



Conference Group

Minutes

16th July 2021

Present: Damian Pugh (Chair, Nottingham), Deborah Monroe (Vice, Birmingham), Chris Bradford (Warwick), Laura Newman (Loughborough), Cheryl Coveney (OU), Ruth Houghton (Cranfield), Gareth J Johnson (Mercian Collaboration)

Apologies: Matthew Cunningham (MSDG, Loughborough), Nial Halford-Busby (BGU), Alison Charlesworth (Leicester), Emily Forster (DMU)

Note: Charlie Hill has stood down from the group.

1. Actions from Last Meeting

Chris noted that we had a confirmed keynote (Emma Cragg) and her fee had been agreed with Steering Group. She was also putting the event programme together.

Reasons to be cheerful - one more has been submitted via the form. There is the potential for a number of others to come, and all committee members were asked to keep on encouraging additional submissions to bolster numbers. There was the potential to ask managers to provide some of these, as in part a way to thank staff, although a continued focus on 'information assistants' and their experiences remained. Matt noted over email he was encouraging the MSDG members to promote the reasons to be cheerful call.

ACTION: ALL to continue encouraging more reasons to be cheerful via their local links

2. Updates

Taken as specific items below.

3. Sponsorship

Cheryl has had a response from Natalie Climas at Cambridge UP who would love to be gold sponsors for the event but they require a purchase order/invoice for their sponsorship before the end of July. GJJ suggested speaking to Helen Curtis (Treasurer, Aston) and Kim Hardingham (SCONUL Accounts) to arrange this.

ACTION: Cheryl to contact Helen and Kim to try and arrange invoice for sponsor

Cheryl noted she needed to chase Talis, as they've not been in touch for some time, but they were interested in sponsoring the conference. Agreed to re-highlight the call for sponsors.

ACTION: Cheryl to reconnect Talis re sponsorship arrangements

The question of sharing emails of delegates with sponsors was raised. GJJ noted this had been standard practice at previous conferences. He noted the wording of the delegate booking form should highlight this contractual element as a condition of booking to attend. It was noted the wording from previous years could be reused.

4. Conference Logistics & Practice Event

Laura and Ruth raised they had received questions about the event platform and the mechanics of how the event will run from speakers e.g. breakout rooms, polling software, audience size, interaction etc. They can't currently answer these, meaning speakers are unsure how they'll deliver their sessions.

Nial has some ideas of the various practicalities and had shared a document ahead of the meeting. However, he was currently on leave and was unable to answer in person, so a list of questions were made during the meeting.

ACTION: ALL to send questions concerning the platform/Teams to Laura

ACTION: Laura to collate questions for Nial ahead of practice event.

It was agreed to set up a practice event in the near future and try out the various platform options as a presenter. The group would encourage as many committee members as possible to participate to help test the options.

ACTION: Damian and Nial to set conference practice date and invite people to attend

ACTION: ALL to attend practice event if possible

Noted that there were still some questions about which version of Teams would be used, as some of the modes required installation and access via the desk client only to participate. This might be an issue under some institutional IT policies and for delegates accessing via m-devices.

It was proposed to invite non-committee members to a later practice event 'stress testing' in August. Noted thanks to Nial for taking on the major task of sorting the platform requirements.

5. Outline Programme

Chris is progressing well on creating the outline programme and hopes to have it ready by the end of the month for distribution. The loss of Charlie and his expertise in this respect was regretted.

ACTION: Chris to finalise outline programme ahead of bookings

ACTION: GJJ to update conference website with relevant information as made available.

Agreed to have a welcome, housekeeping session and closing session for both days. It was also agreed it was desirable to ask MC Chair to do the welcome, and Damian will do the housekeeping on behalf of the group. A version of this would be in the programme, and another version would be recorded on the days and made available afterwards.

The matter of the closing session was still up for debate.

GJJ noted that a final version of the programme was often made available with more information, including sponsors etc, on the day of the conference.

6. Delegate Booking

GJJ asked who was handling the bookings, and it was confirmed Chris and Alison would be setting up the booking. GJJ would assist where possible.

ACTION: Alison and Chris to set up delegate booking information and form

7. Next Steps

- Damian to attend Steering Group (21st July)
- Outline programme (L.July)
- Practice event date scheduled (L.July/August)
- Delegate bookings open (L.July/August)

8. Date of Next meeting

This would be the practice event, as detailed above.

9. AOB

Delegate Vouchers

As had been previously discussed, vouchers for delegates (e.g. JustEat) had been proposed. It was agreed for logistical reasons, these would be more desirable as a post-event reward, they would be framed in this respect and tied in to the evaluation sent to attending delegates. Damian will ask Steering Group next week to approve this move.

ACTION: Damian to raise delegate vouchers with Steering Group