

MINUTES OF THE U3A COMMITTEE MEETING

2pm on the 6th June 2022

Held in the Epworth Room at the Mint

Present: Vivienne Watson (Chair), Frances Berry (Vice Chair), Steph Ward (Treasurer), Minna Egan (Secretary), Julie Crichton-Smith (Groups Coordinator), Dave Parsons (Beacon Administrator), Bill Cross (Minutes secretary).

1. Welcome

Vivienne welcomed everyone.

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Liz Batten

3. Minutes of the Committee meeting of 25th April 2022

Approved

4. Minutes of the Committee meeting of 26th May 2022

Approved

5. Draft minutes of the AGM of 26th May 2022

Approved

6. Matters Arising

Members at the AGM had shown interest in the details of the financial statement and raised questions about the budget. Steph explained that she presented a budget to the January committee meeting which showed how income and expenditure were expected to develop. The bank balance was generally very healthy at the start of the year when members' fees were received and was spent down through the year as venue fees and other costs were met. Steph made estimates of the expected outgoings and included a margin for possible cost increases and contingencies. It was decided that Steph and Vivienne would prepare a piece for the newsletter referencing the issues raised at the AGM and explaining this process and the resulting budget for members' interest.

Action – Steph and Vivienne

7. Regular reports

Finance (Steph)

Steph presented the monthly status report which she annotated to address issues. The Mint bill was outstanding as she had raised queries so expenditure appeared low but this cost would arise twice in the next monthly report. Also the bill for the magazine had been delayed. Estimated at £1200.

Speakers (Vivienne)

In the absence of a speakers secretary Vivienne is dealing with this though Jan will introduce our speaker at the next monthly meeting. We still need to find a new speaker secretary and it will be helpful if that officer continues to be a member of the committee.

Membership (Steph)

Members have a 4 week window in which to renew membership. There is always some

wastage which is about 10% this year, some of which is oversight by the members who then re-join. There have been 23 new members joining this year.

Groups, including Convenors' Cafe (Julie)

Philosophy 2 has been supported to establish itself with a convenor. We have a volunteer convenor for the Travel group together with co-convenors. The choir (10 people) sang at a care home recently and the residents enjoyed it.

Lesley is dealing with the bi-monthly Convenors' Cafe. Lock-down caused numbers for many groups to decline and some are thinking of closing so some effort is needed for a groups re-launch. The discussion brought in the later agenda item relating to the u3a day on 21st September. Ways of addressing these issues were discussed and it was decided that they needed different approaches and that the monthly meetings could support some of what was needed but not everything. The focus of events planned for u3a day was intended to be promoting membership rather than group participation. It was felt that past practice of promoting membership by holding an event in St. Stephen's church in the High Street was sound as it exploited the passing trade. That should be repeated and include a small number of group representatives who would be able to exemplify our activities to interested prospective members. Vivienne would deal with St. Stephen's to book it for 22nd September.

Action - Vivienne

The committee discussed the matter of group participation, declining groups, obstacles to new members participating and over-subscription. Groups were best placed to decide on their own size which would be influenced by the nature of activities and the level of regular attendance of members. The Committee did not know how waiting lists are generally managed and it was suspected that practice was variable. Convenors would be asked to maintain waiting lists so that opportunities could be identified for new group formation.

The issue of recruiting new members to groups with spare places could be tackled by having, say, 3 to 5 groups represented at each monthly meeting, present from 10:00am, where new enquiries would be welcomed and activities explained. There should be an invitation to members detailing the arrangements and the groups that will be present for each monthly meeting. It is up to members to contact group convenors if interested in joining but the committee was unsure about convenors responding reliably. The group information on the website needed up-dating.

A groups fair will be arranged for 26th January next year which should use the worship area.

Devon Links

Steph has been the contact to date. Vivienne has responded to recent requests for information about Exeter. Steph has this activity along with a number of other non-finance topics on her agenda. As she looks ahead to passing on her role she is preparing notes on the finance function and hopes to divest herself of the non-finance items in due course. Liz and Ray may be able to help.

8. Future Planning

Induction of new committee members.

Frances has booked the Wesley room and Bill, Liz and Ray will attend.

Antiques roadshow

October 6th. Vivienne is arranging this with Bearnese and seeks 2 to assist. Frances volunteered and further help will be sought at the next monthly meeting.

New Members' Cafe

The purpose of this will be to help new members to engage quickly and easily with the u3a by learning of its structure and activities and how best to participate. This to be arranged three monthly and separately from other business. Frances will deal with the practical arrangements for an initial meeting to cater for members joining since March 2020. Frances will prepare an invitation letter and Steph will prepare a list of those to be invited and distribute the letter. Frances will need support from others on the day.

Action – Frances and Steph

Third Age Trust recruitment kit.

The “Making Your Committee Bigger and Better” section of this kit on the u3a Trust website is useful – Minna will lead on this in relation to filling vacant roles especially.

Action - Minna

Review Exeter U3A website

The u3a website norm is being revised and we should wait until we see how that works before revising our design but we need to up-date the information on ours anyway. Some convenors have direct access to do so on behalf of their groups and others know that Dave will up-date their information if they provide it. Attention to this issue may be mixed. Julie to press convenors to up-date the website events page. The newsletter used to list group meetings but no longer does – the committee to return to this at a later date. Vivienne to seek Liz's help in relation to the website.

Action – Julie and Vivienne

Facebook

Julie set up an Exeter Facebook page and reports that the internal Facebook group is infrequently accessed, decreasingly so. Neither the Committee nor the membership or potential membership have sufficient social network expertise or involvement to get much out of this. Steph will close down this internal group.

Action – Steph

Group fairs

See discussion above under 'Groups, including Convenors Cafe'

Exeter School and Age UK

Steph's craft group has been involved in supporting some theatre work with props for Age UK. Nicky Flynn of Age UK asks if we can work together thinking that our activities may overlap. Steph to discuss with Nicky and to ask that they display our poster in suitable places as part of our recruitment efforts.

Action - Steph

Vivienne reported that Exeter School is interested in linking with Exeter U3A for inter-generational learning. Minna and Julie to explore this in relation to possible activities in the new school year.

Action – Minna and Julie

9. AOB

Dave asked for any up-dates of email addresses that committee members want to use for u3a business.

Late addendum – Vivienne is on holiday for the July committee meeting and Frances will chair.

Date of next meeting Monday 4th July 2022
2:00 pm Epworth Room at The Mint