

# Hertfordshire

## Overview

This has been a very unusual year. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, we followed our planned events programme up to and including our Computing Fair on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2020. At that point we postponed further physical events and moved our committee meetings online using Skype. We investigated a move to an online platform for future BCS Hertfordshire meetings and conducted a survey of members. We also appointed a Social Media Manager to become more flexible in the ways we communicate.

Following a number of tests we hosted our first virtual event on YouTube (YT) Wed 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020. Our events at the beginning of the year were held at the University of Hertfordshire (UH) and Sopra Steria (SS) and we would like to thank them for their generosity and support. Our thanks also go to Advanced Collection Systems Ltd who provided accommodation for our committee meetings until March. Our link with our local University has been strengthened as we now have a member of our committee who has become an academic staff member at the university. We continue to sponsor student prizes and we have held a student video competition.

## What We Did Last Year

Details of our programme of events are shown in the table below.

Date	Title	Speaker	Venue	Attendance		
				Members	Non-Members	Total
29 Oct 2019	Ada Lovelace Commemorative Lecture:	Dr Robert Thurlby	UH	16	6	22
12 Nov 2019	Finding trees, water leaks and soybeans from space with Data Science	Dr Louise Lloyd, Rezatec's Head of Data Science	SS	8	0	8

4 Dec 2018	Quiz Evening		UH	7	4	11
16 Jan 2020	5G and The Future Mobile Network	Tom Curry, Principal Architect, Mobile Infrastructure, BT	UH	20	13	33
19 Feb 2020	Gearset - a release management tool for Salesforce	Dr Ben Roberts, Software Engineer, Gearset	SS	8	0	8
7 March 2020	.helloworld@Herts Computing Fair and Fun Day		UH	43	7	50
29 Jul 2020	Future of Work Post Covid-19	Mark Martin MBE	YT	111 views as of 25 August 2020		
8 Sept 2020	A Mugu, A Maga and a Magu walk into a chatroom	Dr. Edewede Oriwoh	YT			
17Sept 2020	AGM		Zoom			

## Making IT Good for Society

### How We are Making IT Good for Society as a Member Group

Our programme of events demonstrates that BCS Hertfordshire promotes IT beyond its immediate membership. A large proportion of attendees are non-members. Our Computer Fair attracted young people from local schools and colleges and consolidated our relationship with Cyber Prevent, the regional Cyber Crime Unit of Hertfordshire Police. The move to streaming and publishing our events on YouTube means that we are reaching a much wider and diverse audience.

## Community

### Who We Serve and How We Engage with Our Community

BCS Hertfordshire serves an area of the country which includes parts of Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire, as well as the eponymous county. We have approximately 1400 members associated with BCS Hertfordshire but our use of YouTube has broadened our community.

We continue to support computing students at the University of Hertfordshire through student

prizes, membership of BCS and a student video competition. We are investigating ways in which we can provide a local presence within the county by using volunteers to host small events in areas away from where we normally hold events.

## Leadership

### How we provide leadership

Leadership is about direction, and we demonstrate this through our engaging programme and by providing speakers who are leaders and expert in their fields. We are also at the forefront of the move to more flexible online events.

## Excellence

### How We Excel

We promote excellence in everything we do. This includes events, meetings and support for our local university.

## Objectives for Next Year

### Our Plan

1. Maintain our relationship with the University
2. Produce a high quality programme of events both virtual and physical
3. Encourage wider committee membership
4. Introduce smaller more informal events in the more outlying parts of the county
5. Plan for succession in key roles such as Secretary and Chair

## Achievements

### Our Successes

- Continuing to function during the Covid-19 pandemic by moving committee meetings online and establishing a YouTube platform. Support from BCS HQ was minimal.
- Conducting a survey of members which received 140 responses and gave us the mandate to innovate.
- Appointing a Social Media Manager
- Broadening the diversity of our committee. We have three new committee members



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- Supporting local students including student prizes and a video competition
- Our programme of events

## Challenges

### The Barriers We Face

Recognition – the public profile of BCS remains weak and we often need to explain what BCS stands for

Reaching the core of our membership – of our 1414 members, only a small fraction attend/view our events.

There was very little leadership from BCS HQ once we went into lockdown.. Our request for using our own budget to improve the hardware for streaming to YouTube was turned down.

## Inclusion and Diversity

### How We Are Working for Everyone

There is still some work to be done in ensuring diversity at our meetings although this remains a problem for the wider BCS as well. We have had some success at attracting younger people.

## Membership Survey

In April, we invited our members to participate in the first ever survey of the thoughts and opinions of our membership. We are grateful to everyone who spent a few minutes giving us feedback on how we are doing and crucially, in what areas they thought that we could improve. We received over 140 responses.

The key findings and our plans for responding follow.

### Communications

87% of our members still rely on email for news and information from us. This is not surprising giving our long-term historic use of email, but it does represent a mixed blessing for the committee. There is an on-going debate about how much email is too much and we are aware that for most of our professional membership, email fatigue is a very real issue.

Social media channels do present a way around this, as well as providing a vital line of reply back to us; something that we currently lack from our mailing list.

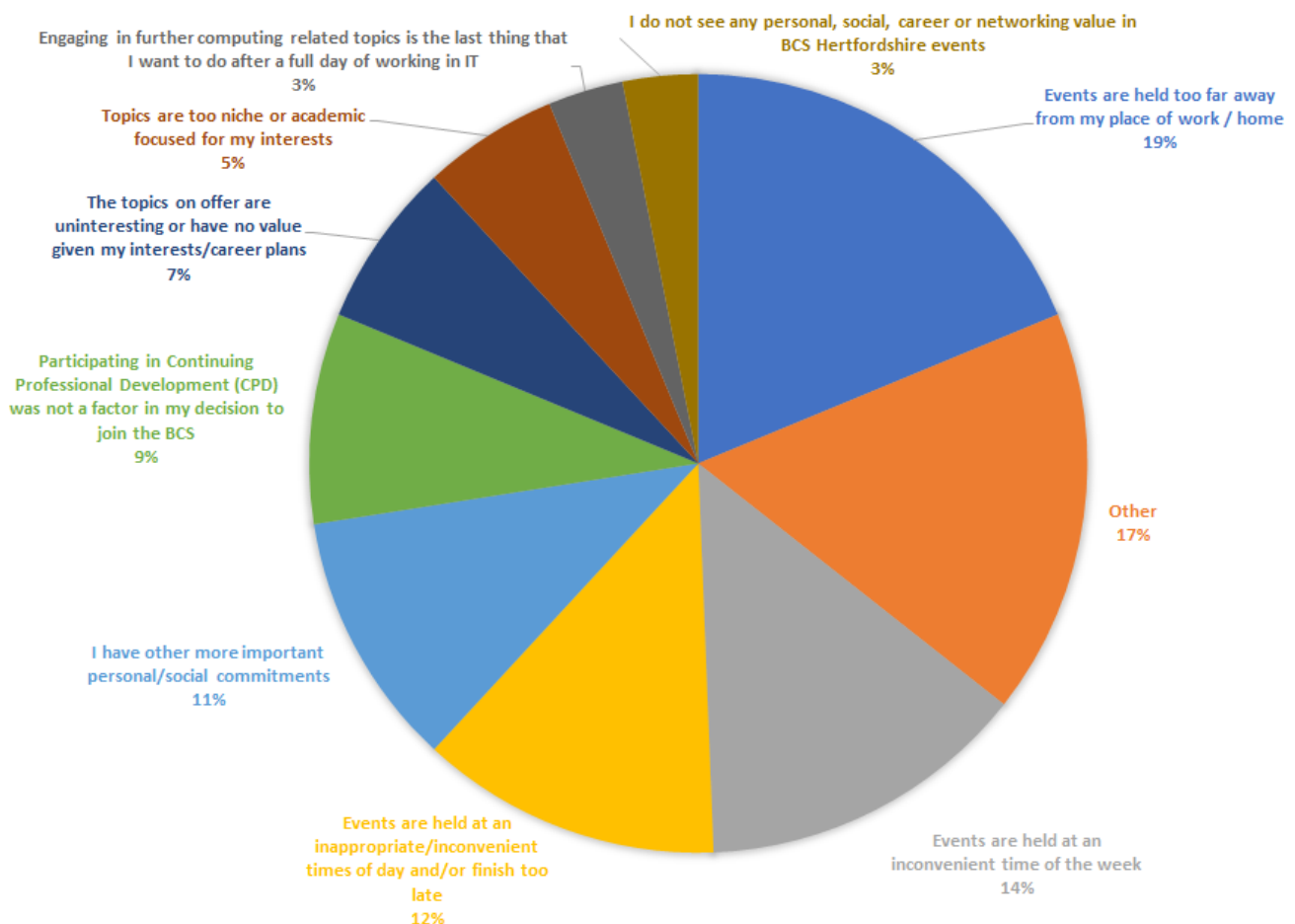
Worryingly, some 30% of our members indicated that they were unaware of our formally published events programme for 2019 – 2020. Similarly, 30% also indicated that they were not aware that they were allowed to bring guests, family members and non-members (including young adults) to our meetings. From this, it is clear that the core message about who we are is not getting out to our members.

We are very pleased to announce that we have appointed Ms. Kes Browne to the newly created role of Social Media and Communications Manager on our committee. Kes brings journalistic experience and passion along with a broader set of social media skills than the committee has historically enjoyed.

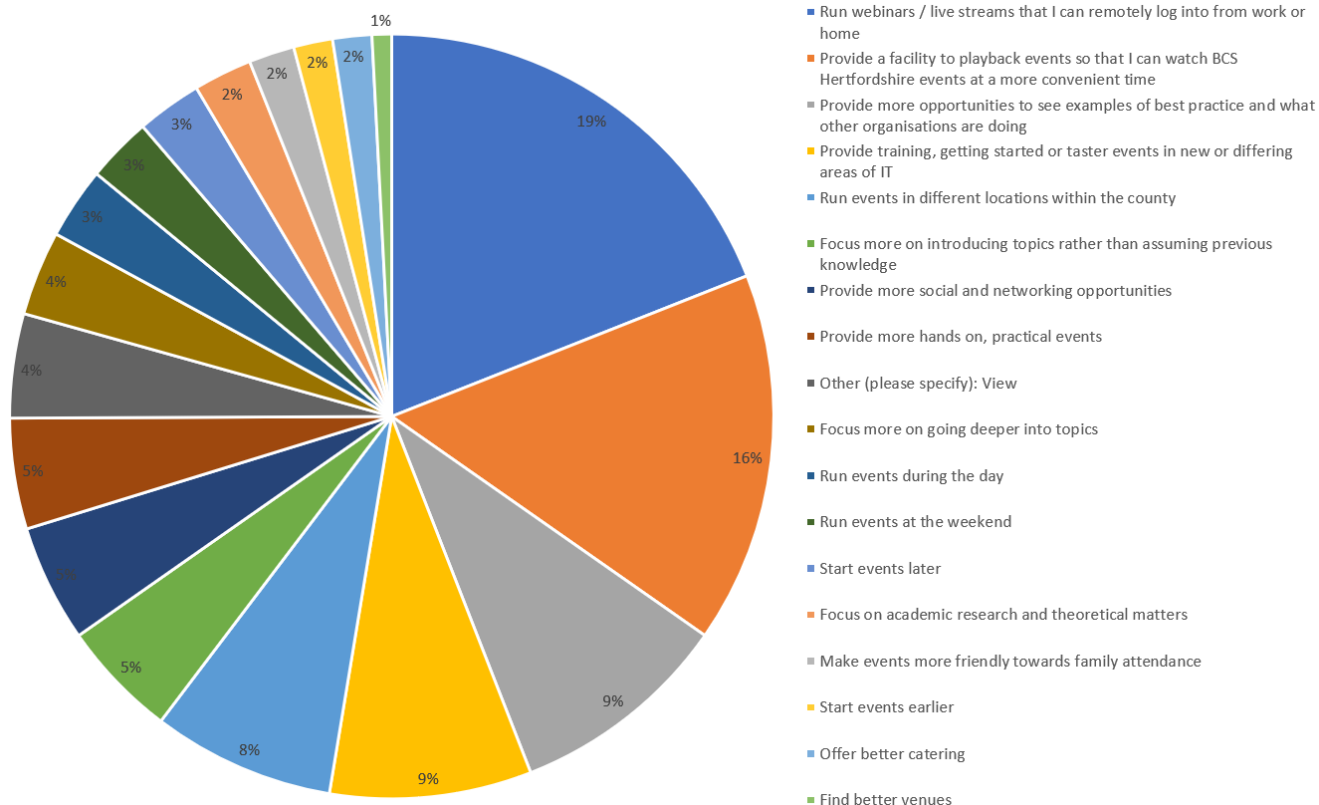
## Events

Some 70% of respondents told us that they had been unable to attend a BCS Hertfordshire event in the last 12 months or more.

The reasons given for non-attendance at our events were quite varied as can be seen in the following pie chart.



When asked how we could make it more likely for respondents to attend our events, we received some very clear guidance as seen in the figure below.



## Digital Participation & Replay

Although already on our radar, digital events have been brought to the fore as a consequence of the Covid-19 crisis.

Considering these requirements and, after multiple trials, we have launched our digital events offering via YouTube Live. It allows a wider possible audience and can be watched live or on catch-up. YouTube requires no special software and does not come with any specific platform security concerns, device support issues or closed-platform 'technology preference'.

It is important to state that it is not the committee's intention to abandon the hosting of physical events. Once the Covid-19 crisis is behind us we will return to hosting physical events with our aim being to supplement them with digital technologies.

## Content

The pie chart above shows there is a mix of expectations for the type of content that we should be providing. In order to respond to this we need to find speakers. If members reading this report feel that they or someone they know would be able to speak on an appropriate topic, then we would be delighted to hear from you.



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If you would like to learn more about our membership survey, you will find a more comprehensive report on our website.

## Student Induction Video Competition 2020

As part of our strategy to consolidate the link with our local university, we created a Video Competition for students. They were asked to make a short video to address one of the following:

- a. How will you, a soon to be Computer Science graduate be able to make the world a better place?
- b. Why is now the best time to be starting a career in IT/Computer Science?
- c. Why does ethical leadership in IT matter?
- d. How will the circular economy change the face of the UK IT industry for the better?
- e. How is British Computing going to be the leading force for social mobility, sustainability and the next generation economy over the next 20 years?

The winner(s) will be decided by the BCS Hertfordshire Committee and used for promotional purposes including publishing on our YouTube channel.

## Committee

### About the Committee

The committee met three times before the lockdown at Advanced Collection Systems Ltd and we would like to thank them for their support. We then moved our meetings online using Skype and met a further four times. Each meeting lasted for approximately two hours.

We identified a need to improve our use of social media and to that end we have advertised for and recruited a Social Media Manager. We are delighted to welcome Kes Browne to the role. Kes has a breadth of media experience including the BBC and has now joined our committee.

During lockdown we recruited two other new members to the committee. We are pleased to report that as a consequence we have significantly improved its diversity.

This was the fourth year in the role for the chair and secretary and second year in the role for the treasurer. It is therefore important that we plan for succession as five years in the normally accepted maximum term for these roles.

Jeremy Withrington has been our webmaster and email coordinator for the last fifteen years.



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He is also our longest standing current member of the committee. It is therefore with some regret that we have to announce that Jeremy will be stepping down. We would like to thank him for his numerous contributions over the years and wish him well as he focuses on other things.