

## Committee Meeting Minutes

**Venue:** John Storer House

**Date & Time:** Wednesday 12th July 2023, 10 am.

**Present:** Pam Upton (PU) (Chair), 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). Martyn Speight and Stephen Morris attended the Simple Membership discussion.

**Apologies:** Geetha Bala (GB), Debra Hardwick (DH), Tony Westaway (TW).

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### 1. Minutes of last meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> June

Corrections:

2 (top of p. 2): Ratcliffe Chorale meeting is December 13th, not December 6th.

3: Title should be Simple Membership Transition, not Simple Management Transition.

4. Membership Secretary: After 'discount of £5', add wording such as 'with Associate Members able to attend as many groups as they wish and receive the newsletter notification', and after 'Associate Membership is free', add 'for attending one group only'. Corrected minutes were agreed. PU to send to TW.

### 2. Matters arising (items not included in agenda)

2: Upcoming Treasurer vacancy: No response as yet and we need to keep trying – Pam suggested mentioning it at the GL meeting on Monday. Sue mentioned that a member of one of her groups who has Treasurer experience might be interested. She would ask him. Pam stressed that he wouldn't need to commit to anything now but could speak to Bob.

Action: SR

2. Committee emails: Generic emails are still a problem for group emails. Pam was worried emails to her at chair@charnwoodu3a.org.uk might not be getting through. Sue agreed to get her son to send an email to the chair@ address to see if Pam receives it.

Action: SR

Bob asked if his email address can be amended on Beacon from his personal email to his u3a address and Garry agreed to do this.

Action: GR

2. Assets: Garry has now sorted the computer and put Office on it. Malcolm will install his copy of Photoshop. The computer has been added to the assets list.

4. Reports – Groups Coordinator: Pam asked if Bev had contacted Anne Carter about the new reading group. Helen confirmed that Tony had contacted Anne and the correct information is now on the website.

8. Monthly Meetings: Suggestion that a link to YouTube be included in Pam's reminder email. Garry agreed to set up the link and send it to Pam in time to include in her email to members on the Monday morning before the Wednesday meeting. This would simplify things as members wouldn't need to pre-register.

Action: GR

9. AOB: Pam reported that the independent panel had heard the complainant's appeal on June 9<sup>th</sup> and that the appeal was not upheld.

Pam suggested we look again at our Complaints Policy, to include an independent panel in appropriate circumstances. Pam to draft something for the next Committee meeting.

Action: PU

4. Treasurer: Garry confirmed that £2500 had been transferred from HSBC to Unity.

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### 3. Reports

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

#### **Secretary (DH)**

Charity Commission (CC): Pam suggested we might need to prepare a Trustees' Annual Report as we'd need to send a copy to the Commission if they ask for it. At present we only have a Chair's Annual Report. There is a template for preparing the Trustees report, which Pam will circulate. It was agreed that Group funds don't count in the return to the CC so we are below the £25K threshold where a report must be sent.

Action: PU

NLA licence: Renewal is due in August and we need to check names on the list and ask group leaders if they want to be added to the list. Also to remind GLs of what they can and can't do under the licence (conditions are in the GL Handbook on the website).

Action: BG

Bev asked if the vibrant orange organiser is the same as the diary? It was thought that it was the same item and might be a wall calendar/organiser but no-one had seen one.

#### **Beacon Administrator (PB)**

Since the report, the IT Help Desk has received a query, and this is being dealt with via a personal visit next week.

#### **Groups Coordinator (BG)**

Bev reported a lot of 'behind-the-scenes' work on the changeover from Beacon to Simple Membership (SM). There is a GL meeting on July 17<sup>th</sup> to explain the changeover, but many can't come (only 13-14 takers at present), so the venue has been changed from Emmanuel to Gorse Covert. Bev has invited GLs who can't come to nominate a substitute and two of the Committee also plan to attend. Phil will do a PowerPoint presentation in a 'look and listen' session. There will be 'hands-on' training sessions later.

#### **Membership Secretary (GR)**

Garry reported that one new member is on Beacon but not yet added to SM.

Garry proposed that anyone who has joined from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 should have a renewal date of their anniversary. This was agreed by Committee.

#### **Treasurer (BP)**

Bob noted that most of the activity had occurred after the report period. Next period will show substantial expenditure, including the bill from Emmanuel. Following transfer of funds from HSBC to Unity, as of 1<sup>st</sup> July there is only about £300 in the HSBC account and we are planning to close this account. Bob favours moving to Lloyds (of which Unity is a subsidiary) but not till after the holiday period. Unity give us much more information than HSBC, particularly on number and dates of cheque deposits. Garry mentioned that we need dual authorisation which HSBC don't offer.

There was a discussion on timing of the closure of the HSBC account. Bob suggested we wait till after the renewal period to avoid penalties for members who continue to pay into HSBC. Garry would like to close it earlier and warn members in the renewal notice. It was agreed to wait till after the renewal period to close the HSBC account.

#### **Web Manager (TW)**

The Transfer to Simple Membership part of the report will be discussed later, and there were no other comments.

### 4. Draft Cu3a Financial Policy

The TAT sample Finance Policy was used as a starting point and sections were

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added/amended specifically to relate to Charnwood u3a and what we do. Pam went through the changes, which were all clarifications of meaning in relation to Cu3a procedures, including the following comments:

2.1 Bank accounts have U3A capitalised so u3a should change to U3A.

Payments authorised by 2 signatories: Bob commented that payments by charge card don't need a 2nd signatory, but payments are checked later. It was agreed to add 'The only exception is where payment is made by corporate charge card, see 2.3.'

2.2. Online banking: Unity Trust Bank added.

2.3 Payment by bank cards: specified that the **Treasurer** will determine spending limits.

3. Groups' finances: Some elements added to clarify the separate status of group funds, which the Treasurer monitors and issues a return for group leaders to complete annually.

3.1 Receipts: Bank paying in slips **will** be given to group leaders...

Group leaders **may** pay sums due...

Any funds deposited into the Cu3a account must be accompanied by an email to the Treasurer... Something we have stressed to GLs.

3.2 Payments: Need to check approved process is in the Group Management handbook. Re 3.4 Payments to other charities and 4. Expenses policy, Tony had suggested the following wording could be used:

*'Charnwood u3a cannot pay a fee to speakers who are members of a u3a or make a donation to a nominated charity on behalf of a speaker who is a member of a u3a.*

*However, it is allowable to pay pre-agreed reasonable expenses to u3a members.'*

This can go in under 3.2 Payments, after the first paragraph.

Tony had also pointed out that section 5 will need revising in view of our recent decision about fees paid by members of another u3a.

Pam will incorporate all agreed changes, highlight them and circulate the document.

Action: PU

**Items 5 (EDI Meeting) and 6 (Network Meeting):** Deferred to the next meeting.

## **7. Charnwood u3a pens**

Pam had made an executive decision to order an extra 100 pens for £29 which seemed a good deal and needed to be agreed quickly. So we now have 600 pens. Re distribution, Pam suggested that a) every Committee member has one and b) she takes some to the group leaders' meeting on 17th for them to have one each. We can decide later who else to give them to. The pens were then distributed to Committee members. Pam thanked Peter for organising this excellent deal.

## **8. Simple Membership (SM)**

Transfer observations:

Gift Aid was set to No by default: Phil has checked this and Beacon and SM now match. Phil reported several discrepancies between Beacon and SM:

a) For Beacon's 'Newsletter required' flag, SM's equivalent is 'News by email' but these are not exactly the same in function.

b) There's an 'Initials' field in SM for middle Initials, but this has come in from Beacon as 1<sup>st</sup> and middle initials, causing a potential issue with address labels.

c) There is a TAM magazine setting which wasn't right. This has apparently been fixed, but not yet checked.

Pam commented that the Profile page has a Date of Birth field which was not on Beacon. This will be optional, as will other fields. It is not on the joining form, only on the profile which members can edit. Likewise for gender (male/female/other?). On the joining form, only name, address1 and postcode are compulsory, but this isn't clear.

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Pam made the point that members give an email address but don't use it, and suggested we advise them to only give an email address if they use it.

Pam said there were inevitably going to be issues – major and minor – with the move to SM. We should note them now and then find ways of sorting them. Phil said there were limits to what could be changed, and we may find we have to live with some minor issues.

Pam thanked the team for all their hard work so far, and suggested that we now need to go beyond the technical aspects to look at the practicalities of what we do in Cu3a and how people in particular roles will use it in practice.

Martyn suggested having an 'Issues Log' for people to report any problems which would go into a spreadsheet or 'Bugs List'. It was agreed that everyone should have a good look at the SM website and email Phil with their issues by the end of the week. He will then put a list on the SM website, then we'll have a meeting of the SM team plus Pam, Garry and Helen to discuss these at the end of next week. Phil will email the Committee with the link to the website and reminding them of their username.

Action: PB

Bev asked whether members could see Committee items on the website. Phil confirmed that only those with Committee role can see these. There was no distinction in access between normal member and group leader, but a group leader has more buttons to press on the group page.

Peter asked if we can have a dummy user. Phil replied that we have been offered a test site. This has been delayed due to personal circumstances but we should get this soon. Phil suggested using the test site rather than the live one for dummy records etc.

Pam queried why there are three people listed as 'Communications Manager' in the Systems Administrator report. This is to allow those people to send out bulk emails to all members. Phil assured Pam that the system is much like Beacon and she would be instructed how to send bulk emails in advance of her next message to members.

Phil said his primary objective today was for the Committee to think of SM as the primary management system and use that as the primary database from now on.

Martyn pointed out that there is no financial data on the SM system. Pam referred to the implementation plan which says that from 13<sup>th</sup> July, SM should be used by Secretary and Treasurer and for communications. Phil confirmed that no financial data has been transferred from Beacon to SM. Apparently no other u3a transferring from Beacon had asked for this. It is being looked into.

Bob said the current workaround is that he's keeping his own system going and updating the ledgers that group leaders can see on Beacon.

Garry said he was happy to start using SM. One concern was about missing partnership links and how TAM magazine will be distributed. Garry offered to send Phil a spreadsheet with all membership numbers of partners.

Action: GR

There was some discussion about the Gift Aid declaration. There needs to be an explanation of Gift Aid on the joining form, with Gift Aid option also included on the renewal form. Members should not be able to edit the Gift Aid declaration on their Profile page, but should tell the Membership Secretary if they wish to change their declaration.

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Margaret asked if there was a way for her to access details of recent members. There is no New Members Liaison role, but she could be given Communications Manager role, or Membership Assistant role. Phil will check.

Action: PB

Pam reinforced the need for all Committee members to have a good play around with the website and report any issues to Phil.

Following these discussions, it was agreed that the Committee would use the SM system as the primary database from now on.

Group leaders will be introduced to SM at the meeting on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July. Pam asked about the format of this meeting. Phil will give a presentation and group leaders will be able to ask questions but won't be able to use it. Pam asked whether sharing info about the SM launch with the membership would mean a) her sending out a bulk email to members and b) an announcement in the newsletter. The SM team agreed to come up with some words for the email and newsletter article.

Action: SM transition team

Stephen suggested that the renewal date could be set up for the Committee to renew a few weeks early as a test of the renewal system. There was some discussion about members having email and not using it and that some members' children handled the membership emails for them. Letters will still be sent to those who don't use a computer.

Pam asked about group leader workshops, proposed for August/September, but no dates have yet been arranged. Also what ongoing communication with members is planned. Stephen didn't think member training for using the SM site was needed. Automated emails will be sent out and no login to the SM website would be required. However, we want the members to be encouraged to engage with the new website. Phil offered to write another article for News & Views.

Action: PB

Martyn pointed out that it would be up to group leaders to communicate with their members about upcoming trips etc. and post details on the website.

Phil asked for Committee's go-ahead on the redirection of our existing web address charnwoodu3a.org.uk to the SM website. Phil will talk to Krystal about arrangements. Martyn pointed out that once we had redirected our address to SM, the 'public face' of Charnwood u3a would be our new website and the current website would be invisible (though it should still be accessible via a suitable link). It was agreed that we can't effect the redirection until after the membership have been informed. Helen felt we should delay redirection until the bugs had been sorted and we are happy with the look of the new website. It was agreed to defer the formal decision on redirection until we have got the website how we want it, including use of colour, as mentioned by Martyn.

Garry asked what a new member would receive. They will get the 'activate' email with their username and a password reset link.

There being no further business, Pam thanked Martyn, Stephen and Phil for their input and the meeting was closed at 12:25 pm.

**Date & Time of the next meeting: Wednesday 9th August at 10 am.**

Accepted as a true record. Pam Upton, Chair.....*P. Upton*.....