



Conference Group Meeting Minutes

Tuesday 9th January 2024 @ 15:00 - Online

Summary of New or Outstanding Actions

ACTION: Catherine to check with University of Birmingham colleagues about payment for The Exchange and merchandise ordered for the Mercian 2023 conference.

ACTION: Chair and Vice-Chair to confirm roles for existing and new CG members as soon as possible.

ACTION: Chair to talk to Jane Mansfield at DMU about her taking on the role of Venue Liaison, because it is helpful to have a local person in this role.

ACTION: Chair/CG to find out more information about pricing and key contacts at DMU.

ACTION: Chair and Vice-Chair to discuss the theme(s) for the Mercian 2024 Conference with Sue Ackermann who will then give the Directors a further opportunity to comment before the theme(s) are confirmed.

ACTION: All CG members to check whether they have access to the Mercian CG Teams area set up by Paul.

ACTION: New CG members to arrange slot with Ruth to set up access to Gmail account.

ACTION: Chair and Vice-Chair to confirm final details of membership of the CG so that Ruth can subscribe all new CG members to the Jiscmail list.

ACTION: New CG members to send photos to Ruth so that she can upload them to the 'CG Current members' webpage.

ACTION: Vice-Chair to arrange CG meeting dates for February - September 2024

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present: Catherine Robertson (Chair, Birmingham), Paul Cavanagh (Vice-Chair, Nottingham), Kerry O'Brien (Loughborough), Michelle Mayer (Coventry), Grace Troth (BCU), Jodie Heap (Staffordshire), Stephen Bull (Birmingham), Cristiana Ilie (Warwick), Joseph Williams (Birmingham), Peter Doveston (Aston), Andy Calvert (Warwick), Matt Cunningham (MSDG liaison, Loughborough), Ruth Jenkins (Mercian Collaboration Executive Officer)

Apologies: Jane Mansfield (DMU), Kate Snaith (Nottingham), Sue Ackermann (Steering Group Sponsor, Nottingham)

Chair welcomed the group to the meeting, with a particular welcome to new CG members Stephen Bull, Cristiana Ilie, Joseph Williams, Peter Doveston and Andy Calvert. She was also pleased to note that Kate Snaith had also agreed to join the CG, but was unable to attend this meeting.



Further progress had been made in confirming which CG members would be leading on which roles, and the Chair was in the process of talking to all new CG members individually to check that they were comfortable with what was being proposed.

ACTION: *Chair and Vice-Chair to confirm roles for existing and new CG members as soon as possible.*

2. Venue for Mercian 2024 Conference

The Mercian 2024 Conference will be held at 'The Venue@DMU', De Montfort University, on 11th September 2024.

<https://www.dmu.ac.uk/campus/venues/gallery/the-venue.aspx>

<https://www.dmu.ac.uk/about-dmu/estates-facilities/buildings-on-dmu-campus/the-venuedmu.aspx>

This had recently been confirmed by Sue Ackermann, following the Directors Board Meeting in December and a further conversation with Dave Parkes, Director of Library and Learning Services at DMU.

We need to have two CG members in Venue Liaison roles, with at least one of those CG members being based at DMU.

ACTION: *Chair to talk to Jane Mansfield at DMU about her taking on the role of Venue Liaison, because it is helpful to have a local person in this role.*

ACTION: *Chair/CG to find out more information about pricing and key contacts at DMU.*

3. Conference theme(s)

The Conference theme(s) should be broad and flexible enough to be able to interest a wide range of speakers and delegates across the Mercian region.

Some ideas were shared at the Mercian Directors Board meeting held on 14th December 2023. It was noted that 2024 will be the 10th anniversary of the initial formation of Mercian Collaboration, and it would be nice to celebrate this, but we do not want to spend too much of the conference looking backwards.

Reflecting on this feedback from the Directors, we had a further discussion about various ideas, including:

- **Collaboration** – examples of work ongoing or planned where Mercian institutions had collaborated on pieces of work, for example via Special Interest Groups.
- **Changing times and looking to the future** – could include AI, post covid changes/reflections, collection management, EDI, etc.
- **Sustainability** – publication costs, overseas campuses, buildings/space, etc.

Last summer, there was a suggestion from the CG that we should have posters at the 2023 conference, but it was not possible to get this organised in time. So, we would like to revisit this idea for 2024. We could ask people to develop posters to celebrate past Mercian achievements. We could also encourage people to develop posters on topics which are not taken forward for the main



conference programme. We would like to have an activity around the posters, to encourage people to look at the poster display and chat to the contributors.

ACTION: Chair and Vice-Chair to discuss the theme(s) for the Mercian 2024 Conference with Sue Ackermann who will then give the Directors a further opportunity to comment before the theme(s) are confirmed.

4. Timeline overview

The [Mercian Conference Group Planning Calendar](#) was shared on screen during the meeting in order to give an overview of the conference planning timeline for the year. This document is also available on the Teams site and the Mercian Collaboration website.

This planning calendar will be helpful for setting out meeting agendas and reviewing actions each month.

CG members were asked to look through the calendar to see what they will be doing in the months ahead. This will vary depending on their roles.

We will be asking for CG members to help with the two 'Speaker briefing' events in May. These are particularly aimed at encouraging new or inexperienced speakers to prepare proposals for the conference.

5. Keeping in touch and sharing information

5. a. Microsoft Teams area

Paul has set up a Teams area for the Mercian Collaboration Conference Group. All CG members should have received an invitation use a 'Guest' account to access this Teams area, which is based at the University of Nottingham.

It is hoped that this Teams area will be useful, particularly for sharing working documents which can be jointly edited.

ACTION: All CG members to check whether they have access to the Mercian CG Teams area set up by Paul.

5. b. Gmail account and Google Drive

The mercianconference@gmail.com was set up a few years ago by the previous Mercian Officer (Gaz Johnson).

All CG members need to have access to this Gmail account for the following reasons:

- This is the main email address for enquiries about the conference and it is heavily-used in the run-up to the conference, particularly by speakers and delegates.
- This account also has an associated Google Drive, containing lots of useful documents going back several years.

ACTION: New CG members to arrange a meeting slot with Ruth to set up access to the Gmail account.



5. c. Jiscmail distribution list

All members of the Conference Group need to be subscribed to the MERCIAN-CONFERENCE-GROUP@JISMAIL.AC.UK Jiscmail distribution list.

Any member of the CG can use this Jiscmail list to send messages to everyone else on the CG.

All messages sent to this Jiscmail list are archived here:

<https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/wa-jisc.exe?A0=MERCIAN-CONFERENCE-GROUP>

ACTION: Chair and Vice-Chair to confirm final details of membership of the CG so that Ruth can subscribe all new CG members to the Jiscmail list.

5. d. Conference Group webpages

The main Conference Group webpages are as follows:

<https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/conference-group>

<https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/cg-agendas-minutes-and-reports>

<https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/cg-current-members>

Ruth will also be setting up a 'microsite' with further information about the Mercian 2024 Conference, aimed at speakers, delegates and other interested parties.

ACTION: New CG members to send photos to Ruth so that she can upload them to the 'CG Current members' webpage.

6. Dates of future meetings

It was agreed that the Vice-Chair would send out Doodle polls and meeting invitations for CG meeting dates for February – September 2024.

Most meetings would be held online via MS Teams.

There will be an in-person meeting at The Venue in May.

ACTION: Vice-Chair to arrange CG meeting dates for February - September 2024