

**Minutes of Basingstoke – Old Basing U3A Committee Meeting held on
Monday 9th January, 2017 at 34 Middle Mead, Hook**

Present: Alan Robinson as Chair (AR), Ian Stimpson (IS), Marie White (MW), Harvey Wallace(HW), Vee Holliday(VH), Margaret Hayes(MH), Linda Wain(LW), Liz Horner (LH), Joan Carnell (JC) and Barbara Robson(BR).

Apologies: Mel McMahon (MM),

1. **Minutes of last meeting 3rd October 2016:** other than a query as to why the constitution is being updated, these were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

2. Actions from Last Meeting Update:

- Beacon hotmail issues fix: LH reported that this has been resolved, but will continue to monitor it

- Update of Enrolment Open Day approach: action to be allocated to a Committee sub-group who are also responsible for the communication of changes to GLs and members. Committee agreed start time for task is spring.

Action - BR to add to agenda of March Committee meeting.

- Committee Member Induction Review: VH prepared an Induction Pack checklist which was seen and approved by the Committee.

Open Action: MW to progress the U3A Foundation historical account and circulate for review.

- Central Committee document storage: HW reported that drop-box is limited to only one no-charge user account with additional accounts incurring significant charges. He will investigate further, select and inform the Committee when available for use.

- Promotion of U3A Ethos to New Members: BR and LW drafted a message which can be used to send to new members starting the 2017/18 academic year. No further action for now.

Open Action: AR to send HW updated 'New Member Information Pack' to replace current version on the website.

- GL Disability facilitation at meetings: JC confirmed that GLs at Oct GL meeting had been reminded of their responsibilities in this matter.

3. **Finance report by the Treasurer:** IS advised there had been very little change in membership and income in this new academic year [2016/17] to last academic year [2015/16].

Current Finances matched both budget and forecast with a slight deviation on Hall hire charges. These are showing lower c.f this time last year. This difference is due to the habit of Chineham Church invoicing late and, as they invoice in 6 monthly chunks, a late submissions will show a significant spend / budget variation. To counteract this IS pays in advance of due invoice, so any noted difference will balance out when the due invoice is submitted.

IS put in a particular request to committee members, asking them to submit cheques for payment promptly.

4. **Beacon Update:** LH requested that Beacon update is a standard agenda item during this key 'bedding-in' phase.

Membership Data:

- 776 members [up by 2 members from 2015 / 16 year]

- 64 lapsed members

- 75 new members [joined since 01/09/16.

LH positively noted that these totals align with membership application totals i.e. Beacon is performing well. IS noted that income this year is higher than budget as 2016/17 Budget was forecasted on an expected reduced membership of 750.

There is a National conference for live Beacon U3A Groups in April at Birmingham which LH and HW will attend. LH is confident that the issue with the inaccuracies in GL number listing will be covered at this conference.

Further developments and utilisation of the Beacon System in 2017 is on-line enrolment using pay-Pal, with the goal to minimise paper cheques. HW / LH will own this work with input on Financial specifics from IS
Action: Budget Provision for PayPal. Action. HW to provide PayPal volume transaction cost estimates to IS to enable him to update Forecast Budget

AR flagged that there were some continuing Email failed send issues. For all member mailings, he uses a workaround extracting the mail list which has proven reliable. He now wants to hand-over membership emailing to BR. However would like monitoring of this email send issue to be continued due to the high incidents of 'bounce-backs' impacting [possibly up to 30% of new members]. MW reported improvement in bounce back volume, with other email send failures showing as a 'not opened' state. It was noted that as the Registration process includes a welcoming email, this is an ideal time to understand and investigate email send issues fully.

Action: AR to book a handover session of email address extraction workaround with BR – Planned for Feb 8th

HW reminded the Committee that changes to any membership email address details MUST be requested personally by written instruction from that member [as per the Data Protection Act]. So, even though an email error is noted, it cannot be corrected by a GL or anyone else with those system access rights, until that member requests this in writing [email or by renewal form] to the membership secretary.

Actions:

- LH to re-send Beacon Guide Noted to GLs.

- JC to remind GLs at next GL meeting that members MUST notify any changes to Membership Secretary rather than make correction changes directly on Beacon. To alert them that in a direct change would be a contravention of the Data Protection Act.

5. Constitution:

LW gave an overview stating the drafted proposals are tweaks with no major changes.

AR wanted the Committee to note that our Group Constitution gives guidance for behaviour of Committee and its members and it is based on a much reduced version of the National version. He reminded the Committee that 2015 adjustments made to our Group Constitution had been limited to just reducing the AGM quorum. No other changes were made. He also reminded the Committee that all Constitution changes, apart from items 2 and 10, had to be taken to the full membership for approval.

HW requested an explanation as to why the circulated draft-for review noted him as a co-opted committee member rather than a formally voted full member. Apologies were made for this error, with AR clarifying that HW was formally voted in as a FULL Member at the AGM,. And whilst the current Committee is over the 10 limit, this is seen as a transition period over the remaining 2016/17 Academic Year as MH replaces AR. i.e. by September 2017 the Committee membership will be reduced down to 10 members as he moves off the Committee.

HW asked about legal standing for the restriction to full time employment individuals. After much discussion, it was felt full time employee U3A membership is low enough not to warrant concern. However before a formal Decision is minuted a final legal check will be made.

Action - LW check legal / insurance status around the reference of 'Full Time Employment' membership constrictions in our Constitution.

MW recommended to preserve the current format as much as possible.

LH asked for the following text to be used for the Objects/Ethos paragraph: read as follows:-

'To promote opportunities for the pleasure and enjoyment of self-directed learning by the members for the members, and open to all in their third age, at a period in life for those no longer in full-time employment.'

The Committee voted to pass the decision on the Committee numbers limit. [section 4.1 of the Constitution]; Results as follows:

vote to increase to 'not more than 12' - 5 votes

vote 'not more than 10' - 3 votes

abstention 1

Decision: motion to increase limit to 12 carried.

The Duration of Committee Member term was discussed and agreed to keep the term open and managed at the discretion of the Chair based on current challenges. It was agreed that the informal understanding of 3 years was adequate.

Section 6.6 money accountability raised much discussion about the lack of full and balanced accounts for the Travel / Trips Group Leader. MW requested a more formal approach is now taken in view of continued issues in spite of a frank meeting last year to address this issue. IS confirmed no improvement with a continued state of poor accounting: lack of information, inaccuracy in the finances reported, missing dates of cash transactions etc. The Committee discussed this issue at length.

Decision: to take a more formal approach with the Group Leader requesting she takes on a deputy to help her. AR volunteered to give finance assistance and can transition into this role over the next 2 months, taking it on formally in August this year.

Actions:

- JC to set up a meeting with IS, AR and Joyce Cook [Group Leader for Holidays and Excursions] to inform her of this Committee Decision. – completed at Jan Hook meeting. Joyce now has a new bank account for the U3A. She and AR plan to go through the accts on the 8th Feb to agree the process going forward and then visit the bank to have AR as joint signatory
- IS to consider the need of financial oversight of BCOT lunches based on their current and history of finance reporting. – in Progress

6. AOB

HW - gave notification that his U3A laptop had stopped working and he had replaced it with his own PC. with his own funds.

Action - HW to remove PC from asset list.

IS - using the example of successful Tadley U3A growth, asked that consideration was given to build membership numbers, and income by advertising. For a healthy sustainable budget IS recommended a growth target of 20% i.e. a 1000 membership. He felt that the Beacon System would allow us to support such membership growth.

Discussion followed on this membership increase policy proposal with some concerns raised on how this could be done when our groups supporting infrastructure [aside from Beacon] is not in place for such numbers. It was agreed that a start in building public awareness would be a good first step, giving time to consider how best to set in place the necessary support.

Decision: future goal of Committee is to grow membership, ensuring there is sustainable support [based on the above pointers] in place.

Actions:

- BR to include Group Growth Strategy as a regular agenda item.
- JC to talk to the recommended Communication Committee member candidate to see if she is interested in the role.

JC raised the following:

- tables for Art Improvers art group. HW offered the tables used by Bridge Group provided they were protected and moved location to Chineham.
- Line Dancing numbers now adequate.
- Ignoring all Email traffic from businesses

LH / MW / VH - no matters to raise.

MH - gave information on the proposed new members welcome approach but said it was now too late for a special Welcome event planned. So she proposed postponing this to the next new academic year and holding it Oct 2017. And for the 2016/17 new members, hold a 'New Member Feedback Meeting' instead. It was noted that the recommended new Communications Committee Member [discussed in the IS AOB section] will be central to creating the right tone and wording for any New Member events / emails.

LW - Christmas meeting member feedback was to avoid carols and have something else instead. Committee suggested involving groups, using their particular skills / material e.g. selected readings from literature Group and / or Poetry Group.

BR - noted that she does not receive any monthly meeting notifications from GLs, and so some could be missing from the monthly email sent after the Monthly Hook Meeting.

7. Date of next meeting: 6th March location at Chineham .

Action: AR to book room

Reminder of May Committee Meeting date: 22nd May