UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES IT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 June 2018

Present:	Abbi Abbioui (Pharmacology)	Andy Judd (UIS/Vet Medicine)
	Jenny Barna (SBS/UIS)	Elizabeth MacRae (Zoology)
	Ian Clark (Genetics)	Aylwyn Scally (Genetics)
	Alastair Downie (Gurdon Institute)	Mark Sharpley (CSCI)
	Mark Holmes (Chair, Vet Medicine)	Wentao Song (PDN)
	Paul Judge (Bioinformatics)	Hugo Tavares (SLCU)

In attendance: Judith Drinkwater (Minutes)

The Chair welcomed Hugo Tavares (Sainsbury Laboratory) to the meeting.

1. **Apologies**
   Apologies were received from Paul Bays, Philip Brereton, Henrik Jönsson, Gos Micklem, Graham Ladds, Christof Schwiening.

2. **Declaration of Interests**
   No declarations of interest were received.

3. **Minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2017**
   The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. **Matters arising**
   There were no matters arising that were not covered elsewhere in the agenda.

5. **Membership of the Committee**

6. **Governance of Research Computing**

   6.1 Progress with reform of management: report from Chair

   The School of the Biological Sciences (SBS) was content for this committee to proceed with reforms to the management of research computing. JB had produced documents to outline the background, which had been circulated, and the committee had proposed to allocate some resource to every PI in the SBS. MH reported on a meeting of research computing users across the SBS, attended by 30 people. Items raised at the meeting related to individuals rather than generic grievances about provision. Items raised included

1

storage, storage costs, bioinformatic support, leverage of investment in research computing, speed of network connection, issues relating to security under the Human Tissue Act, power available, scheduling of small/large jobs, absence of virtual servers and prices, and access to hybrid cluster.

MH and GM were members of the University's Research Computing Committee (sub-committee of the Information Services Committee, ISC), which was responsible for governance and oversight of research computing. Those new to the ISC Research Computing Sub-Committee had been tasked with reviewing its terms of reference, which was a powerful tool for effecting changes. A document would be drafted over the next two months, and MH would consult with or bring the document to the SBS IT Committee before taking the draft further.

Outcomes of user meeting:

AD had set up a Scientific Computing Community Forum (SCCF) for research computing users.

Professor Chris Gilligan had agreed to formulate and distribute a survey about current use and future need for research computing.

ACTION: Chris Gilligan draft proposal to be circulated for consultation and comment.

ACTION: final survey to be distributed via Department administrators in SBS to cascade to research users in their area

6.2 Protocol for decision-making for storage requests to be funded by the School

Since the last meeting, requests had been received from individual members of SBS, relating to running out of storage, and lack of storage in their own Departments. MH had been consulted by UIS about these requests and had approved them. However, it was not appropriate going forward for MH to fulfil this role.

MH proposed that in order to achieve fair and transparent allocation of resource, either a) a sub-committee should be set up to allocate resource; or b) a nominal pump-priming sum of £1K per annum over 5 years should be allocated to each PI in the Biological Sciences who could then claim against that amount against any service on the UIS research computing price list.

The committee agreed to adopt option b).

ACTION: MH and JB to report to this committee in due course with data on uptake of storage.and other resources including CPU time.

6.3 SBS Scientific Computing Community Forum (SCCF)

AD had set up the SCCF. This would be publicised when the survey about research computing needs (6.1 above) was distributed. Research computing users would be encouraged to use the forum for discussion. JB would act as moderator to bring issues raised to the attention of this committee. The SCCF would include links to useful hidden items on the UIS website, e.g. UIS price list.

Link to SCCF: http://computing.group.gurdon.cam.ac.uk/hpcforum/

6.4 UIS/SBS liaison

MH reported that at present JB's post was managed within UIS. There was a proposal to relocate line management for the role in the SBS. This would have advantages: a) role would have detailed knowledge of computing in the SBS, and would lobby from an informed perspective; b) JB would serve as Secretary of this Committee. The committee approved the proposal. MH would report once the change had been effected.

7. Any Other Business

MH welcomed items for discussion from members of the committee.

Contingency plans for occupation of buildings, other risks e.g. flooding, power failure: COs should consider off site arrangement for back up on shared use UIS facilities on West Cambridge site.

ACTION: put proposal to Department administrators to gauge risk and proportionate response

Operations Sub-Committee ISC, charging for streaming media service: a review of charging was underway, but currently use of the service in the SBS was minimal. If staff in any department did have a need for streaming media, COs should inform JB.

Uptake of password re-setting: this item had been covered in the SBS monthly newsletter. Members made several suggestions for action by UIS

ACTION: JB relay suggestions to UIS

Software site-licensing scheme: this was being relaunched.

8. Proposed dates of next meetings, all in Greaves Room, Department of Pathology (stc)
Michaelmas Term 2018:   27 September and 18 December 2018
Lent Term 2019:   21 March 2019
Easter Term 2019:   20 June 2019