

Committee Meeting Minutes

Venue: John Storer House

Date & Time: Wednesday 11th September 2024 10.00am

Present: Pam Upton (PU) - CHAIR, Geetha Bala (GB), Phil Bass (PB), Bev Gillman (BG), Margaret Kelvey (MK), Garry Rigby (GR), Sue Ronald (SR), Pam Towers (PT), Helen Reid (HR) (minutes)

Apologies for absence: Debra Hardwick; David Jefferson has resigned.

Pam U has asked everyone to start thinking about members who might make a useful addition to the Committee and either ask them or let Pam know.

Action: ALL

1. Minutes of last meeting to be ratified and signed

- Item 3e, p.5: Group Accounts:
Delete from "With Group reconciliations..." to the end of the page and replace with "For the year end, Pam T will review the information required from group leaders."
- On last page under AOB: change coupe to couple
- On p.3 under I.T.Helpdesk, 5th line: delete 9 from hands-9on sessions
- On p.3, 5th line of top para, delete "of three people".

Corrections will be made and then minutes signed and sent to Phil for uploading to the website.

Action: PU

2. Matters Arising and Actions (items not included in agenda)

- Members Handbook: All Committee members to look at this with a view to making it more attractive to members. **Action: ALL**
- Coffee & Chat to welcome new members: Pam U now has a list of possible days/times, and suggested asking those at the EDI meeting

on Monday (16th) if they are willing to help. It will be useful if Committee members can give dates they definitely can't manage. **Action: ALL**

- Activities List: Report has been generated and sent to Garry.

3. Reports

a. Secretary (DH)

Pam U commented that it is not necessary to send a list of names to the NLA, as long as we keep a list. Bev commented that the rules may be subject to different interpretations and refers members to the licence details in the Group Management Guide. Any specific questions can be referred directly to Debra as Secretary.

b. Groups Coordinator (BG)

It has been agreed that a carer can attend a taster session with a potential member. Bev reported that yesterday she'd received 21 messages for the same group leader. This group leader has now agreed to have the messages sent directly to him.

Bev introduced a new member to the Chess group which he enjoyed.

Bev asked if it was OK not to mention names in her report and it was agreed that it was best to keep it anonymous – not naming groups or individuals - but if a name had to be mentioned in a Committee meeting it would not be minuted.

Bev confirmed she had sent details of the two volunteer stand-in speakers to the speaker programme team.

Pam U pointed out that there is no section in the Group Management Guide on Risk Assessments, as it is relatively recent. Pam U will ask Debra to write a short piece for this and to share it with Bev, to enable the Group Management Guide to be updated and brought to the next meeting for approval. **Action: PU/DH**

c. Membership Secretary (GR)

Garry reported that numbers are static, with new members cancelling out non-renewals. For renewals, 953 emails and 42 letters (to those without email) went out. 500 members are still to renew.

Membership application form amendments:

A statement about additional charges needs to be added to the website.

We don't need a question about the newsletter as members can opt out at any time, but we do need permission for data to go to publishers of u3a Matters.

It was agreed we don't need a tickbox to consent to data being used for membership purposes, just a statement that their information will be held securely.

Tickboxes weren't printing properly, so Garry has changed these to graphics.

Re consistency between paper and web form: Helen pointed out that the web form asks for 'Initial(s)' but the paper form doesn't. However, initials are needed and Garry adjusts these manually.

Bev pointed out that the 'Enquirer's Invitation' doesn't mention the option to post the application form by post, only email. Postal option to be added. **Action: GR**

Activities List:

The system can auto-generate this, including venues which were previously excluded. After some discussion, it was agreed that on balance the venues should be included in the list.

The system-generated list has landline numbers but not mobile, so mobile numbers will have to be manually copied into the home phone number field.

d. Treasurer (PT)

There was not much activity in August. Since then, the subscriptions amount has changed dramatically – over £5,000 has gone in since the report was produced. The bank reconciliation has been changed to reflect the year to date figures.

Reporting to the Charities Commission (CC):

Pam T had spoken to TAT a second time for clarification, and we do need to report to CC at the £25K+ income level, which changes the reporting. Previously we have submitted the Chair's Report but we will need to submit a Trustees Annual Report, so we need to ensure this coincides with the Chair's Report. We don't need to submit the annual report to CC till October 2025, but timing April-Oct is not critical as the report reflects income up to end of December. Pam T pointed out that at the AGM we will have to report groups' income, not just central funds. Pam T will meet with Debra to look at the requirements.

Action: PT/DH

PayPal:

Pam T has sent our charities registration form to PayPal, but they messaged her on holiday and then closed the conversation down when she didn't respond.

Pam T will be doing a 'pros and cons' report and has a meeting to discuss payment for events with a group leader who is keen on this, especially for members without a cheque book.

The PayPal account is now all set up, but not working yet, so ongoing.

HMRC Gift Aid:

HMRC have acknowledged Pam T's application for Gift Aid administration and noted changes to be made in due course. Pam T has no access to this as yet.

Corporate Charge card:

Forms have been resent and awaiting response.

Riviera Travel:

We received £300 from TAT, referenced Riviera. The individual who booked can be identified and Pam T will email them to thank them. If anyone books with Riviera travel, whether a member or not, they can nominate Charnwood u3a, then Riviera send 10% to TAT who make a deduction and send the balance to us – so we get 9% of booking costs.

Riviera advertise in u3a Matters, and a mention in *News & Views* might be useful.

We need to be careful not to promote the company, but need to word it as a benefit to our members.

Action: HR

e. Web Manager (PB)

Update on I.T. support: There has been an 'Introduction to Using a Computer' workshop on the 4th and a follow-up arranged for 25th, with another group due to have their first session on 24th. Fix I.T. clinics have started, every Tuesday morning at John Storer House. If these are to continue, we need to publicise them. We can mention them again in the newsletter with definite dates in the calendar.

Action: HR

Helen asked if there had been any feedback on the users forum about the extra page when composing an email. The feedback was that there's not a problem and there are more changes to come that might be useful.

We still seem to have an intermittent problem with the treasurer's email address. Investigation is ongoing. If anyone else thinks they are not receiving emails, please let Phil know.

4. Role Description: Web Manager

A full role description for the Web Manager has been circulated. It was commented that it was far better and fuller than the previous one, and this new version was approved by the Committee.

5. Notes from Website Sub-Committee

The sub-Committee met on Monday (9th) and brief notes from the meeting have been circulated. It was a very productive meeting with a lot of changes agreed. The next meeting will be on 11th November and we agreed to see if anyone else would like to join to represent the ordinary member.

Pam U offered to circulate some images from the TAT website (from Barnsley u3a) to the Website Sub-Committee, for possible use on the website and in a leaflet.

The one change for consideration by the Committee relates to a general issue concerning images at the top of pages. It is proposed that such images are made smaller with text down the side, like the current Home and About Us pages. The Committee approved this change.

Bev suggested that if there was insufficient room for 'Information for Group Leaders' on the menu, this could be shortened to 'GL Info', but initials can be problematic, and Phil pointed out that the tooltip gives the full title, as does the page itself.

6. Fit for the Future proposals and TAT AGM

It was agreed that Pam U should register as the voting delegate for our u3a.

Action: PU

We will have 4 votes at the AGM, and we need to decide which way to vote. The final decision could be taken at our October meeting, but time is tight and it would be better to decide now whether to support TAT's resolution to change the Articles of Association to allow the proposed structural changes. 75% of the votes cast will be needed for the proposal to be carried.

Pam U summarised the proposed changes. The two motivations for the changes are

- a) the last AGM showed there was inadequate communication between local u3as and TAT, and that local u3as were not being listened to;
- b) the need to apply the rules of governance to a big charity like the national u3a, to focus on legal and statutory issues.

Up until now, the Board consists of officers and regional directors, and TAT want to narrow down the Board to a maximum of 10 people with specific expertise. There would be a larger Council of regional representatives to deal with local issues, with the Council making recommendations to the Board. TAT feel this would plug the communication vacuum between the Board and local u3as.

A document from the Chair's forum has been circulated, giving the pros and cons of the proposed changes. Pam noted the advantage that it would be a more strategically focused and responsive board, with a representative Council to address the views of local u3as. Against that, the right of representation on the Board would be removed as the regional directors would be on the '2nd tier' in the Council. The Chair of the Council would not be a Trustee, so could attend Board meetings but without voting rights, and the Board would appoint this Chair from nominations from Council. The Council only has an advisory role, and there is the worry that the Council will become a talking shop with no power.

Much discussion ensued, during which the need for change was acknowledged as well as the benefits of a smaller board, but questions remained about the lack of clarity on how the decision-making process will work and whether the proposed changes will solve the communication problem. The Committee decided against postponing our decision to next month. A vote was held on the resolution to change

the Articles of Association to enable introduction of the new structure. There were 3 votes for, 6 votes against with 1 abstention.

7. Membership Application Forms

Discussed earlier under Membership Secretary's Report.

8. Group Leaders Meeting

The date has been fixed for Monday 28th October. As there are fewer groups meeting on a Monday than other days, this is the best date that could be found.

Agenda item suggestions:

Finance: Pam T to explain Group returns, also how to put costs on group web pages

Risk Assessments: Reminder (from Debra or Pam U)

Emergency Contact information: Reminder (from Debra or Pam U)

EDI: Pam U to give update

Case Study Workshops after lunch: 'What would you do in a particular scenario?'

Pam U to draft some case study scenarios

Bev to email GLs next week asking who is coming and give GLs date by which to reply so we have an Agenda at the next meeting. **Action: BG**

Bev to tell Pam which groups are represented by whom, so people can be arranged in appropriate groups for the workshops. **Action PU/BG**

Helen to put a notice in *News & Views*, reminding GLs about sending items for the Agenda. **Action: HR**

9. AOB

Margaret asked if anyone knew a member who was a magistrate, who might be able to lead a role play at a members meeting. Garry said he may be able to recommend someone. Bev suggested the Drama group could be involved.

Phil announced that he was stepping down from the Committee and the Web Manager role at the earliest opportunity.

Date & Time of next meeting: Wednesday 9th October 2024, 10.00 am
Meeting closed at: 12.15 pm

Accepted as a true record. Pam Upton - Chair.

P Upton

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