



Mercian Collaboration Steering Group
Telcon, 10:00am-11:30am, 11th December 2019
Minutes

Present: Diane Job (Chair, Birmingham), Chris Porter (Vice Chair, Newman), Mark Toole (Treasurer, NTU), Simon Bevan (Cranfield), Gareth J Johnson (Mercian Collaboration)

Apologies: Sue Ackerman (Nottingham), Emma Walton (Loughborough)¹

19/21 Welcome & Apologies

a. Formal welcome to Sue Ackerman

The Vice-Chair formally welcomed Sue to the Steering Group, although noted she apologised for being unable to attend at short notice due to an urgent meeting at Nottingham.

b. Approval of previous minutes (14th August 2019)

The previous minutes were accepted as an accurate record.

19/22 Outstanding Actions

SG 19/10: Diane and GJJ to revise tangible benefits document

This hasn't yet been updated, but ideally the revised draft will come to the next telcon in Feb 2020.

SG 19/18: Diane and GJJ to investigate creating a risk register for the Collaboration

It was agreed to move forward on it, but as a very light touch approach. Most risks fall on engagement, as the Collaboration relies on people participation.

ACTION: GJJ and Diane to draft risk register and share at next telcon for comment

19/23 Governance

a. Strategic Plan: Progress update

Due to other commitments this was still under development, but it was hoped a new version would appear for the Feb 2020 SG telcon.

ACTION: Diane and GJJ to continue work on revising the strategic plan

b. Treasurer: Update & Budget Review

Mark circulated two papers last week: an income and expenditure summary and outline budget for 2020. For 2019:

¹ Emma logged in, but prevented from participating due to technical issues



Income (Current):	£22,651	(Projected 31/12/19) £22,2651
Expenditure (Current):	£18,747	(Projected 31/12/19) £19,147
Out-Turn:		(Projected 31/12/19) +£3,625

He noted we were on track for a reserve of £21,691, noting the expected write off of the Birmingham 2018 conference fees and income from conference sponsorship had contributed. It was agreed Mark and Diane would try one final time to arrange for payment for Birmingham, although if not invoiced by 31st Dec 2019, it would no longer be payable.

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ACTION: Mark and Diane to try one final time to get 2018 conference invoiced

For 2020 the proposed budget was fairly conservative and assumed we would only achieve £2k conference sponsorship, and additionally Mark had overinflated some projected expenditures.

Projected 2020 Income:	£20,820 ²
Projected 2020 Expenditure:	£23,900
Projected 2020 Out-Turn:	£-3,080
Projected end 2020 Reserves:	£18,611

This would make a net-loss for 2020 of £3k, but still leave healthy reserves; roughly to cover three months of outgoing costs should we need to wind up the Collaboration over this period. However, he reiterated the Steering Group and Board needed to think more strategically about the budget for 2021 onwards. Ongoing commitments are well below reserve limit currently, but the Collaboration cannot afford to operate beyond our income indefinitely.

GJJ noted the Directors had been sent a reminder of the levels of subscriptions via the mailing list.

c. Annual Report 2019

GJJ noted he had received organisational vignettes from many Directors, although some were still pending. Very few SIG contributions had been received to date, but reminders have been sent to all. The Chair and Vice Chair were reminded their introduction and endpiece contributions were also needed for early January. GJJ noted he had sought advice from SCOUNL, along with Northern Collaboration (NC) and NoWAL in terms of annual report requirements of our parent body but had received no guidance. As such, he was continuing in the 2018 format which had been warmly received by the SCOUNL Director.

ACTION: Chris and Diane to provide their annual report contributions to GJJ by early Jan 2020

d. Development Officer Update

GJJ discussed the valuable annual tripartite meeting with NC and NoWAL (Manchester, 21st Nov 2019) which he attended. While much of the meeting was given over to discussing operational matters and experience exchange between the officers, he highlighted two key points to the SG.

² subs £18,820, conference £2,000

- **Consultation review report:** Five suggested steps forward have been made by the consultant³, which do not include shutting down either organisation. No reduction in overall staffing hours had been envisaged either. It had been noted members saw the NC as having more strategic value, and NoWAL more value to library staff. GJJ had also spoken with the consultant, to provide insight into the Mercian Collaboration's operation, activities and configuration. The next steps will be for both organisations 'Operations Group' to meet in early 2020 to decide on a preferred way forward. However, both organisations will need to mutually agree on the final approach for it to be implemented.
- **Conference planning:** Due to all three (NC, NoWAL & MC) collaborations hosting their conferences for the first time in the same year, there had been a review on any impacts or synergies between these. There appeared to be little deleterious effects (given the discrete core audiences for each event), although all conferences were down on their anticipated attendance. A number of practical outcomes, differences and contrasts had arisen, and GJJ was feeding these into the Conference Group for consideration e.g. feedback, sponsors, risk assessment.

GJJ would next be meeting all collaboration officers/managers in April 2020 at the University of York for their third annual forum. This will include the new M25 and SCURL Executive Managers.

19/24 Operations

a. Annual August SG & SIG meeting

GJJ noted that SG had met in 2018 and 2019 in person for the August SG meeting, this year including the SIG Chairs. It had been informally discussed making this a regular annual event but this had not been agreed by the SG. This proposal was strongly supported and including a representative, nominally the chair, of each SIG was seen essential. It was noted there may be resourcing costs in hosting an event on this size, and the SG would need to consider what the expectations were on any host and if any savings could be made. E.g. bringing 'brown bag lunch'.

b. Co-Badging Events & Charging

GJJ highlighted that the Metadata Group were running a co-badged event in the region (BCU, 11th Dec 2019) with CILIP Cataloguing and Indexing Group⁴. Delegates were being charged for attendance. GJJ asked for guidance for SIGs on co-badged events within the region and charging arrangements, noting that the Collaboration had an avowed 'no member charge' policy currently in place for all its events. After discussion it was agreed that who was leading mattered: if the external organisation is leading (organising, booking, arranging speakers etc) then co-badging with the MC and charging delegates was seen as acceptable. The MC would not feature such events in the website events diary. If the MC or its SIGs were leading, than no charge should be applied, and the event should primarily be for regional librarians. Such events would be included in the MC's calendar of events. It was agreed, in the light of discussions at Board in October, collaboration with other library groups was favourable to the Collaboration's strategic goals.

ACTION: GJJ to write on behalf of the Chair to all SIG to clarify policy on co-badging events and charging

³ These are expressly not *recommendations*, but rather constructed as *scenarios*.

⁴ <https://www.cilip.org.uk/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=1295942&group=>

c. CILIP Chartership Support SIG

GJJ shared the outline proposal he had from Ann Stairmand-Jackson, Collection Management, BCU for a CILIP Chartership network as a new Mercian SIG. He noted he had received a formal proposal that morning, which he shared with the SG. Following a lengthy discussion it was agreed that while Collaboration organisations could host meetings, convening and supporting a network like this was explicitly CILIP's responsibility not the Collaboration. A key issue was that CILIP is not solely academic libraries, and as such this lay outside the Collaboration's core remit as an 'regional academic library collective'. It was proposed however, to assist through approaching CILIP directly to facilitate more discussions between Ann and themselves on establishing a regional network.

ACTION: GJJ to respond to Ann and facilitate introductions to key personal at CILIP

19/25 SIG Updates

a. Deputies & Senior Staff Group

Diane and GJJ reported back on a very successful inaugural meeting⁵ (27th Nov 2019, Birmingham), with delegates expressing their recognition of a clear value in attending. It had been agreed on the day to move forward with the group as self-organising, although GJJ noted he suspected some instigation from SG would be needed to drive initial momentum⁶. Strike action and the first term may have impacted on the group moving forward but it was hoped this would pick up in early 2020.

Diane noted she was collating an outline terms of reference for the group, drawing on elements of the RLUK assistant director group. The D&SSG was still exploring its exact configuration and purpose, beyond a valuable networking opportunity. GJJ had set up a mailing list for the membership, which was hoped to be broad rather than exclusive. It was noted specific topics may draw in people who might not otherwise attend.

ACTION: Diane to draw together outline terms of reference for the D&SSG to drive discussions

ACTION: GJJ to prompt group for next meeting in Feb/March

a. Conference Group

As Emma had been unable to attend GJJ briefly reported, highlighting the evaluation reports submitted in the meeting's paperwork. Emma had stood down as chair with Claire Brown of Birmingham now acting as group chair through the 2020 conference. Emma was continuing though as group sponsor. The group would need to recruit a number of new members in 2020, as many experienced members had reached the end of their term of office. They were expecting to meet next in Jan 2020.

⁵ Meeting notes available at: <https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/deputies-senior-staff-group>

⁶ As had been the experience for the first few years of NoWAL's 'Senior Staff Group'

b. Copyright Group

CP reported that following the cancellation of a meeting this term, the group had gone quiet with no rescheduled date. GJJ noted the group chair had been unwell, but had recently returned to work, and hence things may move forward again soon. Chris will liaise with the group chair to investigate if any support is needed.

ACTION: Chris to contact Yvonne Budden as to next steps for Copyright Group

c. Marketing & Communications Group

Mark reported that the group had been active, and had an event planned for the new year (March 18th, Aston) in collaboration with the MSDG. GJJ noted they are the first SIG to have supplied their annual report contribution, and the committee were actively discussing their next steps. It was agreed they were engaged and finding their way, and Mark was pleased with their progress.

d. Mercian Disability Forum

Met most recently Mon 9th December (Coventry), and among the topics discussed were the question the SG tasked them with respect to web accessibility and departmental leads. Diane noted she had missed out on the meeting date, and GJJ would check she was on the mailing list.

ACTION: Check if Diane on MDF mailing list and add if not

e. Mercian Metadata Group

GJJ reported, on Sue's behalf, on the activities of the MMG – which were many. Following their inaugural event (Aston, 20th August) they had hosted a Legacy Metadata eForum (30th Oct) and the aforementioned co-badged event on RDA (11th Dec, BCU). They were next hosting an 'end of year' members meeting (Jan 22nd 2020, Leicester). GJJ noted there was considerable keenness from the organisers, which had thrown up a few operational and strategic questions, but their commitment was undeniably very positive.

f. RDM Support Group

Simon reported that this group had gone very quiet, with GJJ noting they had cancelled their planned December event. With the loss of most of the organising committee, and the remaining member looking to stand down, questions as to the continued viability of this group were raised by Simon and the Chair. It was agreed that short of a new organising committee revitalising the RDMSG, the group's continuation within the Collaboration should be reviewed by the Directors Board in March 2020. It was noted that potentially a broader research focussed group might be convened as its successor, incorporating research topics beyond RDM. GJJ reminded the SG of the non-affiliated regional research librarians' group, and also the discussions around Plan S at the Copyright Group; indicated there was likely some coterminosity to be explored here also. It was noted purchasing consortia groups may also have some overlap.

ACTION: GJJ and Simon to follow up with Gareth Cole on progress to recruit new committee and inform of planned group review

ACTION: RDMSG to undergo group continuation review at Directors Board March 2020

It was briefly discussed if the Copyright Group, or even all groups, should undergo continuation review in 2020. It was agreed the latter was too broad a piece of work to enter into currently, and that any review of the Copyright Group would need to be considered in the light of Chris' discussions with its chair.

ACTION: Further Group Reviews to be added to Directors Board in the light of ongoing discussions

g. Staff Development Group

Chris reported on the smooth and busy programme of events now underway. She highlighted the profitable discussions with the MDF, that had seen input to many RDMSG events in accessibility and content terms. GJJ noted Matt Cunningham would be standing down as group chair in March 2020.

19/26 Mar 2020 Directors Meeting

a. Venue, Speakers & Agenda Items

GJJ confirmed he had liaised with Diane and Fiona, and the meeting would be held 12th March 2020 at the University of Wolverhampton. The Directors had also been asked for suggestions following the October meeting, but none had been forthcoming. The Chair asked GJJ to remind the Directors, following tomorrow's General Election.

ACTION: GJJ to canvas directors for speakers and agenda items for March Board

19/27 AOB

a. Date of next meeting(s) Feb & May 2020

It was agreed the SG would plan to meet (telcon) in Feb and L.April/E.May 2020.

ACTION: GJJ and Julie Swann to liaise on Diane's availability, and approach the rest of the SG for dates

b. Adaptive Security Updates

Via SCOUNL, Adaptive (web hosts) have informed the Collaboration (and NC and NoWAL) of necessary updates to the website planned for late Jan. These will be charged at their standard hourly rate (£80/hour + VAT) and are expected to take '4 hours'. GJJ is seeking clarification if this is four hours total, or per collaboration, and more insight onto planned work. Mark noted he saw no problem with the cost.

c. Dutch Librarians Visit

Chris noted Diane and herself had yet to respond to the approach, and that the suggested visit date was when Diane was unavailable. She noted the visiting organisation was not analogous to the MC, with limited interest in 'smaller' libraries. It was proposed Chris could host the visit on behalf of the Collaboration at Birmingham.

ACTION: CP and DJ to talk about visiting librarians and respond accordingly