



Mercian Collaboration Steering Group

Thursday 9th Aug 2018

Minutes

Present: Dave Parkes (DMU, Chair), Diane Job (Birmingham, Vice Chair), Paul Reynolds (Keele, Treasurer), Emma Walton (Loughborough), Fiona Parsons (Wolverhampton)

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Apologies: Phil Brabban (Coventry)

The Chair thanked the Group members for attending in person at today's meeting and workshop. He outlined standing matters would be handled, before moving on to examine ideas around developing the Collaboration further.

18/17 Standing matters & Governance

- a) Minutes of previous meeting (11th May 2018)

These were approved.

- b) Treasurer's Update.

Paul had circulated a report prior to the meeting, with the figures as follows.

Reserves (31 Dec 2017):	£9,190.00	
Income (2018 to date):	£19,429.00	
Spend (Jan-June 2018):		£7,180.00
Projected Spend (July-Dec 2018):		£16,402.00
Projected Reserves (31 Dec 2018):	£5,037.00	

Noting income to date, Paul outlined the estimated costs for the remainder of the year included the Officer's salary and travel, website, event funding, and conference costs. Paul highlighted DMU had still not invoiced for the 2017 outstanding conference costs (£1,650.00) despite multiple requests from Dave and himself to settle this. This cost was therefore still accounted for in the anticipated costs for the remainder of 2018. The projected reserve for Dec 2018, may be bolstered by Conference sponsor income, although Paul would only include it in our figures once the funds had been transferred.

As a result, Paul commented he was confident that the Collaboration is on course to meet its targeted reserve aspirations (£5k) at the end of 2018. Consequently, he proposed subscriptions for 2019 be held at their current level, which was generally agreed. A discussion around contingency plans for any members who might be temporarily unable to meet the membership costs followed. It was agreed that while it was desirable to retain members during any periods of hardship, these would be dealt with on a case by case basis in the light of the Collaboration's financial health at that point in time.

- c) SIG Matters Arising

GJJ briefly updated the SG members on matters relating to recent SIG activities, noting a number of recent and forthcoming events from the MDF, RDMSG and MSDG.

Emma reported back as Conference Group Chair and Sponsor on progress towards September's event. She noted the challenges of expectation management in the light gaining sponsorship had been a surprising outcome, and the experience of this would be folded into future efforts. She noted though, that



income from sponsors would considerably contribute towards meeting the event's costs. She noted some concerns had arisen over the venue being relocated by Birmingham to their new conference facilities, although she had every confidence this would be to the benefit of the event. Diane commented that the building is complete, and she will take the opportunity to review the venue on behalf of the Collaboration ahead of the event.

Action: Diane to visit new Birmingham Conference facilities and report back to the Emma

Delegate bookings are coming in, but not quite as fast as would be liked, hence further efforts to market the event would take place. It was agreed to book catering for the full delegate numbers, and to extend the booking deadline to permit people more time to attend. Emma would sort the details for this during next Monday's (13th Aug 2018) Conference Group meeting.

Action: Emma to carry forward recommendations of Steering Group to Conference Group event planning

Emma noted she was going on medical leave from next week and would be handing over the delivery of the conference to Gareth and the Conference Group. She noted she had every confidence in them, in terms of enthusiasm and practical ability, to deliver an excellent event. Gareth noted as previously agreed, he was in the process of designing a pull-up banner for the event, with the input from the Conference Group. The Chair and Vice Chair confirmed their attendance to the event, while the Treasurer tabled his regrets as he was on vacation that week.

Action: Gareth and Conference Group to lead on delivering the 2018 conference

Action: Paul to coordinate with Helen Curtis (Loughborough) over sponsor payment mechanics and other conference financial matters

d) [October Directors Board arrangements](#)

GJJ noted he had these in hand, with the venue having shifted to Warwick. Ruth Stubbings (SCONUL) and Jo Cornish (CILIP) will be in attendance in the morning, and the main agenda item would be the review of the anticipated strategic planning coming from today's meeting.

[18/18 Collaboration Strategy & Action Plan](#)

The Chair and GJJ introduced the main agenda item for today. The hope was to take the time to develop ideas, and ideally a working strategic plan, on how to take the Collaboration forward into its next phase of existence. It was noted that by 2019 the Mercian Collaboration will have been in existence for five years, and this seems to represent an appropriate point at which to take the time to examine its progress to date, and where it might ideally be in during the coming years. GJJ and Dave noted that they had exchanged initial ideas, but that any and all aspects of the Collaboration were open to review and consideration.

GJJ noted the key question to address here was if the current configuration of the Collaboration was all it can be, or if there were aspects which could yet be developed and refined. Notably, its organisational growth and expansion suggested that the Collaboration remained ideologically viable among its members, with their continued subscriptions representing a physical marker of their commitment to it. It was generally noted therefore that the Collaboration represented a success, although the Steering Group could foresee a number of ways in which its operations and activities could continue to evolve, to the benefit of its membership and their staff.

After a lengthy discussion and exchange of views, it was agreed that the Chair and GJJ would use today's outputs to create a draft five-year strategic plan for the Collaboration. This document would go to Directors Board in October for review and comment, before coming back to the Steering Group for revision. It was also agreed that the final version of the strategic plan would be presented for approval and implementation at the March 2019 meeting, alongside the handover of Chairing duties to Diane and the incoming Steering Group. As GJJ's time for the Collaboration is limited, it was agreed to hire him for an additional day as a consultant to work with the Chair on formalising the draft document.

It was also noted that there would be value in seeking input on the draft plan's configuration, content and intent from various other Collaboration stakeholders including: library Director line managers, SIG Chairs and potentially SCUNUL too

Action: GJJ and Chair to meet and draw up a draft strategic plan document ASAP

Action: Strategic plan draft to go to Directors Board in October for review and comment

Action: Revised draft to be shared with appropriate Collaboration stakeholders

Action: Steering Group to agree revised final-draft of plan during winter 2018/19

Action: Finalised strategic plan to go to Directors Board, March 2019

18/19)

a) AOB

None

b) Next Steering Group telcon

This would be set up for late Nov/early December and would focus once again on the strategic plan document, in the light of discussions at Directors Board.

Action: GJJ to arrange date of next Steering Group telcon following October meeting