

The Joint Mathematical Council of the United Kingdom

A Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales, Registered Charity Number: 1171223

Registered Office: De Morgan House, 57-58 Russell Square, London, WC1B 4HS

Minutes of the General Meeting held online at 11 a.m. on Tuesday 2 June 2020

Present

Officers

Chair

Andy Noyes

Deputy Chair

Alice Rogers

Secretary

Chris Chipperton

Treasurer

Jennie Golding

Representatives of Participating Bodies

Adults Learning Mathematics

Jeff Evans

Association of Mathematics Education Teachers

Helen Farmery

Association of Teachers of Mathematics

Heather Davis

British Society for Research into Learning Mathematics

Jeremy Hodgen

British Society for the History of Mathematics

June Barrow-Green

Edinburgh Mathematical Society

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Heads of Departments of Mathematical Sciences

Jan van den Heuvel

Institute of Mathematics and its Applications

Paul Glaister

London Mathematical Society

Kevin Houston

The Mathematical Association

Tom Roper (deputy)

Mathematics in Education and Industry

Charlie Stripp

National Association for Numeracy and Mathematics in Colleges

Graham Griffiths

National Association of Mathematics Advisors

Matt Lewis

National Numeracy

–

NRICH

Ems Lord

Operational Research Society

Evelyn Hardy

Royal Academy of Engineering

–

Royal Statistical Society

Carole Haynes

Scottish Mathematical Council

Carol Lyon

STEM Learning

Steve Lyon

United Kingdom Mathematics Trust

Hannah Telfer

Wales Institute of Mathematical and Computational Sciences

Sofya Lyakhova

Co-opted Members

Immediate Past Chair

N/a

UK Representative to the

International Commission on Mathematical Instruction

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Representatives of Observing Bodies

Department for Education [England]

Alex Smith

Department of Education [Northern Ireland]

Julie Harris

Education Scotland

Andy Brown

National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics

Sue Madgwick

Office for Standards in Education

Emma Gregory

The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation

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The Royal Society

Helen Harth

The Royal Society Advisory Committee on Mathematics Education

Lynne McClure

Scottish Qualifications Authority

Sue Pope

Welsh Government Education Department

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 **Welcome** The Chair welcomed everyone present.
- 1.2 **Practical Arrangements** The Chair set out the protocols for the meeting. He added that the growing familiarity with and acceptance of online meetings may well give new opportunities for JMC moving forward.
- 1.3 **Apologies for absence** Apologies for absence were received from: Mike Ellicock (National Numeracy); Peter Ransom (MA); Sarah Old (Ofqual)

2 Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 18 February 2020

- 2.1 **Approval** The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 18 February 2020 were approved.
- Actions: 5 – Efforts to assist in reports having greater impact are ongoing and will be on the agenda for the Trustees' planning day in September.
- 5.11 – The actions concerning MWE have been completed.
- 5.20 – Lynne McClure reported that no meeting had been held since the last JMC, but one was scheduled for next week.

The minutes were approved.

3 Reports from Trustees

- 3.1 **Chair** The Chair stated that there were a number of topics that he wished to report on.
- The Trustees had held a constructive online meeting on 29 May. Discussions continue regarding the shape and purpose of JMC. The website is seen as key to JMC's presence as developments are ongoing.
- A number of conversations have taken place with the Royal Society and ACME. Issues discussed include the changing role of Contact Groups, the Mathematics Futures project, and proposals for a National Academy for Mathematical Sciences.
- JMC's committee structure is due for review to ensure that it has the best structure and oversight. Consideration needs to be given to if and how JMC can be more agile.
- The Chair is meeting with the government department representatives from each of the four jurisdictions. Following the 4-country work that JMC commissioned, these conversations explore how JMC might offer responsive advice on mathematics education across the UK.
- Following a discussion with Alex Smith, the ongoing issues around mathematics and gender will form the basis of JMC's afternoon discussion item at the November meeting.
- For the February discussion item, it is proposed to consider the impact of, and recovery from, the pandemic.
- The Chair has been involved in work with Ofqual relating to plans for the summer awards.
- 3.3 **Secretary** The Secretary reported that following the Trustees' Meeting, Graham Griffiths and Kevin Houston had made significant strides towards updating the existing website. Further thought to a major revamp of JMC's web presence will take place in September.
- 3.4 **Treasurer** The Treasurer drew attention to the review of the current budget and the proposed budget for next year.
- The budget was conservative and only one subscription is still outstanding. There has been an underspend on meeting costs and website development although this last aspect remains a priority moving forward. Invoices from the two projects are imminent. Balances reach their lowest in the autumn prior to payments from the next round of subscriptions.
- The new budget is based on the premise that an increase in subscriptions is not necessary at this time. Additionally, there is a recognition of the financial position that member organisations might be facing as a result of the pandemic. Scope for the commissioning of further projects is included. While the projected spend exceeds what will be received the reserves will be maintained at the required levels.
- The proposed budget for 2020-2021 was approved.
- 4.3 **ICME Bursaries Committee** The report was noted.

5 Elections

- 5.1 **Election of Deputy Chair** Dr Noel-Ann Bradshaw was elected unopposed.
- 5.2 **Election of Treasurer** Dr Jennie Golding was elected unopposed. Dr Golding was thanked for her work during the current term and for being prepared to serve a second term.

6 Reports from Participating Bodies

The Chair remarked that many reports had referred to the impact of the pandemic, but that there were also some positives in these uncertain times. It was good to see the reporting of awards recognising various individuals. The increased uptake of Teacher Training Scholarships was also noted.

Clarification was sought of the 'SUMP/MAT' heading in the WIMCS report. SUMP stands for Solving Unusual Mathematics Problems and relates to questions similar to those found on STEP papers and the like.

7 Reports from Observing Bodies

8 Reports from Meetings

9 Discussion of Reports

Discussion questions raised in the reports from NRIC and SMC relate to the discussion in item 10.1.

10 Discussion

- 10.1 **COVID-19** The Chair introduced the item by encouraging JMC to focus on issues relating to mathematics rather than those of a more generic nature, though clearly these are also important for learners of mathematics. He made reference to research from the US that showed greater negative impact on progress in mathematics than in English during the lockdown.

A number of key questions were posed: Does JMC need to do something more? Would a task and finish group be useful? Is there a need to engage with others? What further data is needed?

Considerable discussion took place around whether JMC should look to provide a facility to signpost resources. The general feeling was that this space was already being provided by a number of players with a more well-known profile to teachers and that adding to this was unlikely to be helpful; there is a danger of 'reinventing the wheel'. Teacher workload is a genuine concern, but the creation of too many spaces to be looked at could add to an already crowded landscape and be counterproductive. It was added that JMC does not have a significant visibility with the majority of teachers.

NRICH are engaged in a mini-project working with parents. Parents' issues are around confidence, attitudes and curriculum knowledge; there is a tendency to fall back on their own experience rather than using procedures being learnt by their children. While all pupils are currently home-schooling due to the pandemic, there are always pupils off school long-term - 20% of pupils have significant absences during their school career – so these are important ongoing issues. Collaborative learning is a major challenge.

ATM informed JMC that they are offering support for home schooling through Twitter and *Maths Snacks Videos*.

It was reported that DfE are working closely with AMSP, NCETM and the BBC; CfSA are also involved with the BBC. DfE are also doing a lot of work on post-COVID and transition phases. It was questioned whether there is a need for a high-quality online curriculum to be developed.

An important question is around where teachers access resources. DfE, BBC, Oak Academy and *HegartyMaths* were given as major sources. Teachers' own worksheets are also in common use.

It was thought that a similar situation existed in Wales. How to model learning situations needs to be given as much priority as content. Consideration needs to be given to what works in distance learning and possible gender differences.

In Scotland an overarching recovery group has been commissioned. *Scotland Learns*, a weekly online newsletter for parents and teachers is published. Links (similar to those of DfE) are made available. There are questions being asked about the examinable content, as is the case in the rest of the UK. However, there is concern about ensuring consistency of year on year standards as well as a worry about any removal of content becoming permanent.

The Chair raised the question as to what it might be useful for JMC to be doing. It was stated that DfE viewed the next few months to be tight financially resulting in limited analytical work. This is likely to lead to an opportunity for the establishment of an expert space where policy questions can be aired or additional conversations take place under Chatham House rules. The Chair is to follow up on this and

have conversations with the representatives of the devolved governments to investigate whether similar actions might be of useful for all jurisdictions.

10.2 **Report update: Additional 'extension' papers** Delays have arisen as a result of the pandemic, but completion and circulation are expected soon.

10.3 **Report update: 5-18 mathematics education across the four countries of the UK** The commissioning of a report about mathematics education across the four nations stemmed from concern about an England-centric focus where the JMC represents the whole of the UK. Earlier position statements had been used to inform the report and the richness of the table in the report was noted.

Some minor amendments were recommended:

Northern Ireland: re. *Curriculum framing and enactment*

- Mathematics and Numeracy should include KS4 as compulsory
- The Education and training Inspectorate do evaluate the curriculum

Scotland: re. *Professional Learning*

- The role of the GTC is not strong enough. The GTC manages professional development and is a driving force, sets standards, and gives professional recognition.
- The GTC consults with the Government rather than the other way round.

England: Do T levels need to be included?

The Chair stated that he felt it would be a useful document to share with ACME. It was recognised that the report will have a limited shelf-life and will require regular reviewing.

The Secretary reminded everyone that the report was not yet ready for circulation.

10 Any other business not elsewhere on the agenda

12 Conclusion

The Chair thanked everyone present for their participation and closed the meeting.

13 Dates of future meetings

Thursday 12 November 2020 at The National Council for Voluntary Organisations, Regents Wharf, 8 All Saints Street, London N1 9RL (deadline for papers: Thursday 29 October 2020)

Tuesday 16 February 2021 at The National Council for Voluntary Organisations, Regents Wharf, 8 All Saints Street, London N1 9RL (deadline for papers: Tuesday 2 February 2021)

Date and venue for June 2021 to be arranged

These meetings will begin at 11 a.m.