British Combinatorial Committee

Minutes of the May 2020 meeting
Thursday 14 May 2020, 2.00pm, via Zoom

**Present:** Peter Cameron (Chair – PC), Robert Johnson (Secretary – RJ), Simon Blackburn (SB), Julia Böttcher (JB), Benjamin Bumpus (BB), James Hirschfeld (JH), Kitty Meeks (KM), Tony Nixon (TN), David Penman (DP), Maryam Sharifzadeh (MS), Katherine Staden (KS), Andrew Treglown (AT).

**Apologies:** Max Gadouleau (MG)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2019.
   These were approved.

2. Matters arising
   - SB reported that arranging the change of signature on the bank accounts had been complicated but that this had been done for the current account and was in progress for the deposit account.

3. Annual report
   The report was approved with two minor corrections.
   **Action:** RJ to submit the annual report to the OSCR.

4. Financial report
   SB thanked Keith Edwards (previous treasurer) for preparing the accounts and the interim statement for May 2020.
   The financial statement for September 2018 - September 2019 was approved.
   The finances are in a healthier situation than last year, principally because of the significant surplus from the BCC 2019 conference.

5. Report from BCC27 (Birmingham)
   AT presented his report. There had been 235 participants (the largest since 2009), and the blend of plenary talks, mini-symposia and contributed talks had worked well and been popular.
On funding, originally £5881 had been requested from the LMS. However given the surplus from other sources, only £2838.26 was claimed (this was the amount used to support early-career and developing nation participants travel etc. in the name of the LMS). The LMS were happy with this arrangement.

6. Update on BCC28 (Durham)

MG was not at the meeting but had provided a written report. The main concern was that one of the speakers was considering dropping out. The committee agreed that some flexibility could be shown with the initial deadline for survey articles if this would help. If a replacement had to be invited, the committee was happy for MG to do this, informed by the reserve list agreed at the July 2019 meeting.

Other points to raise with MG are: progress on setting up a conference website, obtaining titles for the plenary talks, application for support from LMS and ICA (AT is willing to give guidance on this as previous organiser).

KM asked whether contingency plans should be made to cover the possibility that the conference has to be cancelled, scaled-down, or moved online owing to international travel restrictions. The committee agreed that for now we should continue under the assumption that all is well. However, we will ask MG for clarification on the University of Durham policy on cancellation and refunds.

**Action:** RJ to ask MG to update the committee on the items above.

7. Speakers for BCC29 (Lancaster)

Confidential Item

**Action:** TN to invite the first choice speakers.

**Action:** TN to inform the committee of the suggested mini-symposium topics.

**Action:** PC to check the dates on the BCC website and amend if necessary.

8. Thesis prize

JB presented her proposal for a thesis prize. There was general agreement that this was a workable plan and that we should instigate this with the first award made at the 2021 BCC.
There was some discussion on:

- number of theses shortlisted: agreed on a maximum of 10 with the expectation of it being fewer in most years
- dates: the cut-off date should be based on notification of the award by 31 December
- judging process: this should be light-touch but fair
- prize money: the ICA and CUP could be approached as possible supporters. The committee itself would only fund it as a last resort and only a nominal amount (around £100).
- advertising and promoting the prize: email to BCC mailing list, and item on the conference website

**Action:** JB to revise the proposal to incorporate the changes agreed and re-circulate.

**Action:** PC to contact ICA and CUP to find out if they would be willing to provide prize money.

9. Date of next meeting

This will be during the London 2-day meeting in May 2021. Details TBC.

10. Any other business.

PC informed the committee that he would like to stand down as chair of the committee, although he was willing to stay on for the time it took to find a successor. It was agreed that the other members of the committee should begin the search for a new chair.