



**The 31st Meeting of the Department of Computer Science and Technology
Buildings and Environment Committee**

**14.00-15.00, Monday, 20 January 2025
Room FW11**

Minutes

Attendance:

Prof Richard Mortier, Chair
Sarah Bainsfair (Observer)
Celia Burns, Secretary
Tom Bytheway
Ali Digby
Gabrielle Gaudeau

Dr Markus Kuhn
Dr Ian Lewis
Martin McDonnell
Daniel Porter
Malcolm Scott
Caroline Stewart

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Dr Piete Brooks and Dr Andrew Caines.

2. Minutes

The [minutes](#) of the meeting held on 15 November 2024 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

4. Reducing Energy Consumption

(a) Building System Upgrade (BMS) *

Parts for the remaining repair have been received, and Ali is waiting for engineers to carry out the repair.

(b) LED upgrade

Ali reported that the lighting upgrade, which started on 9 December 2024, is on schedule, with contractors working on the lighting in The Street this week and next week, then moving on to the offices and corridors. The order of the next works will depend on the availability of lights received in the next delivery of lighting. Ali will give building users adequate notice of the works.

Ali noted that the light commissioning rep for Lecture Theatre 1 will be coming in on 16 April, so it would be useful to receive any feedback from lecturers and students on the new lighting in Lecture Theatre 2 before then. Richard will send a note to the Wednesday group about this, and Caroline will raise this at the next SSCoF meeting.

Action: Caroline and Richard

5. Building Matters

a) Department Café *

Caffiend has indicated an interest in providing a cafeteria service for the Department. The proprietor has recently provided a business plan, which will be considered by Procurement to determine whether a tender process is required.

b) Verex security system

The Committee discussed the issue of a new security system to replace the current at-risk Verex system. This included discussion of systems used by other departments and various other options, and where responsibility for the project lies (Estates or UIS). It was agreed that Ian would arrange for 3 or 4 members of the Buildings and Environment Committee to meet with a relevant person from Estates to come up with a shared understanding of the system we currently have, what we need and how that can be provided.

Action: Ian

c) Building management system (BMS; cooling and heating) *

A document outlining the background to the heating problems and possible mitigations was circulated to Departmental staff on 8 May 2024 (BEC-2024-07-5f).

Related to the heating (though not to the BMS), Ali reported a new issue: sludge in the system (thought to be dirt from construction of the building) is affecting the system flow. Ali's understanding is that there is a plan to address this problem.

d) Re-fit of the WGB Library

The Library refit could qualify for funding available for supporting developing education spaces. The Committee agreed to produce an overall estimated cost that could be passed to the Head of Department and submitted for funding.

Action: Ian

e) Downpipe Leaks

Ali reported that the new surveyor had addressed this issue straight away. Roofing contractors and the original installers of the pipes had been to look at the problem and considered the issue to be one of siphonic drainage rather than roofing. The two contractors will work together to address the problem, and this should help with 90% of the egress. Ali also noted that the roof has not been maintained (for example, there is a lot of moss) and the surveyor has arranged for Mantaray Abseil to do a deep clean of the roof).

f) Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) *

Arrangements for the general testing of the building are ongoing.

g) Generator Provision for GN09

The UIS's Roger Needham Building (RNB) will be undergoing a complete refurbishment, and it is thought that plans for the refurbished building do not include having a generator. Richard reported that he had not yet had an opportunity to talk to the Head of Department to try to find out whether it would be possible to obtain the RNB generator, but he will do so.

Action: Richard

There was a brief discussion about whether a generator is in fact needed, whether it would be an appropriate solution, and whether it would be worthwhile thinking about what we do need in terms of back-up power, and how that could be provided.

h) The Hardware Lab—Relocation of the Workshop to the Bin Store

Thomas reported that he had not yet had an opportunity to look into the Head of Department's question about whether there are other spaces on the West Cambridge site where we could collaborate on this issue.

Action: Thomas

i) Ground Floor Showers *

These works have now been completed.

j) Pool Table *

Ali is sourcing a supplier to re-cover the pool table.

k) Meeting Pods

Caroline reported that three more meeting pods had been ordered (one for each floor), to be installed in 6-8 weeks' time. Ian reported that he had spoken to the manufacturer about the ventilation, and he expected the ventilation for the recently ordered pods to be much better than that built into the original pods (which was insufficient and created a serious CO2 concern).

l) Smoking/Vaping by the Cafeteria Area *

Signage in this area has been increased and made bigger to make it clear it is a non-smoking and non-vaping area. No further complaints have been received.

m) Use of the Garden on the South Side of the Building

Ali reported that she had spoken to the surveyor about the request to make use of the fenced-off garden on the south side of the building as a quiet place by installing a gate in the fence. The surveyor could not see why we should not go ahead with this but at the same time did not think it was for her to grant permission to do so. Ali will move this project forward.

Action: Ali

n) Hybrid meeting rooms

Daniel reported on the status of Absolut AV's installation of the UIS recommended kit for GS15: a quote for additional power had been carried out last week and the equipment has been ordered.

6. Out-of-Hours Use of Rooms on the Public Side of the Building *

Ali reported that a policy documenting the responsibilities of event hosts and sponsors (including a risk assessment) for out-of-hours events is not yet available; however, she and Reception have been carrying out risk assessments on recent events.

7. Bike Shed Gate

The Committee discussed a request for the duration the bike shed gate stays open to be extended (to a suggested 45 or 90 seconds). Ali said she would look into whether that would be possible.

Post-meeting note: Ali has adjusted the gate opening timing from 30 seconds to 45 seconds.

8. Student Feedback

Gabrielle, PhD Student Rep, provided some feedback from students. On the positive side, several things had been complimented:

- the meeting pods: considered very useful, and it was hoped there would be more (see item 5(k)).
- The cleanliness of the building.
- The support from administrative staff.
- The cafeteria being open.

Students had also commented on:

- Heating issues (though there were less complaints than last year).
- Leaks on the second floor and an accompanying smell. Ali noted that the leaks are in hand (see item 5(e)) but she was not aware of the smell. Gabrielle said she would try and get further information about this.
- The cafeteria prices being too expensive. It was noted that the prices are comparable to those of the West Hub Cafeteria (also acknowledged as too expensive).
- The cafeteria offering different prices for cash and card. It was acknowledged that if this issue was addressed, the likely outcome would be that the cash discount would be removed. Ali said that pricing would be addressed in the procurement process (see item 5(a)).

Action: Ali, Gabrielle

9. Any Other Business

Building Thermometers

Markus outlined a problem relating to heaters being used in offices where there are building thermometers—used to monitor general area temperature. Offices with a thermometer and where electric heaters are being used are affecting the temperature of other offices because the thermometers are registering a higher temperature in those offices and—assuming that temperature to be an average—reducing the heat provided in the general area. The Committee discussed this issue, noting that there are two parts to the problem:

- (i) an acknowledgement that this is happening but that we can't discriminate who has heaters. Rather, occupants of those offices could be advised that their heater does affect the temperature in the general area.
- (ii) an acknowledgement that even if the average temperature reported by the building thermometers reached the University policy (and current set-point) temperature of 19°C, due to uneven ventilation and heat loss distribution, many rooms would still remain below the set-point temperature. Ali said she would talk to Roger Ling (Estates) to ask if we could raise the building set-point temperature above the University policy temperature, to account for that variability.

Action: Ali

10. Date of Next Meetings

Future meetings are scheduled as follows

- Monday, 17 March 2025, 14.00 – 15.00, in FW11
- Monday, 12 May 2025, 14.00 – 15.00, in FW11
- Friday, 13 June 2025, 10.00 – 11.00, in SC04 (rescheduled from Monday 16 June 2025).