

Committee Meeting Minutes

Venue: John Storer House

Date & Time: Wednesday 10th May 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), Helen Reid (HR) (Minutes).

Apologies: Debra Hardwick (DH), Tony Westaway (TW).

1. Minutes of last meeting on 12th April

Corrections:

3e (i): 'Committee members' should read 'EDI members'

4c (ii): Individual = 963 not 968

7 (i): On 1st line, change 'Garry' to 'Geetha'

9 (i): On 2nd line, change 'Group Leaders meeting' to 'Monthly meeting'

13: Change 'not unavailable' to 'not available'.

Add time (10 am) to this and next meeting.

Corrected minutes were agreed. PU to send to TW.

2. Matters arising (items not included in agenda)

3d (iii): The treasurer post has not yet been 'advertised' in the newsletter as Bob wanted to raise this at the Group Leaders meeting first. A suitable form of words needs to be agreed between HR and BP for inclusion in a future issue of News & Views.

6(i): The Monthly Meeting Survey working party hadn't yet met but will do so soon.

11. Complaint: The appeal hearing of the independent panel was due to be held today but has been postponed till at least the end of this month, as the appellant was unable to attend. In response to a query about feedback on how the case was handled, Pam will update the Committee when she has any more information.

3. Reports

These were all taken as read, with discussion of specific items outlined below.

Secretary (DH)

We need to identify who (if anyone) will vote on behalf of Charnwood u3a at the Third Age Trust AGM and it was agreed that Pam would put her name forward.

Action: PU

Pam noted that we have heard nothing from the Network and HR and BG commented that they have not had a Network newsletter for about 2 months. Pam to make enquiries.

Action: PU

Pam highlighted the TAT workshops on 12th May and 2nd June on 'running your u3a' which might be useful, especially for new Trustees, and offered to send the link to anyone interested.

Beacon Administrator (PB)

Phil raised the issue of a PayPal account and would like to get this approved to enable us to offer on-line joining and renewal. It was agreed to discuss this under the Simple Membership item.

Groups Coordinator (BG)

Re the recent Group leaders meeting, Pam commented that there was a bit of confusion about ICE information, and Bev agreed to add information on how to print it. It was agreed there was no point in promoting the Beacon Members Portal if we are going to move away from Beacon soon.

Membership Secretary (GR)

Garry commented that numbers were continuing to rise slowly. Using Excel, he can easily create membership cards, as per the example shown in his report, so will be able to produce these if Simple Membership can't. In response to a query, Garry confirmed that he only needs to download a person's name and membership number, so would not hold any contact details on his computer, thus not be in breach of data protection regulations.

New Members Liaison (MK)

Margaret reported that she had contacted 12 new members in April. They had all joined groups and the gender split was 50% male/female.

Treasurer (BP)

Bob noted the major item of expenditure this month was the TAT magazine, as expected. Also the transfer from Loughborough u3a had arrived, and at over £4K was more than anticipated. He commented that the major activity centres on Group funds for which totals only are included in his report, but Group Leaders can see their group's accounts on Beacon. Pam noted that Emmanuel had put up the catering costs for the Group Leaders meeting from £7.50 to £10 per head and Bob is comfortable with this.

Pam asked if Central funds can be listed separately (i.e. Total minus Group funds) so it is easier for the annual return to the Charities Commission. Bob agreed to do this in future. Helen asked if it was planned to keep the two bank accounts going. Bob said that all groups were now paying into Unity, but Garry noted that some members were still using old standing orders to HSBC. It was agreed that Garry would inform members in the membership renewal notice that we are closing the HSBC account, and that they must pay into the Unity account.

Web Manager (TW)

It was agreed that the issue of generic email addresses would be discussed under Simple Membership.

Helen reported that when sending out papers for this meeting using the Committee generic email address, 5 people didn't receive it, so there is still a problem currently. A simple text message asking for reports had been received by everyone but the problem arose when sending a lot of attachments. It was suggested that it may be a problem at the recipient's end rather than the sender's, or that it may be linked to 'group' addresses rather than individual generic addresses.

4. Simple Membership

Referring to his 'Simple Membership Concerns' document which had been circulated, Phil asked the Committee whether he had answered everyone's concerns.

There was some discussion about using generic emails and forwarding addresses following the move to Simple Membership (SM), given that the hosting platform for SM doesn't offer the facility. Phil stated that we could keep using the forwarding facility offered by Krystal, as we do now. He then questioned whether we would need generic emails at all with SM. However, after some discussion, it was agreed that generic email addresses will still be needed. As some other u3as using SM also use generic email

addresses, it was concluded that it must be possible and further investigation would be carried out.

There was some initial discussion of timing of transfer to SM, related to both membership and finance. Garry feels it is not practical to run systems in parallel, and Bob would not like the transfer to coincide with the end of the financial year.

There was a query on printing of labels and this should be solvable by granting appropriate permissions for the Membership Secretary and Newsletter Editor.

It was appreciated that not all issues can be answered fully at present but there don't appear to be any showstoppers. Garry felt it was important the issues are addressed before we start using SM and Helen agreed.

In response to a query, Phil stated that as far as he was aware, all adopters of SM have been happy with it, though he acknowledged that if the numbers increased from the current 20 to nearer 100 u3as, support may be a problem.

Bob pointed out that SM is oriented to the membership side and it is unclear how it would work on the finance side. Since group funds are dealt with centrally, Bob updates group records on a 'notepad' in Beacon, and has not found anything in SM to replicate this. So we'd need a replacement of this notebook system, that ideally group leaders would update, not just the treasurer. Currently Bob's system involves him making 4 entries per transaction. Although he feels there is a compelling case for adopting SM for the membership system, some thought would be needed on how to assimilate the finance system in a second stage.

Re timing, Garry felt a transfer before the next membership renewal/joining period would be best, suggesting mid-July at latest. Group Leaders could still use Beacon until they'd had SM training. Phil confirmed that the new website could go live at any time and that content from our current website (including archival material) could be transferred across. He confirmed he was happy to act as Web Manager for the new website.

Pam proposed that we adopt the Simple Membership system, the switchover to commence in June this year. The proposal was carried unanimously.

It was agreed that we do not need to make a decision on PayPal now and this was deferred until the next meeting when there will be time for a full discussion and decision.

5. Assets

There has been a request for a new laptop from the leader of the Photography group, as he wants to use Photoshop which won't run on the current laptop. As a Charnwood u3a asset, the computer would be available to other groups on a first-come-first-served basis. Estimated cost of a suitable replacement laptop = £500 - £600.

Pam proposed that we agree in principle to go ahead with this but she will request more details of the proposed laptop. All voted in favour except for Bob who abstained.

Action: PU

Mike has been managing the assets, finishing with organising the PAT testing this afternoon. The Committee were asked to think of anyone who might be willing to take over this role and bring any suggestions to the next meeting. It does not necessarily have to be a Committee member.

Action: Committee

Garry reported an extra item on the asset register: an extension cable which will need to be tested. Bev said that she has a kettle in her garage which is not used. An asset manager could keep an eye on such assets and be able to respond to any queries.

6. Monthly Meetings

An update on the speaker programme was reported: a South American music group have been arranged as a cheaper alternative to Lesley Smith.

Re the Christmas meeting: The Ratcliffe Chorale may be able to make it; the leader has agreed but needs to check with his singers.

Arrangements for today's meeting: There will be a camera to show the speaker and large screen, as the speaker is doing his own projection.

Last month the YouTube feed went down due to a problem with the internet. This has been an intermittent problem in the past, usually only for a few seconds.

Margaret said that we need to be very clear with the speakers as to what they are prepared to do, e.g. to take account of intellectual property rights etc. Today's speaker had had problems with sharing links. He was happy for us to stream his talk but then delete it immediately afterwards.

Folowing on from a suggestion at the last Committee meeting, Pam had contacted David Jefferson and Ian Procter-Blain to ask if they might be interested in helping with speaker arrangements, in particular with requests in the run-up to a meeting. They were both potentially interested, and Pam would speak to David at this afternoon's meeting.

Garry mentioned a sheet he'd sent to Graham about what he needed to do re speakers, e.g. getting permission for YouTube etc. This hadn't been passed on to the current team, so Garry agreed to send it to Margaret.

Action: GR

7. Financial Policy

Pam, Garry and Bob agreed to form a Subcommittee to draw up a Financial Policy, using the TAT template as a starting point.

Action: BP, PU, GR

8. Committee Roles and Deputies

An updated list was drawn up of members currently filling the various roles, both within and outside the Committee, plus their deputies. See separate document for a full list.

9. Cu3a Pens

Peter asked whether we needed 'promotional' pens as our membership is growing, but there could be a benefit in giving out pens to members as a 'feelgood' item. They could be given out at a monthly meeting, though it would be hard to stop people from taking multiples. Cost about 50p per pen – good quality refillable pens with dabber for iPad or phone. Peter was asked to monitor the deals and contact Pam with details.

Action: PR

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 12:05 pm.

Date & Time of the next meeting: Wednesday 14th June at 10 am.

P. Rapp 14. 6. 2023