



Mercian Collaboration Steering Group

Minutes: Telcon, 20th January 2017

Present: Caroline Taylor (Chair), Robin Green (Treasurer), Emma Walton, Phil Brabban, Fiona Parsons, Dave Parkes (DMU, with respect to the Talent Management discussions)

17/01) Previous meeting

a) Corrections or amendments to minutes (29th Nov 2016)

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record.

b) Actions and matters arising

All matters had been addressed or were pending discussions in today's meeting.

17/02) Talent Management Task & Finish Group discussions

Dave reported that he has received a lot of very useful comments and feedback from other Directors, regarding the talent management idea. Hence, he is pulling together a group for face to face discussions, to create a proposal to be tabled at the 13th March Directors Meeting. Invites will shortly be going out from Dave's PA to this meeting, although he couldn't remember the exact chosen date. He noted he expected to be able to share the report in advance of the Directors Meeting with the SG. The Chair thanked Dave for his contributions, and noted she looked forward to discussing the conclusions at the March meeting.

Action: Dave Parkes to convene talent management task and finish group, collate report and present paper to Directors Committee meeting in March

17/03) Outline Collaboration Action Plan

It was noted that the two items discussed at the previous SG meeting (*Item 2*) concerned (1) digital preservation training, and (2) investigating OCLC GreenGlass management software. Caroline reported that the Leicester staff had produced further information on the costs of digital preservation training, with a mind to taking a consortial approach to arranging this. However, while she did not currently have this information to hand, she intended to present it for discussion at the March meeting.

Action: CT to collate and present information on digital preservation training at March Directors meeting.

With respect to GreenGlass, CT had been actioned to approach Ann Horn and colleagues at White Rose to speak at the March Directors meeting¹, but regrettably, had insufficient time to do so. Fiona offered to take this on, and make the approach, for which the Chair thanked her.

Action: Fiona to liaise with Ann Horn with respect to attendance at a future Directors meeting

¹ However, see 17/06b below



17/04) Governance and Succession Planning

Following the last meeting, GJJ had drafted the protocols and forms for this, which had been agreed by the Steering Group over email. Nomination forms had been distributed before the end of 2016, with a deadline of 31st Jan 2017 to be returned to GJJ. GJJ noted that to date he had received no forms, and that the SG should ensure that those people who had informally stepped forward already should be nominated, along with any other candidates as appropriate, as had been previously agreed (Item 3, 29th November). After a brief discussion it was agreed that GJJ would coordinate these SG nominations, as well as to remind the rest of the Directors to submit their nominations.

Action: GJJ to send reminder nomination email to all Directors

Action: SG members to formally nominate previously agreed volunteers

Action: GJJ to continue coordinating the MC election process and report back at the March meeting

Caroline queried the succession order at the March meeting. GJJ confirmed it had been agreed that the nominations/elections process would report at the start of the meeting, and the formal handover of all responsibilities to the new SG would take place at the close of the meeting.

17/05) Treasurer Update

Robin reported that the 2016 spend was £14,405. To date, 2017 spend has been on the SCONUL admin fee of £603. He also reported that he was delighted to report that all subscriptions from Mercian Collaboration member organisations had been received, giving the MC £19,926 currently in the account. The 2017 anticipated spend in £17,400, leaving a reserve of around £2,500. The 2017 anticipated spend, as presented at the October Directors meeting was:

- £3k/conference
- £1k SIG costs
- £500 Web development
- £2k SDG funding

He noted the actual reserve figure would depend on how much use was made of these funds. Ideally a reserve around £4-5k would be preferred. However, he noted that he was happy with the current levels of expenditure and income. The Chair thanked Robin for his work.

17/06) March Directors Meeting

a) Invited speakers & programme outline

GJJ noted that while most Director meetings had adopted the morning for governance, and the afternoons for discussion topics, the previous (October) meeting had successfully reversed this. It was agreed that either form was workable, and whichever format best served the particular meeting circumstances and invited speakers was acceptable.

b) *Agenda items*

After discussions it was agreed that the following would be necessary agenda items

- **Talent Management:** Report from Dave's group on their conclusions, as previously discussed
- **SDG:** Report on their outline planned activities (2017/18) and evaluative reports on past events from SDG for discussion and comment
- **Disability Group:** To receive a proposal along the lines of the RDM group, to outline the issues, purpose, ROI for institutions, value added from such a group for Directors to consider
- **RDM Support Group:** Update on progress and plans
- **Conference Group:** Update and report from Emma and group on progress, targets, timescales and venue etc
- **SCONUL Update:** From Mark, highlighting items of particular interest or import to the Mercian

A discussion around the regional agenda and partnerships followed, with comments around organisational partnerships agreeing library facilities access, without sufficient consultation with library staff. It was agreed that this was a rich area, with a number of noted ranges of experience within the MC who could speak to this topic. Fiona noted that she had a checklist of partnership relations, that she could share at the meeting, although noting it was a work in progress. Hence, it was agreed that Fiona would share her partnership relationship checklist to spur a brief initial discussion at the meeting. If it appears there is general interest in the topic, then a lengthier exchange would be incorporated into a later Directors Meeting.

Action: FP to share Wolverhampton partnership relationship checklist as paper (work in progress) at Directors meeting

Further discussion continued around the potential for a wider discussion about the idea of *What is the future academic library?* It was highlighted that there was a considerable amount going on with different forms of distributed, flipped, embedded, pop-up (etc.) libraries, within the MC's organisational members. It was agreed that this would make for both a substantive and highly valuable regional exchange of experience, as well as likely providing considerable input from other Directors. Hence, it was agreed that a number of Directors would be invited to make brief presentations on their own local experiences, to spur discussions led by the Chair. As a result, the OCLC GreenGlass discussions, would be postponed for a future meeting, although it was agreed that Fiona should still have an exchange with Ann Horn to note our interest in the platform.

Action: GJJ to approach Emma Walton, Chris Powis, Fiona, Dave, Judith and Diane to make brief presentations on their experiences

Action: GJJ to approach Diane to request a tour of the new Birmingham library be incorporated into the MC meeting programme in March

Action: Caroline and GJJ to draft outline meeting agenda and share with SG for comment

GJJ recommended as with the SG, that wherever possible, papers and reports to the Directors Meeting should be circulated beforehand, to free up time for discussion and decision making.

17/07) SIG Matters

a) Conference Group²

Emma reported that a telcon had taken place in December, and while it was useful, she felt that face-to-face meetings were preferable for the time being, until things were well underway. She would be proposing this at the next Conference Group meeting (Mon 30th Jan) at DMU, and asking members to check with their line managers if this was permissible. She suspected that later meetings would shift to more telcons, and less face time. She noted again that the group was very engaged with the task. A date range for the conference had been proposed, and next job will be agreeing a venue. She noted that the M1 corridor (Nottingham and Leicester) seemed best for travel from all directions, although she noted that future locations will be reviewed following the conference feedback. The group was also thinking about themes and the event timetable, and had been collating thoughts online. Emma concluded by noting she will bring a summary paper to the March Directors meeting, including anticipated timelines and deadlines. The Chair noted she was pleased the group was so engaged with the task, and thanked Emma and GJJ for their efforts.

b) Disability Group

GJJ had continued to have exchanges with the Disability Group representative (Beck Maguire, Nottingham). The Group had met in December to consider its future, and agreed they felt that there was a benefit to continuing. The group also believed that the exchange of practice they had shared had been valuable. They had discussed with GJJ their initial ideas concerning the purposes of the group, as well as what the MC expected of them in terms of reports etc. It was agreed that the group should make a formal proposal, in line with the RDM Group outlining their thoughts, for the Directors to discuss at the March meeting, and consider if this was a regional subgrouping that the Mercian should support.

c) RDM Support Group

GJJ reported that an initial meeting between the group co-ordinators (Laurian Williamson (Leicester) Gareth Cole (Loughborough) and Ben Veasey (Nottingham)) had taken place the preceding week. GJJ had answered some organisational questions relating to the group, notably one concerning the Sponsoring Steering Group member, which would likely need to be addressed by the incoming SG. The Support Group has space set aside on the web site, and some initial outline information about them available. Emma noted she had also spoken with Gareth Cole, and with reference to ideas for a RDM event, that she was happy to host a potential event at Loughborough.

d) SDG

The Chair noted that the annual evaluative report was due from the SDG in March, on their achievement in the previous year and plans for the future, in preparation for submission at the autumn Directors meeting for the SDG's plan of action.

Action: GJJ to write to various SIG's to formally request reports and proposals for the March meeting

² Conference Group minutes are available at: <http://merciancollaboration.org.uk/cg-agendas-minutes-and-reports>



17/08) MCDO Update

a) Website Launch

As noted via email exchange, the Mercian Site is ready for roll out. A few minor amendments were pending Adaptive's attention. An editor account had been created for the SDG, as previously agreed, to allow them to edit their page's text. GJJ noted SCOUNL had informed him that, in line with their own site, they have applied a SSL Certificate to "provide an additional layer of security from spamming". This was not expected to affect functionality. It was agreed to roll out the site.

Action: GJJ to inform Adaptive to roll out the Mercian site

Action: GJJ to publicise the launch of the Mercian website via the various channels

b) Officer's Report

This had been previously circulated by email. Given the Christmas shut down period between the last meeting and today, there was less to report on than normal.

Website: Following ongoing editing and creation of content, the site is now 95% launch ready, and while there are minor tweaks still required, these can be handled post-launch as necessary. The SDG have been given editorial rights for their subpages, and it is envisaged that the same will be done for other SIGs/subgroups as they evolve. Various people have been testing the site with only minor typos or minor errors reported, so confidence is high. Assuming SG is fine for the site to launch, GJJ will liaise with Adaptive and request this. As this is envisaged as a soft-launch, once it is live GJJ will notify the Directors and various subgroups, as well as create a news page announcing this. Whether we need to do more promotion than this within the Mercian, may be a matter for further discussion.

It was proposed at the last meeting to include images from all Mercian sites on the front page. Technically setting this up is easy, however having the content first is essential. Currently this is in progress, as all directors have been asked, so far only a few (~12) have responded. Once all Directors have responded, GJJ will take this forward.

Election/Governance: The nomination and election protocols for the Mercian Collaboration were created, and have been enacted, as noted above. It is anticipated that the ballot forms will be distributed to directors 1/Feb for return 3/March (31 Calendar days). The formal announcement will be made at the March 13th Meeting, but the SG and then all candidates will be notified of the results prior to this.

Subgroups: GJJ has continued his liaison, notably with the Conference Group, RDM Support Group and SDG, but also with the potential Disability Group. In the latter case, I suspect we may need to either invite Beck Maguire along to the March 13th Mercian meeting or to make a formal representation, to discuss this potential group further with the Directors present.

ICT: The Mercian laptop has been repaired, although all data has been lost. Hence GJJ has been recreating the data from the cloud, as well as instituting new daily backup procedures to avoid a recurrence. It was anticipated access to the laptop will be restored as of this meeting. However, notably the Director meetings have been lost, and GJJ is focusing on revisiting these, as thankfully rough notes were saved in the cloud.



17/09) AOB

Fiona noted a suggested from her colleague James, who had attended a Directors meeting as her surrogate, concerning widening the Mercian distribution list to include deputy directors. It was agreed to add this to the agenda for the March meeting for discussions.