

# MINUTES OF TETBURY AND DISTRICT U3A COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD MONDAY, 6th JULY 2020 at 2pm via ZOOM

PRESENT: Carmel, Lawrence, Gail, Caroline, Audrey, Judith, Anita.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies were received from Douglas and Judith

2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 10th JUNE 2020:

(a) Meetings - There had been no change on Government guidelines regarding meetings and the Short Walks Group and the Boules Group had both started meeting successfully.

(b) Publicity - Caroline had put an excellent piece in the "Tetbury Advertiser" who were very co-operative. Judith will undertake to produce further articles for the "Advertiser", which has a new Editor who seems very helpful and who will get in touch with Judith.

(c) AOB - Carmel had been approached by the manager of the new care home, Upton Mill, who was familiar with the U3A and understands the limitations as far as her residents are concerned. There are a couple of meetings rooms in the care home which could be made available to Groups. Gail said that there is an Open Day at the home in August and she will pass on the date to the Committee.

IT WAS PROPOSED BY Caroline and SECONDED by Gail  
THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10th JUNE BE  
APPROVED.

2. FINANCE STATEMENT: It was decided to discuss this at the end of the meeting in the hope that Douglas might be able to join the meeting.

3. LOCKDOWN: There have been no changes in Government advice.

4. ON-LINE FILLABLE MEMBERSHIP FORMS: Gail had made some minor amendments to the original form: preferred name, emergency contacts, means of payment, in order to accommodate some members' concerns. The Gift Aid form is on the reverse side.

It was questioned as to whether the Renewal Form needed to be so detailed, but Gail felt that, at this point of time, it was important to make sure all information was up-to-date.

Gail intended to write a short email to accompany the forms and would have preferred to incorporate the forms in the email as some members find attachments difficult to open but Lawrence confirmed that the forms had to be sent as a pdf attachment. The email would also explain that, apart from completing on line, the forms could be printed up, completed and either scanned and emailed back or posted and that, if anyone found any of the options difficult, they could contact Gail who would put one in the post. Gail also felt that a brief explanation of Gift Aid might encourage more to sign up.

Audrey suggested that a request to let Gail know if there was no intention to renew should be made. This would be helpful in gauging numbers.

Carmel confirmed that financially we have plenty of time to collect renewal fees. Carmel also suggested that the Logo should be changed to the up-to date one.

Gail intended to follow up by telephone if there was no response within a set time.

Lawrence explained that the forms can be filled in on-line by down-loading the free Adobe PDF Reader app and simple instructions are available on the website <http://tetburyu3a.org.uk/membership> to explain and include how to attach a signature.

5. U3A NATIONAL AGM: National Office is increasing the amount to be paid for each member from £3.50 to £4. There was unanimous agreement that this was both insensitive and inappropriate at the present time.

Carmel suggested that either she should email National Office telling them of the Committee's feelings OR raise the matter at the AGM OR put together a counter proposal. It was agreed that an email now would be best.

ACTION - Carmel to draft an email to Head office.

6. GROUP STATUS: Audrey confirmed that, as Government guidance has not changed, there is no change in status.

7. NEWS BULLETIN: Caroline is intending to produce the next Bulletin to include notes on several Groups - Play writing, Photography, Short Walks, Quiz (available on KIC button)

The committee was impressed with the Bulletin put out by the Cheltenham Branch but felt that ours fulfils its purpose very well; we would not want to put out so many pages and all our information is clearly and comprehensively set out on our web site.

Caroline asked if she can include Lawrence's statement regarding reduction to £5 fee and current financial situation. This was approved SUBJECT to discussion and decision to take place later in the meeting under the heading 'FINANCE'.

8. SPEAKERS: Anita reported that she had been in touch with the Speakers for October and November and both were happy to keep the date in the diary pending further news regarding the opening of the Goods Shed.

Howard Robinson (November) did say he would be prepared to talk via Zoom. The possibility was discussed and the general consensus was that this would be a good idea and preferable to not having any meetings at all until 2021. Anita thought that Caroline Lowsley-Williams (October) might also be willing to consider this. Anita thought that we could wait until August before taking this further.

Caroline suggested we send a short note to members to ascertain how many members are familiar with Zoom (or not). Audrey thought this was a good idea. Gail thought some smaller meetings via Zoom might be helpful, possibly using KIC. It was suggested that there would need to be some sort of protocol to ensure that, if we had an invited Speaker, he would not be interrupted unless the meeting was opened up for questions.

Lawrence thought that we needed to find Members who are technically proficient: Audrey felt that we probably had quite a few Members who would qualify.

**ACTION** - Caroline to poll Members in the next Bulletin as to who has previously used or run Zoom meetings.

Anita added that, as far as the January lunch was concerned, Calcot

Manor was reopening at the weekend so, once they had had a chance to see how best to operate, she would get in touch to make further arrangements.

9. KIT: Gail reported that some members would like to arrange some sort of meeting in the open air.

David Hollister would appreciate input from Members for a biography of the Queen's reign.

Gail also thought that an archive of projects carried out by Members during the pandemic would be interesting. Caroline liked this idea, Gail also thought that there may be other Groups talking together of which the Committee is unaware.

Gail suggested possibly producing some posters for public places to ensure U3A remains in their minds. Audrey put the point that, whilst we have nothing specific happening, it might be a little early to do this. The idea was put on hold.

CARMEL asked that a MINUTE should be added to thank Gail for the exemplary way in which she had dealt with a somewhat difficult situation on KIT.

The possibility was discussed that Group Leaders might have similar problems. Carmel pointed out that, although drawing up protocols on safeguarding, etc., can be tedious, they come in useful if problems arise with Members and set out a road map for dealing with such problems.

AUDREY left the meeting.

10. FINANCE: In the absence of Douglas, Carmel summarised previous discussions which had taken place regarding renewal fees. There were two problems:

- (a) Possibility of building up too much money in reserve.
- (b) How to recognise that Members have not had full value for money during the pandemic.

As we do have some outgoings, including payment to National Office, the proposal is that we ask for renewals in July/August 2020 as would be the norm but reduce the fee to £5 for the year. Payment due by October 2020.

This would give us sufficient funds to pay the National Office, plus contingencies such as publicity costs, printing, postage, attendance at the national conference and miscellaneous expenses.

We have enough funds in reserve to cover all costs, leaving an acceptable reserve at the end of the year.

Lawrence reported that Douglas had produced alternative models:

(i) If we follow the example of Malmesbury and make no charge at all for renewal, we would not have sufficient funds for expenses and would essentially be broke.

(ii) A renewal fee of £10 or £12 leaves us with excess funds in reserve which is not compatible with our position as a charity and Members would be fully entitled to ask what we proposed to do with those funds.

It was agreed that we do not wish to commit ourselves to any specific sum for the following year's renewal fee to allow some movement according to circumstances and possible increasing costs.

**IT WAS PROPOSED by Lawrence and SECONDED by Gail  
THAT THE RENEWAL FEE FOR NEXT YEAR SHOULD BE SET AT £5.**

It was agreed that Caroline could include this information in the Bulletin as per no. 7 above.

Lawrence has put forward the following statement which it was felt set out the situation clearly and succinctly.

“Our Tetbury & District U3A is approaching its first anniversary with next year's (2020-2021) membership renewals due on 1st August.

The Coronavirus Covid-19 Pandemic and UK Government legislation have stopped our planned AGM, Group meetings and Monthly speaker talks at the Goods Shed. We anticipate this situation continuing until Government guidance advises otherwise.

Some of our groups are meeting virtually using video conferencing technologies and telephone calls. Our committee has continued to function with monthly Zoom virtual meetings and a summary of meeting minutes is available on our website 'Policies' page <https://tetburyu3a.org.uk/policies>.

We have trimmed expenses to the bare minimum and our Treasurer has registered our local U3A with HMRC to receive Gift Aid. Therefore, we propose to reduce all membership renewals to a nominal £5 as a Covid-19 concession for this year through to 31st July 2021.

We hope to resume Group meetings and Monthly speaker talks at the Goods Shed as soon as possible and thereby normalise next year's membership renewals and new membership applications from 1st August 2021.

For the latest Government advice please refer to <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>."

**ACTION** - Lawrence to make appropriate adjustments to the renewal form.

In the future, if we have a set renewal fee, enabling Members to pay by Standing Order was discussed as a possibility.

10. AOB: There was no other business.

The next Committee meeting was set for Monday, 10th August, 2020 at 2pm via Zoom.

Lawrence was thanked for setting up the meeting which was then closed.