**So You’re Organising A WCC UK Event:
An Event Organiser’s Starter Pack**

The Women’s Classical Committee UK believes in empowering and supporting its members in running events which are relevant and helpful for the membership and the wider UK classics community. Our Accessibility Policy, Events Policy and Expenses Policy set out the technical details of what we expect of our event organisers; this guide is written to be read in parallel with these policies, and offers a step-by-step walkthrough of what you need to do to propose and host a WCC UK event, with some helpful tips and hints we’ve picked up along the way!

**Proposing An Event**

All events sponsored by the WCC UK need to be approved by a majority of the Steering Committee (SC). That means you will need to submit an event proposal for the SC’s consideration. This doesn’t have to be a long document, but it does need to explain the following:

* Why this is a WCC UK event specifically and how it relates to the WCC UK’s stated aims
* Reasons for the choice of host institution or location – the WCC UK aims to hold events spread across the UK
* What considerations need to be taken for including members of the community who may be marginalised, noting our commitment to make our events maximally accessible.

You can also propose a triad for organising an event if you have one in mind.

When you have a proposal together, e-mail it to womensclassicalcommittee@gmail.com; depending on when you submit it, it will either be considered at the biannual steering committee meeting or electronically.

Alternatively, if you would like to host and organise one of our regular annual events, like our Early Career events and our mid-career day, please drop us a line letting us know and we’ll take it from there.

**Organising An Event**

Hurrah! Your event has been approved! The next step is to appoint an organising triad. Your triad must include at least one Steering Committee or liaison member, who will be able to report back to the SC on progress and keep an ‘official’ eye on things; they can also access the WCC UK archive of event reports to see if there’s anything helpful for you in there. If you didn’t have someone in mind when you proposed your event, the SC will suggest someone. You should also have someone connected to the host institution, who will be able to deal with room bookings, catering and other practical on-the-ground issues. The triad can divide up work associated with the event however best fits them; there’s also no problem with adding in a fourth or fifth person to help, so long as at least three people are sharing the load.

The next three issues you will need to sort out are inextricably linked: they are the **date**, the **space** and the **participants**. If you are having an event where you want one or two keynote speakers in particular, you want to coordinate with them to see whether they are interested and what their availability is; we expect event organisers to try and make speaker line-ups as diverse and inclusive as possible. You then need to see how that fits into what is available in terms of rooms the host institution has available to book. You’ll need to think about how many attendees you want space for; WCC UK events tend to have between 30 and 60 attendees in total, depending on the topic. We have also found that a **quiet room** has been a good additional space to have both for those with childcare responsibilities and for those who need to rest for health reasons, so consider how that facility might be provided at this stage.

As part of these decisions, you should bear **accessibility** in mind. The WCC UK has a commitment to make all of its event child-friendly; we also aim to have meetings in buildings which are accessible to those with disabilities. We acknowledge that we cannot make events accessible for everyone since adjustments for one group may mean another group is excluded, but we aim for maximal accessibility.

In deciding on numbers, you’ll also need to think about your **budget**. Costs for events are usually catering; travel and accommodation expenses for invited speakers; and travel bursaries for postgraduate students. Depending on the size of your event, the WCC UK may not be able to cover all these costs, so you will need to speak to the Treasurer about setting a budget and sticking to it. You may also need to apply to other sources of funding, particularly internal funds available through the triad’s institutions. Please do get in touch with us to ask for advice and guidance on how best to tap internal sources of funding, as we will be able to share some boilerplate language we have used successfully in the past; the Treasurer is your first point of call for this. Do bear in mind that cost might be a significant factor in selecting and inviting keynote speakers, and keep in mind the WCC UK expenses policy while considering who to invite.

You will need to think about a **structure** for the day. One thing worth bearing in mind is that WCC UK people enjoy catching up with each other, so leave lots of space for coffee and chat. The spotlight talk format has been very successful (where speakers talk for five minutes on a topic), and can allow participants to access travel funds from their own institution; other elements you might want to include are keynote speakers, traditional conference panels, roundtable discussions and break-out group discussions.

Think carefully about **timings**. If you are expecting people to travel to the event and back in a day, consider setting your start time so that attendees don't have to pay for peak time train fares. In central London this really means starting no earlier than 10.30 to give people time to get there from all major stations, but check the situation with your host institution. When thinking about when to end, remember that attendees willleave before the end, for all sorts of reasons. Bear this in mind as it might affect how you time speakers and sessions; for instance, if you have a keynote speaker and you want as many people as possible to hear their talk then you may need to consider not putting them on last. Alternatively, having a keynote which is also a separate talk a bit later in the evening might allow those who can’t make the whole day come to the keynote as a stand-alone event.

**Advertising an Event**

Once you have worked out a timetable for the day, you might want to issue a **call for papers** as a save-the-date and to get submissions for any panels you are putting together. Alternatively, if you have already finalised your speaker line-up and just have to find spotlight speakers, you can go straight to **inviting registrations**.

Before you send out an e-mail to the Liverpool Classicists List with details of the programme and how to register, you need to sort out two things:

1. **Registration process**: while WCC UK members are entitled to free access to our events, you will still need a way of registering attendees and taking payment from non-members. We have historically used Eventbrite for this, and the Administrator is happy to set up basic registration and keep an eye on it for events where it is anticipated that there will be a lot of money being handed over. This situation may change depending on the fees charged. Using an institutional registration system may also be an option, depending on the fees charged.
2. **Web publicity:** you’ll need to make sure that all the information about the event is up and easily available on the web. We usually do this via a blog post with full details about the event on the website. You can send the text for a blog post to the webpage and social media coordinator.

Once these are in place, you can send out your event announcement to the Classicist List, and the social media coordinator will make sure the call goes out on Facebook and Twitter. It’s up to you whether you want to provide one of the triad’s e-mail addresses for fielding queries or the central WCC UK Gmail address. The announcement should make it clear whether the events will be recorded; whether events and event participants will be photographed; whether it will be possible to attend by Skype; and whether the event involves an expectation of confidentiality. You should make sure to include a reference to the child-friendly policy, and note any issues around accessibility; if you have a quiet room available, you should note if it is being potentially shared for childcare and resting and whether food will be served there.

**Pre-Event Preparation**

You will need to arrange **catering** that falls within your budget; you’ll also need to finalise numbers for catering, which usually needs to be done something like a week before the event. As sexist as it might be, due to social conditioning we have found that for a mainly women event you can order around 20% less than you would for a more gender-mixed event and nobody will go hungry; this is worth bearing in mind given the extortionate price of some in-house institutional catering services. We have found a balance of half vegetarian, half non-vegetarian is about right. Make sure it’s clear to attendees what refreshments are included, so people know what to expect or that they need to bring their own. Also make it clear what the mechanism will be for letting you know about specific catering requirements (e.g. vegan), and ensure that these are passed on.

All WCC UK events follow our **child friendly policy**. Think about how you are going to put that into practice, and what kinds of provision might need to be made.

Think about how you are going to work with **non-attendance**. Especially if attendance is free, some people who sign up won’t actually come on the day. This means that others who'd like to have come miss out on a space, and might mean you over-cater. With that in mind, it’s a good idea to send out a note a couple of weeks in advance to everyone who has signed up to let them know you are operating a waiting list, with a request to let the organisers know as soon as possible if they are not attending so their place can be offered to someone else. Some people will inevitably have good last-minute reasons for not being able to attend, but this should mitigate more foreseeable absences.

You may have various other **communications** you want to send to attendees in advance; Eventbrite will allow you to do this directly. However, think tactically about how many messages you send, and about making sure important information doesn’t get buried. For instance, if you put the note about dropping out at the bottom of an e-mail, there’s a very good chance it won’t get read until too late! If you **need** particular information or action from people (e.g. prep you want them to do beforehand) then make that the key point of an email.

Make sure you are on top of the **technology** you are going to be using in advance. Do a dry run in advance, using the actual room and objects you’ll be using before the day itself, making sure you know what the passwords are for the host institution network if needed. Be certain that everything you need will be available in the room (or know who is going to be bringing it) and make sure you know who to get hold of for tech help if things go wrong on the day. It's also a good idea to get presenters to send their Powerpoints to you in advance so you can pre-load them to save faffing on the day. If you're hosting a remote speaker don't put them on first, but have them on after lunch/tea break so that you can check the connection with them during the break.

**On The Day**

On the day of the event, make sure there are people assigned to key roles like the welcome/registration desk, coordinating with speakers to get them set up, and liaising with the host institution. You will need to provide **name badges** in some form, and might want to think about how to allow people to indicate preferred pronouns; simply providing large sticky labels and pens lets people identify themselves as they wish. You should also have some **membership forms** for any non-members who decide to join on the strength of your event!

At the end of the day, you might want to distribute **feedback forms** to get a sense of how things have gone and what the attendees have taken away.

During the event wrap-up, you should also make sure that ten minutes are put to one side for forming a **post-event triad**; their job is to put together an action plan of actions arising from the event for the steering committee to follow up. The post-event triad does not need to be the same as the organising triad, although it can be.

**After The Event**

Don’t forget to **say thank you** to all the speakers who came and have made things a success! You might also want to reach out to speakers and ask them if they would like to write up their talk or a portion of it to be posted on the WCC UK blog.

You will need to work with the Treasurer to **wrap up the budget**; this might mean sorting outstanding invoices for catering, chasing speakers for their travel expenses, or getting proof of travel so the Treasurer can release travel bursaries.

We expect all event organisers to submit an **event report** – again, it doesn’t have to be long, but it should outline what process you went through to organise the event, what decisions you made, what worked well, what you could do better next time, and any follow-up actions you would like to draw the Steering Committee’s attention to.