Minutes of Meeting 1 of the BCS Open Source Specialist Group

14/03/2005
18:00 – 19:00 Hrs
BCS London Office - Southampton Street
First Floor, The Davidson Building,
5 Southampton Street
London
WC2E 7HA

In attendance :

Patrick Tarpey, Gary Lloyd, Paul Adams,
Mark Elkins, Conrad Taylor, Andrew Nicholson, Peter Murray,
Malcolm Kendall, plus attendees staying behind from the inaugural presentation.

Patrick Tarpey introducing himself and the caretaker committee as the steering group to get the SG off the ground.

Gary Lloyd explained the committee structure and said the an informal group of people decided that the BCS should have an open source group. He then introduced the names and roles of the caretaker committee.

Malcolm Kendall said that there was a sunset clause so that the current committee members can be replaced after a few months at the first AGM.

Peter Murray explained some of the history of the previous planning OSSG meeting in which a group of interested members appointed themselves to the roles.

Paul Adams said that the initial website was set up to deal with the need for the initial caretaker group to organise the first meeting and launch the group, dealing with formal mechanisms, fees and governance issues.

Peter Murray said that the BCS now had a good mechanism for the turnover of the officers of SGs.

Conrad Taylor asked the committee about non-BCS members becoming members of the SG.

Patrick Tarpey replied that the constitution necessitates two officers (chairman and treasurer) being members of the BCS. Given that the group is open to all - including committee roles.

Peter Murray said that for those interested the draft constitution is available for viewing on the website. He said that the BCS encouraged SGs to recruit new BCS members.

Gary Lloyd stated some of his motivations for becoming involved in the group. He said that he was just a member of the BCS and working in the industry and not intimate with the workings of the BCS. He was happy for non-BCS members to become involved.

Mark Elkins said he considered the OSSG should be open like open source, and adopt the same philosophy.

Patrick Tarpey noted that many potential members of the OSSG here tonight are not affiliated to the BCS in an official way. So the OSSG is not prescriptive to the BCS and has independence from it.

Peter Murray said that the aims of the OSSG in the draft constitution are on the website. He said that the OSSG was an opportunity to take part in the Open Source movement, and to influence and change the BCS itself.

Someone suggested that, in his experience, an AGM should be held in the autumn not in the summer. This would allow a few months of group working before the AGM.

Andy (?) asked the committee about where meetings will be held and where members came from.

Peter Murray said that member come not only from the UK but also from America, Ireland.

Malcolm Kendall said that some expats from Europe were also prospective members.

Andrew Nicholson said that the provisional meeting schedule include events to be held in "NOT LONDON" (where ever that is).

Andrew Nicholson said that he tried to get such an OSSG group off the ground 3 years ago. He further said he thought the disability road show was a good model for an SG to have meetings outside London.

Cornelia Boldyreff asked that it was not yet made clear how good the web site is. At the website you can meet electronically and there are Wikis and forums.

Gary Lloyd moved to formally elect the caretaker committee to the proposed posts en masse.

On a show of hands the committee was elected unanimously. The committee posts are assigned as follows:
    Chairman : Patrick Tarpey
    Vice-Chairman : Gary Lloyd
    Treasurer : Peter Murray
    Secretary : Malcolm Kendall
    Web Spinner : Paul Adams
    Member without Portfolio : Conrad Taylor
    Member without Portfolio : Andrew Nicholson
    Member without Portfolio : Mark Elkins

The committee having been elected **Peter Murray** explained that the aim is to co-opt people for specific roles.

Paul Adams explained that the website has a working area for the use of the caretaker committee. Now about nine people had worked hard to get the group off the ground. It would be good for a core group of about 20 people to develop. They can be committee members without portfolio.

Peter Murray raised the issue of gender bias on the committee, being all male. He shared his experience of working in an industry with the reverse bias and then expressed his wish that in the future there will be female committee members. There was agreement from female members of the

audience.

Someone then asked the committee to explain the constitution.

Patrick Tarpey explained that the areas that the constitution covered were: aims of the group, voting structures, framework for expenditure, ethical issues concerning the group.

Andrew Nicholson read out the objectives of the group from the website document:
o Provide reliable, honest, independent view on Open Source
o Continually monitor development of the Open Source paradigm
o Reduce professional uncertainty around the subject of Open Source
o Act as a centre of expertise for BCS use
o Encourage serious debate & examination of Open Source
o Educate and inform members & wider audience of Open Source news
o Bridging the digital divide by the promotion of OS solutions
o Recognition, support of Open Source projects and individuals
o Add to members professional knowledge & career development

The draft constitution was then adopted by meeting.

Peter Murray added that there was a lot of discussion about the objectives. The definition of open source was deliberately left out to leave it open. He further outlined his personal vision that open source group encompasses FLOSS and GNU/Linux as areas of interest. He also said that some people may be more interested in the Free Software movement.

Paul Adams then apologised the email spamming (of meeting notices) and attributed this to 50% ignorance and 50% stupidity. He described that he had created a working group area where content could be added by a committee group but that the public had the capability to look and comment on that content. One current aim is to remove the too many chiefs effect of having membership of the committee group open.

Someone suggested that there should two areas on the website, one closed and one open.

Paul Adams replied that in effect this existed already.

Mark Elkins said that the website should keep the members forum and area.

Paul Adams replied that these would be kept.

Someone then said that his experience of running a Linux user group in Hampshire led him to suggest that the core group should be formed of achievers and this group largely self assembled. It was generally obvious who the people should be.

Paul Adams agreed that a large core (larger than the current committee size) is necessary. He then said that how to select the extra folk will come later.

Peter Murray stated that their are forums on the website and if people have ideas he urged people to use them. He wished to see an interesting and dynamic group as much as possible.

Someone requested the ability to raise topics (on the website) would be useful.

Andrew Nicholson said he had respect for the website, it looks good with the BCS logo, and a good domain name.

There was a round of applause for the web spinner's efforts (**Paul Adams**).

Paul Adams was asked to describe the website. He outlined the basic software of Zope and Plone was used with an Apache front end and hosted on Linux. The hardware was a Pentium 3 which is a little clunky now. He would appreciate contributions to the hardware. He described the history of the software as coming from his involvement in the EU Calibre project. This software was based on Zope and proved to be largely reusable. He wanted initially to show off collaboration software with Zope and Plone but now the software was achieving things that were not originally intended. The aim for the website is to provide something like yahoo groups, but also to have an electronic meeting place as an adjunct to face to face collaboration.

Someone asked for the OSSG website software as a tar ball.

Someone else suggested that Zope and Plone were available on the net.

Paul Adams said that the exact configuration of the software was important.

Steve Nice of ForLinux kindly offered to donate a server for the BCS SG website. (Round of applause)

Gary Lloyd urged people to active and contribute to the committee, to get a topic and run with it. He said his pitch was one long appeal to people and their contacts to find people who can help. He gave an immediate example of meeting a lawyer at tonight's meeting who is prepared to give a talk on the licensing issues of open source.

Patrick Tarpey said there was a proposed event calendar on the website. There was also a proposed newsletter later in the year.

Someone from the Oxfordshire BCS branch suggested that a good way to get the group on the road is to jointly host meetings with branches. He gave an example of a very successful joint session with the Oxford University Computing Society on the subject of open source.

Peter Murray mentioned OSS watch contacts and the possibility of the group holding educational style meetings.

Patrick Tarpey said that holding joint meetings with branches would solve the problem of finding venues.

Gary Lloyd urged holding open meetings to attract more people.

Mark Taylor from the Open Source Consortium (executive director) suggested that the OSSG should work with other organisations. The coordination of messages between the OSSG and the other organisation was important.

Patrick Tarpey noted that here tonight were two senior members from SOCITM

Conrad Taylor raised the topic of the proposal for the BCS to commission a book on open source.

Paul Adams said that the book topic had generated more conversation than anything else on the website. He suggested that the planning for the book can be done on the web.

Someone pointed out that the main thing for the committee to consider was to structure the target audience for the group. e.g. To influence decision makers at the top end and also to reach the low end. At the current meeting were the already converted so there was a danger of preaching to the

converted.

Paul Adams noted that one of the aims of the group was to reach a wider audience. He suggested if people can open a Wiki on item, or set up a forum on an item then wider discussion can take place on the web. He asserted that meetings should be about decisions but that discussions are better made on-line.

Patrick Tarpey commented that he agreed to that idea, and also took the point about singing to the choir. He urged people to provide input back to the committee.

Patrick Tarpey then closed the meeting at seven o'clock, encouraging all present to register on the website.

The meeting closed at 19:00hrs

Actions from Planning Meeting

Person	*Action*	*Status*
Paul Adams	**Investigate the use of CRM type software to keep track of inquiries.**	Open
Gary Lloyd	**Make contact with hardware vendors re sponsorship/donated hardware for website.**	Open
Patrick Tarpey	**Confirm booking of venue for one of dates above.**	Done
Paul Adams	**Create a Wiki to hold a list of potential speakers for the inaugural meeting on interim OSSG website.**	Done
Paul Adams	**Create an announcement mailing list from interim website.**	Done
Paul Adams	**Contact the following potential speakers:** **Brian Fitzgerald - COSPA - Sarah Ewen – Sony**	Done
Malcolm Kendall	**Agreed to act as OSSG Secretary.**	Done
Dr Peter Murray	**Agreed to act as OSSG Treasurer.**	Done
Conrad Taylor	**Agreed to video/audio the inaugural meeting and retain for future use.**	Done

Actions from Meeting 1

There were no actions arising from the meeting.

The open actions from the planning meeting are carried over.