



Mercian Collaboration Steering Group

Telcon, 11th May 2018

Minutes

Present: Dave Parkes (Chair), Paul Reynolds (Treasurer), Diane Jobs (Vice-Chair), Phil Brabban, Fiona Parsons, Emma Walton

18/09 Minutes of previous meeting (23rd Jan 2018)

The Chair apologised for not creating any formal notes from the previous meeting, which GJJ had been unable to attend at short notice. Given as far as the Chair was concerned all requisite actions and outcomes from the January meeting had been actioned by the Steering Group (SG), he agreed to pass brief notes to GJJ, purely for archival purposes

ACTION: Dave to provide outline notes from Jan 2018 meeting to be made available on the website

A brief discussion around providing a public channel to disseminate and promote the activities within the MC's member organisations. Some form of collaborative or discursive space, such as a blog, might provide a suitable for a under GJJ's ongoing efforts to enhance the effectiveness of member communication. It was agreed this had value, and GJJ was tasked with exploring configuring a suitable space.

ACTION: GJJ to explore and potentially set up a discursive public space for member organisation's staff to promote their activities.

18/10 Treasurer's Update

Paul had disseminated a report ahead of the meeting, noting a projected spend for 2018 of £24,049.00 which would leave cash reserves of £4,569.00, close to the desired £5k level. He reported currently two outstanding charges had not been levied: the DMU conference, and the Adaptive security costs. The Chair agreed to resolve the former, and Paul would follow up with Adaptive as it was unclear if security updates were being applied to the website, as a result. GJJ commented as far as he was aware updates had been applied, but had no recent communication from Adaptive to categorically confirm this. Paul noted that costs from SIG events were being processed, but other than that there was little else to report.

ACTION: Dave to chase DMU conference costs invoice

ACTION: Paul to chase Adaptive charges with SCONUL

Paul noted as previously requested by the SG he had approached SCONUL to query the details of the administration fee levied on the MC, and had received some information. However, it had been harder to achieve clarification to some follow-on queries he had in this respect. It was noted that SCONUL had been happy to take on the admin role when MC was created, but in recent years there had been some noticeable reluctance to provide the degree of service anticipated. However, it was noted recent staff appointments may help to resolve some of SCONUL's staffing resource issues, and aid in facilitating their supporting role.



Emma noted, as had previously been agreed, money had been allocated for the conference (£7k), but that sponsorship was coming in, which would reduce the demand on the MC's reserves. She would facilitate Helen Curtis, who was leading on finance matters for the conference, to speak to Paul about sponsorship income.

ACTION: CG representative to speak with Paul re-sponsorship income

18/11 Governance

a) SCONUL Subgroup Arrangements

The Chair had received some feedback following the discussion of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with SCONUL at the most recent Directors' Board (18/04 (b)¹). Consequently, the phrasing 'wound up' would be revised to 'cease operating'. Clarification on who can authorise expenditure (only the Treasurer, Chair and Vice Chair), was also added. Finally, the phrasing 'mid-term review' was seen as ambiguous and would be revised to 'middle of the term', with respect to the potential for revisiting the signed MoU after an appropriate period. The SG agreed to these amendments to the finalised MoU.

A final query concerning the need for the incoming Chair (2019-2021) to resign the MoU had also been made, but the SG agreed the Chair was acting on behalf of the MC, and hence this would not be necessary. It was agreed the Chair would give the Directors final notification of the intention to sign the final document, shortly before doing so.

ACTION: Chair to notify Directors of finalised MoU before signing

ACTION: Chair to sign MoU document on behalf of MU

b) Mercian Sponsorship Policy

Emma reported that the policy which had gone live in March, following SG approval and operation revisions by the Conference Group (CG). As noted this had drawn in sponsors, but there were still some operational considerations in terms of obtaining the income (e.g. when payments are required, how the funds are transferred to the MC). Emma and the CG would develop this guidance during this year's conference preparations, with an aim to augmenting the policy to reflect this experiential learning.

ACTION: Emma and CG to draw together practical guidance on sponsorship following 2018 conference

ACTION: GJJ to revise Sponsorship Policy to reflect practical guidance amendments

c) Annual Report 2017

GJJ noted the annual report had been well received, by Directors, members and SCONUL. No notable feedback beyond a general satisfaction for the document as a distillation of the MC's broadening and evolving range of activities had been received. GJJ highlighted he already had outline plans for the 2018 report, including tighter deadlines on submissions, although discussions on strategic direction would likely also shape this document. He had also advised SIG chairs to begin thinking about their contributions to the next report.

¹ <https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/sites/default/files/minutes/Minutes%2019%20March%202018-Mercian%20Directors.pdf>



18/12 Collaboration Action Plan

a) Communications Update

GJJ reported his efforts to promote and market the MC and its activities continued. The mailing list currently had 75 members, with the @MercianCollab twitter account having 130 followers. The weekly news mail and tweets usually covered the same ground, and were hopefully being well received, although interaction with both channels remained low. The news items for the website were now being more regularly received, following repeated reminders from GJJ to event organisers. As a result, the website was presenting a more active and accurate representation of event outcomes, although not all events were represented.

Web access in 2018 demonstrated a monthly average of ~520 users and ~2,000 page accesses. For unknown reasons March had seen a data spike (852 users and 3,021 page impressions), before returning to normal in April. GJJ noted that NoWAL pages had been showing up in his Google Analytics reports, and after a brief investigation with Adaptive, it had been discovered the developer had been using the same GA key for both organisations. This had been corrected, but may as a result mean the genuine statistics for the MC site will diminish.

As noted earlier, GJJ considers reviewing and enhancing effective communication by the MC to the membership to be a critical ongoing task for the MCDO.

b) Conference and Event KPI & CSF

Emma and GJJ reported that following #Mercian2017 the CG we were actioned to come up with some Key Performance Indicators (KPI) or Critical Success Factors (CSF), against which to measure the conference's success. It was noted KPIs had been harder to establish, while remaining sufficiently inclusive. However, Emma was leading on developing a set of measures, and more importantly establishing some CSF. These would be used and then revised in the light of experience at #Mercian18. It was hoped that rather than strictly 'judging' the conference's success, these measures and factors would provide useful outputs for marketing the conference and the MC, through demonstrating its impact and value to delegates and member organisations.

ACTION: Emma and CG to develop appropriate conference success measures

c) GDPR Preparations and Data Protection

GJJ reported on his preparations for GDPR, which had focussed on conducting an audit of personal data processing and assets within the MC, along with the creation of privacy notices for the website and other online activities. This would be completed ahead of the 25th May, although revisions to approaches to bring the MC more closely in line with legislation would remain an ongoing activity, in discussion with the MC Chair. While there were no high risks identified to date, GJJ had identified two problematic areas which he would return to discuss with the SG once he had a clearer understanding. The first was the use of a single EventBrite account by all SIG for registering event delegates. The second was establishing appropriate data retention policies and procedures. These areas would form part of the ongoing data protection (DP) activities of the MC.

Diane highlighted the nervousness around DP changes, as represented at a recent event declining to provide a delegate list. GJJ noted he was in the process of investigating this very issue, and had been



discussing it with a Data Governance advisor, and would report back to the SG and SIGs once he had greater clarity.

Paul noted with respect to data retention, and his financial records, his understanding was these fell under the legitimate interest basis for processing, but he would revisit and confirm this information through seeking advice from SCOUNL and local experts.

ACTION: Paul to clarify retention schedule for financial records personal data

ACTION: GJJ and Chair to coordinate ongoing data protection work across the MC

d) Data Preservation Training

GJJ reported following the recent Directors Board discussions (18/04(a)), that the RDMSG and SDG had been debating the possibility of some joint effort or training event in this area. However, there were some concerns from the RDMSG that they were being asked to scope and provide a large-scale training programme across the MC region, which they were not resourced to provide. Emma noted that the RDMSG were hoping to find a way to look at potential mechanisms to identify extant data preservation expertise within the region, e.g. through focus groups, events or other knowledge sharing forum. It was agreed it would be valuable if the RDMSG provided a brief overview of potential actions and any resource implications to the SG, who could then advise on any appropriate future steps.

ACTION: RDMSG to submit formal briefing on data preservation options within the MC

Following discussions at the Directors Board (18/07(c)), GJJ and the Chair led a conversation around the future direction of the MC. The Chair noted his belief that the MC was still evolving, but had built from a strong base to a considerable range of activities. The MC of 2018 had a visible online presence, an increasing number of SIGs along with possessing a building awareness within region and beyond as national actors (e.g. Jisc, National Archive, CILIP) took notice. In the light of this, and the forthcoming realignment with SCOUNL, the time was seen to be ripe to revisit the ongoing direction of strategic travel and operational ambitions for the next few years.

The Chair highlighted this represented a major discussion topic, and not one which could be resolved in a brief exchange over the telephone. He proposed that the SG should meet face to face to devote time to exploring the future direction of the MC, which drew unanimous support. After a brief consultation it was agreed to devote the next SG meeting largely to this focussed topic. This will be held in August at the University of Birmingham, on a date to be agreed, and will present its outline findings to the Directors Board in October 2018.

ACTION: GJJ and Abi to sort date for next face-to-face MC SG meeting

ACTION: Dave and GJJ to agree proposed outline agenda for SG strategy meeting.



18/13 SIG Sponsor Updates

a) Mercian Copyright Group

The group had met in January, and agreed a revised terms of reference. They had been recruiting committee members to achieve a more representative group. It was noted that the MCG had also hosted an event in Feb (GDPR and Copyright) in Leicester, and was expected to meet again before too long. Dave, as group sponsor, had spoken with the group and hoped to attend their next meeting.

ACTION: GJJ to contact MCG Chair about next meeting date(s)

b) Conference Group

Preparations were going well, with a call for papers and sponsors going live in recent months. Care was being taken with venue space, with respect to exhibitors, as space considerations were an issue. Emma would be meeting with the team soon (14th June, Birmingham) to review submissions and advance planning. She also planned to speak with the local Birmingham conference team to learn from their experiences. The call for papers closes on 1/June/2018, and the topic ('New for You!') is sufficiently broad to try and attract a range of engaging papers. She noted support from the CG is also available for first time speakers. Emma confirmed a keynote speaker has been recruited, Andy Cope, a former Loughborough academic specialising in personal change who had kindly offered to speak at a reduced rate due to his prior association. As the CG had noted issues during the evaluation of #Mercian17 especially relating to the previous keynote's match to the conference's theme, Emma would be leading for the MC in ensuring this was less of an issue in 2018. GJJ added from his perception, progression was going well, especially as pressures of other Mercian commitments meant he had been less directly involved this year than previously.

c) Mercian Disability Forum

Planning for their event 'Inclusion: Back to Basics' for 26th June was well in hand, with the external speaker booked and practical considerations underway. Promotion and booking was expected to open soon. A representative committee was growing in size due a recruitment call, but did not yet include all MC members. Phil had spoken with Beck, MDF Chair, and was planning to attend their July meeting.

d) RDMSG

As noted above, the group had been speaking with the SDG with respect to digital preservation. They had held a recent very productive event on GDPR and Research data, and an event report was now on the website². Fiona noted she had not yet managed to attend a meeting, but had spoken with the group. She noted they had considerably ambitious plans which she welcomed, although she had advised them to consider carefully what was realistic and achievable. Discussions with the SDG had arisen as a consequence of this advice.

² <https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/research-data-and-gdpr-propagates-stimulating-and-enlightening-discussions>

e) MSDG

This had last met in March, with a new Chair, Matt Cunningham (Loughborough) elected to take over from founding chair Kirsty Kift. GJJ noted Matt was a very enthusiastic and communicative chair, and was already enjoying a strong working relationship with him. The new MSDG events programme had been outlined to Directors in March, and would be coming back for update, review and practical planning during the next MSDG meeting (27th June, DMU). Diane had been present at the March meeting, and planned to attend the June one also, to support the new chair. She highlighted it was an excellent and enthusiastic group, although she had some concerns relating to event priorities arising from MSDG representatives' concerns rather than those of Directors. As highlighted at the Directors Board (18/06(d)), she reiterated the importance of Directors and their MSDG representative speaking ahead of future group meetings. She invited particular input from the SG on proposed events relating to 'the changing role of library assistants', which seemed to be focussing on 'how' rather than 'why'. This was a key area where Directors could bring a greater context, and support to the group's ongoing plans.

ACTION: ALL to speak with MSDG reps ahead of June meeting to discuss event planning priorities

18/14 Autumn Directors Board

Potential Speakers

As had been highlighted in online discussions, Diane and her senior team were speaking shortly with Jo Cornish (Development Officer: Employers, CILIP) concerning workforce development and the ways in which her organisation can better support the HE library sector. Jo had suggested that addressing the MC might be of interest and benefit to Directors, and this was agreed. Bearing in mind the need to discuss MC strategy at the October meeting, Jo would only be invited to the earlier part of the meeting.

ACTION: GJJ to approach Jo Cornish to speak at the MC October meeting

GJJ enquired if Jisc's representative should be invited, and it was agreed that this was not immediately desirable but would be revisited for the March 2018 meeting. A future meeting might also seek representation from the SCONUL Director or her deputy to address the Directors directly. It was also agreed with a need to address the strategic agenda, that keeping external speakers to a minimum was desirable for the October meeting.

Date and Practical Arrangements

GJJ explained this was pending a conversation in late May with Enid at BCU, and he would follow up with the Chair to ensure his availability. However, it was planned for October to allow for time to discuss the SCONUL strategy in order to provide unified feedback.



18/15 MCDO Update

GJJ reiterated his comments from the Directors Board about his current workload pressures, and the impact on any ambitions to grow the MC's portfolio. The Chair was aware of this, but it was agreed that in any future planning the role, resource and application of the MCDO would need to be carefully considered.

GJJ noted as he had drawn together the agenda for today's meeting, all key topics of interest had already been addressed. The Chair thanks GJJ for his work, and noted again an awareness of the MCDO's commitment already far exceeded his salaried role.

18/16 AOB

a) Advertising None Mercian Events

As had been previously discussed online, it was agreed that the MC website would only promote events that were specially arranged and delivered by the MC or its SIGs. The earlier proposed collaborative space, could provide a non-badged arena suitable for promoting regional events not directly allied to the MC itself.

b) Archives SIG

The Chair noted a conversation he had recently had with the head of the National Archives, concerning the potential for a Mercian Archives group. It was noted that archivists already have good networks, but that this might still have a strong potential, especially for those member organisations who lacked local expertise in this field. It was agreed than an initial event to facilitate discussion while exploring any practitioner desire within the region concerning the formation of a group. Diane volunteered to start an initial discussion through the SDG.

ACTION: Diane to speak to MSDG Chair about potential for an archives focussed event

c) Promotional Banner

GJJ noted he believed the MC would benefit from a portable standee-banner for use at major events (e.g. the conference). It was agreed this was desirable, and GJJ in association with the CG would investigate suppliers and costs.

ACTION: GJJ and CG to investigate providing a standee-banner for the conference

d) Wolverhampton Representation

Fiona noted that James Anthony-Edwards was now the SCONUL rep for Wolverhampton, and enquired if this had any implications for Fiona's membership of the Directors Board and SG. It was agreed to discuss this at the August meeting.

e) Next Meeting

This would be early August, and would be as discussed earlier a face-to-face meeting in Birmingham.

The Chair closed the meeting and thanked all for their contributions.