



The 26th Meeting of the Department of Computer Science and Technology
Buildings and Environment Committee

11.30 – 12.30, Monday, 22 January 2024
Room FW11, William Gates Building

MINUTES

Present:

Prof Richard Mortier, Chair (RMM)
Dr Pietie Brooks (PB)
Celia Burns, Secretary (CB)
Thomas Bytheway (TB)
Dr Andrew Caines (APC)
Ali Digby (AJD)

Gabrielle Gaudeau (GJG)
Martin McDonnell (MJM)
Daniel Porter (DRP)
Malcolm Scott (MAS)
Caroline Stewart (CS)

1. Committee Membership

The Committee welcomed the new PhD Representative, Gabrielle Gaudeau. Introductions were made.

2. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2023 were approved.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Reducing Energy Consumption

(a) **Monitoring energy consumption:** Ali reported that she has contacted the Sustainability team about the possibility of acquiring historical energy usage data but has not yet had a response. She will follow this up.

Action: AJD

(b) **Recording energy use and solar panel contributions:** Andrew asked whether there would be a way for people to see how much energy is coming from the solar panels once they are online, and a way to record the historical data too. Ali said someone else had also shown an interest in this data and that she would bring the subject up at a

Wednesday meeting. She would ask the contractor for all the information and contact IT to explore how the data can be shared.

Action: AJD

6. ★ Building Occupancy

Richard had spoken to the Head of Department, who did not have any immediate concerns about building occupancy. They had both agreed that occupancy appears to be rising, with more people around more regularly now than a year ago, for example. This item will now be removed from the agenda.

7. Building Matters

a) Department Café

Ali reported that it had been agreed that the café space could be franchised out and she was hoping to get some example design specifications from Alison Bun, Head of Workplace Services, so that she could start the tendering process.

Action: AJD

b) Drinks Vending Machine

Martin reported that he was still waiting to hear back from the University Catering Service about the currently out-of-action drinks vending machine. He will follow this up.

Action: MJM

c) Lighting

i) LED whole-building upgrade

Ali reported that she was waiting to hear back from Roger Lin, the electrician for this project. The project is planned for Summer 2024 (at the same time as the audiovisual equipment upgrades), with the lighting in the Lecture Theatres being a priority.

Action: AJD

d) Fire strategy for the William Gates building

Ali reported that the replacement of the roof vents and accompanying electrical installation work was now complete and had been tested successfully. This item can now be removed from the agenda.

e) ★ Verex security system

The Verex security system is running on old software and at significant risk of failure. Malcolm reported that UIS had decided that the William Gates Building would be used as proof of concept for their new central security system, and that works would be starting in the next four months. The new system will enable the use of smartphones, but physical cards will still be supported for visitors and those without smartphones.

f) Building management system (cooling and heating)

i) ★ Heating problems: the heating issues are long term, with the building not capable of producing a comfortable working environment for some areas even when it is working as optimally as it can. A solution will require a big infrastructure change.

Gabrielle reported that most of the complaints she had received from fellow students had been about the heating problems in the building. The Committee emphasised that any solution would be a major works issue and would be very disruptive to the department, but it was acknowledged that the issue is something that should be

considered. Richard said that he would follow up with Ali to understand what the practical options might be to mitigate the heating problems.

Gabrielle asked whether free-standing radiators could be provided, and Ali noted that radiators can be requested from her (though it is hard to keep up with demand). Ali also highlighted the massive fire risk from the radiators, with having to rely on people remembering to turn them off.

Action: RMM and AJD

- ii) **Ventilation:** Ali reported that the ventilation problem in the second-floor west corner of the building had been fixed, with both heating and cooling up and running. This item can now be removed from the agenda.

g) Refit of the WGB Library

Ali reported that she had not had a response from Alan Gleaves, the surveyor for this project. Richard agreed to follow this up with Graham Matthews (Director, Estates Division) again. Caroline noted that the refit had been referred to briefly in the Reshaping the Estate report. She said she would mention the issue to the Head of Department who could perhaps bring it up at the upcoming School of Technology Strategy and Planning Committee where the Reshaping the Estate report was scheduled to be discussed.

Action: RMM and CS

h) ★ Cleaning service

Central Procurement is bringing in a new cleaning framework at the end of August 2025, which the Department will be obliged to join. This item can now be removed from the agenda.

i) Clearing of FN11 Machine Room

There is now only non-sensitive equipment left in FN11. Malcolm reported that the next steps were to ask Nick Batterham (Electronics Workshop Manager) and the Systems Research Group whether there is anything left worth salvaging. Richard said he would send an email about this.

Action: RMM

j) Downpipe Leaks

Ali reported that there has been some progress with this issue but no resolution yet.

Action: AJD

k) Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)

Ali is going to arrange for a contractor to do the overdue general testing in the building.

Action: AJD

l) Generator Provision for GN09

Chris Purnell (Estates) had suggested running a cable from the Roger Needham Building generator and getting Estates plus both departments and their surveyors to discuss this idea. Ali is going to follow this up with Alan Gleaves, the Building Surveyor.

Action: AJD

m) Improvements to the Ventilation and Extraction in the Hardware Lab

Thomas is going to put some information together about improvements to the ventilation system to present to the Head of Department.

Action: TB

n) ★ Visitor Car Park – Barrier and Lockable Bollards

Installation of a barrier to the car park has been put on hold. The installation of some lockable bollards (which was paused due to the redesign of access to the Department's car parks because of the Whittle extension works), has been picked up again because the Whittle project is going to take too long to finish for us to wait.

o) ★ Refurbishment of the Audiovisual Systems in the Lecture Theatres and FW26

The refurbishment works are scheduled for the week commencing 22 July 2024. Daniel reported that he will be meeting with the contractors soon.

Action: DRP

8. Electricity Devolution Project (EDP)

(a) Solar panels

Ali reported that the 14 January shutdown to allow further works to be carried out by MainTech, the solar panels contractor, had been successful. Ali noted her thanks to Malcolm and Martin for their involvement in the successful shutdown. There are some final snagging items to be sorted out and the metering needs to be fitted. In addition, the system needs to be independently verified. No further shutdowns are scheduled until the next regular five-year shutdown in four years' time.

Action: AJD

9. Whittle Extension

Richard reported that he, Caroline, and Ali would soon be meeting with the Department of Engineering about their long-term plan for the Whittle Building and he would report back at the next meeting. Ali reported that she and Caroline are continuing to get Whittle updates on a week-by-week basis.

Action: RMM and CS

10. Equans

Richard had been in contact with Graham Matthews (Director, Estates Division) and Andrew Smart (Director of Estates Operations) about the issues with Equans. He had received a response from Andrew Smart that noted how Equans now had a new system, having moved on from their practice of opening new tickets when a job is reopened (thereby affecting their service level agreement targets).

Ali noted that responses had been quicker, but it seemed that orders were being duplicated—with both Estates and subcontractors responding to the same jobs. Piete asked when Equans had started their new system so that we could compare our experience of improvement with the new system date. Richard said he would include these two issues in his response to Andrew Smart.

Action: RMM

11. E-bikes and Electric Scooters

The minutes of the 12 October 2023 meeting had stated that no e-bikes or scooters are allowed in the building, and e-scooters other than Voi scooters are not allowed on site. The Research Staff Forum (RSF) had asked Andrew (RSF Rep on this committee) for clarification about this.

Committee members had discussed the issue by circulation before the meeting and continued their discussion at the meeting. Published guidance was available at the time of the meeting (at https://www.em.admin.cam.ac.uk/system/files/cam-only/ebikeandescooterguidancenote_2.pdf), but the link was broken at the time these minutes were written.

The Fire Safety Team guidance recommended that E-bikes are charged outside and are not stored within buildings unless in a designated carpark or cycle store. If charging outside, these should be a safe distance away from the building and any escape routes. E-scooters other than those recognised as part of the VOI government trial should not be used or charged on University property.

There is currently no official University policy, but it has been suggested that the Fire Safety Team, Estates Division, Insurance Office and Safety Office produce guidance on the use of e-scooters and e-bikes within the University as there is a need for this.

12. Any Other Business

(a) Decommissioning of Plain Old Telephone Service (POTS) phones: Piete reported that BT would soon be cutting off all POTS phones. This prompted discussion about the Redcare fire alarm phone line, and Ali said she would enquire with Estates about what their plan was for that. The analogue phone in Reception and the phones in the lifts were also discussed.

Action: AJD

(b) General feedback from PhD students: Gabrielle reported that her fellow students had been very complimentary about the Building Services Team, with regard to the speediness of responding to tickets and dealing with enquiries.

(c) Bins

Gabrielle noted that further bins were required in or near the kitchen adjacent to FW11. Ali said that further bins could be requested from her.

13. Date of Next Meetings

The next meeting will take place from 11.00 – 12.30 on Tuesday, 30 April 2024. The meeting originally scheduled for 18 June 2024 has been rescheduled to 11.00 – 12.30 on Tuesday, 2 July 2024.