

These questions have been asked following our recent information event

Who has funded the solicitor costs so far?

No costs have been paid so far but an invoice is expected shortly. The JMC have a designated fund which has been set up through donations from two anonymous donors. These donors are NOT a part of the process in any way and have NOT been in contact with the solicitor. One donation was made directly to the JMC and the other was made through the CAF Bank anonymous donations via NANAMIC. None of the subgroup of MMSA working on the merger have any knowledge of who the anonymous donors are.

Where did we find the solicitor?

The solicitors, Bates Wells, were recommended by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations ncvo.org.uk. They have been working with them on charity mergers for a number of years.

Who will fund the solicitor for the next work?

The JMC fund is sufficient to cover up to the AGMs and possibly the application to the Charity Commission. It will not cover the Due Diligence process, though others may want to give towards this.

Why haven't we explored federating?

The question is not easily answered because much depends upon what is meant by federation.

The five associations work together through the Meeting of the Mathematics Subject Associations (MMSA) for mutual benefit, information gathering and sharing and, sometimes, to take a shared stance on an issue. MMSA is a Special Interest Group (SIG) of the Joint Mathematical Council (JMC) and the JMC always tries to ensure that a member of the MMSA sits on the Council for Subject Associations (CfSA). Within MMSA the separate identity of each association is maintained. If this is what is meant, then we are already federated.

Were we to join together into one single subject association then it has already been set out within publicly available documents, to be found on each association's website, that there would be SIGs. Thus, for example, AMET could be a SIG if its members so desired and its character and unique profile would be maintained. Similarly, a group with a specific interest in a particular way of teaching could become a SIG. If this is what is meant, then moving towards a single association would be moving towards federation.

Why aren't we presenting a wide range of options rather than one?

Various options have been considered by the MMSA but have been rejected. One suggested is that we have joint membership of ATM and MA, but decisions would need to take place on the price for this membership. The price to belong to both associations has to be the sum of the two memberships, otherwise neither association would be financially viable. Both associations would have to continue to employ staff and run or rent accommodation, and may, because of increased workload caused by joint membership, need to employ more staff. This option is already there but the individual may well ask, why cannot I join one association?

There may be other options, which may need to be considered if the merger does not happen, but we are already working closely together through MMSA and the feeling was that the next step, the ultimate goal, was to become one single subject association. The arguments for this have been set out elsewhere. There is to be a vote within each association, first on the motion to bring into existence the Association for Mathematics in Education (AMiE), second to dissolve in favour of AMiE. The respective memberships will make the decisions. Should the process fail in any one of the associations at either of the two votes, then the process of merger will cease, and other alternatives will be considered.

Does a single subject association mean that the other five won't exist?

There will be one single subject association for mathematics but within that association there will be SIGs. Therefore, any one of the five associations or a group of members of that association could maintain the essence of what it does, what it feels it represents, by forming a SIG. However, each of the current five associations will cease to exist as legal entities.

It was asked at the meeting for details of the various alternatives to merger that have been explored over the last 5 years. This detail was not found in the from MMSA minutes.

Minutes of meetings do not contain details of all the discussions. Such discussion was brief. As noted above, within the MMSA, we have been working closely together for many years and it was felt very strongly that the next step was merger to form a single subject association that had the voice and the membership to represent all those involved in mathematics education. It is a grand vision and some clearly feel it is a step too far. But the memberships of the associations will have the final say in a democratic vote. Should the motions at the respective AGMs fail in any one association the process will cease and other options will be explored.

What evidence is there for saying the reason we are not invited to join government "or other bodies" is specifically that they do not know which association to approach, when we have JMC for one set up exactly for this purpose.

The JMC is a charity representing the views of the whole mathematics community, not just mathematics education and, as such, there would be those with a completely different agenda from that of the five MMSA associations.

An example of one body which did not know who to approach is the Council for Subject Associations (CfSA). They did not know who to invite to join their meetings to represent mathematics as a school-based subject, so they invited JMC to send a representative. The current representative, a member of MMSA, knows how difficult it is to explain to representatives of other subjects represented by a single association why they cannot speak for the whole of mathematics education in schools but must go back to MMSA and consult with the other associations. On the other hand, the three different subjects of Physics, Chemistry and Biology have come together as the Association for Science Education (ASE) and include teachers, lecturers, teacher trainers and researchers.

Another example was in 2019 when the Times Educational Supplement cited Charlie Stripp of MEI as the representative of the mathematics subject association. Charlie had been approached for a comment by the Institute of Physics who did not know who else to contact.