

# **Minutes of the ACCU Committee Meeting. Bristol, 12th of May 2012**

## **Visit to the Marriott Bristol City Centre Hotel**

We have been taken for a tour of the hotel as well as its conference facilities in view of a possible moving of the conference from Oxford to Bristol in 2012 and also as a venue for the ISO C++ committee meeting that will be held just after the conference.

### **Conference facilities**

We would be given the entire conference area which is self contained. The access can be given from the main hotel reception as well as directly from outside.

The entrance of the area has a big space where we would put the reception desk for the conference. It also has a big dedicated cloak room.

They will look into putting benches for smokers outside (as asked by Asti).

The main room is quite big with a maximum capacity of about 700. It can be split in up to three smaller rooms of about equal capacity. We also saw two other rooms on the same floor of the main one. The space in all of them is quite good--all are bigger than the rooms at the Barcelo--but only one of them has windows. The air conditioning is quite good--effective and quiet--in all the rooms we visited.

There is also a conservatory on the floor above the main conference area, which has quite a good space and light. It could be used for some sessions (but Jon thought that we may not want to), but everybody agreed that we couldn't use it for the main conference dinner as its shape is a bit awkward and some people wouldn't be seen from (or could see) people in other tables, therefore we concluded the big room in the conference area would be a better choice.

There are a few narrow corridors, and Julie observed it may be a bit difficult to provide the sponsors with adequate space and visibility for their stands, but we agreed that is a problem we would be able to solve.

All meeting rooms have electricity plugs, and we were told they would provide also extension cables.

There is wifi all over the hotel, and it should be better than the wifi at the Barcelo.

## **Hotel Facilities**

First things first. The bar in the hotel is big but probably not suited for the overnight use the delegates usually make. We were told that they would put a movable bar somewhere in the conference area that would better suit our needs. They have a 24 hours license to serve alcoholic drinks. They are also able to serve food in the rooms 24 hours a day.

The bedrooms in the hotel are of a good size, and they seem to be well kept. They would provide some complimentary water to delegates. All the rooms are equipped with a small bar and a safe.

They are non-smoking, but there are some with balconies that could be used by smokers.

The size of the hotel would be able to accommodate all the delegates easily.

The restaurant for the breakfast is of a good size but we were told that if we wanted they would be able also to organise private breakfasts in the conservatory only for us.

We were shown also the executive lounge, but, from what they said, they wouldn't give access to it to all the delegates, but only to the committee and some VIP speakers (as advised by the committee). We told them that had to be all or none, and they explained that they cannot open it to all, and we conclude that, then, it will be none.

## **Conclusions**

Jon thinks that we should give it a try and move there for 2013 (but the decision was not final yet). The committee decided to give him full authority for the final decision and to support him whatever it will be. He would like to increase attendance by about 20%, so staying in Oxford would make this goal much more difficult to attain.

There are still some concerns about the reachability of Bristol from the main airports and also about how easy it would be to "sell" the place to the speakers. Tom Sedge proposed to call it "Bristol and Bath", given the fact that Bath is very close and is an extremely interesting place from an historical point of view.

The hotel is very central and close to the train station (which is a short walk from it), and there are some flights from Europe to its airport. This last point may be quite an important one as the number of delegates from the rest of Europe seems to be increasing.

Ewan Milne expressed some concerns about the impact the distance of Bristol to Heathrow airport would have on the Saturday of the conference. Several speakers tend to leave early on the Saturday, and being in Bristol might actually cause them to leave even earlier.

Finally, there is always the possibility to go back to the Barcelo in 2014. According to Julie, that shouldn't be a problem at all.

## **Conference Survey**

Julie talked about the conference survey. 2012 was another successful event. There were 191 answers, and in total there was over 90% of the respondents rating the value for money good or excellent.

There have been some mixed reactions about the mobile app. Some like it, and others didn't. T-shirt management was better than in 2011 years with over 60 sold.

# Committee meeting

The meeting started at 14:30.

Present: Alan Griffiths, Giovanni Asproni, Ewan Milne (guest), Astrid Byro, Andrew Marlow, Stewart Brodie, Tom Hughes, Tom Sedge, Matthew Jones, Jon Jagger, Roger Orr, Julie Archer (guest).

1. Apologies received by Paul Grenyer, Seb Rose, Mick Brooks, and Robert Pauer. Dirk Haun should have been able to remote connect with webex, but technical problems didn't allow that
2. The minutes of the previous meeting (18th of February 2012) were approved
3. The minutes of the AGM were approved
4. Andrew Marlow, Jon Jagger, Ali Cehreli (US agent), and Silas Brown (Disabilities) were coopted to the committee
5. The actions of the previous meeting were checked to see what was still outstanding (see "Actions" paragraph)
6. We discussed the change of venue for the conference (See the "Conclusions" paragraph in the chapter before for the outcome)
7. Change of officers and bank account signatories. Alan Griffiths to contact Rob Pauer and Hubert Matthews to remove Hubert and add himself to the signatories
8. Committee list. It needs to be cleaned up from old members. Roger volunteered to do this
9. Conference survey by Asti. There was a low scoring for local groups, but people want them. People want to know what is ACCU. We are still very UK centred. There are many issues with the website. Tom Sedge and Asti to consider new survey about the association
10. Alan Griffiths proposed to talk with Lois about stepping down from her post of standards officer and coopt Mark Radford for it. Lois was standing only to avoid leaving the role unfulfilled. Alan also proposed to nominate Lois for an honorary membership at the next AGM. We all agreed to do that
11. Roger proposed to improve communications with the various local chapters, especially the US one. To this effect we need to make the remote conferencing work and allow them to participate to the committee meetings
12. Matt Jones was nominated the coordinator of local groups. He will email ACCU members to let them know they will have to contact him if they want to start a local group and need help with that
13. Website. Alan Griffiths proposed that a member of the committee should oversee its upgrade. We thought Dirk Haun could be a good candidate (Roger had a chat with him about this at ACCU 2012). Alan Griffiths will talk to him about this. We discussed the fact that, as far as the website is concerned, there is the technology aspect and the content aspect, and that they may need to be managed by different people. Jon asked if there is scope to change the conference site first (not sure we reached a conclusion on this proposal)
14. Constitutional changes for the nomination of the Conference Chair.

- a. Two years ago there was a complaint to the Conference Chair about something that happened at the conference. The person who complained felt his complaint wasn't dealt with properly. This prompted a motion for a constitutional change to make the Conference Chair an elected officer. That motion was discussed with the ACCU Chair, reworked and presented at the AGM last year. However, it was not voted on then nor considered this year. (The complaint itself has not been brought to the committee for consideration.)
  - b. Alan G. said the constitution shouldn't need to change and that it is already clear the Conference Chair is responsible to the committee and acts with their authority.
  - c. Roger said there were two issues here. The first one is to clarify the complaints procedure, and the second one is to make it clear how the appointment is made.
    - i. Complaints procedure: If a member has a complaint about any ACCU activity and doesn't find satisfaction with those directly involved they should raise it with the ACCU Chair. If the Chair cannot resolve the matter it should be raised with the ACCU committee. If the committee cannot resolve the matter then it should be raised at a General Meeting.
    - ii. Appointment: Ewan observed that the practice was that the incumbent Conference Chair would find the next one on behalf of the committee. We need to make it clearer how the process work and improve communications between the ACCU committee and the Conference Chair. But there has been some confusion about how things were done in the past, and the ACCU committee didn't feel it was involved enough in the process.
15. Roger proposed that the members of the committee summarise the communications they receive to the other committee members at the next committee meeting, so that everybody in the committee is aware of what is going on. Also we need to advertise the fact that members are allowed to propose items for the committee meetings
  16. We will continue the work for the constitutional changes needed for the proxy voting. Giovanni volunteered to continue with that work.
  17. The secretary will publish the minutes of the meetings in the accu-members mailing list and in a members only area of the website. The public minutes will be approved by the committee before the publication and may be an edited version if there is a need to remove some sensitive information that shouldn't be made public
  18. The committee approved the spending of money to buy some kit to make virtual meetings work. Asti volunteered to do that and the ACCU will pay the costs
  19. Ewan asked for £25 to buy the font for the ACCU conference logo. The committee approved
  20. We agreed to have the next meeting at Bletchley Park on the 7th of July 2012

## Actions

1. **Alan Griffiths** to contact Rob Pauer and Hubert Matthews to remove Hubert and add himself to the signatories

2. **Alan Griffiths** to talk with Lois about stepping down from her post of standards officer and with Mark Radford to ask him to replace her
3. **Alan Griffiths** to talk with Dirk Haun about the new website (may need to talk with Hubert about what he's got already and about the idea of getting a VM and put the code in github)
4. ?? Organise things so that representatives of local chapters will be able to participate to the committee meetings? Talk with them and agree on how to arrange the meetings
5. ?? to advertise the complaints procedure and the procedure for nominating the conference chair to members? (this may be for the secretary to write an article on CVu)
6. **Roger** to cleanup the committee list from old members
7. **Matt Jones** to email ACCU members to let them know they will have to contact him if they want to start a local group and need help with that
8. **Giovanni** still volunteered to help Asti with the organisation of the Autumn conference
9. **Giovanni** to publish the approved minutes of the meetings in the accu-members mailing list and in a members only area of the website.
10. **Giovanni** will propose some draft changes to the constitution to allow for proxy voting to get the conversation started
11. **Asti and Tom Sedge** To talk with a PR agency to help us promoting the Autumn conference event.
12. **Asti and Tom Sedge** To organise a survey about the association
13. **Asti** to buy some kit to make videoconferencing of committee meetings possible
14. **Rob** to liaise with Tim Pushman to spring clean the mailing lists (outstanding from previous meeting)
15. **Mick** will try and write something about the ideas (outstanding from previous meeting)
16. **Ewan** to buy the fonts for the conference logo