



Conference Group Meeting: Minutes

13:00 Friday 16th April 2021

Present: Damian Pugh (Nottingham), Chris Bradford (Warwick), Nial Halford-Busby (BGU), Alison Charlesworth (Leicester), Laura Newman (Loughborough), Emily Forster (DMU), Cheryl Coveney (OU), Charlie Hill (BCU), Matt Cunningham (MSDG, Loughborough), Gaz J Johnson (Mercian Collaboration)

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Apologies: Deborah Munro, Ruth Houghton

1. Actions from Previous Meetingⁱ

- *Emily to supply headshot for the website*

Emily noted she would supply an image to GJJ.

- *Charlie to reshare final version of conference theme document with all*

After a brief discussion it was agreed Charlie would recirculate his earlier email on this, and GJJ would adapt the text from this for a news article and the conference microsite.

ACTION: Charlie to recirculate conference theme email to all

- *GJJ to create conference microsite and news item announcing theme*

GJJ shared the link to the draft site, noting he was in the process of populating this with information. He would roll out the news item hopefully next week time allowing, following the recirculation of Charlie's theme summary.

- *Nial to explore functionalities of the MS Teams Live Event installation and report back*
- *Nial to explore potential of BGU acting as online conference host for the 2021 conference*

Nial reported he had installed the MS Teams Live version and was exploring its function. He also agreed he was happy to keep leading on platform and hosting issues. It was agreed having speakers practice through a test event at least a week before the conference would be advisable.

- *Deborah to check if local staff can act as test bed for Collaboration conference experience*

As Deborah wasn't present today this couldn't be confirmed, but it was hoped this was fine. It was noted other staff at committee members' institutions would likely be willing to help with testing if asked.

- *Laura & Ruth draw up an outline conference schedule ahead of next meeting*

This had been completed and shared via the email list. GJJ would add to the conference microsite

ACTION: GJJ to add to outline schedule to conference microsite

- *GJJ to feed back to ALN about our proposed conference exchange of experiences and meeting representatives*

GJJ reported he had spoken with the ALN who were open to closer links and sending representatives to each other's planning meeting, to help with crossover of ideas, experience and scheduling. He would update everyone once further information from ALN was forthcoming.

- *GJJ to seek Steering Group's approval for opening up attendance to external delegates and speakers*

GJJ reported that Steering Group had approved external academic library staff speakers and delegates with two key provisos. (1) Mercian Collaboration member staff should have a priority booking period ahead of opening delegate bookings more widely (2) Preference to Mercian Collaboration member staff's speaker proposals should be given during the review meeting in June. He also noted that commercial organisation staff (e.g. non-librarians) were expected to join as sponsor delegates (e.g. paying a fee), and wouldn't normally be eligible as speakers.

ACTION: GJJ to update microsite to reflect the revised eligibility for speakers and delegates

- *Damian to make outline approach to Sarah Keyworth as potential keynote*

Damian had approached Sarah's agent, who had asked a number of key questions: (a) Duration of keynote (b) Talk, a stand up or a mix of both, (c) number of delegates and (d) maximum fee we were offering.

It was agreed a mix of talk and comedy, hopefully related to the conference theme would be desirable. The keynote slot of 40 minutes plus 10 minutes of questions had been noted on the outline schedule. Delegates was a tricky question, but it was assumed this would be in the order of 150-250, which Nial confirmed was within MS Teams Live's capabilities. The question of fee was trickier, and GJJ agreed to seek Steering Group's advice on this.

ACTION: GJJ to check on speaker fee question with Steering Group

- *All to consider and propose additional/alternative keynotes as alternatives at next meeting*

It was noted as a backup one or more of the Directors of the Collaboration could be called upon. It was suggested a panel or dialogue between a number of them, on the conference theme, would make for an excellent (and affordable) keynote. Emily Kragg as a potential speaker/facilitator for personal coaching angle might be another person to consider inviting.

- *Cheryl and Emily to update group on sponsorship call at April meeting*

They reported they were in the process of collating a list of sponsors, and we had already one potential approach already. In the meanwhile they would be meeting soon to prepare the call for sponsorship in the near future.

ACTION: Cheryl and Emily to meet to take call for sponsorship forward

2. Call for Sessions

There was a discussion over the previously circulated draft wording, and it was agreed to stress the 'personal adaptation & effectiveness' angle, as this would appeal to a more inclusive range of staff. Elements of professional experience would be welcome too, although this wouldn't be stressed as strongly in the wording of the call. Charlie and Chris would coordinate over merging the various comments into a final version of the call, and GJJ would market via regular channels and the website.

ACTION: Charlie & Chris to merge the two versions of the call for sessions

ACTION: Charlie & Chris to pass final version of call for sessions to GJJ to promote

3. Event Platform: MS Teams Live

Nial updated everyone on his positive experiences with MS Teams Live. It would permit up to 10 presenters per session, and a maximum audience of 10,000. There were some issues with a maximum session duration of 4 hours, but for a half day format this should be adequate. As people were unsure about the features available, Nial agreed to share a comparison between Live and the base Teams platform. In the meanwhile, Nial would meet with local ICT staff to continue supporting his explorations.

ACTION: Nial to send around overview of MS Teams Lives functions and options

4. Pre-Recorded Sessions

It was noted that some testing and further information on file formats and expectations for pre-recorded materials was needed. Nial agreed to investigate further, and GJJ offered support as needed in this respect. It was noted that most common video formats could be supported, although MS Teams Live's preferences were uncertain.

ACTION: Nial to investigate video streaming/hosting/formats relating to MS Teams Live

5. Next Steps/Timetable

The revised timetable was now:

April	W/b 19 th w/b 12th News item announcing theme on website W/b 29 th Call for Papers opens, microsite launches publicly
May	W/b 3 rd Call for Sponsors Open
June	18 th Call for Papers Closes W/b 21 st June – Committee Meeting to select papers W/b 28 th - Notify applicants successful and unsuccessful
July	12 th Speakers to confirm attendance 26 th Bookings open + Outline Programme
Aug	W/b 23 rd August: Event/platform set up & tech testing End of August: Close bookings
Sept	Sept 1 st Committee Meeting. Loading delegates onto platform (delegate invites/info) Sept 9 th 10 th Conference (two half days)

6. Date of Next Meeting

Damian would arrange a poll for the next meeting (w/b 21st June). GJJ noted he would facilitate introductions with the new Steering Group sponsor and the Chair/Vice-Chair, following their selection next week.

ACTION: Damian to send poll for June meeting to all

ACTION: GJJ to facilitate introduction to Steering Group Sponsor to group

7. AOB

Charlie raised some thoughts regarding a 'lead sponsor package', which led to discussions of providing a breakout room for gold sponsors.ⁱⁱ Cheryl and Emily agreed to take this onboard in planning the offer to sponsors. However, it was generally agreed that offering this room, if technically possible, could be advantageous.

ⁱ Minutes from March 2021 meeting:

<https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/sites/default/files/minutes/30th%20Mar%202021%20Minutes%20Conference%20Group.pdf>

ⁱⁱ This was the 2020 sponsorship offer:

<https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Mercian%20Collaboration%20Sponsorship%20Policy%20v3.1%20-%20May%202020.pdf>