

Minutes of U3A Committee Meeting

At 2pm On 7th March 2022

In the Epworth Room at the Mint Methodist church

Those present: Stephanie Ward (Treasurer), Julie Crichton-Smith (Groups Coordinator). Dave Parsons, Anne Staley, (Membership Secretary) Hardy Ford, Lesley Churchill-Birch (Minutes Secretary)

1. Welcome. As Vivienne was not present Steph welcomed everyone

2. Apologies were received from Vivienne Watson, chair and Minna Egan, Secretary

3. Minutes of the last Meeting dated 4th January plus Addendum were agreed

4. Matters Arising.

3. b) The new bank account is in full operation with only about a dozen people paying to the old account by mistake.

10. The Talking About Death (TAD) Workshop will be going ahead on 15 March with attendees (including convenors) contributing £2.50 per person.

10. Vivienne and Julie are following up on groups with no convenors/waiting lists when Vivienne returns from holiday.

11. Hardy has taken over production of the Rolling News at Monthly Meetings from Keith Shaw. After some technical problems at the January meeting the Rolling News is now being e-mailed to the Mint rather than transferred on a memory stick and this worked well for the February meeting.

13. The paid for Zoom subscription has been reinstated. Andrew Staley may want to use this for his Art & Artists Group.

5. Regular Reports

a) Finance. Steph noted that the bank account is now open, and many people are renewing, and membership money is coming in. We are getting £1000 for Gift Aid for the year. January to December but Steph is trying to get that changed to April to March, so it ties in with our financial year. However, if this doesn't work, we can go back to the old way. Steph is chasing up a couple of groups for their venue fees.

b) Speakers (Steph). Jan has speakers booked up to June (expect for May AGM) Advertising for Speakers Secretary. Steph would put something in the newsletter reminding people that Jan is standing down and thanking her for the work she's put in. There followed a discussion on the best way to fill the post and it was felt it was best to get someone on the new committee first rather than advertising specifically for a Speakers Secretary.

c) Membership (Anne) Roughly 50% of the membership had renewed at the reduced rate. 3 new members had joined since the Monthly Meeting. Anne did mention it was good having a separate visitors sheet. She is following people up and inviting them to the Monthly Meeting but also sending them the Newsletter. She's had six enquiries since the February meeting. 15 people have not renewed (no specific reasons given) but there are many new people. A couple of people said they'd not been contacted by the convenors so Steph has now given them an email address and they will be emailing the convenors. (Both Anne and Julie bcc the convener when new people join.).

There was then a discussion as to whether people who have been members, but are now lapsed for various reasons, should be offered to renew at the discounted rate. It was generally felt that we should stick to the rules.

d) Groups (Julie) The Convenors Café went very well with 13 people attending. Julie reported the *Choir Group* is thriving but needed more men. *Classical Music and Geology* had started again with Colin Farlow. Julie thought that Music could

well be being hosted in someone's house, but she wasn't sure about Geology. *Board Games for Fun* is also starting, and the convener of the group is interested in joining the committee. *Japanese Writing* has started. The new *Talking about Death* Group will not start until after the upcoming Workshop has happened and will be run on a topic specific basis.

Julie mentioned that she had sent out two documents to conveners on setting up new groups. One, "Notes for New Conveners on How to set up a New Group is done in bullet point fashion. The other 'Notes for Conveners'" was inherited from the previous groups coordinator and sets out the Role of the Convener more comprehensively. She would like them to go on the website and Dave offered to do this.

Action: Dave

The topic of Beacon Training also came up at Conveners Café and it seems there might be quite a bit of interest in it. Julie will write to conveners and if they are interested. Both the old and new convener for *Creative Writing* is having problems with email and as the new convener needs to have the list of existing members of the group. Julie had emailed her but had nothing back. Julie and Hardy would try to sort it out between them. *Contra Dancing* was mentioned in the Rolling News but seems not to have a venue. However, the convener has said he is now thinking of doing Square Dancing instead. He is waiting to see if he gets more people. Dave gave some background on the history of the convener of this group.

Action: Hardy and Julie

e) Networks (Steph) There is another Network meeting on 12th April which Steph is going to. She hoped to get ideas there about U3A Day which is in September, and said it should be put on the agenda to be discussed at a future meeting. Frances goes to the SW Region Meeting. Network Reps feeds info to her which she sends to the Region. They're asking if we want to put information on their website, Newsletter and Facebook page, but there was no interest in doing this.

Devon Link. Culm Valley is part of East Devon Link and are inviting us to a quiz which they are organising. The meeting was happy for Steph to pass this info on to Jane Chappell who convenes the Quiz Group.

Action; Minna and Steph

6. AGM: 26th May 2022 (Steph)

Viv, Minna and Steph have been working on the AGM paperwork and have sent out notes of the planned timetable and the initial notice of the meeting, plus a nomination form for committee members which needs to be sent out fairly soon. The committee was happy with the timetable and approved the two documents.

Everyone apart from Anne as Membership Secretary is happy to stand again. Frances Berry previously offered to stand as Vice Chair and is still interested. Also, a convener we met at the last Monthly Meeting wants to stand and has experience of committee work. So perhaps Viv could get in touch with her.

Steph mentioned we have to be quorate on the Committee meeting of 25th April although Minna and Anne are both away for the AGM itself. At least 5 of us have to be at this (committee) meeting as we must approve all the final paperwork for the AGM. then.

Julie asked about giving Reports at the AGM, but Steph said this is no longer happening as written reports will get sent to the members. These reports should be done fairly soon. Viv will just do a summary of the year, but reports will not be read out.

Anne asked about the Annual Return to the Trust which is submitted in April, as we won't have the new Membership Secretary in place until the end of May, but Steph said this is not a problem. She said Minna should send the Annual Return with the information as it stood at the time. It will come to Minna, and she will have to fill in the info and submit it. We would send Anne's consent and then, when Hardy is elected, we'll tell them it's Hardy and take Anne off

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Action: Minna

7. PFV Fees (Steph)

Steph is chasing up a couple of groups for venue fees but asked if we need to look again at the £1 venue fee and also if we should be charging for zoom. as this involves a cost too. She queried if we should be asking smaller groups (less than eight) to do something about their low turnout, due to covering room fees. Paid for venues with accessibility facilities can obviously be used for members with mobility problems?

There was a lengthy discussion on conveners' being aware of the venue costs and it was pointed out that although 40% was the overall budget for rooms, this was not a requirement for individual rooms which are considered on their own merit: it is just an aim. The issue was that conveners should simply be aware of trying to meet the cost of their rooms.

The meeting felt happy with the current £1 charge, but did feel that by next September when things should be back to normal after Covid, we should perhaps look at it again which are held in a paid for venues. Dave talked about his group and how the Tai Chi group can be managed and felt he would like to bring the issue up at the next meeting. The issue concerning what do we about this kind of thing. would be an item on the agenda for a future meeting

It was agreed that 40% was acceptable for room hire at the moment (we are currently achieving 38.8%) and £1 per session for every member which will include hybrid meetings where the meeting is in a paid for venue. Steph offered to put that in the Newsletter.

Action: Lesley, Steph

8. Groups Income and Expenditure & ring-fenced Funds (Steph)

The question of ringfencing funds arose, particularly in the case of the gardening group who wanted to hire a speaker. After a lengthy discussion it was decided that the gardening group had to fund the speaker, who was charging £40, either by members paying in advance or by the group doing a fundraising activity. Steph agreed that we could ringfence the money for the speaker if they had a fundraising event.

9. April/May Newsletter (Steph)

Vivienne drafted something about fees and the bank details changing plus that we needed more meeters and greeters to go onto the Newsletter. No-one objected to this. Steph would also put something about PFV fees being charged for people on zoom from 1st April. Conveners need to know about the new zoom fees. Julie should tell Stephanie which groups are going to use zoom so she knows. Steph will send a draft to committee members to edit and will then send it to Trudi as the deadline is the 10th of March.

10. Exeter U3A Domain Name & email Addresses (Dave)

Dave said It would be good to do this now for the new committee. Steph was happy with the cost. It's the sensible thing to do. The domain email addresses just get handed on to the next person in the post. Emails should be accessible to the new person. Do we want to do it and pay £8 a year? The meeting agreed that we were.

A few questions came up from Steph and Hardy so Dave. would keep Hardy in the loop as he seemed to know a bit more about it. They would come back with information to the next meeting.

11. Monthly Meeting Process (Steph)

Steph asked if we should create a written process to help future members who may help setting up the Monthly Meetings. Newcomers to setting up could read beforehand and make sure everything was ready i.e., who had the backpack and if everything was in it that was needed. A tel number would also be useful to find out who was supposed to be helping, It might also be better, rather than Minna having it for it to be Viv as she has to be there and comes in a

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car so she could be early. The last meeting was unusually chaotic, but we should be able to cope with unusual situations.

Steph will draft something about the process of setting up for the meeting and will ask Julie flesh out the groups business and asked that we check for anything she's missed or things which didn't work on the day.

Action: Steph

12 Any Other Business (Steph)

Plymouth University asked if our members would be interested in a research project to do with dementia and pain research. The meeting agreed that we have links with Exeter university for projects like this.

Jude Dimuantes talked about energy saving stuff. We had decided not to send to members. We weren't sure who would benefit from it and where it came from.

Devon free internet training. Viv suggested Steph send the leaflet out with the newsletter to those who get it posted. It was felt we shouldn't be doing this.

Julie is organising the choir to sing at the Cumberland Grange Carehome. They are keen for us to go but want proof of a LFT and a covid pass. They were offering free room but it's not clear if they need us to include their members in any activity.

Julie would find out what the implications are. Previously residents were welcome and often did join in the French group. Apparently, Trudi said the Northcott are offering a free room as long as members bought a coffee.

The meeting finished at 3.55pm.