

MINUTES OF U3A COMMITTEE MEETING MONDAY 5TH
DECEMBER, 2022

AT PRINCE COURT AT 2PM

PRESENT: CARMEL ALAN AUDREY BERNADETTE JUDITH
LAWRENCE MARTIN ANITA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

There were no apologies.

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10th October 2022 were discussed.

The only outstanding point was in regard to the change of the Bank Mandate. It was confirmed that the paper work had been submitted and was with the Bank.

IT WAS PROPOSED BY AUDREY AND SECONDED BY BERNADETTE:

THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10TH OCTOBER 2022
BE PASSED AND APPROVED.

3. REVIEW OF MINUTES OF AGM HELD 15TH NOVEMBER 2022:

The Chair thanked the Committee for its efforts in ensuring the smooth running of the AGM and particularly the WebMaster for his technical assistance.

The Chair reviewed the Minutes of the AGM although approval of these has to be proposed and seconded at the next AGM by the membership.

It was confirmed that these could be put on the website with the names of the Members who had sent apologies removed for the sake of privacy. Reference 4(D) below.

ACTION: The WebMaster undertook to remove the individual names and insert the appropriate number.

4. INTRODUCTION:

The Chair had attended an online discussion at National Office. They had provided a list of some eighty interest groups, plus some learning facilities. It was considered this information might be useful to be included in the next News Letter and also to be passed on to new Members.

The Chair confirmed that our membership of the Cotswold Link had been subscription free for two years but it was intended to reinstate a fee of £14 per annum. It was decided that it was useful to maintain this contact.

The Cotswold Link AGM would be held shortly. The Link was looking for new committee members. It was possible that this was something that might appeal to current members of our Committee who would be retiring at the end of the year.

There was to be a special interest group meeting in June next year and suggestions for topics had been requested.

Through the Cotswold Link, and in contact with other branches, it appears that the National Office is aware of a feeling amongst branches that it has lost touch with them and with the grass roots of the u3a.

The National Office, in recognising this, was considering forming a second group, in addition to the Board, to concentrate on keeping in touch with local branches. The Board spent a great deal of time on finance, Charity Commission and similar topics.

In discussion on the merits of the this suggestion, there were varying views. It might prove more bureaucratic, might add to costs, should the paid advisers not be supplying the information needed to make legal and financial decisions? would it necessitate extra Board Meetings as a trustee would need to attend meetings of the second group. Alternatively, it could be helpful to have a separate entity to concentrate on the particular problem.

ACTION: The Chair offered to draft a statement expressing the committee's views.

(A). Thank you to retiring Membership Secretary:

This was delayed as the retiring Membership Secretary was joining the

meeting later and it was preferred to thank her in person.

(B). Approval of new Membership Secretary:

IT WAS PROPOSED BY CARMEL AND SECONDED BY ANITA:

THAT MARTIN DOIDGE BE CONFIRMED AS MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY.

(C). DISCUSSION OF 2023-2024 MEMBERSHIP FEES:

It was confirmed that the earlier Resolution allowed for fees up to a maximum of £12 a year but the Committee felt that fees should be kept to a minimum and the level of fees in other organisations had no bearing on the u3a fees. A reserve of funds was needed to cover future expenditure, but the branch had no paid employees and no commitments so this could also be kept to a minimum.

It was pointed out that the country is in the middle of a cost of living crisis which has a negative impact but, more positively, we are also receiving more refunds via Gift Aid.

ACTION: The Treasurer will produce alternative projections for future consideration.

(D). INCLUSION OF FIRST NAMES ON WEB SITE:

After discussion and with reference to past experience, it was considered that inclusion of names on a website that was accessible to the public was unsafe. It was straightforward to use the email aliases on the website to get in touch with Group Leaders and Committee members.

(E). DISCOUNTS FOR U3A MEMBERS:

There was some uncertainty as to exactly how this system worked.

ACTION: The Chair to email the South West Regional contact to verify details to pass on to Members.

5. FINANCE:

The Speaker Secretary ran through the costs of the lunch at Chavenage with the Treasurer.

The Treasurer had produced a statement and spread sheet, including projected figures. These were discussed in detail and there were no additional questions.

6. GROUPS:

The WebMaster had updated the web site as requested and also inserted a link on how to use beacon.

It was confirmed that the Badminton group was up and running but the Classical Music group was not continuing.

It had been proposed that an Electric Bike group be started and encouragement would be given to this suggestion.

The Public Transport group had made a start.

Historic Buildings had held a successful coffee morning to update members and had requested that each member of the group put £2 into the Social Account as it was sometimes necessary to pay a deposit prior to finalising arrangements for a visit. This was non-refundable and the account would be continuously replenished as members paid for a particular visit.

The Group Co-ordinator had attended an online National Office training course. These are provided from time to time to help various officers. This meeting had proved very useful and instructive. It had also set out the principles of the u3a in a clear, well-expressed form which it was decided would be useful on the website.

ACTION: The Group Co-ordinator to send a link to the WebMaster.

It was interesting to know that the majority of the branches had about 300 members.

Suggestions which could be useful included a coffee morning at intervals to welcome new Members, encouraging larger groups to appoint a Deputy Leader, include on application form a facility to show what groups a new member would be interested in or their ideas for extra groups.

The Membership Secretary already sends out a welcome email to new Members and could incorporate this in the email.

It was also suggested that carers should be offered free access, unless they wished personally to join a group. The Chair confirmed that this point is included in our policy document as is a roadmap for dealing with a Member who might be disruptive. A further point was that the idea of a 'waiting list' to join a group was rather negative and groups should be encouraged either to split into smaller groups or to start a new group.

The Chair and Group Co-ordinator had visited Upton Mill nursing home and been very impressed with the facilities. The Manager was anxious to encourage use of their public rooms by the u3a on a non-paying basis.

ACTION: The Group Co-ordinator will email Group Leaders with information on Upton Mill and it could also be included in the next News Letter.

A question was raised as to whether Group Leaders made risk assessments. It was confirmed that risk assessment is included in the group Leaders' instructions, but a reminder could be issued.

ACTION: Group Co-ordinator to include a reminder on risk assessment in email mentioned above.

7. PUBLICITY:

The Publicity Secretary had been distributing the new brochures, together with lists of next year's Speakers around the town.

8. MEMBERSHIP STATUS:

Membership was rising steadily and we now have more than 300 Members. 70% of new Members are signing up to Gift Aid.

9. BEACON AND WEB SITE:

Most points had already been covered under other headings.

10. SPEAKERS:

The Speaker Secretary confirmed that all was in hand for the January 2023 Speaker.

Chavenage House had been given final numbers for the Christmas lunch, together with a list of menu choices for each table.

11. NEWS LETTER:

The News Editor confirmed that there would be no News Letter in December.

ACTION: Speaker Secretary to provide report on the Chavenage lunch with photos.

ACTION: Editor to include a note regarding facilities at Upton Mill as above.

12. A.O.B.:

Information had been given to Members regarding a puzzle swap at the monthly meetings. It was essential that Members take back with them any unwanted puzzles.

ACTION: Speaker Secretary to add a note about the puzzle swap to the monthly meeting reminder which goes out on 9th January, 2023.

The News editor confirmed that it was intended that there would be a repeat of the Window Wanderland around the town in February.

The retired Membership Secretary joined the Meeting. The Chair thank Gail for all the work she had put into her position as Membership Secretary and presented her with a large Mahonia plant. She was applauded by the Committee.

It was agreed to hold the next Committee meeting on Monday, 9th January at 2pm and the Chair would approach Upton Mill to see if the meeting could be held there to give the Committee an opportunity to assess the facilities.

The Treasurer was thanked for his hospitality.