



Mercian Collaboration Conference Meeting

Minutes

4th February 2019

01 Introductions & Apologies

Present: Emma Walton (Group Chair), Jen Brotherton, Claire Browne, Cheryl Coveney, Matt Cunningham, Helen Curtis, Charlie Hill, Jo-Anne Watts

Apologies: Gaz Johnson

The Chair welcomed the new group members: Charlie Hill from BCU and Cheryl Coveney from OU. It was noted that whilst the group email list existed, it wasn't necessarily the best tool for decision making so meetings would play an important role and members would be encouraged to attend wherever possible.

02 Actions from previous meeting

The previous meeting was a review of how the 2018 conference went. Any actions are on the agenda for discussion.

ACTION 1: EW to send out final report to all group members

03 Venue deliberation

The conference group have built experience over the first two years to see what we need to have from a venue. DMU was a great starting point, especially as it was provided free of charge, and experiencing a completely new venue at Birmingham in 2018 was a useful comparator.

We need to make the conference venue as accessible as possible, so will need to be on a main train line. We will also be alternating the location between the East and West sides on the Collaboration. It was also felt that, if possible, returning to the same venue on alternate years would make preparations and relationships a lot easier. With that in mind, Emma, Gaz and Helen visited two locations in Nottingham for potential venues for the 2019 conference: NTU and Nottingham University. Both venues gave what we require but better access from public transport tipped the decision in Nottingham's favour, despite being the slightly more expensive of the two.

For the booking fee, we would receive: the Senate Chamber for the keynote session/plenary which seats 150 people, access to the Great Hall for the catering and exhibition space for the sponsors, two breakout rooms to seat 30 in a cabaret style, one larger classroom seating 60 and the Council Room seating 40. The venue also has a specific liaison contact for the day, receptionist and in-house AV support.

ACTION 2: EW to contact two venues with decision and book Nottingham for Tuesday 10th September 2019

04 Theme

Different themes suggested by members,

- **Focus on the student** – have presentations from students /student panel – the student experience in Libraries was decided that as we have a more diverse range of users in the Mercian Libraries, we should broaden this out.
- **Participation:** how we make a sense of community in our libraries, what that engagement looks like
- **Collaborations:** working with partners either internal or external

There was a discussion around different themes suggested by members, with a general feel around the idea of collaborations and community.

It was identified that it would be important to ensure that community would include everyone that interacted in any way with the library, e.g. students, researchers, academics, content providers etc.

05 Keynote speaker

There was discussion around different potential keynote speakers. It was discussed that the keynote could come from a similar background to the theme, or be unrelated. The keynote should be inspirational and maybe challenge the status quo. It was discussed whether to have someone who could speak about community in general where the audience could make links to the theme of community, but may not be library based, e.g. sports, local community.

ACTION 3: All to think about a keynote around the theme of community, voices, Higher Education

ACTION 4: EW to email on 25 March

06 Sponsors and suggested changes to sponsorship policy

From last years' experience it is clear that sponsors aren't interested in lots of different sponsorship levels and it leads to protracted negotiations. The aim is to give two simpler options from now on:

- Upper level for £1,000 which gives a stand, attendance at the conference sessions and ability to add details to programme etc.
- Lower level for £200 which is just the ability to send flyers etc. without attendance at the event

We will aim for six upper level sponsors to help us break even with the costs of the venue, but will be happy with five. The proposed venue in Nottingham would help as the stands would be in a larger area where lunch is taken, giving delegates chance to talk to sponsors in the lunch period. The Mercian SIGs would also have space for a stand in the same area.

ACTION 5: As companies plan their attendance early in the year, EW and GJ would revise the sponsorship documents to reflect these changes ASAP.

07 Conference planning schedule

It was decided that at the next meeting we would look at the order the marketing materials in order to avoid delays in dispatch and delivery. These will be stored until needed at the conference venue.

It was discussed that the marketing materials would be different from previous years, and although it was previously suggested that delegates could have lanyards it was felt the size of the conference would not justify the cost.

08 Conference structure

Conference group members felt that the structure on the day worked well, plenty of time for lunch, transfer between sessions and networking. It was decided to keep the schedule the same for the 2019 conference.

09 Roles and responsibilities

- **Speaker Liaison:** Jo-Anne
- **Venue co-ordinator:** Nottingham based member alongside Claire
- **Booking operator:** Jen
- **Publications/Marketing Operator:** Charlie
- **Sponsorship:** Emma, supported by Cheryl
- **Finances:** Helen

It was identified that it was very useful and practical to have a member of the conference group based at the venue. Matt would check if there was someone based at Nottingham who would be interested in this role.

ACTION 6: MC to identify if there is someone based at Nottingham University who would be interested in working with us in a venue co-ordinator capacity this year.

ACTION 7: HC to create document to pass on key information on financial aspects of role.

10 Date of next meeting

The next two meetings would be held in April and then June, where submissions would be reviewed.

ACTION 8: EW to email out doodle poll for next meeting in April, and June.