

**Annual General Meeting  
18<sup>th</sup> June 2009**

**Chair's Report**

Since the last members' meeting in January the Steering Group has met twice, the second of these meetings being our annual Planning Day. If I say that both these meetings were fairly lengthy this is not intended as a criticism of my colleagues on the Group – or even a degree of self-flagellation about the failure of the Chair to keep matters under control – but a reflection, I think, of the number and diversity of the topics we discussed. This is evident in the agenda for the business meeting where members are being asked to consider a range of issues which encompass the criteria for accepting new members, the role of the Consortium with regard to collaborative purchasing of digital resources, the progress of key Consortium projects, the remit of working groups and the timing and frequency of members' meetings themselves. I won't attempt to cover matters in this report which will be dealt with in detail at the meeting. Suffice it to say that there are several meaty issues here and, as ever, the Steering Group welcomes your views on these topics.

I am pleased to report significant progress on a number of major Consortium projects. There will be a demonstration of the Directors' Room at this meeting prior to a launch later in the year. This will also be a chance to introduce and welcome our new Web Services Project Officer, Andrew Amato, who joined the Support Team in the spring. One of the features of the Consortium which distinguishes it from SCONUL and other national organisations is that we are local – we can meet regularly, visit each others' libraries, get together to discuss ideas and share good practice. The Directors' Room is intended to complement this by using Web 2.0 technology to enable us to share expertise/experience, engage in confidential discussion, create opportunities for group sharing of knowledge and generally take advantage of the skills and knowledge of our colleagues. Ultimately, whether or not it is successful will depend on how you as members engage with this but I hope that you will see this as one of the tangible benefits of being part of the M25 club.

If the Directors' Room is focused on members, WAM25 is aimed squarely at students and researchers. Providing access to journals which would previously have been available on the open shelves for any visitor and are now "locked away" in internal networks is a major initiative which, if successful, will benefit the whole academic community. Is this another example of the Consortium leading the way and the rest of the country following? At the time of writing we are a hair's breadth away from securing all the funding to set the project in motion – a position we could not have reached without the time and energy that Maureen Wade, as Project Director, has devoted to politely nudging, badgering and chasing up our funders and supporters.

These projects have a financial implication for us meaning that we will be budgeting for a deficit this year. The Steering Group is relaxed about this at this stage as we have built up healthy reserves over the past few years precisely so that we can go ahead with some major initiatives. But clearly this will not be sustainable over the long-term. During the next year Caroline Lloyd, as Treasurer, will review our reserves policy and this will be referred back to the membership. The Consortium is now a company and from next year our annual accounts will be audited by professional auditors who can also provide ad hoc advice on financial

matters. The next stage will be to move to charitable company status and I will be progressing this over the summer.

The Consortium is coming to the end of the current strategic planning cycle and we will need to develop a plan for the next three year period 2010/11 – 2012/13. The Steering Group agreed a timetable for this exercise which will culminate in a draft Plan being brought to the membership for approval in April/May 2010. The feeling of the Steering Group at the Planning Day was that the next few years would represent a “steady onward path” rather than a significant change in direction. Again, the views of members - both on what we do now and on what we might do in future – are welcome. Late in 2009 we will involve the working groups in the process and, depending on what issues arise, we may seek the views of members on specific proposals, perhaps through the discussion boards on the Directors’ Room. Feeding into this process will be the consultants’ review of InforM25 which will be taking place later in the year.

I’ll end with welcomes and farewells. The M25 Support Team has been augmented by Andrew, as noted above, and we can also welcome our new cpd25 Administrator Claire Hackshall who joins us in June. Our thanks to Vicky Falconer who covered as temporary administrator during the interim. There will be a further change to the team shortly as Genein Cox - De Sousa will be leaving to take up the post of Project Support Assistant within the IT Services Programme Office at LSE. The Consortium has been very fortunate in its choice of Administrative Assistants and Genein has done a wonderful job of supporting the Officers and ensuring that events run smoothly. It is also farewell to Adam Edwards as Secretary (and previously Chair of a number of Working Groups) and William Masterson, who is retiring from his role as Chair of the Resource Discovery Working Group having helped to steer the development of the InforM25 suite of resource discovery tools.

**Nick Bevan**

Chair, M25 Consortium

June 2009