



**The 35th Meeting of the Department of Computer Science and Technology
Buildings and Environment Committee**

**14.00 – 15.00, Thursday, 16 October 2025
Room GS15**

Minutes

Attendance:

Dr Ian Lewis, Chair	Dr Tobias Grosser (from item 7(d))
Sarah Bainsfair (Observer)	Dr Markus Kuhn
Dr Piete Brooks	Martin McDonnell
Celia Burns, Secretary	Daniel Porter
Thomas Bytheway	Malcolm Scott
Professor Andrew Caines	Caroline Stewart
Diana Gauvrit	

1. Committee Membership

The Committee noted the new Committee member, Dr Tobias Grosser.

2. Conflicts of Interest

Committee members were asked to make any declarations of interest at the relevant agenda item.

3. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies.

4. Approval of the Minutes

The [minutes](#) of the meeting held on 13 June 2025 were approved.

5. Matters Arising

Ian raised the following topics for discussion:

- (i) **Teaching wall surfaces:** Ian mentioned that some of the whiteboards are not up to standard. Diana said she had spoken with the Head of Department, and the plan is to upgrade all teaching whiteboards to better-quality ones, starting with the board in FW26. Ian asked how decisions will be made about which boards to replace. Diana explained that she'll be meeting with Tobias Grosser, Jonathan Sterling and Marcelo Fiore (the main board users) to get their input on this, including about preferred sizes and types of boards. Sarah asked about costs, and Diana said that once she has the figures, she'll look into whether the expenses can be covered by Building Services or a teaching-related fund.

(ii) **Office temperatures:** Diana reported that she'll be meeting with Colin High, Manager for Major Works in Estates. A system survey and flushing were carried out two weeks ago, which revealed a long list of issues. Fixing the current system isn't viable; upgrading or replacing it is more realistic. Estates are aiming for this to happen in 2028/29, but the Department is pushing for it to be done next year. There was mention of individual heaters and, in response to a question about the backlog, Diana said that 18 more heaters have been ordered. Ian noted that he and Diana will be meeting to discuss this further.

Action: Diana and Ian

(iii) **Car parking:** Diana said she's been in touch with the Travel Team via email to express her concerns about how parking has been managed. She hasn't been able to share much else, as she hasn't been included in communications on the matter, but she'll try to get more information from the Travel Team to pass on.

Action: Diana

6. Reducing Energy Consumption

(a) LED upgrade: leftover funds

Following the LED upgrade on the ground floor, it had been suggested that the remaining funds could be used to install emergency lighting on the first and second floors, as well as lighting in FW26. Diana reported that, due to complaints about the new lighting—and with the Student Union and UCU now involved—a survey had been commissioned, and Estates have paused any further work. As the issue lies with Estates, there's nothing for the Department to action at this stage.

(b) Recording energy use and solar panel contributions

Additional accounts have been set up so Malcolm and Markus can access energy usage data. Since this information could be useful for others in the Department, it was agreed that Markus would share something about energy usage with colleagues.

Action: Markus

7. Building Matters

a) Department Café

Caffiend had expressed interest in providing a cafeteria service for the Department. Diana noted that Procurement is currently undergoing a major overhaul and developing a new programme to support catering. As a result, there won't be any changes to the cafeteria service until at least 2027. This item can therefore be removed from the agenda until the new Procurement programme is in place.

b) Verex security system

A new security system is needed to replace the current Verex system, which is considered at risk. There have been discussions between the Department, Estates, and UIS about the possibility of the Department running a pilot project.

Daniel reported that the last update he received was that UIS had been planning a pilot with the Department of Materials Science, but that had fallen through and they are looking again at our Department. Daniel will be meeting soon with Abraham Martin (UIS) to discuss next steps. Regarding costs, Daniel said the Department is doing everything it can to avoid having to fund the pilot itself.

Action: Daniel

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

- i) **Sludge in the system.** Diana reported that the side-stream filter installed on boiler circuit no. 1, along with the flushing that began two weeks ago, has made little difference. The underfloor heating in The Street also remains problematic, largely due to the lack of water movement for most of the year when the heating is turned off. It was agreed that Ian will meet with Markus and Diana to discuss the issue.

Action: Diana, Ian, and Markus

d) Re-fit of the WGB Library

Diana noted that she and Tobias—who has recently become involved in the project—would be meeting about this issue.

Other related issues were discussed:

- **Carpet tiles:** there are very few spare carpet tiles available for the rest of the building. Diana suggested removing the tiles from the library and using them as spares elsewhere, with the refit including a non-carpeted floor in the library. The Committee agreed with this proposal.
- **GN09—noise and potential expansion:** noise concerns and the possibility of expanding into the space across the corridor will be considered as part of the planning.
- **Reconsidering use of the space:** as the proposed layout hasn't been reviewed in a while, it would be useful to confirm whether the space is still needed for teaching—especially now that the West Hub is available as an additional venue. Ian agreed to clarify what teaching has taken place in the library, or what might be planned for it.
- **Availability of Estates funding:** Sarah noted that funding from Estates will not be available in the same way as before (when it was thought that the library refit might be eligible for funding aimed at developing educational spaces) due to the introduction of the Enhanced Financial Transparency system, which will go live in January 2027.

Action: Ian

e) Downpipe Leaks and Roof Repairs

Diana reported that Millcam—who came to carry out roof repairs in June—had assessed the work and realised the job was larger than expected, requiring more time for planning. They now intend to replace the roof, starting in the spring. In the meantime, patching of the holes in the roof membrane will begin shortly. The target completion date for the new roof is July 2026.

Diana also noted that, at a recent meeting, Estates had made it clear that the chiller should be raised onto concrete slabs. Malcolm added that a new temporary chiller would be needed while the existing one is being raised, as the previous temporary unit wasn't suitable. He also pointed out that temporary chillers tend to be less reliable than permanent ones.

f) Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)

Diana reported that a tendering process is underway for bulk testing. She had hoped to bring it to the Committee for consideration, but there wasn't time. The Committee agreed that Diana could go ahead and make the decision herself. Diana also noted that a clear

schedule for the testing would be needed, along with corresponding rules. The Committee agreed to review these via email.

Action: Diana

g) The Hardware Lab—Relocation of the Workshop

The Head of Department had asked whether there are other spaces on the West Cambridge site where we could collaborate to find a larger or separate workshop. Thomas had made enquiries with other departments on the site, but feedback had suggested there aren't any opportunities to access shared facilities.

Diana noted that the outdoor space the Committee had considered for relocating the bins (to free up the bin store) has now been taken by the Whittle Laboratory. Thomas mentioned that he could revisit the proposals he had brought to an earlier meeting. The idea of using part of the library space was also raised.

Action: Thomas

h) Meeting Pods

Ian reported that CO₂ sensors had been installed on the underside of the meeting pod desks and that he and Diana would be reviewing the collected data. He noted that the sensor system was originally installed six years ago; however, funding for the team responsible for its maintenance ceased three years ago. As a result, there are limitations—additional sensors cannot be added, and existing ones cannot be relocated.

i) Use of the South Garden as a Quiet Place

Diana reminded the Committee of the options discussed with the University and Estates regarding potential use of the South Garden. As the area is University-owned, any formal use would require opening it up to the wider University community, which would involve meeting specific requirements and incurring associated costs. Alternative options include leaving the space as it is, with no formal designation; or installing a gate on the east side to allow access solely for landscaping purposes.

Following discussion, it was agreed that Ian would speak with the Head of Department to explore the matter further.

Action: Ian

j) Chiller

Malcolm reported that the repair to the chiller has still not been carried out, and Diana is following this up.

Action: Diana

k) Bike Cage Gate

This issue is now resolved and will be removed from the agenda.

l) Automatic Doors

Diana presented a proposal requiring Committee approval for the installation of automatic door mechanisms. The proposal covers five doors: the central doors on all three floors, the main door to the public toilet, and the door to the disabled toilet. The estimated cost for the works is £16,000. It is hoped that funding may be available via a donation from the Disability Resource Centre (DRC), which the Department could potentially access. Diana confirmed that a minor works order has been prepared, and she is currently seeking funding sources. The Committee agreed that Diana should go ahead with the proposal.

Malcolm raised the need to ensure integration with the existing access control system. Diana confirmed that this requirement is included in the quoted works.

Action: Diana

m) Coffee machine in the Fishbowl kitchen

Diana reported that the coffee machine had been repaired but she had cancelled the contract and would be acquiring a new machine from another supplier. This item can now be removed from the agenda.

n) Lack of discussion space on the second floor

Following a request from a PhD student to improve the social/discussion spaces and whiteboard areas on the second floor, the Committee considered the matter. It was agreed that Diana would review the current provision and explore options to make the spaces more suitable.

Action: Diana

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

Internal events

Diana reported that she had picked up the action regarding the policy documenting responsibilities of academic event hosts and sponsors for out-of-hours events and would be updating the information on the intranet accordingly.

Action: Diana

External events

As requested by the Head of Department, the Committee considered the possibility of charging for the use of the building for external events, in line with practices in some other departments. Caroline reported that she had followed up with Maths, which charges for external bookings. Maths has four Facilities Team staff who are willing to work overtime to support such events. Since our Department does not have comparable resources, it was agreed that charging for external use might not be appropriate.

Thomas queried the distinction between internal and external events. Caroline clarified that 'internal' refers to other University departments. In response to a question about student societies, she explained that they would need a departmental host to be eligible to use the space.

There was a brief discussion about a previous Raspberry Pi event. Caroline noted that while the Department does not currently charge for such events, introducing charges would require the provision of additional services. Ian concluded that a common-sense approach should continue to guide decisions, noting that if a well-funded group were to request use of the space, the situation could be reconsidered.

9. Student Feedback

Daniel (member of the Postgraduate Student Forum (PSF)) reported that, since there has not been a PSF meeting this term, no progress has been made on finding a Student Rep. The next PSF meeting will take place this term.

Action: Daniel

10. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

(i) Lighting issues

Diana had reported that she has arranged with Estates for the dimming in the corridors to be set to 20% after 30 minutes of no movement (compared to the original 10% after 5 minutes of no movement) and she had received no further feedback. This issue will now be removed from the agenda.

11. Any Other Business

Gender-neutral toilets

Diana updated the Committee on ongoing efforts to introduce gender-neutral toilets in the building. She noted that she has been pushing Estates on this issue for some time and, following a discussion earlier that day, there has finally been some progress. While the University has not yet made a formal statement on gender-neutral facilities, Diana confirmed that she will initiate a minor works request to obtain a quote and then explore funding options. She clarified that the proposal involves converting three sets of toilets, none of which are publicly accessible; and she will report back either once a quote is received or at the next meeting.

Action: Diana

Toilet seats

Diana reported that when the building was originally constructed, many fixtures—including the toilets—were custom made. As a result, sourcing replacement toilet seats has proven difficult. She is currently working to resolve the issue.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Dates for the next meetings are as follows. All meetings will take place as hybrid meetings located in GS-15 from 14.00.

- Thursday, 29 January 2026
- Thursday, 26 March 2026
- Thursday, 14 May 2026
- Thursday, 25 June 2026