

MC Officer Report to MSDG (March 2021)

Steering Group: The handover of the Steering Group to the new chair (Chris Porter), and the five newly elected other Directors Board representatives will occur following the 25th March Board meeting. The officer positions of Vice-Chair and Treasurer will be agreed internally by the new Steering Group. Notably, the Vice Chair is normally the group sponsor for the MSDG, due to its importance and visibility within the Collaboration's activities. I'll update everyone once this appointment has been made. Minutes of past [Steering Group and Boards are available](#).

Conference: The 2021 Conference (exact title TBC, but currently being formulated along the lines of '*Adaptation and Growth in times of Adversity*') will be hosted online in early September. The hope is to incorporate elements of the diversity theme of the postponed 2020 event, especially within the body of the keynote speaker. The event will aim to use a blend of live and recorded media and seek ways to facilitate delegate interaction. As in previous years, no fee will be charged for attendance, and the hope is the online format will facilitate attendance by delegates who may have been disinclined to travel to previous physical events. The intention is for the 2022 event to return to a largely physical format, although hybrid elements may still be embraced as part of its delivery. However, the decision will be influenced by prevailing public health and financial considerations within the Collaboration.

Funding: The Board agreed a 7% cut in member fees for 2021, to reflect current fiscal challenges to the sector, along with the more limited outgoings in 2020. Consequently, with the limited physical activity in 2020, the Collaboration remains in firm financial health for this year. As a result, the level of support set aside to cover costs for external trainers or facilitators at events remains as per previous cycles. Notably, the Steering Group has agreed to fund an MSDG event in April, as per SOP.

Other Subgroups: The [MDF \(Disability Forum\)](#), [MMG \(Metadata\)](#), [D&SSG \(Deputies & Senior Staff\)](#) and [Conference Groups](#) have hosted meetings in recent months. The MDF will have met again the morning of 15/3, and the Conference Group on 30/10. D&SSG will be meeting again May/June (date TBC). MMG is planning a number of events and eForums for 2021, details to follow in the near future. Conversely, MCG (Copyright) and MarComs (Marketing & Communications) have been effectively inactive since #Lockdown1, and as of writing I am unaware of any planned future activities for either group.

Academic Libraries North: The former Northern Collaboration and North West Academic Libraries collaborations (our SCOUNL regional counterparts), officially began a process of merger from 1/Jan/21 to form this new group (ALN). A new website and fully integrated organisation is expected to launch in April, as currently both groups continue to maintain separate online presences. However, both their officers are already, and will continue, working together to deliver on their programme and aspirations.

Virtual Networking Events: The latest event was co-hosted by the MDF in January on [an accessibility theme](#). The next event is scheduled for organisation in April, delayed due to more pressing demands on the Officer's time, theme and date TBC. Feedback for these events continues to be very positive.

Communications: The monthly Mercian Collaboration Newsletter continues to be distributed to the members of the general (mercian-collaboration@jiscmail) mailing list, which now has 167 members. News items and updates are regularly broadcast on the [@MercianCollab](#) twitter feed, with more substantive information appearing on the Collaboration's [news pages](#). Notably reports on most, but not all, events hosted in the past twelve months have appeared on the site.