

MINUTES - EXETER U3A COMMITTEE MEETING MONDAY 25 APRIL 2022 2PM - EPWORTH ROOM AT THE MINT

Present: Vivienne Watson (Chair), Steph Ward (Treasurer), Minna Egan (Secretary), Julie Crichton-Smith (Groups Coordinator), Anne Staley, (Membership Secretary), Dave Parsons (Beacon Administrator).

In attendance: Frances Berry (Vice Chair Nominee) observing

1. Welcome

Vivienne welcomed everyone, especially Frances Berry, who it is hoped will be voted on to the committee at the AGM.

2. Apologies

No apologies were received. Hardy Ford had resigned from the committee with immediate effect on 19 April so was not expected to attend. In the absence of Lesley Churchill-Birch (Minutes Secretary) Steph volunteered to take the minutes of the meeting.

3. Minutes of the meeting on 7 March 2022

Accepted

4. Matters Arising

From item 4 – the Talking About Death Workshop originally planned for 15 March had initially been delayed and subsequently cancelled altogether. The related Talking About Death Group is also disbanding but a new group, Discussions on Death and Dying, convened by Brenda Barnes and Bob Usher, is planning to start up at the Mint on 16 May.

From item 5 b) – Steph had deferred thanks to Jan Rolfe, who is standing down as Speaker Secretary, from the April/May Newsletter to the June/July Newsletter.

From item 5 d) – Colin Farlow has started up the Classical Music and Geology Groups again, both meeting at the Mint.

From item 8 – The Gardening Group Meeting with an external speaker had gone ahead on 21 March with 17 members in attendance paying £2 each. This raised £34 and the shortfall of £6, necessary to pay the speaker's minimum donation to charity of £40, was paid by the group convenor. Some committee members felt that this shortfall should be reimbursed from Exeter U3A central funds or allowed to be deducted from future income but after some discussion it was agreed that this was against our policy that all group activities should be funded by the group members. This had been clearly explained to the group convenor in advance and it was up to him to collect the shortfall from group members who had promised to attend but not turned up on the day.

5. Regular Reports

5.1 Finance (Steph)

Financial results for 2021/22 had been included in the Annual Report. These showed that income and expenditure for the year were almost equal, leaving reserves quite high at the year end. Steph had circulated a report in advance showing a significant excess of expenditure over income to date for 2022/23. This is expected as most of our membership renewal income has already been received in 2021/22 and we had to pay our annual Third Age Trust Membership Subscription and Beacon Licence fee in April. This will help to bring our reserves back down to a more reasonable level.

5.2 Speakers (Vivienne)

Jan Rolfe had provided a written report covering 2021/22 for inclusion in the Annual Report. Vivienne reported that there is no speaker required for the AGM in May and that Janet Cowlard has been booked to talk about The Queen's Dedication to Duty at the June monthly meeting. Jan will be standing down as Speakers Secretary at the AGM but is happy to offer support to her successor when one is found.

5.3 Membership (Anne)

Anne had provided a written report covering 2021/22 for the Annual Report and also circulated a report in advance showing the current position on membership renewals. She reported that Hardy had been very helpful in processing renewals and it was a shame that he had decided not to put himself forward to take over as Membership Secretary when she stands down at the AGM. She is currently in the process of producing a set of written procedures for new membership enquiries and processing.

Action: Anne

Once Anne has stood down and until a new Membership Secretary can be found it was agreed that Minna will deal with membership enquiries and Steph will process new members joining and existing members renewing. Dave was asked to provide Minna and Steph with the appropriate Beacon access and redirect enquiries to Minna at the appropriate time.

Action: Dave

Anne will be away on holiday for around three weeks immediately after the AGM but on her return will be happy to offer support to her successor when one is found. Vivienne thanked Anne for all her hard work during her time on the committee. It was noted that the New Members Café should be reinstated and this is to be included on the agenda at the next full committee meeting.

Action: Minna

5.4 Groups including Convenors Café (Julie)

Julie had provided a written report covering 2021/22 for the Annual Report and circulated a report in advance detailing recent group developments. She had booked a room at the Mint on 28 April for those interested in the Travel Group and a second Philosophy Group to get together and see if convenors could be found to get these groups running. It was agreed that members attending this meeting would not be charged a PFV fee.

It was noted that a schedule of Convenors Café Meetings had been set up to the end of 2022 and Lesley Churchill-Birch will continue to convene these even though she has decided to stand down from the committee at the AGM.

At the Convenors Café on 4 April it was noted that Group Convenors should be

checking their group members had all renewed their membership of Exeter U3A. Convenors might also wish to consider asking their members to ensure that their emergency contact details could be easily found if necessary. Julie will contact convenors about both of these points.

Action: Julie

5.5 Devon Link (Steph)

Steph had attended the most recent meeting on 12 April and circulated a report in advance and added that Devon Link had agreed to end their Facebook Group. It was noted that our own Exeter U3A Members Group is very inactive. Steph agreed to try to revive the Group but if this was not successful then we should consider closing it down.

Action: Steph

Some local u3as use U3AWeb instead of Beacon and Sitebuilder. Dave agreed to look at this to see if we should consider it in Exeter.

Action: Dave

Recruiting committee members is a problem everywhere and we should have this on the agenda at the next full committee meeting and consider the use of the Third Age Trust recruitment toolkit.

Action: Minna

6. Agree AGM Paperwork (Minna)

The following documents had been drafted by the AGM working party and circulated in advance of the meeting. Some amendments were suggested as noted below and subject to these all were approved by the committee for circulation to members.

Final Notice of Meeting – References added to inclusion of Annual Report, any questions to be asked in advance, new membership secretary required.

Annual Report – Membership Secretary's Report amended to highlight the need for a new Membership Secretary

Word Voting Form – word Draft to be removed

Google Voting Form – no amendments

Agenda – Liz Batten's Proposer and Secunder to be added on nomination table

Powerpoint Slides – Liz Batten's Proposer and Secunder to be added on nomination table

All paperwork will be circulated via Beacon to members on e-mail by Minna on Friday 29 April and posted to members not on e-mail by Steph on Tuesday 26 April.

Action: Minna & Steph

Vivienne will draft a separate News Alert to be e-mailed to members to highlight the most important points about the AGM and need for committee members.

Action: Vivienne

Vivienne thanked the AGM working party for all their hard work. As Minna and Lesley will both be away on the date of the AGM and there is currently no nomination for a new Minutes Secretary to replace Lesley Steph offered to take the minutes of the AGM and the committee meeting immediately following it.

7. Monthly Meeting Process (Steph)

Steph had circulated some notes on the Monthly Meeting Process as agreed at the last meeting. Some members felt these were unnecessary and committee members would just deal with any problems that arose on meeting days. After some discussion it was agreed that the notes would be finalised and circulated in case any members found them useful.

Action: Steph

Despite standing down as a committee member Hardy Ford has agreed to continue doing the Rolling News for the monthly meeting.

8. Financial Policy Revision (Steph)

Steph had updated the Financial Policy to reflect recent agreed changes in our practice and circulated a draft in advance of the meeting. The revised version was approved by the committee and will replace the previous version on the website.

Action: Steph

9. Membership Policy Revision (Anne)

Anne had updated the Membership Policy to reflect recent agreed changes in our practice and circulated a draft in advance of the meeting. The revised version still referred to “capitation fees” and it was agreed to change this to “Third Age Trust Membership Subscriptions”. Subject to this change the revised version was approved by the committee and will replace the previous version on the website.

Action: Anne

10. Antiques Roadshow (Vivienne)

Viv had been in touch with Bearnese, Hampton & Littlewood – auctioneers based near Exe Bridges - about organising a valuation day for Exeter U3A members on 28 or 29 September. It was agreed this sounded like a fun event - Vivienne will investigate further and it will be added to the agenda for the next full committee meeting.

Action: Vivienne & Minna

11. Exeter U3A Domain Name & E-mail Addresses (Dave)

Dave had circulated some information in advance about the benefits of having our own Exeteru3a.org.uk domain name and associated e-mail addresses eg chair@exeteru3a.org. This would allow for consistent and easily deduced e-mail addresses which could be passed from one postholder to the next. After some discussion it was agreed some members would prefer to keep their personal e-mail addresses and the additional cost and work involved did not merit this change.

It was also noted that our existing website is not particularly attractive due to the limitations of Sitebuilder but that starting a new webpage from scratch would be a huge undertaking. The Events page is currently well out of date and the whole website needs to be reviewed. It was agreed that this needs to be on the agenda for the next full committee meeting and it is hoped that one of the new committee members appointed at the AGM might be interested in taking this on.

Action: Minna

12. Any Other Business

U3A Day is on Wednesday 21 September this year and needs to be on the agenda for the next full board meeting.

Action: Minna

The deadline for input to the June/July Newsletter is 12 May. Vivienne will draft the committee information and circulate it for comment.

Action: Vivienne

The meeting closed at 4pm.

Dates of Next Meetings (Epworth Room at the Mint)

Thursday 26 May 12.15 – short meeting to deal with admin arising from the

AGM

Monday 6 June 2pm? – next full committee meeting