

Committee Meeting Minutes

Venue: John Storer House

Date & Time: Wednesday 11th October 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), Helen Reid (HR) (Minutes). Stephen Morris and Martyn Speight joined the meeting for the Simple Membership discussion.

Apologies: Debra Hardwick (DH), Sue Ronald (SR), Tony Westaway (TW)

1. Minutes of last meeting on 13th September

Corrections:

Page 3, last paragraph, should be Elizabeth **Peers** not **Pears**.

Page 4, 2nd para: Bev reported that she did **not** say that we need to ensure people are told when they are 'lapsed'. She suggested the sentence be changed to 'Bev reported that 2 members had received a message saying they'd been deactivated'. Bev agreed to send Garry the names of the members concerned and he would check.

With the above corrections, signed copy to be sent to Phil and Tony for the websites.

Action: PU

2. Matters arising (items not included in agenda)

2, 10. (p.1): Helen has obtained quotes for printing the newsletter. M&B Printers quoted £188 per month, whilst the University quoted £28.10 + VAT per month for 60 copies double-sided monochrome, stapled. It was agreed to go with the University.

2a (p.1): The Treasurer vacancy is becoming urgent, and we really do need to push it - we can't wait till just before the AGM. Bob and Pam will mention it at the Group Leaders meeting and we should have an eye-catching 'poster' in the next newsletter as well as a mention in the 'View from the Chair'.

Action: ALL

3. (p.2, 2nd para): Group Leaders Handbook: Geetha, Bev and Pam met last week about this; Debra and Bob to check it's up to date. Geetha said she had checked on accessibility: 'Communications' in the EDI policy is missing from the GL Handbook.

Action DH, BP

3. (p.2, 3rd para): Helen reported that she had been onto the ICO website, completed the 'self-assessment questionnaire' and found that we are exempt and do not need to register or pay a fee. The details have been circulated to the Committee by email.

6. (p.5): Emmanuel are OK with changing our Monthly Meeting 'holiday' from July to August. All agreed with this plan.

8. (p.6, 3rd para): Activities List: Someone needs to take responsibility for updating it. Garry said he can do this as he needs to send it out, but he needs to be informed of changes. This to be raised at the Group Leaders meeting.

3. Reports

Secretary (DH)

Report notes the Network meeting on 19th which Debra and Pam will be attending, and also gives details of TAT workshops which may be of interest to members of Committee and EDI Team.

Systems Administrator (PB)

Phil had email from Tony saying our SSL certificate has been renewed, allowing a secure connection to the Krystal website. All other information is in the report or to be discussed under the Simple Membership section later.

Membership Secretary (GR)

Garry reported that outstanding renewals are now down to 95, compared with previous years being around 180 at the end of October. The extra reminder on 1st Oct has clearly spurred people into action. We have lost some members due to age, moving away, etc. as normal. Some people have continued to pay into the HSBC account and have paid £13, leading to delays in getting their membership cards as Garry can't see the HSBC account. Garry will email each of these members to say the HSBC account will be closed before next year so they must change their payment details.

Action: GR

Garry still has issues with fields in SM, the defaults and what the fields actually do. Our old application form stated that their email address would be used for communication but this isn't on our current on-line form and really should be, so it's clear they are opting in to 'Communication by email' thus justifying changing the default No to Yes. They can opt in or out of the newsletter separately on their profile. Helen proposed not to use 'merged email' for the newsletter notification but to send a single email to all those in the 4 lists compiled by Garry (i.e. to exclude those who have opted out of the newsletter) and also to change the wording from just 'Cu3a mailing list' to 'Cu3a mailing list for the newsletter notification' and tell them they can change their option on their profile or contact Garry.

Action: HR

Phil reported that the 3 profile fields mentioned in Garry's report had not been set up properly. Phil has now made changes suggested by Ric and it works perfectly on the test site but on the live site, the 'newsletter required' one causes an error. Investigation is continuing. For the other 2, defaults have now been set to what Garry asked for.

New Members Liaison (MK)

Margaret reported that she'd had 8-10 'new member' enquiries through the form on the 'old' web page and asked if we'd have a similar facility on the SM website. Currently there is just an email link to contact Margaret. Pam commented that the 'Welcome' table had proved successful – even if some of the enquirers weren't new members.

Groups Coordinator (BG)

Group Leaders meeting: 30th Oct, 12-3 with lunch at 1. Price of lunch £10 or £12 a head depending on numbers. Currently 30+ have said they are coming (so should be £10). Committee approved payment of the lunch costs. Reminder will be sent to GLs. NLA licence: Pam will re-send the list to Bev.

Action : PU

Group Leaders Handbook: Bev will revise this following changes agreed at the recent meeting. Numerous references to Beacon to be changed to 'website'.

Action: BG

Agenda for GLs meeting to be finalised. The 'pick a stick' at the start of the last

meeting - so people weren't sitting with friends - worked well and promoted a lot of conversation. Pam mentioned the possibility of group exhibitions at the AGM and GLs could be asked to think about that. Pam offered to send Bev a list of topics which have previously been suggested and Bev to send Pam the Agenda once drafted.

Action: PU, BG

Dawn Hawley had told Bev she was closing her groups, but the groups have been left open to see if another leader emerged. As she was about to email group members, Bev found that a leader had already been entered into SM, but Bev knew nothing about this, and asked if any of the Committee knew about it – no-one did. Also Dawn has emailed Bev again asking her to remove these groups. Bev has assured Dawn she is no longer Group Leader. Bev will contact the new 'leader' to clarify things and invite them to the GLs meeting.

Action: BG

Treasurer (BP)

Bob said he was having some difficulty sorting out the multiple deposits going into Unity and HSBC. Some leaders may be making small deposits and not informing him. An amount of £10 or £15 is assumed to be for membership but may not be. There had been one deposit of over £900 which still needs a 'home', assumed to be group income, but currently 'unallocated'. Phil said he had seen a similar amount associated with Days of Interest, but Bob said Pauline always informs him of her transactions. Another thing to mention at GLs meeting: Bob should be notified what deposits are for.

Emmanuel have billed us for several meetings and told us they will be raising their charges from £150 to £165 per meeting and bill us monthly. Not all suppliers are so fastidious. Bev asked for approval of cost of hiring Emmanuel for the GLs meeting and this was agreed.

Helen said that as the University don't issue invoices for <£50, she would pay for the newsletters on collection each month and ask Bob to refund her. Bob agreed.

The Krystal cost has increased from £55 to £110+VAT. Phil pointed out that we were paying for website hosting which we will no longer need and we may be able to get a cheaper option for email forwarding.

Bob wondered about closing the HSBC account if people are still paying into it. Garry said everyone who had standing orders to HSBC has probably paid by now. On other banks, Milton Keynes u3a had recommended Metro Bank, and had a lot of money from a legacy. Pam mentioned a discussion on the u3a Facebook page (Keeping in Touch) about recommended banks and Lloyds was popular. Even though Unity is a subsidiary of Lloyds, we can't use Lloyds as our local bank branch without a Lloyds account. Geetha said that Equality Action bank with Lloyds and they do have dual authorisation. So we could close the Unity account and open one with Lloyds. Unity are very good at sending us details of cheque deposits, so any other bank would need to be asked about information feedback and charges.

Bob pointed out that in his report 'Interest Group Funds' hides a multiplicity of transactions. Most traffic we have are deposits and payments on behalf of groups, which an incoming Treasurer would need to get to grips with - another reason why we need to push to get an 'apprentice' as soon as possible.

Web Manager (TW)

Item 5 - re when Tony is no longer needed to maintain the old website - will be discussed under Simple Membership. No other points raised.

4. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Most of the last meeting was about the Group Leaders meeting.

It had been suggested that the joining form could include a question about special requirements. Garry questioned who would look at a response in a text field, but it was felt important for us to try to get the information. In further discussion, it was suggested this could go on the website, thus also reaching existing members, and the question could be asked when new members are sent their membership details. 'Accessibility requirements' may be a better term, but it would be important not to raise people's expectations of what we could do for them. Queries could go to an 'accessibility coordinator'. Margaret suggested we could amalgamate this with the New Members Liaison role.

5. Third Age Trust AGM

Pam has registered to attend this on our behalf so can vote. Two resolutions:

a) To have TAT give more status & support to smaller networks.

Pam suggested voting for this and no-one objected.

b) To increase membership to at least 500,000 by end of 2028 and implement substantial promotional activities across the country.

It seems some u3as don't want more members as they are struggling to cope. It would be a better resolution to raise the u3a profile and broaden its appeal, rather than having a specific number. Pam will just see how the debate goes and vote accordingly.

Margaret asked what happened to social prescribing as she hadn't heard anything recently. Pam said it had gone quiet and the last email she had a few months ago was from a different person, so a change of personnel may have slowed things down.

6. Simple Membership (SM)

When asked by Phil, everyone present confirmed they had logged in to the website and had a look around. Phil then gave a presentation concentrating on the Control Panel containing all the features of SM and guiding us through the sections available to the Site Administrator.

Renewals have been going well and all personal details are in the system, thanks to Garry. It would be good to disable the emails about password changes going to him. The system is up and running for both groups and events. About half of the group leaders have been trained, but that doesn't cover Finance as that is not yet set up, and no instruction was given on how to use Events. SM has the concept of 'Events Organiser' so we could have people managing events but haven't looked at doing that.

Communications: two options for emailing: Send Email for fixed email (working) and Merged Email where you can include fields such as Username – as was done in the last newsletter notification. As merged email sends one email to each recipient, the system struggles and can't send 900 merged emails, so membership has to be split into 4 lists. This issue has yet to be resolved; Ric and his team are aware of it, but we don't know when this might be tackled. Garry pointed out that uploading large lists doesn't work as the system times out. This seems to be a related issue.

Finance: This will be up to Martyn and Bob to implement. Martyn referred to the paper previously circulated explaining how it will work.

System section: Web Manager and overall system settings. Phil noted that the website has a lot less information than the old website, so over time we need to move the information across. We also need to redirect our domain name charnwoodu3a.org.uk to point to the SM website so we can retire the old website. The email forwarding lists are not SM, as the Microsoft server used by SM does not allow email forwarding, so we need to keep Krystal hosting for now. However, there is still a problem in that a single email address forwarding to multiple individuals is not working properly. Phil said he would contact Krystal and suggested reopening the ticket Tony had about this.

Action: PB

Pam asked if any Committee members not involved in the SM implementation team had any questions. Bob asked if the Treasurer would be able to send a request to GLs to complete an annual return (instead of relying on Garry to do so). Phil agreed to give Bob a Communications Manager role to enable him to do this. Also, Bev had only contacted Group Leaders via Beacon, so he gave her Communications Manager role to enable her to use SM for this.

Martyn mentioned that in the Membership part, there are some statistics built into the system. These can be explored at a later date.

Phil then showed the email page to demonstrate what is involved, the lists that are available (including Group Leaders) and how to select recipients. Pam suggested people – particularly Bev – investigate for themselves and ask Phil any questions. Helen pointed out the override of sender's name and email address to enable it to come from a postholder and generic email address if desired.

If anyone on the Committee needs help with using the system, Phil offered one-to-one help sessions on request.

Garry asked if the Group Leaders list was automatically generated. Phil said there is a dynamic list for Group Leaders but the list there now might possibly be a custom list. Stephen said we can easily test it to make sure. The All Members list is dynamic.

Notes from SM meeting on 4th Oct: Summary of items for Committee consideration:

1. GDPR for personal data held by groups: Pam to contact Debra to follow up.

Action: PU, DH

2. Should we encourage members to upload Emergency Contact details?: Yes

3. Web layout expectations – explore longterm collaborative approach?: Yes

4. SM web layout: to go to the SM implementation group.

5. Documents that need to be on the SM website: Helen and Peter have compiled a list of items on the old website; needs to be reduced to what's necessary and priorities. Helen mentioned that the constitution on the SM website is the old one (2021) not the current (2023) version. Phil said he'd check (*Note: after the meeting Phil updated the SM website with 2023 Constitution and moved 2021 version to the archive area*).

6. Date for current website to be 'stood down'? See final paragraph of these Minutes.

7. Groups to report attendance statistics and/or locally held monies? See below

Martyn explained that SM has an inbuilt rigorous finance system. Bob has offered to back-populate 2023 data onto the system. So groups (with appropriate GL training) can start using the finance system from start of 2024. Need 2 decisions (a, b below):

a) Bob currently reports all money held in bank; SM allows recording of cash holdings. Do we make this compulsory or suggest as best practice? It was agreed that we should have this facility and offer it to GLs without any compulsion. The form in SM for

recording money – either to be banked or cash – should make life easier for GLs. No compulsion, but encouragement to GLs to use it.
Bob mentioned ongoing balances are carried forward, but date on bank statement not necessarily the same. This is fine if Treasurer can amend that date.
Garry mentioned the 700-800 transactions for membership. Martyn said these were already in the system, though not yet reconciled. Martyn, Bob and Garry will go through this year's transactions to ensure they are correct.

b) The form has a section that needs completing: meeting attendance statistics. Do we want GLs to supply these numbers? Users have to enter something, but they can just put 0. So it would be optional if they wanted to enter actual attendance.

Garry records all his cash transactions on Beacon and can do the same on SM. This means he won't need to do an end-of-year return as it will already be in the system. This can be pointed out to GLs as an advantage of using the system.

Bulk emails: covered earlier (page 2 under Membership Secretary's report).

Decision on standing down current website: Pam felt we were not quite ready. In reply to a question about ongoing access to the old website, Phil said there will be a link to the old website on the new one, until we stop paying Krystal for the old website. Beacon will run out in March but is not connected with the website. Stephen pointed out that charnwoodu3a.org.uk is rented for 2 years at a time, expiring middle of next year, and renewal can be done by Krystal. Re the link to the old website, Garry said people need to be clear how to access information not on the SM website, particularly Group Leader information, e.g. by having a Group Leaders icon to redirect them. Pam suggested having another SM Implementation meeting within the next 2 weeks, to: a) agree what needs to be transferred from old to new website, b) suggest a date for 'standing down' the old website and c) relay these to the Committee. If this meeting can be held before the Group Leaders meeting on 30th, we can inform GLs then. Pam to send round possible dates to the SM team.

Action: PU

It was agreed that we need to stress at the Group Leaders meeting that Beacon is on its way out and is not up to date, so they need to get on to Simple Membership asap.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 12:15 pm.

Date & Time of the next meeting: Wednesday 8th November at 10 am.

Accepted as a true record. Pam Upton,

Chair..... 