

Conference Group Minutes

**Fri 5th August 2022**

**Present**: Deborah Munro (Chair, Aston), Laura Newman (Vice, Loughborough), Chris Bradford (Warwick), Ruth Houghton (Cranfield), Funmike Ifie (Loughborough), Matt Cunningham (MSDG, Loughborough), Natalie Baker-Fosker (Mercian Collaboration)

**Apologies**:

Adrian Clarke (Loughborough), Jo-Anne Watts (Wolverhampton, Steering Group), Catherine Robertson (Birmingham), Andrea Kellett (Birmingham)

Team welcomed to short Conference Catch-Up session.

Chair ran through action list to mark off completed actions and request updates on outstanding actions.

## Summary of New or Outstanding Actions

ACTION: Deborah to make suggestion for Central MS Office/ Teams account to Steering group meeting.

ACTION: Natalie to create a spreadsheet, listing all panellists and speakers (using information from Programme schedule and emails in Mercian Conference Gmail account and share with Team. Info to be used to cross-check panellists, speakers and moderator to ensure inclusion in programme.

ACTION: Chris Bradford to request all missing programme information via email.

ACTION: Deborah/Laura to email Cranfield panel to confirm attendance and ask for biog details and photo.

ACTION: All speakers to book an appointment at Cranfield studio.

ACTION: Team invited to think of additional questions for panel and forward to Deborah and Laura.

ACTION: Laura to request bio info from all panel members and pass along to Chris Bradford.

ACTION: Laura to ask Cranfield about supplying a bio for the studio team.

ACTION: Chris to chase Bibliu for adverts and images to be included in programme.

ACTION: Laura to send email to Helen Curtis for Bibliu invoice. If no response is received by 9th Aug, Natalie agreed to ask about this at steering group meeting on 9th Aug 2022.

ACTION: Laura/Deborah to chase Josh at Nottingham - re: Round Table (Panel Discussion).

ACTION: Laura/Deborah requested continued feedback and thoughts on the list of panel members and suggestions on creating a more varied or ethnically diverse panel.

ACTION: Round table discussion themes to be sent out in advance.

ACTION: Laura to contact Cranfield studio to check that this image suits Cranfield’s technical requirements and ask for advice on a better image suggestion.

ACTION: Once finalised, Laura to provide the background image to Cranfield.

ACTION: Funmike to confirm her availability to attend asap.

ACTION: Deborah and Laura to discuss and confirm who will host on day 2.

ACTION Ruth to confirm if Cranfield can provide lunch for those in attendance.

ACTION: Deborah and Laura to arrange a thank you gift for the Cranfield Team.

ACTION: Laura to share edited moderator rota with conference planning team and a separate colour coded document for the Cranfield studio team.

ACTION: Matt and Laura to coordinate on setting a date for a moderator briefing sessions. These need to be sent out asap.

ACTION: Deborah to send update to Ruth re: response to outcomes.

ACTION: Booking reminders should be sent out in late August/ early Sept.

ACTION: Conference group asked to book on to conference using the booking form and please book on to the longer sessions.

ACTION: Everyone asked to publicise the event to your member institutions.

ACTION Matt to check if he is on main list and send the booking link to Lis link.

ACTION: Laura to advertise on all mailing lists.

ACTION: Laura to send to main lis link.

## 22/65 Streamlining Future Conference Admin Tasks

Team briefly discussed ways of improving processes for future conferences, to streamline the process and to avoid lots of emails bouncing around.

Suggestions included creating a *‘Teams’* account, where all Mercian related content is stored in a central place and accessible by the whole Conference planning group. To be discussed at a later date.

**ACTION:** Deborah to make suggestion for Central MS Office/ Teams account at Steering group meeting.

## 22/66 Event Programme

Chris Bradford is putting together the event programme and has requested a list of missing speakers.

Team discussed the creation of a central document listing conference attendees for ease of accessing the information and marking actions as completed.

**ACTION:** Natalie to create a spreadsheet, listing all panellists and speakers (using information from Programme schedule and emails in Mercian Conference Gmail account and share with Team. Info to be used to cross-check panellists, speakers and moderator to ensure inclusion in programme

**ACTION:** Chris Bradford to request all missing programme information via email.

**ACTION:** Deborah/Laura to email Cranfield panel to confirm attendance and ask for biog details and photo.

**ACTION:** All speakers to book an appointment at Cranfield studio.

Group discussed the possibility of having a slot in the programme for some student panellists.

Deborah and Laura agreed to write the panel questions and send to panel in advance. Deborah requested assistance on this task. Group discussed that 3 or 4 questions would be an appropriate number of questions, but the suggestion was put forward to prepare some additional questions, just in case they are needed.

**ACTION:** Team invited to think of additional questions for panel and forward to Deborah and Laura.

Following some questions from the group, Laura confirmed that we need brief bios from ALL panellists

**ACTION:** Laura to request bio info from all panel members and pass along to Chris Bradford.

**ACTION:** Laura to ask Cranfield about supplying a bio for the studio team.

Some discussion around the inclusion of adverts from the event sponsor, Bibliu.

**ACTION:** Chris to chase Bibliu for adverts and images to be included in programme.

## 22/67 Sponsor invoice update

Laura updated the group on plans to invoice the sponsor, Bibliu.

**ACTION:** Laura to send email to Helen Curtis for Bibliu invoice. If no response is received by 9th Aug, Natalie agreed to ask about this at steering group meeting on 9th Aug 2022.

## 22/68 Round Table (Panel Discussion)

Laura and Deborah are to agree and finalise panel members and make approaches. It was reported that they have not yet heard back from Josh (Nottingham)

**ACTION:** Laura/Deborah to chase Josh at Nottingham - re: Round Table (Panel Discussion)

Currently, the round table discussion panel is to be: Chris Porter, Karyn at Cranfield, possibly two student delegates from Warwick, plus Matt and Tim.

**ACTION:** Laura/Deborah requested continued feedback and thoughts on the list of panel members

**ACTION:** Round table discussion themes to be sent out in advance.

## 22/69 Event Hosting

### Green screen

Prior to his departure, Gaz shared some potential green screen images with the team. However, it was noted that the supplied images did not have enough variety in terms of ethnic representation, therefore it was agreed that Laura Newman would look for alternative images.

Laura had discovered a generic image of puzzle pieces, which she noted was vaguely related to the conference theme of engagement and sent to Deborah for feedback. It was agreed that further discussion is needed in regard to the image, but the team were happy to go along with the new puzzle piece image, unless a better image is found.

**ACTION:** Laura to contact Cranfield studio to check that this new image suits Cranfield’s technical requirements and to ask for advice on a better image suggestion.

**ACTION:** Once finalised, Laura to provide the background image to Cranfield.

### Conference group physical attendance

Funmike has stated that she is not currently able to confirm her attendance to present at Cranfield, so Deborah asked for volunteers to attend in her place, if needed. Christine Bradford volunteered to go in place of Funmike, if needed.

**ACTION:** Funmike to confirm her availability to attend ASAP.

Deborah and Laura stated that they would like to offer to attend but noted that their attendance could jeopardise their availability to handle any emergency issues that arise on the day.

Ruth Houghton has asked us to confirm attendance for numbers and informed us that Cranfield need two bodies sat on sofa at all times. Team discussed challenges of having various colleagues host on the Cranfield sofa, noting that some colleagues won’t know the speakers so can’t easily introduce the next speaker.

Chris Bradford offered to attend on day 1 and it was suggested that if they can’t find an alternative host, Deborah or Laura could possibly attend on day 2 (to be confirmed).

**ACTION:** Deborah and Laura to discuss and confirm who will host on day 2.

Deborah updated that she has contacted Chris Porter to request attendance on the sofa and for her to host the lead in session. This has been confirmed.

There was some discussion around hospitality arrangements for the physical attendees.

**ACTION:** Ruth to confirm if Cranfield can provide lunch for those in attendance.

**ACTION:** Deborah and Laura to arrange a thank you gift for the Cranfield Team.

## 22/70 Moderation

Laura confirmed that she had started to draft the moderator rota and once completed this needs to be shared with team.

**ACTION:** Laura to share edited moderator rota with conference planning team and a separate colour coded document for the Cranfield studio team.

**ACTION:** Matt and Laura to coordinate on setting a date for a moderator briefing sessions. These need to be sent out asap.

It was noted that moderators may need to be changed if people are in attendance at Cranfield, so decisions need to be made as a matter of urgency.

## 22/71 Conference joining instructions

It was confirmed that the conference joining instructions have been shared. It was reiterated that conference attendees should use the same name, zoom account and computer IP address to send their joining request that they plan use on the day. This information has been shared with delegates in the booking form.

There was some group discussion around asking delegates to join with cameras and microphones on or off. Due to technical constraints of zoom, moderators won’t have ability to mute delegates’ microphones, so it should be reiterated to delegates as they join the conference on the day.

It was agreed that cameras and microphones should be OFF during talks unless otherwise stated on the day.

**ACTION:** Deborah to send update to Ruth re: response to outcomes

## 22/72 AOB

Deborah gave praise to the group for the progress so far and noted there is still lots of info to assimilate.

Deborah asked Matt, as the longest standing conference planning group member, how he feels this year’s conference planning is going, compared to previous years. Matt’s response was largely positive, noting the groups achievements. Matt reiterated that the final month of conference planning is always a little hectic, as the team make the final arrangements, and noted that the fast-paced nature of the event usually sees some last-minute issues arise.

Matt reiterated that it is very important for the smooth running of the event, that ALL speakers, panellists and moderators MUST book onto the Cranfield training session so that they know what is expected of them on the day, to avoid any surprises.

Deborah noted that there are 20 delegates booked in so far, but it is expected that lots of delegate will book at last minute.

**ACTION:** Booking reminders should be sent out in late August/ early Sept

At the moment, the short 15-minutes sessions are much more popular than the longer sessions, so Deborah requested that conference team attend the longer session when they are not moderating.

**ACTION:** Conference group asked to book on to conference using the booking form and please book on to the longer sessions.

Deborah finished by recapping that there are a lot of the actions to be completed within the next week or so, but she firmly believes it will be ok.

## 22/73 Next Steps

Group discussed how to promote the conference.

It was agreed that, as an online event, the conference is open to everyone (i.e., non-Mercian).

The event is already advertised on the Mercian website and Twitter page.

**ACTION:** everyone asked to publicise the event to your member institutions.

**ACTION:** Matt to check if he is on main list and send the booking link to Lis link.

**ACTION:** Laura to advertise on all mailing lists.

**ACTION:** Laura to send to main lis link.

## 22/73 Next Meeting

Due to annual leave and other commitments, Deborah has created short catchup meetings - to block out some time for discussions - and team reminded to attend each session, where possible:

* 25th August 2022 @ 10:00-10:00
* 2nd September 2022 @ 14:00-15:00