



## Steering Group Notes and Actions

**Tuesday 11th July 2023 - 15:00-16:00 - Online Meeting**

### **1. Present and Apologies**

Present: Emma Walton (Chair, Loughborough University), Sue Ackermann (Vice-Chair, University of Nottingham), Pete Maggs (Treasurer, Nottingham Trent University), Jo-Anne Watts (University of Wolverhampton), Sarah Pittaway (Birmingham City University), Ruth Jenkins (Mercian Collaboration Executive Officer)

Apologies: Judith Keene (University of Worcester)

### **2. Introduction from Emma Walton as incoming Chair**

Emma welcomed Steering Group members to the meeting, with a particular welcome for new members. She thanked Jo and Judith for extending their membership of the SG, as this would ensure continuity.

Emma explained that today's online meeting had been arranged to discuss some urgent matters as it had not been possible to find a date that everyone could meet before the summer break.

It is hoped that it will be possible to hold an in-person SG meeting before the autumn Directors Board meeting.

This will give us a better opportunity to discuss the following 'big ticket' items:

- Purpose, and focus of the Mercian Collaboration
- Strategic priorities – linking in with the SCONUL Strategy
- Role of MC as a Regional Consortium.
- What can MC do best? What should we consider leaving to other groups who can do it better?
- Have we got the right portfolio of Special Interest Groups? Reviewing Terms of Reference and expectations of the SIGs.

3. **Minutes of the previous SG meeting (6th January 2023)**

[https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/sites/default/files/minutes/20230106\\_SteeringGroup\\_Minutes.pdf](https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/sites/default/files/minutes/20230106_SteeringGroup_Minutes.pdf)

**3.a) Supporting the SIGs to work more effectively**

It was agreed that the SG and Sponsors should work closely with SIG Chairs on communicating expectations and ensuring accountability. There may also be a need to review and update Terms of Reference to reflect changing requirements and the option to hold some meetings online, as appropriate.

**ACTION:** Ruth to ensure this is on the agenda for the next SG meeting.

**3.b) Associate Membership for institutions outside the Mercian region.**

This could be discussed further as part of a wider discussion about the role of regional consortia, including the Mercian Collaboration.

In the meantime, it had been agreed that places in the Mercian Conference and MSDG staff development sessions can be opened to the people who are not members of Mercian Libraries, subject to places being available.

**3.c) Conference update.**

Planning for the Mercian 2023 Conference on 7<sup>th</sup> September was progressing well. This will be our first in-person conference since 2019. This will have an impact on accessibility of the conference and numbers that can attend. Numbers for breakout sessions will need to be limited, especially for the breakout sessions in smaller rooms in the conference venue.

Some people have asked whether there will be an option to attend the conference online, but unfortunately, we do not have the facilities or the technical expertise to be able to deliver a hybrid conference.

Jo has done a fantastic job as SG Sponsor and will be stepping down after Mercian 2023. Sue agreed to take over the role of SG Sponsor for the next conference and hoped to be able to come along on 7<sup>th</sup> September to facilitate the handover.

**ACTION:** Ruth to send link to the Mercian 2023 delegate booking form to Sue.

#### 4. Governance

##### a) Subgroup proposal – Library Systems & Technologies

It was noted that the Library Systems & Technologies group had already met a couple of times, and there was considerable enthusiasm from members to continue meeting.

The group is asking for confirmation that SG has approved the establishment of this group as a Mercian Special Interest Group. They have also requested support to set up a JISCMail list and a shared file store.

**ACTION:** Emma to contact Bertha Low to confirm that the Library Systems & Technologies SIG has SG approval.

**ACTION:** Pete to act as SG Sponsor for the Library Systems & Technologies SIG.

**ACTION:** Ruth to liaise with Bertha Low and others on the new SIG about setting up webpages, establishing a JISCMail list and discussing options for a shared file store.

#### 5. Operations

##### a) Document and file sharing for Operational Groups and SIGs

People are using a mixture of Google Drive, Microsoft Teams and other solutions to share documents and files across Mercian Collaboration and its subgroups. This is causing practical problems as not all universities allow their employees to access Google via work PCs. It also causes problems when a person managing shared drives move to a different employer, and they need to move all the documents across before they are deleted by the previous employer. (see appendix for examples)

Ruth recommended working with SCONUL to see whether it would be possible to provide a Teams area for Mercian Collaboration and SIGs as this would solve some of the practical problems. There is potential to follow existing good practice used by Academic Libraries North.

**ACTION:** Ruth to obtain further details from ALN on how they share files and documents.

**ACTION:** Emma and Ruth to make request to SCONUL to have similar provision to ALN.

**Subgroups updates:**

**a) Conference Group - Conference on 7th September 2023 - Sponsor Jo-Anne Watts**

See above - section 3.c)

**b) Mercian Staff Development Group - Sponsor Sarah Pittaway**

MSDG is meeting regularly and functioning very effectively.

Review of 2022-23 programme has been completed.

Programme for 2023-24 is being firmed up and will be shared ASAP.

Most staff development sessions are being delivered online, with in-person sessions where these would add most value.

**ACTION:** Sarah to share key documents at next SG meeting.

**c) Copyright Group - Sponsor TBC**

The Copyright SIG has not been able to meet recently and two members who were leading on this have had to step back.

**ACTION:** Ruth to contact members of the Copyright SIG to let them know that it is ok for this SIG to be paused.

**d) Deputies and Senior Staff Group - Sponsor Emma Walton**

Emma is now taking over as Sponsor. The DSSG is intended to be self-governing.

However, they might need a bit of encouragement to avoid losing momentum following the departure of a couple of key individuals who have moved to more senior roles.

**e) Marketing and Communications Group - Sponsor TBC**

Still meeting regularly but might benefit from a refresh of Terms of Reference and clearer accountability.

**f) Mercian Disability Forum (MDF) - Sponsor TBC**

Deborah Munro and Manda Laine are Co-Chairs now that Simon Satchwell Giles has stepped down as Chair. Jo will take over as SG Sponsor for MDF after the Mercian 2023 Conference.

Ruth shared the draft updated Terms of Reference for the MDF. The SG agreed that what was proposed seemed sensible.

**ACTION:** Jo and Ruth to arrange to meet Deborah and Manda to discuss their priorities for the MDF for the next academic year.

**ACTION:** Ruth to contact Deborah and Manda to finalise the updated Terms of Reference, before updating the website.

**g) Mercian Metadata Group (MMG) - Sponsor Judith Keene**

MMG has been quiet recently as members have been busy with other things (including the forthcoming CILIP Metadata & Discovery Group Conference). But they are keen to hold the next MMG meeting in the autumn.

**6. AOB**

**a) News item introducing new Steering Group and/or new Executive Officer**

It was agreed that there should be a news item introducing Emma as the new Chair.

**ACTION:** Emma to send text of news item to Ruth for uploading to the Mercian website.

**7. Date and format of next SG meeting**

**ACTION:** Emma to find date and venue for the next SG meeting, which is likely to be in October.

Ruth Jenkins, Executive Officer  
August 2023

## **Appendix - Document and file sharing for Operational Groups and SIGs**

People are using a mixture of Google Drive, Microsoft Teams and other solutions to share documents and files across Mercian Collaboration and its SIGs. This is causing practical problems as not all universities allow their employees to access Google. It also means that when a person managing shared drives move to a different employer, they need to move all the documents across before they are deleted by the previous employer.

Here are some examples:

- There is a Google Drive associated with the mercianlibrariescollaboration@gmail.com email address, containing multiple documents stored by Gaz Johnson during the 6 years when he was in the Officer role.
- The Conference Group has a Google email address (mercianconference@gmail.com) with an associated Google Drive where CG members share some documents and files. However, this means that all CG members need to be able to login to the same email address, and there are some downsides to this. Another issue is that not all universities are keen to allow their employees access Google from work PCs, so some people must make other arrangements to access via personal laptops or tablets. There has also been a Loughborough University Teams area set up for the Conference Group by Laura Newman, the current CG Chair.
- The Staff Development Group has a Teams area at Coventry University, managed by Kirsty Kift who is the SDG Admin Officer. Kirsty has to give SDG members guest access to this Teams area.
- The Mercian Metadata Group had been using a shared folder on Aston's Box instance. But when William Peadon moved to a new role at Coventry he had to transfer everything across to Teams area at Coventry.

Ruth Jenkins, Executive Officer

August 2023