

Charnwood u3a Committee

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 10th August 2022

Present: Mike Hood (MH) (Chair), Geetha Bala (GB), Phil Bass (PB), Bev Gillman (BG), Diana Harvey (DH), Margaret Kelvey (MK), Bob Pyatt (BP), Garry Rigby (GR), Tony Westaway (TW), Helen Reid (HR) (Minutes).

Apologies were received from Pam Upton, Sue Ronald and Graham Cooper

Members of the Loughborough u3a (Lu3a) Committee - Dawn Hawley (Chair, Lu3a), Margaret Pickford (Groups Coordinator, Lu3a) and Sue Cotton (Treasurer, Lu3a) - attended for discussion of item 4.

1.	<p>Minutes of the last meeting on 13th July 2022 The minutes were agreed as correct and signed.</p>	
2.	<p>Matters Arising and Actions (Items not covered by the agenda)</p> <p>2.3.c.2: The laptop exchange has been sorted.</p> <p>7.1: Bev had not yet sent out the Accessibility Audit to group leaders. See item 3c.1.</p> <p>10.1: Following circulation of the Cu3a Constitution and TAT sample, Mike asked if anyone felt that any areas of our constitution needed updating. There were no specific comments, just that the TAT one was very long and complicated.</p>	
3.	<p>Reports</p> <p>a. Secretary (PU)</p> <p><u>TAT AGM</u></p> <p>i. We have 3 votes for director elections, deadline 22nd August. It was agreed that Mike would look at the candidates and choose on our behalf.</p> <p>ii. TAT have published two proposals to increase subscriptions annually in line with the UK's State Pension increase, one to start 1 April 2023, the other to start 1 April 2024. Mike has been approached by the Chair of Soar Valley u3a seeking support for a counter-proposal for an increase of 50p this year, but further increases not to be automatic. Any amendment must be submitted to TAT by 25th August, seconded by another u3a. There followed a discussion of the issues, including the 'value for money' of TAT membership, its necessity for insurance, etc. Overall, it was felt an increase in line with pension increases was not unreasonable, given that it would be of the order of 40-50p per member per year, and avoids TAT having to seek approval for an increase each year. Committee voted in favour of an increase from 2024. So it was agreed that we would not second the Soar Valley proposal and Mike would inform their Chair.</p> <p>b. Beacon (PB)</p> <p>1. There has been recent notification of changes to the way Beacon handles passwords which should make it easier to log in. Phil will forward details to the Commttee.</p> <p>2. The Theatre Group is now led by Gillian Ablethorpe, with Sue Unsworth handling the finance. Tony will arrange the generic email address for the Theatre Group to be forwarded to Gillian.</p> <p>3. Bob asked if we could ask the Beacon team to fix problems. He has to make every entry 3 times which is very error-prone. Phil said there is no prospect of substantial changes to Beacon.</p>	<p>MH</p> <p>MH</p> <p>PB</p> <p>TW</p>

<p>4. Garry confirmed that the categories of Joint and Associate Joint members can be removed from Beacon as we never use these.</p>	PB
<p>5. Garry will transfer relevant members to the 'Postal' category as they renew and pay the £5, and anyone from Lu3a without email will automatically become a postal member without charge until September 2023. In response to a question he confirmed that the two Honorary members receiving <i>News & Views</i> by post will continue to receive this free of charge.</p>	GR
<p>c. Groups Coordinator</p>	
<p>1. Bev noted she'd been asked to send out the Accessibility Audit to group leaders, but as to when, she felt it better to send it out just prior to the group leaders' meeting in October rather than over the summer. It was agreed to send it out about 4 weeks before the meeting.</p>	BG
<p>2. Re group numbers, Bev had replies from only 5 groups (out of 85) saying numbers are down. Mike heard walking group numbers are down and they are thinking of amalgamating groups.</p>	
<p>3. Bev confirmed that Sci Tech have officially merged, with Roy Faulkner as leader and Janet Butlin doing the finance. Bob pointed out their finances needed sorting out. It was agreed that the 2 groups should be merged on the website and on Beacon, under the name Science & Technology, with the generic email going to Roy and Janet.</p>	TW/PB
<p>d. Membership Secretary</p>	
<p>1. Garry reported a 4.2% increase in our membership over the last year. Since last month there had been 1 death, 1 resigned member had rejoined and there have been 6 new members, so we now have 967 members. Deaths can be announced in <i>News & Views</i> if Helen is notified.</p>	GR
<p>2. Next month will see the start of the new year for renewals. Garry will send out emails, encouraging members to pay by BACS and asking them to change bank details to Unity, though payments to HSBC will still work. Members who don't have a printer can collect their membership cards at a monthly meeting. Helen asked if payments by BACS should include a reference no. Garry confirmed they should use their membership no. as reference and he would add this to the email. Garry will send a 'renewals' item for next month's newsletter.</p>	GR
<p>3. There was some discussion of when/where members carry their emergency contact details and any medical information. It was felt it was up to the individual to carry relevant details.</p>	
<p>4. Members without email will be sent a letter pointing out the £5 charge to receive <i>News & Views</i> by post. If they don't pay £5, they can still collect a printed copy at a monthly meeting.</p>	GR
<p>5. The onus will be on Lu3a to distribute Cu3a membership forms to their members.</p>	
<p>6. Tony asked about charging extra for the magazine. We may consider this in future.</p>	
<p>e. New members Liaison</p>	
<p>Margaret noted 7 new members in August (including the one who had rejoined), and that 5 of them were men. She will start contacting them by mid-August.</p>	
<p>f. Treasurer</p>	
<p>1. Bob noted a lot of activity in June, due to much of the main annual expenditure occurring then, e.g. affiliation fees and Beacon charges. July was quieter, the main expense (in central meetings) due to a delayed invoice from John Storer House, and most activity was in interest groups' income and expenditure. A problem of unallocated deposits had been resolved.</p>	
<p>2. Bob noted that Milton Keynes u3a had been boosted by a bequest from a deceased member. Also that Milton Keynes banked with Metro Bank who currently don't impose charges, but Bob's efforts to contact Metro had so far been unsuccessful.</p>	

	<p>3. Bank charges are being kept low by putting renewals through Unity where cheques are free up to a certain number. Groups are also being encouraged to use Unity, but there is reluctance, as they cannot use the NatWest machines to pay in and there are often queues for the cashiers. It seems that Unity's parent company Lloyds will not accept cheque payments into Unity bank. So the HSBC account is being kept open for the time being.</p> <p>4. The debit cards are both being used successfully with no apparent problems.</p> <p>g. Web Manager</p> <p>1. Tony has developed a new page with Committee details and role descriptions in collapsible sections. He asked how we want to present role-holders who are not Committee members, favouring a separate page but not called 'non-committee roles'. We agreed to call it 'Support Team'. Helen agreed to take photos of these people at this afternoon's meeting at Emmanuel.</p> <p>2. Stats for website visits show numbers of visitors have been dropping off slightly over the summer (though summer access times are very early in the morning). The PDF download stats show that the members handbook has suddenly become very popular. However, the number of people looking at group pages has dropped off dramatically, in many cases by over 50%. Possible reasons are drop-off in attendance and details of meetings no longer appearing on group pages. Keeping these pages up to date relies on group leaders supplying information.</p> <p>3. Do we need a prune of our website? In particular, there are lots of on-line links, but all of them are visited, especially those to wildlife webcams and on-line advice. As it's not costing us anything except a bit of Tony's time to check the links still work, we agreed to keep these.</p>	TW/HR
4.	<p>Loughborough u3a (Lu3a)</p> <p>1. Lu3a Committee members had been invited to attend and provide information in 3 areas:</p> <p>a. <u>Membership</u> A list of the 123 current members of Lu3a was passed to Garry. It was agreed that Lu3a will send a letter to all their members, enclosing a separate printed membership form for them to complete and return to Garry if they wish to join Cu3a. Garry to email the form to Dawn.</p> <p>b. <u>Groups</u> In October, Lu3a will ask group leaders to say if they want to continue into 2023 as part of Charnwood u3a. Bev and Margaret P to liaise on transfer of groups, and members of those groups. Most of Lu3a's groups relate to craft or walking and there's not too much overlap. Tony can put relevant information on the website about groups as soon as he's informed which groups will be continuing, saying 'from January' and creating generic email addresses as appropriate. Mike to act as intermediary for this information.</p> <p>c. <u>Assets</u></p> <p>1. Assets held by various Lu3a members/groups are mainly old equipment but include one new laptop and a projector. Mike asked for any assests to be logged so they could be covered by u3a insurance. Phil offered to repurpose old laptops by installing the Linux operating system.</p> <p>2. Lu3a confirmed they have no commitments for next year, and currently aren't paying hall hire fees for meetings. They had received an offer of a speaker which may be of interest for a Cu3a talk next year. Mike asked for details so he could forward to Graham.</p> <p>3. In response to queries: a) Garry explained that on joining Cu3a, each member will be sent a membership pack including a list of groups and a membership card in a 'new member' colour, and b) Mike confirmed that TAT indemnity insurance will apply as before.</p>	GR BG TW/MH

5.	<p>Emergency contact details (legitimate interest) The TAT document circulated to the Committee shows we have a legitimate reason for keeping ICE information. This document to be relayed to group leaders and placed on the website.</p>	BG/TW
6.	<p>Simple Membership (SM) Following the meeting last month with Dave Barratt of Milton Keynes u3a and the demonstration of the SM system, the Committee were asked how they feel regarding SM.</p> <p>In response to a question from Tony, Phil confirmed that Committee papers can be protected by a separate password. Helen commented that generating address labels of a sensible size had proved problematic in SM but Dave had agreed to find out how to do this.</p> <p>Two key issues were identified and discussed: a) <u>Support</u> Can we trust the one individual if more u3as adopt SM? Phil said the SM User Group think, maybe wrongly, that as more u3as adopt SM, more people will be recruited to provide support. But how much confidence can we have in the Beacon team? Any updates rely on communication between a team of ~10 TAT volunteers and Sftware (unknown no. of people involved). b) <u>Group Leader involvement</u> Successful implementation of SM depends on group leaders actively using it. Phil sees this as a positive, that we should encourage them to manage their groups on-line. He accepts that some won't, but thinks that more will do so in time. Committee members felt that group leader engagement would be poor, judging by the lack of engagement with Beacon, failure to answer emails etc. but Phil felt the more user-friendly SM interface would encourage people to use it.</p> <p>Garry said that whilst SM can do a lot more than Beacon, it seems to rely on people renewing via PayPal etc. Unless payment is automated, handling renewals is more difficult and time-consuming in SM, and producing membership cards is more problematic.</p> <p>Mike suggested the SM/Beacon sub-committee could meet and prepare a proposal to present to a future meeting of the Committee to vote on.</p> <p>Bob commented that he'd need much more information to make a decision, and would need to discuss financial aspects with someone who has used the system for longer than the 3 months experience of the MK treasurer he had spoken with (one of a team of 3 dealing with finances).</p>	
7.	<p>On-Line Membership Forms Tony has developed on-line membership forms for new members and renewals which Garry has now seen. If back-end problems converting to pdf can be overcome, this might be used to send members a copy of their application. Tony to make the forms available on the website.</p>	TW
8.	<p>Members Survey re Monthly Meeting Attendance Tony has produced an on-line version of the members survey in two parts. This could be used alongside group leaders surveying groups, following the group leaders meeting. Tony agreed to circulate the link to the survey to the Committee.</p>	TW
9.	<p>Group Leaders meeting This will be in October, date to be decided. Discussion deferred to next meeting.</p>	
10.	<p>AOB Tony gave his apologies for the next meeting. Bob will be away from 21 Sept to 5 Oct. The Picnic in the Park had been more successful than anticipated, >100 members attended.</p>	
11.	<p>Date and Time of next meeting: Wednesday September 14th, 10am, at John Storer House. The meeting closed at 12.13.</p>	