs and talking to, say, two SIG leaders every week.

The EC, in turn, could contribute in some other way. Specifically, MJ proposed that the EC could pursue the location of additional Researcher Resources to add to the website.

The EC were generally in favour of this proposal. MJ clarified the type of material of interest by running through some of the existing resources currently on the UKFN website taken from the AIM (Advanced Instability Methods) network.

- PL asked whether gaining permission of authors was an issue. MJ noted the authors had all been asked first and had been happy to see their material made more widely available.
- PL asked for suggestions on the best way to proceed. MJ suggested each EC member work with their own research area first, which might involve some of the SIGs to which they belonged.
- NS asked if existing resources could be linked to, rather than simply repeated. MJ concurred, provided they were of sufficiently high quality.
- MJ suggested each EC member aim to secure one resource that can be added to the Researcher Resources pages.
 - YH noted there may be some material from the Combustion Institute, who run summer schools, and offered to follow up this lead.
 - NS noted there were several avenues to explore in the CFD area, including short courses and the *CFD online* website to check out.
 - AJ noted the Granular flows and Non-Newtonian flows SIGs would be useful places to start in her research area

Action: EC members each to provide one 'resource' in their own research area.

6. Short Research Visits

MJ reported the current batch of SRVs had two proposals so far, although this often increased with the approach of the deadline (currently 30 September 2017). The SRV page now includes the visit reports as they become available. (PS: there were 5 by the deadline of 30/9/17.)

7. Supplementary funds

MJ gave an update on supplementary fund contributions received and in progress, and noted that money had so far been spent only on the photo/video competition and UK Fluids Conference competitions.

Dissertation prize

As noted at the last EC meeting, a prize for the best fluids dissertation had been mooted. ND outlined the proposal for how the competition would run. The EC discussed the proposal and some outstanding questions. It was agreed that:

- there would be minimal prescription in how the competition was run, so it was not necessary to define 'fluid mechanics' in advance of the competition, there would not be guidelines for the citations provided by sponsors of a thesis and a set of criteria for judging would not be employed. These aspects could be revised later, if necessary, in the light of experience
- in addition to a first prize, provisionally set at £300, a runner-up prize would also be awarded
- further channels for publicity could be sought from industrial societies such as IChemE and IMechE, both to encourage participation and to advertise the winners. Simultaneously, this would be a useful way to introduce UKFN to industrial societies and increase awareness within the industrial fluids community.

PL commented on the competition timeline, which would close on 31st March for dissertations successfully defended in the previous calendar year: it was common for doctorates to last 3.5 years, so that March was often the time when a doctorate was at or near completion, and so it would be unreasonable for an author to have to wait potentially 18 months before giving a presentation and receiving their prize at the next UK Fluids Conference. MJ and ND agreed to review the timeline and if possible push back the closing date while remaining compatible with the UK Fluids Conference timeline

Action: ND/MJ to revisit timeline for thesis prize to align better with PhD end dates.

Action: ND/MJ to identify and approach industrial societies for publicity of thesis prize.

8. Engagement with other UK activities

MJ gave an update on ongoing interactions in the fluids community.

UK Fluids Conference

MJ summarised the UKFN activities related to this year's conference. The EC agreed that the conference had been a success, with a high standard of presentations, and good feedback from students.

ERCOFTAC

Transfer of the UK Pilot Centre to UKFN was in progress, and would take place formally at this year's Autumn Festival, which MJ will attend.

Action: MJ to report back on Autumn Festival before next EC meeting.

Naked Scientists/Journal of Fluid Mechanics

MJ outlined the plan for Nicole Sharp (FY Fluid Dynamics blog) and Tom Crawford (Naked Scientists/JFM) to attend APS this year to conduct interviews of various delegates, in particular UK-based fluids researchers, with a view to publishing the interview videos on the UKFN website (and elsewhere). The EC agreed to provide suggestions for people to interview.

Action: EC members to review APS programme and send suggestions for shortlist of interviewees.

Other interactions

MJ drew attention to the newly-formed UK Acoustics Network, which is co-led by Kirill Horoshenkov (Sheffield) and Richard Craster (ICL). Following an initial meeting in July, MJ and ND will continue to liaise with RC and share experiences from UKFN. (PS: MJ will attend their kick-off meeting in November 2017.)

9. Interactions with EPSRC

MJ reported contact with EPSRC was ongoing, although in something of a hiatus due to personnel matters in the relevant portfolios.

Contact would be resumed later in the year with follow-up focusing on the SIGs and their outputs, while the next UKFN photo/video competition could be themed, aimed at the growth of continuum mechanics and the interface between solid and fluid mechanics.

Action: MJ to revisit meeting with EPSRC to discuss UKFN input by end of 2017.

10. Publicity and engagement with UKFN

MJ reviewed efforts to consolidate and expand the reach of UKFN, most of which are ongoing.

How to increase engagement within UKFN

Of primary interest here was increasing the number of UKFN participants, especially SIG members, who have registered and entered their details. The EC agreed that a good time for a push on this would be once the website Directory page was live, so that it was easy to see the utility of registering.

Action: ND/MJ to push registration when Directory page live and fully functional.

How to attract new members

There would be ongoing efforts to attain more links to the UKFN website from other relevant websites (researcher home pages, departmental and institutional websites) and to continue to develop publicity literature and distribute it whenever possible.

How to promote UK fluids

Pathways to gather newsworthy stories via the SIGs were in continuing development.

11. Any other business.

Having noted that by the time of the next EC meeting it would be appropriate to begin planning follow-on funding, in particular for the SIGs, MJ outlined a proposal to link SIGs with the upcoming call for CDTs, whereby a CDT bid would propose to join forces with specific SIGs in that area, and in return the CDT would provide some continuation funding for the SIG. The priority areas for CDTs would probably be announced later this year, with the call early in 2018, a timeline consistent with that for UKFN's own planning.

The EC agreed this was an interesting idea in principle, but noted it was difficult to plan further without knowing the priority areas. It therefore agreed to consider this proposal in more detail once the priority areas had been announced.

12. Next meeting

It was agreed the next EC meeting would be scheduled for January 2018.

Before that, MJ, AJ and PL (and possibly ST) would all be attending APS, and an informal meeting on UKFN would be scheduled for during the conference.

Action: ND to arrange next meeting in 3 months' time, face-to-face if possible.