POST-EVENT SUMMARY REPORT

Name of event:	**The Big Mathematics Initiative (BMI) Virtual Event: An Academy for Mathematical Sciences**
Date of event:	**Thursday 11 June, 2020**
Location of Event:	**Zoom**
Number of Persons Attending:	**250+**

On June 11th, the Big Mathematics Initiative (BMI) held a virtual event on 'An Academy for Mathematical Sciences', which focused on one of the key recommendations in Philip Bond's '[The Era of Mathematics](#)': i.e. the establishment of an Academy for the Mathematical Sciences to facilitate links between academia, government and industry.

The event was open to the Mathematical Sciences (MS) community with the purpose of bringing together interested members of the mathematical community to discuss the role and mission of an Academy and to think about possible next steps. The event attracted over 250 attendees and provided an open opportunity to share opinions and discuss how and why an Academy might benefit the mathematics community. The virtual event was in place of two meetings originally scheduled to take place at the ICMS in Scotland and Sheffield Hallam University in May 2020, but due to COVID-19 restrictions, was rescheduled on a virtual platform with the help of ICMS.

The online meeting opened with an introduction from the CMS Chair, Sir Ian Diamond, who gave a brief overview of how following the Bond Review, the Big Mathematics Initiative project came to fruition , when the Council for Mathematical Sciences (CMS) set up two committees to consider its recommendations and discuss how to take them forward. These were the Strategic Committee (SC), chaired by Claire Craig and the Implementation Group (IG), chaired by Sir Bernard Silverman, which became known as the Big Mathematics Initiative

The meeting was then handed over to the panel chair and BMI Strategic Committee member, John Pullinger, former President of the RSS and previous National Statistician who set the scene for the day and introduced the speakers for the panel sessions:

- Claire Craig, Chair of the BMI Strategic Committee, gave a brief update on all the various BMI work strands but explaining that the focus of this event would very much be the BMI work on the case for developing a National Academy for the Mathematical Sciences.
- David Leslie, member of the BMI Implementation Group, set out in a [structured presentation](#) what the purpose and function of an academy might be based on the paper, [The Case for a National Academy](#), which he co-authored with other IG members..

- Bernard Silverman, Chair of the BMI Implementation Group, presented thoughts on possible models for the [governance and structure of a proposed academy](#).
- Caroline Series, member of the BMI Strategic Committee, presented some thoughts on the potential [next steps](#) to follow this event.
- Nira Chamberlain, member of the BMI Strategic Committee, concluded the panel talks with his reflections on a National Academy for Mathematical Sciences.

Please refer to video link for all of the full-length presentations: https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1_0q24cu52

The attendees were then arranged into 12 breakout groups and invited to discuss and feedback thoughts on the presentations above, with support from a facilitator and scribe to record opinions, suggestions and questions for the panel on the three topics covered (Academy Consultation and Overview, Governance and Structure, and Next steps). Each group was asked to identify one priority under each of the headings, which were then collated before being fed back to the panel via pairs of synthesisers.

All the feedback captured from the breakout groups was captured and can be found on the BMI [webpage](#).

During the 30-minute break, three pairs of synthesisers worked with the priority notes to collate and report on the key themes founded for each of the three topics for the report back after the breakout groups:

1. Academy and Consultation Overview – Chris Budd & Christine Currie

2. Academy Governance and Structure – Martine Barons & Jonathan Dawes

3. Next Steps – Colm Connaughton & Ulrike Tillman

All the priorities identified, collated and presented by the synergisers can be found [here](#).

All three synthesiser pairs presented their findings consecutively and John Pullinger directed questions to the panel to address the findings on their respective topics from the breakout groups. The public chat function was enabled during the meeting as an opportunity to express feedback that would possibly not be addressed during panel discussion, but later in the future offline.

The overall tone of the feedback was encouragingly positive, though not to say this included all voices from the whole of the MS community. The key messages raised were:

- inclusivity and diversity in the Academy at all levels is key, to ensure representation from a broad spectrum of voices in the MS community
- a wide and inclusive membership may be more suitable than a fellowship structure
- support that an Academy can represent and advocate for all the MS community, if it does not compete with or drown out other societies
- explore other platforms for the Academy, particularly a virtual and online format could foster a more inclusive and flatter structure.

For next steps, many were in favour of seizing the momentum which has been gained, with a diverse interest group to take the next step.

Claire and John closed the meeting with final remarks to thank all attendees and for contributing their time and input. It was stressed that impetus would need to come from the community to take the establishment on an Academy forward, and that those willing to commit to contribute were strongly encouraged to put their names forward to join a Special Interest Group; an email would be sent to all attendees with further details. The baton will then be passed on to this SIG to take this initiative forward. The offer from both the INI and ICMS to jointly provide the necessary resources to Support the establishment of this SIG was gratefully acknowledged and it was agreed that the mathematics community should encourage them to do so.