

Conference Group Minutes

**Thursday 25th August 2022**

**Present**: Deborah Munro (Chair, Aston), Laura Newman (Vice, Loughborough), Ruth Jenkins (Cranfield), Matt Cunningham (MSDG, Loughborough), Jo-Anne Watts (Wolverhampton, Steering Group), Chris Bradford (Warwick), Ruth Houghton (Cranfield), Catherine Robertson (Birmingham), Andrea Kellett (Birmingham), Natalie Baker-Fosker (Mercian Collaboration)

**Apologies:** Funmike Ifie (Loughborough), Adrian Clarke (Loughborough),

## Summary of New or Outstanding Actions

ACTION: Natalie to send Ruth the speaker’s spreadsheet which contains the correct talk titles.

ACTION: Laura to send Ruth the moderator’s schedule.

ACTION: Chris to send Ruth the draft programme.

ACTION: Ruth Jenkins to proofread programme.

ACTION: Group asked for further volunteers to proofread the programme.

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

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

ACTION: Ruth Houghton to ask David for list of speakers who have not yet attended a speaker session and chase them up to attend one asap.

ACTION: Laura to contact Phil to confirm his position on the joint presentation.

ACTION: If Phil not available to jointly present in partnership with Bibliu, JoAnne to contact Coventry to ask for alternative presenters.

ACTION: Deborah and Laura to purchase chocolates as a thank you gift for the Cranfield Team and bring on day 2.

ACTION: Andrea to remove Deborah’s duplicate conference booking before sending finalised list to Cranfield.

ACTION: All moderators to book on to correct session as changes are difficult to rectify.

ACTION: Conference group members reminded to book on to the conference using the booking form if you have not already done so.

ACTION: Deborah to email Tim with bullet points for opening speech content.

ACTION: Ant Brewerton to book technical session with Cranfield asap, which will address his concerns.

ACTION: Chris Bradford to contact Ant Brewerton with instructions to bring a laptop and headphones if he wants to join in with the the rest of the conference after his keynote speech.

 ACTION: Andrea to attach programme to joining instructions for delegates.

ACTION: Natalie to put final programme online and promote on social media.

ACTION: Andrea to send David at Cranfield, a list of delegate strings for each break out session.

ACTION: Andrea to create joining instructions, including reminder to use correct name and email address for breakout sessions. (Andrea to send draft to Deborah and Laura for approval before sending to delegates please).

ACTION: Deborah to send JoAnne a list of institutions that are not currently engaged with the conference booking form.

ACTION: JoAnne to send a reminder to those directors as a conference booking reminder.

ACTION: Deborah to include in her talk some information about joining next year’s conference planning team and opportunities to take part in other Mercian subgroups.

ACTION: Deborah to promote the feedback form.

ACTION: Team reminded to direct any queries to Deborah and Laura (Chair and Vice chair).

ACTION: Deborah to send invite to Ruth Jenkins for next.

## 22/75 Welcome and Action List Updates

Team welcomed to short Conference Catch-Up session.

Chair introduced group to Ruth Jenkins, who has kindly offered to help organise the conference following the recent departure of the Executive Officer.

Chair asked Ruth to act as reserve for moderators in case anything comes up during the conference.

Ruth offered to proofread and make alterations to programme as required. To do this, Ruth requested all vital information is sent to her today (25th August 2022).

**ACTION:** Natalie to send Ruth the speakers’ spreadsheet which contains the correct talk titles

**ACTION:** Laura to send Ruth the moderator’s schedule

**ACTION:** Chris to send Ruth the draft programme

**ACTION:** Ruth Jenkins to proofread programme

**ACTION:** Group asked for further volunteers to proofread the programme

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

**ACTION:** Everyone reminded to publicise the event to your member institutions.

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

Chair feels confident that we are on target with conference related tasks.

### Technical sessions

Ruth Houghton confirmed that all speakers have booked in for a technical session at Cranfield studio, but she is unaware if all speakers have actually attended one.

**ACTION:** Ruth Houghton to ask David for list of speakers who have not yet attended a speaker session and chase them up to attend one asap

### Sponsor presentation

Group discussed the continued uncertainty around Coventry’s participation in the joint presentation with Bibliu.

**ACTION:** Laura to contact Phil to confirm his position on the joint presentation

**ACTION:** If Phil not available to jointly present in partnership with Bibliu, JoAnne to contact Coventry to ask for alternative presenters

### Refreshments

Ruth Houghton is awaiting response from Cranfield regarding lunch arrangements. Group discussed possible alternative catering options, which included nearby Costa or Waitrose, should Cranfield not provide lunch/refreshments.

If refreshments are arranged internally, Cranfield would raise an invoice for Mercian to make payment. Otherwise, Deborah will purchase refreshments and claim back via expenses.

### Gift for conference hosts

Group discussed suitable gift suggestions for Cranfield studio.

**ACTION:** Deborah and Laura to purchase chocolates as a thank you gift for the Cranfield Team and bring on day 2.

### Moderator briefing sessions

Laura confirmed that moderator briefing sessions are no longer going ahead. Top tips for moderators were sent via email by Gaz Johnson prior to his departure.

## 22/76 Quick updates

Chair asked for a quick roundup on everyone’s conference tasks.

Deborah informed group she has accidentally booked onto the conference twice and requested that her duplicate booking be removed from the list

**ACTION:** Andrea to remove Deborah’s duplicate conference booking before sending finalised list to Cranfield

**ACTION:** All moderators to book on to correct session as changes are difficult to rectify

**ACTION:** Conference group members reminded to book on to the conference using the booking form if you have not already done so.

Ruth Houghton requested some guidance, on behalf of Tim, regarding content for his opening speech on day 1 of the conference. Group shared suggestions for content, such as: a welcome to Cranfield, introduce himself and the studio team, thank speakers and sponsors, etc.

**ACTION:** Deborah to email Tim with bullet points for opening speech content

Chris Bradford asked for clarification on her role at the conference.

Chair and Vice chair confirmed Chris’ role is to include liaising with the guest speakers (by being generally friendly and helpful), while Ruth does the same for the Cranfield studio team.

Chris asked what studio setup is like, on behalf of Ant (keynote speaker), including whether Ant will be able to see all the delegates on screen.

**ACTION:** Ant Brewerton to book technical session with Cranfield asap, which will address his concerns

Group discussed that the speakers and moderators in attendance at Cranfield studio will need to bring laptops and headphones if they wish to participate in talks and parallel sessions.

**ACTION:** Chris Bradford to contact Ant Brewerton with instructions to bring a laptop and headphones if he wants to join in with the the rest of the conference after his keynote speech

## 22/77 Joining instructions and parallel sessions

It was decided that joining instructions would be sent out at least one day before conference.

Joining instructions to include virtual links to conference, with programme attached for information – therefore it was decided there is no need to put the joining links in the programme as well.

**ACTION:** Andrea to attach programme to joining instructions for delegates.

**ACTION:** Natalie to put final programme online and promote on social media

Ruth recalled some issues at last year’s conference regarding delegates attending parallel sessions.

Chair and Vice chair confirmed that as conference hosts, the Cranfield studio team will automatically place delegates into the correct parallel session, as per their original booking form requests.

However, this can only be done accurately if the delegates join the virtual conference using the full name and email address that they used when they submitted their booking form. If delegates don’t join with the correct name and email address, Cranfield team will put the unknown delegate into a randomly allocated session.

**ACTION:** Andrea to send David at Cranfield, a list of delegate strings for each break out session

**ACTION:** Andrea to create joining instructions, including reminder to use correct name and email address for breakout sessions. (Andrea to send draft to Deborah and Laura for approval before sending to delegates please).

Group agreed that delegates will be asked to join the conference with cameras on, to facilitate a welcoming and interactive experience.

Group discussed promoting the conference to member institutions that have not yet interacted on the booking form or involved as guest speakers.

**ACTION:** Deborah to send JoAnne a list of institutions that are not currently engaged with the conference booking form

**ACTION:** JoAnne to send a reminder to those directors as a conference booking reminder

## 22/78 Arrangement for conference day 2

Deborah is listed to give the welcome back speech on day 2.

Group discussed the brief overview of the items Deborah should include in her welcome speech.

It was agreed that Deborah should recap on success of day 1, and to offer thanks to sponsors, keynote speaker and Cranfield team again.

It was discussed that in previous years, Gaz Johnson had utilised his time networking at the conference to stimulate interest in joining next year’s conference planning team.

Group discussed how taking part in the conference is a useful staff development opportunity to gain valuable experience of a friendly and welcoming conference environment.

Gaz would also raise awareness of opportunities arising within the other Mercian committees and subgroups, including the forthcoming elections.

Brief group discussion on the role of the committees and subgroups within Mercian, as they allow people to network with like-minded colleagues and counterparts within the wider regional area.

**ACTION:** Deborah to include in her talk some information about joining next years conference planning team and opportunities to take part in other Mercian subgroups.

## 22/79 AOB

### Feedback

Group discussed using feedback to help with next year’s conference planning.

**ACTION:** Deborah to promote the feedback form

Catherine Robertson gave brief update on her task of obtaining copies of the speakers’ presentation slides and is confident that she has either received or will receive all slides within the next week or so. All slides to be forwarded to mercianconference@gmail.com – and moved to an archive folder for ease of retrieval.

### Risk assessment

Group assessed the main risks to the smooth running of the conference, but as the conference planning team has relinquished control to Cranfield studio, there are few mitigations available to us.

A catastrophic power failure in Cranfield area is the main single point of failure and the biggest risk to the conference. Group briefly discussed ways to mitigate this risk by setting up alternative zoom links, but it was agreed not to take this forward.

### Thanks

Conference group thanked for their continued efforts and were reminded of who to contact with queries.

**ACTION:** Team reminded to direct any queries to Deborah and Laura (Chair and Vice chair)

## 22/80 Next Meeting

Final conference planning meeting is scheduled for 2nd September 2022 @ 14:00-15:00

**ACTION:** Deborah to send invite to Ruth Jenkins for next meeting