British Computer Society
Coventry Branch
2024 AGM

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 23rd October 2024, at 6:30pm, by webinar.

Present:

Desmond Alvares	Wendy Bown	Joshua Bygate-Ralph
Ada Chan	Richard Kenyon	Margaret Low
Dianabasi Nkantah (**Chair**)	Ian Nussey	Chidi Okorro
Adrian Pauling	John Rendall **(Secretary)**	Syed Muhammad Rizvi
Kayode Sanya	Tony Seaton	Colin Tyc
Yuri Vershinin		

1.   Welcome and Introductions

Dianabasi thanked everyone for attending. Those who were in the meeting at the start, introduced themselves.

2.   Apologies

Apologies were formally received from the following:
Rich Bishop.

3.   Minutes of the 2023 AGM

3.1. Minutes

Motion to accept the minutes
Prop: Adrian Pauling   Sec: Joshua Bygate-Ralph : Motion carried: ratified copy to be sent to HQ

3.2. Matters Arising

None.

4.   Chairman's Report

4.1. Report

Motion to accept the chairman's report:
Prop: Joshua Bygate-Ralph   Sec: Margaret Low   : Motion carried

4.2. Matters Arising

A discussion regarding Student Prizes was concluded following the presentation of the Treasurer's Report.

5. Treasurer's Report

5.1. Report

Motion to accept the Treasurer's report:

Prop: John Rendall   Sec: Joshua Bygate-Ralph   : Motion carried.

5.2. Matters Arising

Chair reported that going forward Branch would only be awarding one prize per university, in line with the edict from HQ (this now being £150). John sought a point of clarification with regards this year as we had awarded two prizes per university, Dianabasi confirmed that he had raised the SFRs (Special Finance Request) for the difference between the HQ awarded prizes and the Branch awarded prizes. John remined Branch that historically we had awarded the Ron Footit Memorial prize and the Coventry Branch prize.

> **Secretary's Note: Ron was an early committee member, but had died in a tragic accident and the committee at the time set up a memorial fund for him, which eventually ran out/got swallowed when the Gold Accounts were integrated into the HQ financial system This prize was intended for a graduate whose degree was primarily in the IT field and expected to achieve full Membership of the BCS, whereas the Coventry Branch prize was for a graduate whose degree had an element of IT, but not as the primary focus of the degree.**

Ada spotted a typo in the report (the variance appeared to show £7000.00 instead of £700.00), this will be corrected in the copy to be sent to HQ.

6.   Election of Officials

6.1. Elected Officials

Post		Nominee	Proposer	Seconder	Result
Chair	:	Dianabasi Nkantah	Joshua Bygate-Ralph	Margaret Low	Nem. Con.
Secretary	:	John Rendall	Margaret Low	Joshua Bygate-Ralph	Nem. Con.
Treasurer	:	Syed Rizvi	John Rendall	Joshua Bygate-Ralph	Nem. Con.
Inclusion Officer	:	Yuri Vershinin	Joshua Bygate-Ralph	Margaret Low	Nem. Con.
Vice Chair	:	Syed Rizvi	Joshua Bygate-Ralph	Ada Chan	Nem. Con.

6.2. Committee

Rich Bishop - Early Career Advocate *– confirmed by email after the meeting*
Margaret J. Low - Education Liaison Officer
Adrian F. Pauling – local IET Liaison Officer
Joshua Bygate-Ralph
Wendy Bown
Chidi Okorro

Thanks were extended to Ada for her past support for Coventry Branch.

7.   Further Ideas for the Branch Programme

Role of Open-Source tools by Ecologists to track climate change – **Margaret took an action** to try to provision this for our January meeting slot following meeting confirming that this sounded interesting.

> **Secretary's Note: Margaret advised that she had attended Oggcamp - an open-source unconference – (and gave a talk on open-source embroidery) and had met Michael Winston Dale who had presented on open source tools.**

Quantum Computing – no firm decision was made

Isaca – Cyber Girls - Adrian

> **Secretary's Note: Adrian advised that he had recently undergone Certified Information Security Manager (CISM) Training and had joined the Central Chapter of the Information Systems Audit and Control Association (ISACA) and one of the other ISACA people in Warwickshire is running something in the ISACA space for Cyber Girls. Adrian has asked her about a presentation; however, she has not yet come back to him. Adrian took an action to chase her.**

Skyfarer – Drone Superhighway - **Adrian**

> **Secretary's Note: Adrian advised that he had recently contacted Skyfarer – a small SME – to ask if they would give Branch a presentation on their work – automated drone flights for medical supplies. They have been working with UCHW and the superhighway interfaces into the ATC. The Superhighway currently is Coventry extending down to Reading. Plus, there is a new air-taxi testing sight.**

AI Enterprises – Ian Nussey suggested the way AI applications are being developed may be interesting, especially successful applications being used in the Healthcare Arena. Ian had no suggestion for speakers, however.

Intelligent Healthcare – **Syed** is in contact with researchers in this arena and will ask his contact.

Knowledge Graphs – how different types of knowledge integrate – **Syed**

> **Secretary's Note: A knowledge graph (KG) is a graph-structured database that organizes and represents information about entities and their relationships:**
> - **Entities: Objects, events, situations, or concepts**
> - **Relationships: The context and meaning of how entities are connected**
> - **Structure: A graph structure made up of nodes, edges, and labels**
> - **Storage: Typically stored in a graph database**

Cyber Security – **Dianabasi** will try to contact the Specialist Group to see if he can get someone to talk on this subject.

Christmas Lecture:
Meeting noted that there were two ongoing suggestions with willing speakers
1. Professor Malcolm Macleod (QinetiQ Ltd and Strathclyde University) – Proposed by Yuri Vershinin
2. Asar Ghassen on Art Design in the Automotive Sector (Coventry University) – Proposed by Derrick Willer who is no longer part of the IET, but seems to had garnered support from the IET and IMA.
The committee will continue to work on this, led by **Dianabasi**.

8.   Any Other Business

Yuri drew reference to a link to a number of Computer Weekly articles going back to 2009 (https://www.computerweekly.com/news/366589563/Post-Office-expert-IT-witness-Gareth-Jenkins-resigns-BCS-membership)

Yuri drew reference to the Fujitsu/Post Office scandal which started 20 years ago and is still going on, with 1000 ordinary people affected and nobody investigated properly. Yuri highlighted that these people did not commit any crime being ordinary people who probably did not have any education in computer science and were merely doing their job. Yuri posed the question why was this not investigated properly, and asserted that this was our task, being members of the BCS. Yuri also quoted the BCS article "Post Office expert IT witness Gareth Jenkins resigns BCS membership"
'CEO Rashik Parmar wrote to Jenkins earlier this month to advise him that investigative action under our code of conduct was a potential outcome, pending evidence due to be heard from him at the inquiry.

In his reply, Jenkins resigned his membership of BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, which includes Chartered IT Professional Status (CITP)'
Yuri asserted that the BCS still needs to investigate this, not just advise him to resign (as now the BCS cannot investigate). John asked what needed to be investigated, as there was a parliamentary enquiry currently ongoing and Jenkins had been grilled by them and from what he had seen there was lots of things he 'can't remember or he was unsure of'. Dianabasi had looked at the article and from what he (Dianabasi) gathered he didn't think the BCS could have investigated him while the enquiry was going on, and from what he gathered the CEO [of the BCS] had written to him, letting him [Jenkins] know that post the investigation the BCS would take investitive action because he was a BCS member (and a CITP as well) and that having been informed of that he [Jenkins] then resigned his membership of the BCS. Dianabasi therefore thought that as Jenkins was no longer a member of the BCS the Society would be unable to take disciplinary measures against him. John wondered what the BCS would have been able to do, even if they did investigate? It is not like the BCS could fine him for bringing the Institute into disrepute*. Dianabasi conferred that the BCS could not stop someone from practicing as the BCS is not like the GMC.

Secretary's note *John actually said disrespect but meant disrepute.

Tony confirmed that "dishonourable discharge" from the BCS was about as far as we could go on that one, and Dianabasi confirmed that Jenkins had left anyway.

Yuri reminded us that Jenkins had presented himself as a specialist by way of his BCS membership and that was why he was retained as a consultant by Fujitsu (with the resultant salary) and so Jenkins is responsible for the sub-postmasters losing their money, houses, livelihood and in some cases their lives. Yuri asserted that the courts should issue an order that some of the redress due to the sub-postmasters should be paid by Jenkins.

Ian Nussey observed that the original point was 'what is the BCS going to do about Jenkins' and his sense is that the situation is well beyond the BCS's control as the issue is being considered currently as he [Jenkins] is one of the two people who is currently under examination by the police; if the enquiry comes to the conclusion (that some of us think) then the consequences will go far beyond the notion of the BCS – perhaps – instituting a new order of 'Undistinguished Fellows'

Dianabasi summarised that the point was "what was the BCS going to do about this?' and that the situation is past the BCS being able to do anything about it; the only thing the BCS could do was withdraw membership. Accordingly, as the matter is with the police and the enquiry is ongoing, we should just let it go through at the moment.

Josh advised that Coventry University has undergone some quite significant changes impacting - not just its IT workforce - but its provisioning of how the BCS membership are treated in respect; the digital services and central IT organisation has just undergone a tremendous reshuffle which has seen its cyber security, cloud and infrastructure and system administrator numbers slashed – by up to half in some cases, effective from the end of next month [November]. The most high-profile victim of this restructure was a Fellow of the Society; the Head of the [now defunct] School of Computing, Mathematics and Data Science§ (Dr. Faye Mitchell) who was unfortunately unsuccessful in her application to retain her post as head of the new School of Combined Science, so moral is unfortunately quite low within the Computer Science, Cyber Security etc. colleagues within the Colledge at the moment…Warwick may see a rise in applications if they haven't already, as 'we do seem to be seeing a lot of colleagues moving over there'. Branch needs to be aware that the University is changing how staff members are being treated; even very well learned people in our industry.

§ **Secretary's Note – this is shown on the Coventry University website as the School of Computing Electronics and Mathematics**

Tony confirmed that it is much the same in teaching at secondary level; there is a huge shortage of supply of teachers able to teach to A-level, but the lack of appreciation that they get from senior leadership in a significant proportion of schools is very telling.

Formal Meeting closed 19:46 with thanks to the attendees.

I certify that this is an accurate transcription of the proceedings of the meeting to the best of my ability (notwithstanding the need to 'summarise' some the proceedings.)

John Rendall, CEng. MBCS CITP MIET
Coventry Branch Secretary
27th October 2024