



Mercian Collaboration Steering Group

Minutes: Telcon, 29th November 2016

Present: Caroline Taylor (Chair), Robin Green, Fiona Parsons, Phil Brabban, Gareth J Johnson (MSDO)

Apologies: Emma Walton

1) Update and Actions

a. Minutes & Outstanding Actions from last meeting (8th August 2016)

The only outstanding item was that Phil still owed GJJ a photo for the website. Phil noted he had booked a photographer and would supply this presently.

b. Outstanding Actions from Director's meeting (Oct 2016)

Due to GJJ's technology problems the original list of actions was currently inaccessible. However, he had recreated these from memory and shared with the Directors prior to the meeting. He was also in the process of writing a new version of the minutes, but welcomed suggestions for key items from discussions or missing actions. It was agreed that the actions felt complete, and that GJJ should continue to recreate a brief set of minutes for distribution to the Directors.

GJJ also noted that minutes and agendas from all meetings are now available on the draft website.

c. Agree Date of Next Directors meeting

After checking on the Chair, Treasurer and host Director's (Birmingham) availabilities for next March, the remaining Directors had been surveyed as to the best date. From the 18 responses Monday 13th March 2017 was the best date, followed by Friday 17th and 24th. After brief discussions it was agreed that, provided it was still okay for Birmingham, that the 13th March 2017 would be the date of the next Director's meeting.

Action: GJJ to check with Diane and team that 13th March was still okay

Action: GJJ to notify all Directors of next meeting date via email

Action: GJJ to liaise with Birmingham over practical arrangements for the day

2) Outline Collaboration Action Plan

Caroline proposed that the Steering Group should commit to the writing of an outline Mercian Collaboration action plan, so that the incoming new Steering Group officers would have a clear initial steer to work on. She suggested two initial ideas that she had had, although noting they might be costly in terms of the resource needed to achieve them. These were *Digital preservation training for practitioners* and *OCLC's Green Glass tool*¹.

Digital Preservation training

Caroline noted her interest for the DP training had arisen following requests from Leicester staff, and wondering if there was a regional demand for such a thing. She noted it was relatively expensive, but perhaps a case could be made to bring the training to the Mercian region as an MC programme. Hence, she asked two questions: (1) was their regional interest (2) was it worth commissioning such work for the region. While the SG members were at different points in working on digital preservation, it was

¹ See: <http://www.oclc.org/sustainable-collections.en.html>



generally agreed that it would be of interest to most institutions and that there would be considerable value in getting involved as a region. It was also suggested that the scheme should be opened up to research officers and records management staff, not based in institutional libraries, as they would value this as well. While more information was required about the scheme, it was agreed that it would be worth discussing the issue with Directors in March. Notably, the training could then be built into the SDG's programme.

Action: CT to ask Leicester staff to investigate details of digital preservation training further and report back to SG

Action: SG to discuss digital preservation training proposal with Directors at March meeting

Green Glass (OCLC Sustainable Collection Services Decision-Support Tool)

CT noted she had looked into this OCLC product and it seemed very interesting, noting the White Rose Consortium were using it. As Leicester was losing its external book store, and ideally did not wish to replicate it, the issue of what was valuable and unique, vs what could be safely disposed of was not an easy question to answer with the currently available information and tools. Again, she asked if this was something that the MC could address as a region? It was noted similar issues at different institutions existed although once again each university was at a different place with respect to implementing such an audit. It was agreed that discussing this issue more widely with the other directors would be valuable, and that more information was needed about the Green Glass tool in action, in order for any coherent decision to be made. It was also noted that decisions regarding the value of archival collections of limited motility stock would be impacted on by other projects (e.g. UKRR), regional collections and inter-library loan concords. It was proposed to invite Anne and colleagues from the White Rose to the Directors Meeting in March to present on, and discuss the matter further.

Action: CT to invite Anne and Colleagues from White Rose to the March Directors Meeting to discuss OCLC Green Glass

Talent Management

It was noted that Dave Parkes was leading a task and finish group on this, following discussions at the Directors Meeting [16/18.b]. It was agreed to invite Dave to the next SG telcon to provide input, support and provoke discussions around this activity. GJJ noted he had discussed the outline talent management idea with other regional officers, and there was no comparable scheme. Hence, this could be a uniquely valuable endeavour for the Mercian.

Action: CT & GJJ to arrange next SG telcon for January and invite Dave Parkes to attend

3) Succession Planning

As noted at the March and October Director's meeting [16/03 & 16/17(a)] Caroline would be standing down as Chair in March 2017. As per the request to all Directors to submit self-nominations for Officer roles, and following some personal contacts from the SG a number of volunteers had been identified. After some lengthy discussions, it was agreed that the MC should formalise its nomination process, as this would allow for transparent honesty, avoid risks of cronyism and validates the contribution of from all members. Where multiple candidates were nominated for a role, then an election would be held for these roles, at the March meeting.

The Chair noted, once more, the importance of a varied institutional SG representation. It was agreed that the SG would take a lead on nominating those members who had volunteered. The results would be reviewed at the Feb SG meeting, then announced at the March Directors meeting. It was also agreed that the three non-officer posts would also be subject to the same nomination process, formalising their representation on the SG. The Chair noted the value of the input from these roles, and encouraged the current individuals to seek re-nomination. It was agreed that an end of January/beginning Feb 2017 deadline for formal nominations would be targeted.

Action: CT to write to all volunteers and update them on the nomination process

Action: GJJ to devise nomination and SG election process, paper work and procedures

Action: GJJ to distribute SG nomination papers to all Directors

4) Conference Group update

As Emma was unable to attend, GJJ summarised her progress report. All interested parties met at Leicester on 20th October, during which the group workshopped ideas for good conferences as well as discussing the background and outline of the conference. Following a really useful meeting appointments to officer positions were made and actions given to all attendees to research potential venues, and any clashes with other conferences. The next meeting is on Dec 7th, and will be a telephone conference, to drive the planning process forward and to begin focusing on event practicalities. Additionally, a conference date would be proposed, following the Group's research into induction weeks in the region and other conferences. It was also noted that Claire Preval from Leicester had moved on elsewhere, and hence had left the team, which would require a slight reworking of the assigned duties.

GJJ noted the Group has representation on the Website, and also now has an active email list, albeit a low traffic one. The Chair thanked Emma and GJJ, and the CG for their work.

5) Treasurer Update

a) Subs for 2017

Robin noted there had been a very positive response to his email concerning subs from Directors. This reflected the support he had received at the October Directors Meeting. Subscriptions would run, depending on institutional band, from £1,000-£93. He noted finances were on track for next year, noting especially; £3,000 for the conference, £2,000 for SDG events and other SIG costs. GJJ noted he would be talking with the RDM Support Group leads in the new year, as they had expressed possible resource implications for their plans.

Robin noted slight concerns over the cost of replacing GJJ's laptop², but there was a buffer should this need to be expended. Currently the anticipated spend for 2016 was £14,870 and was roughly around £13,700 currently, which was well within expectations. The Chair thanked Robin once again for his efforts.

² See item 7(d)



b) SCONUL: Mercian Income/Expenditure and Support

GJJ noted that a request had been received from Ann Rossiter for the Mercian to provide our estimate for overall income and expenditure for 2017, and any changes to subscription levels, members or major capital outlay. Robin noted this had been done. He noted that SCONUL were prepared to be involved in conference administration, if required, and if this was added to MC costs, this wouldn't need to be paid until 2017.

6) SIG Matters

a) Disability Group

GJJ reported back on discussions with Jane Mortimer (DMU) and Beck Maguire (Nottingham) concerning the autonomously configured Disability Forum and its relationship to the MC. While Jane had stepped back from direct involvement, Beck was facilitating a meeting between interested parties at Nottingham on the 6th Dec, and would be seeking to come to a decision on the group's future. She noted there had been limited drive from other participants, and little or no communications since their previous meeting at DMU at the start of the year. She was interested in any steer from the MC. The Chair noted that this group was not Director nor MC driven, and hence was not high on the MC's agenda. She noted the group's brief existence, but questioned its remit or core purpose.

A discussion around the DSA and its implications followed, and it was generally agreed that a group of this nature seemed likely to be a finite task and finish in nature. It was agreed CT and GJJ would contact the group's current convener to explore if there was a concrete task for them to achieve, or if it was envisaged as an informal network. However, it was agreed to discuss the matter of a disability support group within the MC at the next Directors Meeting.

Action: CT and GJJ to write to Beck Maguire with MC's concerns and questions

Action: Disability SIG to be discussed at Directors meeting in March 2017

c) RDM Support Group

GJJ had been liaising with the Group leads (Laurien, Gareth and Ben) over Website representation. An initial meeting of the Group was anticipated in the new year, and the Group leads would be discussing this, and their Mercian support needs, with GJJ in Jan/Feb 2017.

7) MCDO Update

GJJ reported on his activities not addressed above, since the last Director's meeting.

a) Website

2-3 days had been spent working on the MC Website, adding content, revising structure as well as becoming more familiar with the Drupal CMS system. By his estimation the site is now 90-95% complete and is ready for final review and testing, and agreement on launch date. He noted he had asked some of the other Collaboration Officers to test the site and was awaiting their comments. Emma had provided the final versions of the logos, and these have been edited and made web/document ready.

There are a limited number of outstanding snagging issues to be completed with the assistance of Adaptive including upload of final logo and some outstanding images. Caroline has suggested adding new images with people in shot, from Mercian libraries, although these would need to be sourced.



b) Director Visits

With the exception of Leicester, these have been completed and are pending writing up. As per current hardware issues, previously written up ones are currently inaccessible, but this will be revisited in the light of feedback from Leicester ICT staff.

c) Collaboration Officers Meeting Feedback

Following the successful meeting with other Collaboration Officers in March at SCOUNL, a second experience sharing meeting was arranged during early November at Sheffield Hallam University. This was attended by GJJ, Emma Spivey (NC) and Nicky Freeman (NoWAL). Other Officers were invited but unable to attend, and a spring 2017 meeting is currently being considered. Topics discussed were as follows: SCOUNL: Relationships and agreements, Officer management and working arrangements, collaboration conferences, identifying collaborative issues and cross-membership participation, talent management and websites.

Notable issues arising which may interest the SG included:

- **Conference:** NoWAL (20th July 2017, Lancaster), call for papers in December for Feb submission. Running a workshop online prior to conference on How to write a conference proposal. Northern Collaboration (8th September 2017) – discussed issues with Hotel venue for 2016 conference, venue staff support and additional charges for any extra requirements (e.g. £400 for a room for a pre-conference planning team meeting). One question to MC, was our plans for allowing external delegates to attend.
- **Collaborative Activities:** Similar issues with getting things moving and a reliance on small knots of enthusiasts to drive SIG and similar endeavours forward. Considerable traffic noted on the associated mailing lists.
- **Engagement Demographics.** Similar issues with smaller-staffed institutions abilities to be involved or host events existed in other collaborations, hence exploring different delivery methods (online, recorded webinars etc) to bypass problems around travel and time away from home institution. Notably NC Officer attends every SIG event, and while this provides a useful liaison and communication role, it was also possible to perceive a limited demographic of engagement across the collaboration.
- **Talent Management:** No comparable scheme, and considerable interest/excitement in our efforts and experiences expressed. There are some variants of Buddying-type schemes in operation, and similar to the SDG proposal these are light touch and informally managed.
- **Website** back up procedures, following NoWAL's unrecoverable site-loss experience. A question regarding the Mercian site in this respect has been posed to Adaptive. NC noted despite support from SCOUNL webteam, that it had taken a full working week of her time to prepare their site for launch, and had to be released by her employer to perform this.

d) Tech Blues

During early November the Mercian laptop suffered an unrecoverable crash and loss of O/S. The laptop had been passed to Leicester ICT staff, who in turn had returned it to HP as per their service contract. It had been reported today [29th Nov] that the machine had suffered a total hard-disc drive failure, and the total loss of all data. GJJ noted that he would be recovering files from emails and G.Docs space, but that some materials (notably the almost complete Directors meeting minutes) had been lost. Additionally,



until the laptop is repaired or replaced, it does diminish GJJ's flexibility to work when travelling. However, he noted that there were very few off-site appointments in the next few months.

In response to questions, GJJ confirmed that there would be no additional charge to the MC for repairs as the laptop is covered for a 5 year service contract period. He also noted he had now started a day-end data-mirroring protocol to mitigate any future data loss.

e) AOB

None.

8) Next meetings

As above, it was agreed that two SG meetings would be held ahead of the Directors March meeting. These would be in late Jan (focus on talent management) and late Feb (focus on succession planning). The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance, and the meeting closed at 3.15pm.

Action: GJJ and Chair's PA to arrange dates of next two SG meetings.