



**Mercian Board Meeting 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026  
Online  
Notes and Actions**

**1. Welcome and apologies**

Present: Sue Ackermann (Chair, University of Nottingham), Emma Walton (Loughborough University), Pete Maggs (Treasurer, Nottingham Trent University), Phil Brabban (Coventry University), Diane Job (University of Birmingham), Benjamin Veasey (University of Derby), Jo-Anne Watts (University of Wolverhampton), Judith Keene (University of Worcester), Joanne Dunham (University of Leicester), Anne Knight (Cranfield University), Lesley Thompson (University of Lincoln), Shaun Kennedy (Bishop Grosseteste University), Georgina Dimmock (University of Northampton), Katie Mann (Birmingham Newman University), Victoria Wreghitt (Birmingham City University), Liz Gardner (University of Warwick), Malcolm Meaden-Pratt (University of Buckingham), Deborah Munro (Aston University), Sophie Page (Interim Executive Officer Cover, University of Nottingham)

Apologies: Sarah Pittaway (Vice-Chair, Birmingham City University), Laura Pilsel (Harper Adams University), Chris Powis (University of Northampton), Gary Elliott-Cirigottis (Open University), Anna O'Neill (University of Warwick), Ann-Marie James (Aston University), Paul Mahoney (Staffordshire University), Alan Brine (De Montfort University), Steve Williams (University of Leicester), Laura Pilsel (Harper Adams University)

The Chair welcomed everyone present at the Board meeting, there was a particular welcome for first time attendee Malcom-Meaden Pratt from Buckingham.

**2. Mercian Executive Officer Role**

Sophie Page, Sue's EA, is providing interim cover for the Exec Officer role including administering and arranging the Steering Group and Board meetings, maintaining email lists and updating the website where possible. During this time of interim cover SP will quantify how much time is needed for the tasks involved in the role and keep track of the type of tasks that arise. It was agreed this cover will be in place for approximately 6 months until the Autumn Board meeting where a decision will be made for any future recruitment.

**ACTION:** SP & SA to look at the workload involved and create a role profile over the Summer ahead of the Autumn Board meeting.

### 3. University of Gloucestershire request to join

The Board approved the request from the University of Gloucestershire to join the Mercian Collaboration.

### 4. Website Review

Board members discussed the Mercian Collaboration website and whether members are getting what they need from it. It was mentioned that a more slimmed down version of the website would be better and that it is important to think about what the aim of the website is and what we are trying to promote. It was agreed that a task and finish group would be created to have a look at this in further detail.

**ACTION:** SA/SP to ask Pendulum to look at website usage and provide any metrics if possible.

**ACTION:** Board members to email SP any names of colleagues who would like to be on the task and finish group by Friday 24th April on [sophie.page@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:sophie.page@nottingham.ac.uk)

**ACTION:** SA to draft ToR for the task and finish group.

### 5. Finance Update (PM)

Pete talked through the Finance update slides. The income in 2025 was up from 2024 which was due to the work of the Conference group in securing some high-level sponsorships. The Board would like to extend their thanks to the Conference group for this.

**ACTION:** SP to share slides Board members following the meeting.

### 6. SIGs

- Proposal for Community of Practice on Sustainability

The proposal for a Community of Practice (CoP) on Sustainability was discussed and approved by the Board, BV offered to lend support on this CoP.

- Process for Approval of new Communities of Practice

The Board discussed the current approval process for CoPs and it was agreed that it needs to be simplified and could be changed to a Microsoft Form with not all boxes being mandatory to complete.

**ACTION:** Board members to send feedback on the current approval process to EW who will collect a set of key questions to use on the new proposed form and share via email to Board members for approval.

- SIG Chairs

The Board agreed that there needs to be some work done to help encourage staff to become Chairs of SIGs due to a current lack of interest in Chair succession. They discussed it should be framed as developmental for staff but that there would need to be commitment from the Sponsor of the group to provide support to the Chair, especially if the staff member is in more of a junior role.

**ACTION:** BV and DJ to do a piece of work around creating some more formal parameters around what is expected for Chairs and selling the benefit of being one.

EW talked through the slide about SIGs, and the outstanding decisions/actions of how we operationalize the expectations of current groups including how they might report their work back to the Board, how to pause/stop a group if needed and to look at which current groups should remain. PB offered support to review any groups that may need closing down or encouragement to restart their work.

**ACTION:** EW to send any work already completed on the SIGs review to SP and SA who will look at this work over Summer to bring to the board meeting in Autumn.

## **7. Strategy**

As the Collaboration doesn't have a formal strategic plan in place, SA asked Board members to have a think around what the core strategy of the Collaboration could be. Some suggestions were workforce/staff development, resources/finances, libraries space, AI and sustainability. PM offered to help work on this as he mentioned it is important to think about value added and value for money for the Mercian Collaboration.

**ACTION:** EW to send notes to SP on previous workshop held about strategy.

## **8. AOB**

### **Autumn Board Meeting**

BV kindly offered University of Derby as a host for the Autumn Board meeting. This will be an in-person meeting.

It was noted that there may no longer be representation from Lincoln Bishop going forward.

**ACTION:** SP to send out possible dates for Autumn Board meeting.

Please see previous Mercian Board agendas and meeting minutes:

<https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/about/agendas-minutes/directors-board/>

Please see previous Steering Group agendas and meeting minutes:

<https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/about/agendas-minutes/steering-group/>



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Notes and Actions**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead(s)</b>	<b>Dates &amp; Progress</b>
SP & SA to look at the workload involved and create a role profile over the Summer ahead of the Autumn Board meeting.	SA/SP	Fri 28 <sup>th</sup> August
SA/SP to ask Pendulum to look at website usage and provide any metrics if possible.	SA/SP	Thurs 9 <sup>th</sup> April
Board members to email SP any names of colleagues who would like to be on the task and finish group by Friday 24th April on <a href="mailto:sophie.page@nottingham.ac.uk">sophie.page@nottingham.ac.uk</a>	All	Fri 24 <sup>th</sup> April
SA to draft ToR for the task and finish group for website review.	SA	End of April
SP to share slides Board members following the meeting.	SP	Thurs 2 <sup>nd</sup> April
Board members to send feedback on the current approval process to EW who will collect a set of key questions to use on the new proposed form and share via email to Board members for approval.	All	End of April
BV and DJ to do a piece of work around creating some more formal parameters around what is expected for Chairs and selling the benefit of being one.	BV/DJ	End of May
EW to send any work already completed on the SIGs review to SP and SA who will look at this work over Summer to bring to the board meeting in Autumn.	EW	End of April

EW to send notes to SP on previous workshop held about strategy.	EW	End of April
SP to send out possible dates for Autumn Board meeting.	SP	Thurs 9 <sup>th</sup> April

# Mercian Collaboration Groups : decisions and outstanding actions from review 2023- 2025

- Core Groups agreed as distinct to SIGs (Summer 2024)
- SIGs and CoPs are treated the same and at Board it was agreed that it didn't matter what they were called (Summer 2024)
- It was agreed that all groups Core and SIGs/CoPs should be asked to provide an annual update on their activity – how this works is as yet not operationalised (March 2025)
- Further to requests for new groups
  - Updated guidance (simplified) on starting a new group to be included on our website – (March 2025)
  - Board to receive all group requests to ensure oversight by email or at Board depending on timing (March 2025)
- Only Core groups will have a Steering Group sponsor
- Outstanding decisions/actions
  - Expectations of groups.
  - If a group needs pausing or stopping and why
  - Should all existing groups remain? (no decision agreed)
  - Creation of guidance for new groups

**Mercian Collaboration Board  
Meeting**

**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026**

**Treasurer's Report**



## Final Income and Expenditure 2025

- **2025 Income = £29,985.43**
  - *[up from £25,764.36 in 2024]*
- Including income from Conference = **£10,340**
  - *[up from £6,682 in 2024]*
- **2025 Expenditure = £30,997.46**
  - *[down from 34,449.60 in 2024]*
- Including consortia support (SCONUL) = **£2,300**
- Conference venue = **£3,600**
  - *[Venue costs almost exactly equivalent to 2024 level]*



## Final Income and Expenditure 2025

- Income minus expenditure [final] = - **£1,012.03**
  - *[2024 equivalent figure was - £8685.24]*
  - *[Annual deficit reduced by £7673.39]*
- We are required to maintain a reserve of minimum **c.£11K** with SCONUL
- Current level of remaining reserves (2026) is **c.£18K**



# Income And Expenditure Forecast For 2026

- Total income forecast = **£32,275**
  - *(includes new subscription model, 2 new member institutions and estimated levels of conference sponsorship of £9,000)*
- Total expenditure forecast = **£30,000\*\***
  - **Assumptions**
    - Conference cost = **£4,000**
    - Consortia support from SCONUL = **£2,500**
    - *\*\*Exact cost of Executive Officer role not yet calculated*
- Estimated income minus estimated expenditure = **£2,275\*\***
  - *\*\*Exact cost of Executive Officer role not yet calculated*



# Subscriptions modelling

- Identified 'unit' subscription cost, members pay multiples of it as per JISC banding
- Band 10 institutions pay 1x the unit cost, Band 9 pay 2x the unit cost, all the way up to Band 2, who pay 10x the unit cost
- Straightforward approach to dividing up costs, in way that acknowledged different capacities of the members to pay, resulting in figures members broadly happy with
- With everyone at the agreed level proportionate to each other, an inflationary rise to the unit agreed each year while basic model remains the same
- New members are (easily) incorporated – potentially x2 this year (2026)



# New Subgroup: Proposal – Sustainability Community of Practice

## 1. Background

*Outline the subgroup's background, highlighting any prior existence or discussions with or within the Collaboration community which may have taken place. [50-200 words]*

The proposed Community of Practice aims to bring together professionals working in Mercian Collaboration libraries who share an interest in sustainability and collaborative development. This initiative builds on recent activities that suggest there is a need for such a group within the Mercian network. In September 2024, Mercian Conference presentations focusing on sustainability from the Open University and University of Birmingham were well received. This led to a few institutions starting to collaborate and pursue the topic further. Following this, in February 2025, we hosted an online networking event focused on sustainability in HE libraries, which provided a platform for sharing best practices and innovative approaches. In September 2025 we delivered a presentation at the Mercian Collaboration Conference to explore the concept of a Special Interest Group, canvassing interest and gathering valuable feedback from attendees. This went beyond the conference itself, in the form of a survey, which captured interest across the community. These activities have highlighted the need for a dedicated space to exchange ideas, foster partnerships, and develop practical strategies to advance sustainability within our professional community.

## 2. Aims

*Please provide a brief statement outlining the intended purpose and area of focus. [50-100 words]*

The CoP will serve as a collaborative forum for library professionals within the Mercian network who are committed to advancing environmental sustainability. Its primary focus will be on sharing knowledge, developing practical strategies, and promoting initiatives that reduce environmental impact within library operations and services. By fostering dialogue and co-creating resources, the group aims to support institutions in embedding sustainable practices, reducing duplication of efforts, influencing policy, and driving positive change across the sector.

## 3. Activities

*Please outline how the group will deliver on these aims. (e.g., holding meetings, hosting events etc) You may wish to use a bullet pointed list for clarity. [50-100 words]*

- Quarterly online meetings via Microsoft Teams
- Annual online event
- In person presentation/workshop at the Mercian Conference
- Online space for resource sharing
- Newsletter (twice a year)

#### **4. Strategic Alignment**

*Please indicate how the subgroup will align with the Collaboration's strategic aims and ambitions (Cf. [Strategic Plan 20-24](#)). [50-100 words]*

The proposed Community of Practice (CoP) will develop and share knowledge relating to the environmental impact of our library practices, policies and collections. By supporting collaborative learning and the exchange of good practice, the CoP will enable members to deliver high-quality library services while minimising environmental impact. Its scope is intentionally wide and will cut across all areas of library activity.

The CoP supports the Collaboration's strategic aims in the following areas:

##### Theme 1: Workforce Development

It will support workforce development by facilitating knowledge exchange, peer learning and professional development focused on environmental sustainability. Through shared discussion, resources and practical examples, the CoP will enhance members' knowledge, confidence and skills, enabling staff across the collaboration to embed environmentally responsible practice in their roles.

##### Theme 2: Collections

The CoP will share evidence and experience of the environmental impact of different collection practices. Members will collaborate to promote sustainable collection management, including the sharing of good practice and the use of collective purchasing power to influence suppliers to embed environmental sustainability within their operations and supply chains.

##### Theme 3: User Experience

The CoP will explore and address the environmental impact of our services. By identifying, testing and championing practices that reduce environmental harm, the CoP will help ensure that services are delivered in ways that are both high quality and environmentally responsible, supporting users' expectations around sustainability and institutional values.

##### Theme 4: Learning & Teaching

The CoP will explore opportunities to develop and embed education for sustainable development within library teaching. It will also consider how environmental sustainability can be integrated into the design and delivery of teaching activities and professional development, ensuring that sustainability is consistently reflected in both what we teach and how we teach it.

##### Theme 5: Research

We will share any relevant research outputs (including conference talks, papers, or collaborative projects).

#### **5. Governance & Committee**

*Subgroups are normally convened by a committee with a designated Chair, supported by a Vice-Chair and minutes/meeting Secretary, serving for two years. Please briefly*

*outline the envisaged required officer roles, terms and succession expectations. Where possible identify individuals prepared to initially fill these positions. [50-200 words]*

The Community of Practice (CoP) will be established and initially led by its original owners, who will be responsible for set-up and chairing arrangements. Leadership responsibilities - including Chair, Deputy Chair, and Secretary - will be shared among the group. Once the CoP is established, the owners will recruit volunteers from the group's membership to support and contribute to the group's activities. The original owners are Lizzie McCauley and Jo Elliot (Open University), Steve Parton (Keele University), and Charlotte Stockwell (Nottingham Trent University).

**6. Proposed membership model:**

Any interested parties

**7. Resource requirement**

*While subgroups and their activities are supported by the Collaboration Officer, please outline any particular resource implications or expectations envisaged. [50-100 words]*

We would like a space on the Mercian Collaboration website.

**8. Next steps**

*Finally, please outline your initial plans, including meetings or events, following approval, for the first six months to a year. [50-100 words]*

- Form a steering group from volunteers.
- Define terms of reference for group (including priority areas and initial goals)
- Set up Teams channel
- Arrange quarterly Teams meetings
- Deliver an online event in April 2026 to launch the group
- Create an online space for resource sharing
- Deliver an in-person workshop at the 2026 Mercian conference
- Explore the logistics (and environmental impact) of a bi-annual newsletter

**Document authors**

*Please list all contributors, including institutions and current roles*

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