

Committee Meeting Minutes

Venue: John Storer House

Date & Time: Wednesday 13th September 2023, 10 am.

Present: Pam Upton (PU) (Chair), Geetha Bala (GB), Phil Bass (PB), Bev Gillman (BG), Margaret Kelvey (MK), Bob Pyatt (BP), Peter Reid (PR), Garry Rigby (GR), Sue Ronald (SR), Tony Westaway (TW), Helen Reid (HR) (Minutes).

Apologies: Debra Hardwick (DH).

1. Minutes of last meeting on 9th August

No amendments.

Signed copy to be sent to Phil and Tony for the websites.

Action: PU

2. Matters arising (items not included in agenda)

2a: Upcoming Treasurer vacancy: No offers received. Sue suggested that we encourage Group Leaders to identify potential candidates amongst their members and ask them. Pam will mention it at the next GL meeting in October. We need to stress (again) that if no-one volunteers, the u3a will have to close.

Action: ALL

2c. Copyright images: Pam has contacted the NLA but had no response. Tony explained that images can be used in meetings, on screen or passed around, but not photocopied for people to take away. They can also be put in a newsletter. Care is needed as images in newspapers may not be owned by the newspaper but by the photographer. Pam suggested to relay to GLs that if in doubt, don't do it.

2e. Recently joined members: Phil has sent Margaret an email explaining how to access a list of these.

5. Some licences on SM website were out of date: this has now been sorted.

10. Teamprint closure: No immediate rush as TeamPrint will print the next (October) newsletter. Helen will obtain quotes from alternative printers in due course.

12. AOB: Pam still hasn't heard from Dawn re laptop, but may see her this afternoon.

3. Reports

Secretary (DH)

Issue of media licences: All are automatically updated by u3a, who don't always pass on copy, but we are covered to 2024. We still await a copy of the CLA licence.

There is revised information about the licences for GLs to access. Bev has reminded them and added names as appropriate to the NLA list. Sue was assured she was on the list. Garry said the list should be on the website so people know if they are

covered. Tony confirmed it is there under 'Information for Group Leaders' but dated 2021 so needs updating. Bev agreed to send the current list to Pam.

Action: BG

It was agreed that the on-line Group Leaders Handbook needs updating. Pam, Bev and Geetha agreed to meet via Zoom to organise this. Pam to email some dates.

Action: PU, GB, BG

Peter said that under GDPR rules there needs to be someone responsible for the rules being followed and that any organisation holding personal data should be paying a fee (ca. £45 a year) to register with the Information Commissioners Office. Pam asked Peter to email the Committee about this, for discussion at the next Committee meeting. It may well be covered by TAT, but we need to check. Pam to ask Debra to check if there's anything on the Charity Commission website about it.

Action: PR, PU

Systems Administrator (PB)

So far, there have been 3 Simple Membership (SM) workshops for Group Leaders and all seemed to go well, with no real difficulties. Garry asked how many Beacon users have signed up. Those who haven't need to be encouraged to do so before Beacon is withdrawn. Helen asked about follow-on workshops for areas not yet covered, e.g. finance. Finance is an issue and will need to be addressed later. Questionnaires have been collected and will be reviewed at the next SM meeting on 4th Oct.

Phil has asked his contact at the library to invoice Bob for the room hire. Bob asked how the finance system will work with SM. On Beacon, only bank account transactions are recorded. Martyn is liaising with other SM users on how best to set up the finance system. Once the processes are decided, e.g. what group leaders can and mustn't do, Bob needs to be informed. GLs will be told to continue to use Beacon for now and they will be updated on the SM situation at the Group Leaders meeting.

Phil reported a couple of issues that are still with Ric, the SM developer, who has been busy, but is addressing our queries. Re the current Krystal website, Tony has sent Phil instructions on how to access it, but he lacks the tools to update it easily.

Tony mentioned that the Cu3a logo was changed for the current website, but it was pointed out that for the SM website, this would involve changing the template which we can't easily do. Tony commented that when prospective members go onto the joining page then click on the Cu3a logo to go back to the Home page, they end up on the Simple Membership site which is confusing.

Pam noted that there will be monthly updates on SM in the newsletter. Phil agreed to give a presentation on the current state of the SM system at the next Committee meeting. In the meantime Phil would send links to both the test site and live site for Committee members to look at both. Helen asked Phil whether by the next Committee meeting he would know whether we can change the default template. Phil agreed to ask Ric the question again.

Action: PB

Tony asked about reporting bugs, as Sue was having a problem with a link (though it later worked). If people report bugs to Phil, he can then report them to Ric. Garry mentioned that usernames can't cope with accents in names. Also the membership fee doesn't automatically go in on renewal.

Sue expressed concern about the SM system but Phil reported that Group Leaders at the workshops were getting on much better than they had with Beacon. Pam feels that it is more people-friendly than Beacon because it is a website. It should encourage members who don't currently use either the website or Beacon to use the new website.

Up to now we have had 2 people – Systems Administrator and Web Manager – and for future we might consider sharing the load in a similar way with Simple Membership. However, Phil pointed out that the issue is not the amount of work on him but the amount put on Ric, as he has 20+ u3as to manage. Pam wondered how often longstanding users of SM now need to refer to Ric; hopefully our reliance on him will reduce in time. Bob commented that if there's a problem with 20 SM users, compared with 500 Beacon users, we might be in trouble, though it was pointed out that the user forum is supportive and Ric has a development team to help. Helen pointed out that we can't compare Beacon directly with SM as Beacon is just a database whereas SM's integrated website should offer a more powerful product. However, we know from past feedback that members don't like having to log in, so as much information as possible should be accessible on the website without having to log in, as it is now. When Phil does the presentation, we can look at it as a member or potential member.

Phil reported that there has been a problem with the way some email clients respond to messages generated by SM. A reply went to Phil instead of the Group Leader who sent the message, apparently because the member's email client didn't respect the correct protocols. Tony commented that such problems seem to be affecting email systems in general, including generic emails.

Geetha suggested that at coffee time at the monthly meeting, 2 or 3 of us could show SM on our laptops for people to look at for 5-10 minutes. Phil said we might be able to use the church projector in the main hall for everyone to see. However, Geetha's approach seems friendlier and more informal, so it was agreed to try this at the November meeting by which time members should have their login details. Pam will mention this in her email inviting members to the meeting. Phil advised Pam to use the merged email facility to insert their username.

Groups Coordinator (BG)

Bev reported that she'd had a busy month signing GLs up for the workshops; about half the 96 group leaders have signed up for these. There had been queries from GLs about whether they needed to be registered for the NLA licence, and as we have plenty of spaces on the list, Bev has added them just in case.

The next Group Leaders meeting will be at Emmanuel in October and it was decided Monday 30th would be the best date. Suggested agenda items: Simple Membership; Finance; EDI (15 minute slot); Support for groups/GLs and potential new groups (see *section 8*). Sue said that GLs should be encouraged to identify other, preferably younger, people in their group who might be able to take over.

Membership Secretary (GR)

Garry reported that membership has fallen a little, but this is expected at renewal time. We currently have 1053 members. Renewals are going very well. As of today, 43% have renewed. Garry has been correcting the address format for all renewals. Elizabeth Peers, who helped with transfer of Loughborough u3a members has offered more help this year, but she's unfamiliar with the new SM system. She could help to deal with email renewals, so Garry can compile a spreadsheet and send out the badges. Helen commented that Garry's report lists 48 postal members (matching the 48 on Beacon) but there are only 46 on SM. It seems one has become an Individual

member. Garry has updated Beacon with new members but not updated existing records to reflect status changes. With Elizabeth's help, Garry hopes to sort out the records and create a current 'News' list so SM can be used to send out the newsletter.

Garry noted the large number of lapsed members (around 450) who'd come across from Beacon and wants to process these as 'leavers'. It needs an administrator to delete these, with Garry keeping a copy of those who had Gift Aid. Phil said there is no easy way of deleting these in bulk, but agreed we should not be keeping records beyond the period we need them. Phil and Garry to liaise on this. Garry also described the difficulty of reinstating someone who has left. Pam raised the point Garry made about people not emailing him to say they'd paid and asked whether she should mention it this afternoon, but Garry said it usually sorted itself out when people emailed him to complain they hadn't received their badge.

New Members Liaison (MK)

Margaret said that with the change to SM, her role doesn't exist, so she is now Membership Assistant. She proposed three changes to her role:

- a) that rather than ringing all new members, she'd answer - by phone or email - enquiries posted on the website, via 'Ask Margaret'. There has been a big increase in these recently, and people seem to want a lot of 'hand-holding'.
 - b) She'll set up a 'Welcome' table for new members in the lounge at Emmanuel, where people can come and chat at coffee time, starting this afternoon.
 - c) She will work with everyone on the Committee as needed to support new members.
- Everyone present was happy with these proposals.

Treasurer (BP)

Bob noted that the July report included receipt of Gift Aid and thanked Garry. The groups were surprisingly active in July. August included the large affiliation fee. The central funds are still healthy, and we hold at least 9 months worth of funds. Some groups were inactive in August, and some groups' dwindling membership no longer justified paying for a venue.

Bob is maintaining the group ledgers on Beacon but ceased recording all activities through Beacon from end of June, just keeping a local record of all activities. He assumes he will still need to create the whole year record for 2023 in SM.

Web Manager (TW)

Phil has login details for Krystal. When Tony is no longer needed, Phil just needs to change the administrator name and email address on-line.

Tony is hoping to move to Devon end Oct – mid Nov, and he may not make the next two meetings. He kindly offered to do the minimal maintenance on the current website until we move over fully to the SM site.

In recognition of Tony's efforts, Garry proposed that Tony be made an Honorary Member of Charnwood u3a. Everyone agreed and applauded.

Krystal are increasing the price for our plan from £50 to £55. Phil confirmed that we need to keep the Krystal subscription because of the generic email addresses. Phil said that another u3a using SM had arranged with their hosting company to pay a reduced fee for forwarding generic emails, so we may be able to do similar.

4. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Deferred to next meeting.

5. Monthly Meeting Programme

The Programme Planning Team now consists of Margaret, Geetha, David Jefferson and Ian Procter-Blain and this is working well.

In December, we've booked the Ratcliffe Chorale who are asking £150: £75 for the leader and £75 for the pianist. Bob confirmed we are well within budget and everyone was happy to pay the £150. Garry pointed out that the grand piano does not belong to the church and the owner's permission would be needed to play it.

For the February meeting, Margaret has spoken to singer Holly Reynolds, daughter of a previous speaker Kevin Reynolds. She can come on 14th February (Valentine's Day) to sing songs from the 50s and 60s on the theme of 'Love'. Cost would be £85 plus £15 for travel. Everyone agreed to go ahead with this booking.

Geetha said she had been contacted by Mike Storr, very unhappy that he hadn't been paid as promised. She told him she would take the issue to the Committee and get back to him. We agreed that we couldn't pay him because the Third Age Trust precludes payment to u3a members, and he shouldn't have been promised payment.

Geetha said she had been in touch with a magician who had agreed to entertain us for a fee of £100. This was approved by Committee.

Nothing has been planned for the AGM in March. The EDI group had suggested mini presentations from groups, but due to time restrictions, an exhibition in the foyer might be better, for people to look round after the AGM. Some music might be a possibility. It was agreed that this should be another item for the Group Leaders meeting agenda.

6. Monthly Meeting 'Holiday' 2024

Pam suggested we change the monthly meeting holiday from July to August. She will email Emmanuel about this.

Action: PU

7. Proposed Pickleball Group - finance request

Martyn Speight has asked for a loan of £140 to set up a Pickleball group, as detailed in his email. This was approved by Committee. Pam will email Martyn to say yes.

Action: PU

8. Possible Group Closures

Making Music Group will almost certainly close. The general principle here is that it is up to the group members to decide what they want to do, and that if a group leaves the u3a – as in this case – they need to know that they won't be covered by u3a insurance and licences and any u3a-owned equipment must be returned.

Tony said Dawn Hawley had told him that Beading 1, Beading 2 and Garden Visits were closing. Tony asked if groups where the leader has resigned and said 'the group is closing' should remain on the website with 'no current group leader' or should the group be removed? It was agreed that we need to know if the members have been consulted about whether they want to continue the group. In the case of Parish Walks the members had been consulted but no offers to lead had been received. However, it was pointed out that there doesn't need to be just one leader. Several groups operate with shared leadership or a committee.

Tony had received an offer from a non-u3a member to run a chair yoga group, but it would need a u3a member to lead the group. Bev was concerned that this offer was not for u3a reasons but to earn money, but it was pointed out that sometimes a paid instructor is needed, as with the existing Pilates and Tai Chi groups.

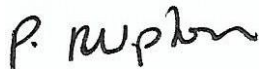
Garry reported that the Activities list he sends out to new members hadn't been updated since January. Tony offered to provide Garry with an updated list he had compiled from Beacon listings. Tony suggested it needs to be maintained, particularly for postal members, but someone needs to take responsibility for updating it.

There followed a wide-ranging discussion of what needs to happen to support groups and leaders, provide timely information to all members and get them more involved. These issues will be discussed at the Group Leaders meeting on 30th October. Bev asked if it was OK for her to email members of groups where the leader was stepping down and this was agreed to be a good idea.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 12:20 pm.

Date & Time of the next meeting: Wednesday 11th October at 10 am.

Accepted as a true record. Pam Upton,



Chair.....