Minutes for ACCU Committee meeting

24th March 2018, via Hangouts

Meeting started at 14:30.

1. Attending

Nigel Lester, Ralph McArdell, Malcolm Noyes, Roger Orr, Bob Schmidt

Apologies for absence

Jim Hague, Matthew Jones, Robert Pauer, Russel Winder

2. Minutes from last meetings

The committee approved the minutes of the meeting on 20th January 2018.

3. Actions in progress from previous meeting

Actions from previous meetings:

74. Bob - Draft procedure for violations of Code of Conduct/Diversity Statement created. Ralph commented that it may be difficult for local group organisers to deal with complaints and perhaps the detail needed revising; Bob will review and revise as necessary. Bob will look at Bibliography and changes for next meeting. Committee approved the revised version; Bob will update website before conference. Done.*

93. Nigel to write some notes on affiliations with other groups. Nigel has spoken to Phil Nash. Done.*

Actions added by this meeting:

99. Roger to ask conference committee whether we can send out announcement email and add pre-conference workshops to registration. Done*

100. Bob will email accu-general reminding people who have had conference talks approved that local groups are very happy to host 'practice' talks. Done.*

101. Rob will make enquiries to see whether we can have some sort officer/director insurance to protect against liabilities. Pending.*

102. Jim to contact Andy Balaam to see whether we can incorporate a blog aggregator into our website. Done.*

103. Rob and Malcolm to email accu-members and accu-general to encourage people to stand. Done.*

104. Bob will do a test to see if it is possible to access member only content after creating an account on the website.

105. Bob will contact London office to see whether non-legal organisation is allowed to use an iZettle/SumUp device.

4. Reports

4.1 Advertising

No report.

4.2 Conference

Report from Russel Winder:

ACCU 2018 is "ready to go". As ever AYA are doing a great job organising the event, I am assuming everything will go as smoothly as ever. Also as ever there are a few last minute amendments to the content, but hopefully less than last year.

The only real experiment for 2018 was switching the conference dinner to Thursday as we had lots of suggestions of having it earlier as the "presenters stay seated and the paying guests move" format created a lot of positive response that people got to talk to the presenters, creating a nice community. Bloomberg had some reservations shifting from Thursday to Friday for their party event as they felt there might be fewer people. Their response after the event will be the driver for 2019 structure.

2019 is well on the way, we have three of the four keynotes signed up (sorry no names just yet). There are some changes needed to the submission and schedule management, this will start as soon as ACCU 2018 is over. Mid-October to mid-November will be the call period.

Responses to the informal request for views on the member emailing list, made it clear that the ACCU structure we have "lots of C++ stuff, but lots of other stuff" is the preferred structure, i.e. leave things as is but perhaps just a little bit more C++ content.

4.3 Local Groups

Report from Nigel Lester:

Since the last committee meeting the local group meetup membership has increased by over 7% to just over 6.2k (chart). Note due to the close proximity of C++ London and ACCU London groups, there is probably a significant overlap in their memberships.

All the groups have been running sessions (besides Greece), and look to have had some good attendances. ACCU Oxford has had attendees wait listed for the last couple of sessions.

Emyr Williams is standing down from the running of ACCU Bristol in August. Emyr has approached someone to see if they would be willing to take over. If that fails then we will put a shout out to see if anyone else is interested in the role - something to follow up at conference. Emyr is hoping that someone new will bring fresh insights to running the group. A Big Thank You to Emyr for organizing the monthly sessions over the last year and we also much appreciate the advanced notice of standing down.

Conference dry run speakers slots. We had some interest and ACCU Cambridge has hosted at least one person. For Oxford no takers, so had to back fill the slots with other speakers, which is always a bit challenging when trying to get speakers at short notice.

Bristol has been struggling to find speakers and has had to rely on the "usual suspects". A shout out at conference for speakers may help here.

Meetup has significantly revamped their GUI, and it is taking a little time to rebuild confidence in it. This is not helped by running into a few bugs, and the loss of the ability to format meeting descriptions.

At the conference I am planning to run a little meetup of group leaders on

the Thursday lunchtime, with the aim of just meeting each other, sharing problems and solutions.

4.4 Membership

Report from Matt Jones:

As ever, up to date membership stats are here: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1_DBWE4ya54atjshmEMzA4qdWEa-bagJVc4A36 u_YOpQ

We've had a good quarter, with lots of new members on the back of the conference. Numbers are drifting up gradually - over the last 2 years we're basically flat, ending the slow decline of the preceding 4 years.

I won't be at the conference or AGM this year (for which I send my apologies) but I expect the usual actions over the coming weeks:

1) Get extra Overloads printed for handing out at the conference.

2) Liase with AYA & Parchments to get the extra overloads delivered direct to Bristol

3) Send a parcel of back issues for handing out.

I'm happy to field any questions or inquiries at the conference, by email, and I'll try to be responsive.

The committee agreed to print 200 extra copied of Overload for the conference.

4.5 Treasurer

Report from Robert Pauer:

The draft accounts have been circulated to the Auditors. Niall has confirmed his agreement. Waiting to hear from Guy.

4.6 Publicity

No report (no publicity officer)

4.7 Standards

No report.

4.8 Website

Report on hosting from Jim Hague:

Our version of Andy Balaam's blog aggregator is working fine at https://blogs.accu.org,and Andy is very happy for us to launch it officially. We could automatically announce new entries on Twitter if (a) we wanted to, and (b) I could get the necessary Twitter auth info.

Otherwise there are no new issues with the hosting.

Bob wondered whether it is possible to access member only content after creating an account on the website. Bob will do a test.

4.9 Mentored Developers

No report.

4.10 Social Media

No report.

4.11 Publications

Report from Roger Orr:


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Everything continuing normally.
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5. Any other business

5.1 Legal status of Association

Following the decision by PyConUK to change their legal structure to avoid liabilities, the committee discussed whether the current legal status of ACCU was still appropriate. It is believed that since the ACCU is an Association it has no legal status and is therefore unable to enter into contracts (we know because we have difficulty setting up things with companies). However we may have obligations for the production of the magazines, local groups and mailing lists.

We believe that PyConUK changed because they do have possible liabilities for the conference; since the ACCU conference is organised by Archer Yates, the ACCU is in a slightly different situation.

Update: 2018-01-20: We also need to consider possible liabilities due to publishing libellous/proprietary/copyright material. We might also be able to have some sort of officer/director insurance. Rob will make enquiries.


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##### Update from Rob Pauer:


I had an interesting phone conversation with Owen Campbell who is the Chairman of
Python UK.
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They run a Python conference that appears similar to ours and they were concerned about any personal liability that might fall on individuals.

Note: Archer Yates run our conference with some assistance from ACCU. So our situation is slightly different.

The first action they took was to create a limited company in order to run the conference, but that appears not to have been entirely satisfactory.

There are more requirements: eg the need for Directors, Company Secretary, annual returns to Companies House etc.

Subsequently they have formed an educational charity and registered with the Charity Commission (CC). This was not easy; there are many hurdles to overcome.

When looking at the Charity Commission website a potential applicant needs to demonstrate some sort of "public benefit" and I struggled to think of a satisfactory argument in our case that would satisfy the CC.

The charity is now the owner of the limited company that runs the Python conference. They believe that being a charity is more attractive to potential conference sponsors and that a charity is less likely to be sued if anything goes wrong.

Summary: PUK have created a legal structure that appears to work for them. However it has been a difficult path to negotiate. We need to tread carefully before following them: as we have difficulty in recruiting volunteers to join the committee it might be difficult to persuade people to become charity trustees.

The committee will review this at the next meeting.

5.2 iZettle/SumUp

The committee had a brief discussion about whether a product like iZettle/SumUp (https://www.mobiletransaction.org/izettle-vs-sumup/) might be useful to the association, either at the conference or local groups to sign up new members or collect donations. It seems like this product only requires a bank account to setup, which would suit ACCU since we cannot enter into legal contracts. Bob will contact London office to see whether non-legal organisation is allowed to obtain and use a device. The committee agreed that more investigation is needed.

5.3 Secretary - what happens next?

The committee discussed what would happen if there were no volunteers for Secretary. They believe that the committee would be "limited to ordinary administration of the organisation" (5.3.4.4). What this means is not well defined.

6 Annual General Meeting, 2018

AGM Schedule:

6. Annual General Meeting, 2018

AGM Schedule:

Announce date	14 Jan 2018	(AGM - 90)
Nomination/Proposal deadline	13 Feb 2018	(AGM - 60)
Draft Agenda	3 Mar 2018	(AGM - 42)
Agenda Freeze	17 Mar 2018	(AGM - 28)
Voting Opens	24 Mar 2018	(AGM - 21)
AGM	14 Apr 2018	Marriott Bristol

7. Date of next meeting

The date of the next committee meeting will (provisionally) be Saturday 20th May 2018 @ 2:30 UK time, via Hangouts.