

Minutes for ACCU Committee meeting

13 Sep via Google Meet

Meeting started at 14:30 BST.

1. Attending

Patrick Martin, Bob Schmidt, Ralph McArdeell, Adeel Nadeem, Geoffrey Daniels, Felix Petriconi, Guy Davidson, Roger Orr, Robert Pauer, Jim Hague

Apologies for absence

Robin Williams, Matthew Jones

2. Minutes from last meetings

The committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting.

3. Actions in progress from previous meeting

Note: the Google Sheet for actions is here:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1RMTorasYR_A94VBjv-Dn6ghhTVWLbW0w1ekhN994qFI

Actions from previous meetings:

122	Patrick: update the very old advertising card - get ad server stats and web visits from Bob and Jim
140	Phil to write up and pass round his suggestions for local group affiliations
143	Patrick: suggestions to define some central storage solution for ACCU documents. etc. consider GDPR - talk to Rob Pauer
146	Phil: Local groups: propose to add "affiliated groups" section underneath - Phil to send details to Bob
153	Patrick: to investigate setting up the safety account for the Paypal payments
156	Matt: Question: can corporate accounts get a list of emails?
157	Matt/Adeel: to start a Google Doc for ACCU publicity purposes
163	Adeel: find speakers for online "local" talks, contact Ralph/Phil about arrangements

Actions added by this meeting:

164	Adeel: best way to connect to LinkedIn ACCU profile for those that can
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4. Reports

4.1 Advertising

From Patrick

We have run the QBS ads in the last 2 magazines - the first due to not getting a response in time, and the second as we have got agreement in principle to proceed with the advertising at a further discounted rate. I need to get back to them with the details and get signatures on dotted lines.

4.2 Conference

From Felix:

Call coming up with Julie from AYA to discuss the format of the 2021 conferences.

Partially / completely virtual.

Location - multiple hubs?

Call for papers intended for mid October

4.3 Local Groups

No reporter

4.4 Membership

Report from Matt

Up to date membership numbers are here, and as ever continue the gentle downward trend.

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1_DBWE4ya54atjshnEMzA4qdWEa-bagJVc4A36u_YOpQ/edit#gid=8

Predictably lockdown has caused more than the usual number of magazine returns, due to offices being closed.

Last week I emailed all the members who pay by standing order, warning that there was a small chance we would change bank, or a very small chance that a new membership system might not support manual payment entry; and asking whether they would change to credit card payment. Roughly 50 members out of 550 pay by S.O. So far I have had responses from about half, with most happy to change to credit card payment right away. One or two don't have credit cards, so we must take this into consideration in any future plans.

I have had a bit of a look around for COTS membership software for the new website. It looks like <https://webcollect.org.uk/> might work. A major plus is that it is very cheap. I haven't looked into its features in detail yet, but need to do this. They offer a free 3 month trial, which is very useful.

Also in preparation for changing the membership system I have had a go at gathering the requirements: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1qOPcDdmiSiXluFhwwq-j-tgajLVAvykUrFIzATYgY_4/edit?usp=s haring

Bob, Jim and I should probably have a meeting to discuss all this in more detail, but I am wary of overloading anyone, with the new website rightly taking precedence until it is released.

Cheers,

Matt.

4.5 Treasurer

From Patrick

** we have received statements from Natwest*

** also I made a blooper on writing the quantity for one invoice (I wrote net, instead of total), and in confessing to them it turned out the VAT value was incorrect on their side, so we have resolved that with another small cheque for the balance.*

4.6 Publicity and Social Media

From Adeel

Update use on the progress on the current actions to create a benefits document and discussion on how we can have members showing up on the ACCU LinkedIn company page

4.7 Standards

Report written for CvU

Meeting are proceeding online

Plenary is due in November

4.8 Website

Web hosting report from Jim

I have not had time since the last meeting to make any progress with new site hosting. Having run into problems with disc space and outdated version of Flask during the current deployment, I am now keen to move forward with transferring the new main site to a new host.

In addition: there are disk space issues - we need some work to happen to migrate to the Raspberry PI server. Also some work remains to be done on the membership system. Forward broken links and issues to Bob and Jim.

Web editors' report from Bob

Overload 158 and C Vu 32.4 have been uploaded to both the old and new web sites. Daniel James continues to produce the ePub versions of the magazines.

Jim and I are going live with the new site tonight, Saturday 12 September, 2020. Updates to the old site will end. Conversion of pages from the old to the new site will continue. The main conference pages still need a lot of work.

I've been experimenting with implementing a custom membership system, and have gotten as far as initial registration and sending the validation email. This is being done in parallel with Matt's research into a COTS solution.

In my spare time I've started an initial design for software that will produce a formatted conference schedule, creating and maintaining the links to speakers bios and session abstracts. (I discovered a lot of broken/missing links while going through old conference pages and converting them for the new site. I also noticed that older conferences used more color to designate tracks, and would like to bring that back.)

Regards,

Bob

There is investigation to be done on the membership system - some functionality has been reverse engineered in Flask, but the membership system is more complicated than was initially assumed. Is there an off-the-peg system than can supply all the features we need - TBC?

4.9 Publications

Publication of Overload and CVu: everything as per normal.

Geoff will be writing his first view from the chair for the next CVu,

5. Any other business

Discussion on the ongoing drop in membership numbers and publicising ACCU

There was a wide ranging discussion around the reasons for reduced membership. It seems clear that it is not possible to compete in offering content for a fee in a world where almost all content at a certain quality level is available and usable. Discussions focussed on what ACCU does that is distinctive, related to groups and the conferences. In no particular order the bullet points are:

- *Focus on "Human touch" capabilities*
- *Badges / incentives to recognise members who make a contribution*
- *Suggestion to introduce Forum software for ACCU members*
- *ACCU guilds / other similar concepts*

- *ACCU needs to attract Younger members, and needs to know what to do to achieve this*
- *Brainstorm offline from the committee meeting to refine our thoughts*
- *Re-circulate Alan Lenton's document: "Whither ACCU?"*
- *Example of outreach: School Career Conventions, but practically we should be looking at the first few post graduation jobs.*

6. Date of next meeting

The date of the next committee meeting will (provisionally) be November 22 @ 14:30 GMT, via Hangouts.