

Minutes for ACCU Committee Meeting

14th of September 2013 London

Meeting started at 11:05

1. Attending

1. Alan Griffiths (remotely), Roger Orr, Giovanni Asproni (remotely), Rob Pauer (remotely), Matthew Jones (Remotely), Tom Hughes, Dirk Haun (remotely), Andrew Marlow (N), Martin Moene (remotely), Mick Brooks, Chris O'dell, Amilendra Kodithuwakku (general member, attended remotely)

2. Apologies for absence

1. Mark Radford, Astrid Byro, Seb Rose

3. Minutes from last meeting

1. Approved.

4. Actions arising

1. Actions from previous meeting have been all closed.

5. Other matters arising

1. None

6. Reports

1. Advertising

- i. Just generating renewal quote for QBS in November.

2. Conference

- i. it will be week of 7th April. it will be in Bristol again. Jon has irons in fires for two keynote speakers - if anyone has any good contacts for possible keynoters please let him know. Kjersti from Program Utvikling has offered us a full page advert for the conference in their 2014 Q1 magazine which has a wide circulation. Pete Goodliffe is working on the advert. I'm attaching his first cut. The logo colour will be goldy-mustard. Also attached. Jon is considering dropping the Bletchley auction and replacing it with some fresher and newer. Ideal would be something like a CoderDojo evening (coding for kids). He is also considering moving the accu-banquet off-site, perhaps to the SS Great Britain if that is big enough. The call for papers, review, selection, etc happened over quite a long period of time for 2013. Jon feels it was too long, so this year he is going to shrink the period, viz delay the call for papers a bit compared to 2013.
- ii. Three keynote speakers are confirmed
 - 1) Bill Laio. Bill is the co-founder with James Whelton of the world-wide CoderDojo movement which is all about encouraging coding for kids. See <http://coderdojo.com>. He will be speaking about CoderDojo and also about self-organization. This will be the opening keynote.
 - 2) Dan North. Only seems fair since he missed out when he was due to keynote due to the volcano.
 - 3) Didier Verna.One of the slots is traditionally filled by an accu member.

3. Local groups

- i. **Wroclaw** (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wroc%C5%82aw>): As we recently heard,

there is interest in starting a group in Wroclaw. Which is nice.

- ii. **London:** Summer break, need to get back to regular meetings.
- iii. **Bristol & Bath:** Summer break. The turnout in Bristol is typically just under 20, and we have quite a lot of non-ACCU folks attending, especially since switching to meetup. Just need to convert them into members!
- iv. **Oxford:** (Nigel Lester now organising) For Oxford my aim is to increase the number of folks attending principally by keeping the rhythm of regular meetings going. For now we have a corporate covering the room fees and other incidentals. I feel confident that I have enough monthly talks and events in the pipeline to get us to the middle of next year (brave words). I am interested in how are folks publicizing their local groups. My concern for all is to make that sure that the venues & specifically the room being used for local group meetings is covered by someones public liability insurance. As groups there has been some standardizing on how we do things such which meeting sites to publicize our events on, logos etc.. (i.e. I have been following Ewan's lead). Wondered if we all wanted standardize on a couple items i.e. on a logo and which meeting site to use. (I am very mindful though of adding yet more task to folks lists). Finally, I really enjoy my local group meetings :-)
- v. **Silicon Valley:** Mostly thanks to Jon [Kalb] and Dane [Van Dyck], we have been more active than before. :) In addition to our second-Wednesday presentations we now meet on the fourth Wednesdays as well. The additional meeting is free-form, more like a workshop. Although the topic of the previous presentation is a good starting point, the discussions go every direction. We are now on Meetup: <http://www.meetup.com/SFBay-Association-of-C-C-Users/> Matt, there has been a number of requests for the presentations to be recorded and published. In addition to now owning any recording equipment, I know that it is labor-intensive to record, edit, and publish the talks. I just wanted to let you know that there is such a need but no solution. :) Jon added: You may also want to know that we are a "community sponsor" of the C++ Track at the local Silicon Valley Code Camp, which draws thousands annually.

4. Membership

- i. Membership numbers are available (updated each month) at <http://sinking.in/accu-member-stats.html>. In the August peak-renewal season we've lost ~30 individual members, which is about the same as in other years. However, it's on a background of a gradual fall in numbers for the past ~18 months, and leaves us with just 639 individuals (cf. 683 and 708 at about this time in 2012 and 2011). Taking back the reigns from Craig was no trouble since we'd barely started moving over. There were a few niggles moving to Parchment for distribution, but we managed to get it all sorted quickly. We have a return label with Parchment, and so I started getting returns. Have dropped ~20 gratis and complimentary memberships where the journals weren't reaching anyone. This week I've been going through August's bank statement processing standing order payments. There are still ~10 members who're sending the wrong amount. I've written to them all again, with letters for all those that didn't respond to email last year. I'm still asking those that leave to share why. Very few responses, but here are the most recent: Joined '93 - "Due to moving to New Zealand and a change in career, I am cancelling all my UK based subscriptions and will therefore let the annual renewal lapse. I

think I have been a member for about 20 years, so thank you to all those volunteers in ACCU over the years, that have made it such a great community." Joined '90 - "I am not a programmer and have never taken any courses in computing or programming. However after dabbling with BASIC and then C I became interested in C++ while writing very trivial Windows programs for engineering calculations using the point and click method with Borland's C++ Builder software. I joined one of your Mentored Developer projects but got bogged down with the complexity of the language about half way through the book "Accelerated C++". Since then I got to about a third of the way through "You Can Program in C++" by Francis Glassborow, but no further. During all these years of subscribing to the CVu magazine I had hoped that I might be able to fully appreciate and understand the published articles one day. That day has never come and although I will still take an interest in programming if only to keep the brain cells going in my retirement I will leave reading CVu to the professionals."

- ii. We have a five year low on the number of members. Standing order payments still around with the wrong amount. Mick following up with them with a soft approach. Most pay the difference and change the standing order. There are 6 or 7 that didn't answer. Mick is following up.

5. Treasurer

- i. Rob asked if there were any merits in issuing a press release two months before the conference to attract new joiners. Follow up action: Rob to create a press release in January.
- ii. Finances are remaining strong. They are very much like last year's one in the same period. The accounts have been signed by alan , and there is a possibility we need to pay a corporation tax. Partly due to the fees from the conference.
- iii. Hardship fund. We haven't had any objections into rolling that into the ordinary fund, and Rob proposes to do that at the end of next year. Alan says we need to ask the membership.
- iv. Availability of the accounts at the AGM. Rob says he should have given them the accountants a deadline, and he thinks he should have been clearer with them. He doesn't think the problem is incompetence on their side, just a clarity of communications. Rob will make sure in January he will give the accountants a deadline for the beginning of March (including a bit of a buffer).
- v. We have quite a bit of money, but no plans to spend it. Last year we contributed to the standards committee, and that was a worthwhile spending of the money
- vi. Alan says we need to spend some money on the website, and having the money in the bank gives us confidence we can do that. (Items 7 and 8 included in all this discussion)

6. Publicity

- i. Getting ACCU mentioned in some interviews and link to our website included. Asti will also shortly begin work on the next t-shirt design.

7. Standards

- i. No report

8. Website

- i. Martin reports: The Committee meeting of 18 May 2013 had had the following action for me:

“Martin: contact Mick and Tim to ask whether we could leave the existing membership part of the website in a subdomain to facilitate moving everything else forward.”

Mick thinks it's a good idea to ease carrying forward, but refers to Tim for the technical aspects. Tim thinks it's tricky to do and also mentions the negative effects on usability and advertising. Given Tim's answer, I think it would be best to not try such a path. Further, there's no progress on a/the new website from my side. Partly because the need to migrate the membership system (for which the help of other people is needed), partly because I've been busy learning C++11. Without knowing that the membership system is being migrated, it's less useful to progress other development of the website too far I think. There is a follow up action to ask the membership to help with the migration.

9. Mentored Developers

- i. Ian and Jonathan reported that it's going smoothly at the moment. They feel that they are working well as a team, to quote Ian "Jonathan provides the expertise & I provide "other" things". Ian would also like to pass that he's for the ACCU hosting the study group's email mailing list.

10. Publications

- i. All going well. The biggest problem is the lack of material for publication. No idea of the underlying cause. We may need to encourage people to write articles. Alan says that it may be due also to the membership dwindling. If we cannot increase the membership we won't be able to change the trend.

7. Availability of auditors reports at AGM

8. Finance

9. Review/approve/reword the local group sponsorship

1. Action: Matt to polish the wording of the proposal and send it around for review (see email)
2. Roger asked why 3.5 - "Would we expect to provide CVu/Overload back issues to the meeting, and 'donate' these to the sponsor? Certainly on the first encounter with a new sponsor it would make sense. Cheap advertising etc. It could be seen as corporate membership by the back door, but then the sponsor is effectively giving us something equivalent to their subs by sponsoring in the first place" - is difficult to implement. Alan said it was done in the past. Mick says that we could use the back issues we have for that. It may get expensive if we send a packet bigger than the usual one.

10. Continuity w.r.t. secretary and chair and membership secretary stepping down

1. Chris suggested to write a page describing what is expected from each role, so people can get more information. Alan said that the difficulty with a webpage is that the roles evolve over time and the description may become obsolete. Roger said we could attach a date to it to mitigate the problem. Action: Everybody on the committee to write down something about their roles.
2. Matt asked if we have any volunteers to take over. Matt is OK to candidate himself as a membership secretary. Giovanni said he would highlight this on the mails to accu-members. Roger asked what happens if nobody steps forward. The constitution doesn't seem to provide anything for that. Alan said that we would have to close the association down. Roger said that it's not a unique problem of the accu. Alan asked if he has any solutions, but Roger said that he hasn't. People want to be involved, but it is hard

to find Chairs and Secretaries. It is harder than it used to be. One possibility is to have a shadowing system. Roger suggested to put out the job spec of the Chair and of the Secretary and keep it on the consciousness of the accu members. Alan asked Amilendra to give an outside perspective. He joined recently, and he didn't have an answer.

11. Discuss management of US chapter and disabilities

1. We have an disabilities officer, but in the last few years nothing happened. The role was to support people with disabilities in the IT business. Silas had also part of the website setup to have a format usable by visually impaired people. We can do something in that area but we are not. Follow up action: Alan to contact Silas and see what is going on
2. US chapter. Roger asks what kind of connection they have with the accu. There was a change of person in charge with no people in the committee being notified. They seem to be a random group. They have quite good speakers and we can do with their skill set. They have a large choice of speakers. I asked what to do. Chris proposed to have a conversation with them. We could ask them if they wanted to join the committee meetings. Perhaps a get together of all the local groups to share knowledge. Roger asked Matt if he could do that. Follow up action: Matt to contact them to have a hangout with the US and european groups.

12. Book Reviews

1. From Asti. Although I got off to a good start, it is proving difficult to coordinate from Qatar. I don't mind continuing to coordinate but I really need someone in the UK to take on the acceptance of books from the publishers and the distribution.
Also, the UI for uploading the book reviews to the site deserves to be one of the circles of hell. Frankly I am unsurprised that they weren't being maintained. Do we have someone who knows how to use it and has bandwidth? If so, I am happy to liaise with that person.
2. Alan could take acceptance and distribute the books. Roger asked if Alan could contact any of the reviewers of the last years to see if they can help with the distribution because they have an interested in that. He thinks it is more likely to have a response than an email to accu-general or CVu. Alan said Paul Grenyer would say no. Follow up action: Roger to put these ideas to Asti and see how she feels about it

13. Any other business

1. Mick and membership categories. He says that what is in the website is not fully clear on how the concessionary memberships work. There was a member who took a concessionary membership because he was a CTO and wouldn't take a salary. Roger says that we should check statements of concessions in other organizations to find an appropriate phrasing. Or, perhaps, we just need to accept the occasional person pushing the boundaries.

14. Next meeting

1. 7th of December 2013. Virtual meeting 11am UK time

Meeting finished at 12:39 UK time

Actions

- **Alan:** suggest at next AGM we roll the hardship fund money into the general fund.
- **Alan:** contact Mark for an update on contacting Nathan Myers re C panel
- **Alan:** contact Silas and see what is going on with the disabilities officer post
- **Mick:** Ask Tim to get an option 'no hard copy' and option for 'send me an email' on membership renewal, to get the lists of the email addresses for people who want to be notified by accu and the list to send to parchment to notify new issues of publications.
- **Mick and Martin:** Ask for help with an article in CVu, and emails to accu-members and accu-general for migrating the membership system.
- **Mick** to send list of corporate contacts that returns journals to Asti
- **Rob:** to create a press release in January to attract new joiners
- **Rob:** will make sure in January to give the accountants a deadline for the beginning of March (including a bit of a buffer), so that the draft accounts will be ready for the AGM.
- **Matt:** to polish the wording of the proposal for the local group sponsorships and send it around for review
- **Matt:** Contact the US and european chapters and have an hangout to see how we can collaborate together, and investigate if they want to participate to committee meetings.
- **Everybody on the committee:** Write down something about their roles to be put in the website.
- **Roger:** Put the ideas discussed above about the distribution of the books for review to Asti and see what can be done.
- **Chris:** to follow up with Martin for Google analytics