

# Minutes of the Open General Meeting of the BCTCS

## BCTCS 33, University of St Andrews, 27 April 2017

**Opening:** The meeting opened at 1718.

**Quorum:** The meeting was recognised as quorate, there being present the President and Secretary of the BCTCS, the local organiser of BCTCS 33, and at least ten other members of the BCTCS.

**Apologies:** Apologies were received from Barnaby Martin and Stephan Reiff-Marganec.

**Previous minutes:** The minutes of the Open General Meeting held at BCTCS 32 in Belfast were approved.

**Matters arising:** There were no matters arising that will not already be covered by specific agenda items.

**President's report:** Faron Moller expressed his gratitude to Markus Pfeiffer for the organisation of BCTCS 33. He noted that, in common with BCTCS meetings in recent years (due to less funding being available to support PhD students) the number attending is modest – the figure is around 30 this year. He thanked the invited speakers, those who contributed talks and those who sent their PhD students for their support. He also thanked the LMS for supporting the attendance of László Babai and the Heilbronn Institute for Mathematical Research for supporting the travel of 5 PhD students this year.

**Treasurer's report:** Stephan Reiff-Marganec reported that the LMS had paid the expenses for last year's speaker (Valerie King) to the full amount of the grant (£1,250). LMS funding had again been applied for and BCTCS was successful in being awarded support to the amount of £1,250 for László Babai. This will be claimed after this year's event.

**Middlesex:** Final accounts had been received around the time of last year's meeting, but not in time to be reported. These have since been updated to show a smaller loss from the event. Middlesex had been supported with £2,250 (£1,250 from LMS and £1,000 from BCTCS funds to contribute to covering losses); Middlesex has refunded the £1,000 contribution, so the event was cost neutral to BCTCS reserves. Stephan Reiff-Marganec thanked Barnaby Martin for spotting their earlier mistake and acting to correct it.

**QUB:** Final accounts have not been received as the organiser has moved institution. However a claim was made to BCTCS for £1,174.44 to cover Valerie King's expenses and this was settled in full using the LMS grant.

The closing balance of accounts as of 5 April 2017 is £13,999.99.

Faron thanked the organisers of the two previous meetings for running the meetings on budget.

**Election of Secretary:** Faron Moller thanked David Manlove for his contribution over the last three years, remarking that he had held the position of Secretary since 2011. David

Manlove was nominated by Markus Pfeiffer and was seconded by Jessica Enright. No other nominations were received and David Manlove was duly elected as Secretary.

**Election of Postgraduate Student Representative:** Faron Moller thanked Thomas van Binsbergen for his contribution over the last year. Frances Cooper was proposed by Sofiat Olaosebikan and seconded by Markus Pfeiffer. No other nominations were received and Frances Cooper was duly elected as Postgraduate Student Representative.

**Report on arrangements for BCTCS 34:** It was agreed at least year's OGM that BCTCS 34 will be held at Royal Holloway, University of London, in 2018. The local organisers are José Fiadeiro, Matthew Hague and Adrian Johnstone. None were able to attend this OGM but Peter Robinson gave a presentation on the arrangements for BCTCS 34 in their absence.

He reported that BCTCS 34 will be held between 26-28 March 2018. He noted that Royal Holloway can be reached in 15 minutes by taxi from Heathrow Airport, and, in 40 minutes from Waterloo station in Central London. The anticipated registration fees were £40 per day (day rate) which includes coffees and lunches, and £85/day (full rate) which includes accommodation and full board. The banquet (to be held in the Founders' Building Dining Hall) will cost an additional £30.

In addition to campus accommodation (which is included in the full rate), alternative accommodation off-campus includes the Runnymede Hotel. BCTCS 34 will form part of the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the Computer Science Department; it was also noted that the Department will host ACM PODC between 23-27 July 2018 and WADT between 30 June–5 July 2018.

**Choice of host for BCTCS 35:** Barnaby Martin of Durham University offered to host BCTCS 35 in Durham in 2019, with the local organisation to be shared with Daniël Paulusma. Barnaby Martin was unable to attend this OGM but sent some slides that were presented by Faron Moller. There are 11 members of academic staff in the Algorithms and Complexity research group. Durham hosted BCTCS in 2008 and Barnaby Martin co-organised BCTCS in Middlesex in 2015. It was noted that the city of Durham has multiple attractions and that there is inexpensive college accommodation. It was proposed to hold the meeting at the standard time around Easter 2019 (it was noted that Good Friday falls on 19 April in 2019). This proposal was approved and Barnaby Martin was thanked for his offer to host this meeting.

**Any other business:** Roy Dyckhoff expressed his opinion that the BCTCS registration fee was high and that he felt this might be preventing some potential participants from attending, particularly given that travel and accommodation may also be payable in addition. He had been attending the British Logic Colloquium for a number of years where the registration fee is typically between £30-£40.

Roy Dyckhoff suggested that the BCTCS Committee should look into ways of increasing participation through subsidising the registration fee. To raise funds he suggested that BCTCS could charge an annual subscription and move to charitable status so that donations could be tax-deductible.

Markus Pfeiffer noted that he had approached a number of organisations to seek sponsorship for this year's BCTCS, without success. This could have enabled the registration fee to be reduced if the event had been subsidised.

Faron Moller explained that in previous years it had been largely left to local organisers to decide how to run the event (and this includes deciding the level of registration fee to charge). BCTCS would be able to underwrite any losses provided that they are not excessive. He noted that in the past generous support had been available to fund attendance by PhD students (e.g., up to 48 assisted places were available a few years ago).

David Manlove noted that some funding to support PhD students had been provided this year by the Heilbronn Institute. Moreover even when 48 studentships were available, these supported places were not always over-subscribed. Thus it had not been obvious, at least from recent experience, that the level of the registration fee was a key factor when people were deciding whether or not to attend BCTCS.

Faron Moller stated that BCTCS could subsidise local organisers from BCTCS funds for a limited period to help lower registration fees. This is obviously not sustainable in the long term but he was prepared to offer such subsidies on a trial basis for the next few years to determine whether such support helps to facilitate an increase in numbers.

Meanwhile Faron Moller also resolved to check with EPSRC again as to the possibility of applying for funding to support PhD places as in previous years.

Roy Dyckhoff was asked to draft an email to be circulated round the BCTCS organising committee mailing list in order that his proposals, the discussion around them and the suggested resolutions could be visible to all members of the organising committee.

There was no other business.

**Closing:** The meeting closed at 1746.

*David Manlove*  
*Secretary, BCTCS*