

Basingstoke – Old Basing U3a Committee Meeting

13th January 2022

Via Zoom

Attending: Rod Marshall, Margaret Hayes, Janet & Richard Field, Linda Wain, Sue Seamour, Madeline Hussey, Janice Vaughan, Marie White, Audrey Bird

Audrey confirmed she is happy to stay on the Committee and support but does not want any leading roles.

- 1. Apologies for Absence** – None. Liz Horner may still be in the USA.
- 2. Approval of Minutes of Meeting 18th October 2021** – Janet noted at Item 7 that Queen Mary's College only need a name and car registration number from members attending meetings. Rod said we had budgeted on 650 members and we now have 704, so he is very happy about that.
- 3. Open Actions – Beacon Training for Richard** – Margaret said Liz did not want to meet before Christmas because of her trip to the USA but this will be arranged on her return. Richard has been through the User Guide which he found helpful and has also looked at Harvey's notes. Margaret said the main stumbling block is getting access to Beacon. Rod asked that this be done sooner rather than later. Linda stressed that Harvey's notes are outdated now. Rod offered his help in any data tidying up that might be needed.

Margaret - Passwords with Group Leaders – now done.

New Venue for Computer Group – Now staying at Christ Church as their internet has been improved.

- 4. Treasurer's Report** – Sue had distributed the Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement to the Committee for perusal. The state of the funds is better than expected due to the rise in membership and many Groups are not meeting at the moment so venues are not being used. **There is are two sets of unpaid invoices for venues which together amount to approximately £2,000. Sue is currently is consultation with the venues as both needed corrections.** Sue is happy with the financial situation at the present time.

Folk Dancing is starting again and Richard asked for any information about this and any other Groups so it can be added to the website. Linda informed the Committee that the hall for Folk Dancing at Ridgeway is being refurbished in February and whilst this is underway the Group will be meeting at Kempshott Village Hall. She stated that the old amplifier is very heavy and therefore the Group have spent £50 on new equipment. Margaret suggested using Bluetooth speakers but Linda said these would not be loud enough as some members of the Group are hard of hearing.

Madeline asked in light of the extra funds, if it would be possible to have a budget for Marketing. Sue agreed that we should. Audrey asked if we should spend more money on monthly meeting speakers. If we could get

better speakers, it might make the meetings more appealing to members and encourage higher attendance. Linda agreed that we do get better quality speakers if we pay more. Her current budget is £600 for the year which covers 10 meetings. The maximum spent on a speaker last year was £180, which included travel expenses. For two meetings we used members as speakers, so only eight external speakers were used this year.

Recorded speakers only cost £50 while face to face usually about £150. Sue felt we should use the monthly meeting as a “flagship” for our u3a to try to encourage members to attend. Linda doesn't feel that the change of venue has made a difference in the number of members attending monthly meetings.

- 5. Funding Expensive Groups** – Sue said there are four Groups (counting all the language groups as one for this purpose) that breach the proposed limit on costs. The individual language Groups range in price from £36 to £100 per member, whereas the overall average is less than £20. The reason for this is that the language Groups meet weekly. Margaret said Rose has now handed over leadership for some of these Groups so it might not be easy to sort this out. German is now being taught at a member's house as there are only six members of that Group, so that contract with St Leonards will be ended.

Mah-jong is also costing a lot of money. At the present time we pay for 3 hour meetings, there are 24 members in this Group and they meet twice a month. Audrey asked if the time spent could be cut to 2 hours.

Rod suggested the u3a could cover one meeting a month with Group members covering the cost of any additional meetings (other than those held using Zoom). For the language Groups, the u3a could cover the cost for a monthly face to face meeting but suggest the members get together over Zoom or at a member's house for the other meetings - if they wanted to continue meeting face to face in a hired venue every week, a surcharge would have to be paid. Janet said members would have to be shown figures/numbers to explain the surcharges. Rod agreed but said that we have until September to put something together to explain the situation and make a plan for the future. Madeline also agreed that a plan is needed, maybe at another meeting to discuss this.

- 6. Card Readers** – Sue has been looking at card machines and the cheapest is £29 - with a cradle it would be £39, with a printer £69, and a top of the range model would cost £149. Sue suggested that we buy the cheapest one but the operator would have to have a smartphone and Janice would also have use of this machine and Sue was unsure how this would work. 1.69% of each payment would go to the company but there would be no contract. Richard said his instinct was not to go for the cheapest or the dearest option, but the middle of the road. Margaret said the only benefit of a more expensive one is that you can issue a receipt. Sue is concerned that she is not going to be able to control expenditure and keep up with accounts as readily as she can at present if different people are using the machine. Janice suggested that she gets together with Sue and work out the best way forward with this. Margaret suggested that members pay fees on Meet and Greet Day by card as fewer people are using cheques now. Richard

suggested getting a machine that works with Wi-Fi. Janice felt it would help greatly at Meet and Greet Day. The Committee agreed that we buy the £69 version but Margaret checked and found that the cost for this had risen to £99. It was then agreed that Sue should still go for this version, but shop around to see if she could find it cheaper.

- 7. Feedback on New Members Meeting/QMC Monthly Meeting** – Linda reported that it was a successful meeting with 35 new members plus two who joined later. There was good support from car park, refreshments helpers etc and no problems with signing in. Comments have come back from Madeline about the layout of the chairs but the reason has since been explained. People were chatting in groups of four or five and Committee members went round to get feedback and give any advice required. Linda felt it was very rushed and suggested we should consider moving the Meet and Greet to a separate day. The downside of this would be that the new members wouldn't see how the monthly meetings work. Janice felt the feedback was very positive and that new members didn't feel rushed. Margaret said that although the Committee members might have felt rushed, the new members didn't feel this way at all. It was agreed to keep the present format but maybe start the Meet and Greet earlier. Janet said that asking new members to come earlier would mean that it would be asking people to stay for a lengthier period of time which might result in more of them leaving before the monthly meeting. She pointed out that it was a new venue for the Committee to work in and next time they will be better prepared. Linda said that we need to be better prepared as regards refreshments and keep encouraging members to bring their own mugs. She has got a team to work on refreshment duties now who are willing to help out at different events. Linda thanked the Committee for all their help.
- 8. Monthly meeting Sub-Group Idea** – Richard said that as Linda is stepping down in the Summer and no-one has come forward to take over her position, would it be better to have a sub-committee for the organisation of monthly meetings. He praised Linda for the work she has done, as it is a very involved position with lots of different aspects. He felt it was too much for one Committee member to take on. Richard said that Linda and Audrey could still be on hand, if they wished to, to give advice/assistance where necessary. Madeline suggested we put it out to members to see if anyone comes forward and maybe a leader will come from there. Rod agreed this was a good idea.
- 9. Marketing Meeting Feedback** – Madeline had sent out notes for the Committee to see. We are looking at new ways going forward, Wellbeing etc. There are several things planned, face to face at fairs/fetes but we would need to purchase tables at these events. Madeline asked if Guy Caplin could be invited to become our official photographer, but Margaret explained that due to family issues Guy would not be available to do this at the present time. Rod suggested that the Photography Group be asked if anyone there would be interested in taking up this role. Richard said only one photograph a month would be needed. Margaret pointed out that we would have to have permission from members before taking their photograph. New members are asked on their new member forms but existing members would have to be asked.

Marie picked up on Madeline's point about liaising with other organisations such as Age Concern. This had been rejected by the Committee in the past as Age Concern had tried to steal our thunder.

- 10. Healthy Ageing Network Meeting** – Richard suggested covering mental health, ideas for people to do things from their armchairs.
- 11. Complaints** – Janet said that before Christmas we had some complaints and members were going straight to Rod. She said that members should be reminded at the Group Leader meeting that there is an escalation process. Rod said the process should be put on the website and if anyone contacts him, he would refer them to the website. Janet said a link should be included.
- 12. Beacon Update** – Nothing to add but there are some spam emails with “I have a favour to ask”. If anyone sees this then delete it. Be wary basically.
- 13. Group Responses to Omicron Variant** - Some Groups are deciding not to meet up and are using Zoom. Margaret said about 50% of Groups are meeting face to face and that, because lateral flow tests are in short supply, we can't ask members to take tests at the moment. We should stress that with any signs of symptoms members should not attend Groups.
- 14. Succession Planning** – Two positions will need to be filled this year. Rod will put something together about this.
- 15. A.O.B.** – The new insurance certificate has arrived and is on the website if required. There will be a National u3a Meeting on 19th January 2022 from 10a.m till noon covering Understanding Diversity and Inclusion. If anyone wants to attend, let Janet know and she will send a link. Face to face Committee Meetings will hopefully resume soon.
- 16. Date of Next Meeting – 1st March 2022 @ 2p.m**

Actions – Committee – Review budget for 2022/23 for Marketing

Margaret & Liz – Training for Richard on Beacon

Rod & Sue – To discuss surcharge for expensive Groups

Rod – Letter explaining why certain Groups pay a surcharge

Sue – To purchase a Card Reader

Rod – Succession Planning – put something together