

**Minutes of Basingstoke – Old Basing U3A Committee Meeting held on  
Thursday 9th August 2018 at Christ Church, Chineham**

**Present:** Margaret Hayes (MH), Ian Stimpson (IS), Marie White (MW), Harvey Wallace(HW), Barbara Robson(BR), Liz Horner (LH), Linda Wain(LW),

**1. Apologies for Absence:** Vee Holliday (VH), Joan Carnell (JC)

**2. Minutes of last meeting held 17th May 2018:** agreed and signed by MH. No matters arising though recent Drop box issues were flagged which were preventing Committee Members seeing / accessing operational and reference documents e.g. the agenda for this meeting. HW thinks it has been caused by a recent MS update which has affected Windows 10 / W7 synchronization. As this is likely to be temporary, it was agreed that all should continue using Drop Box with individuals alerting when having viewing / access issues.

**3. Open Actions update:** all minuted actions from May meeting completed except: archiving action [MH] which remains open as retired Chair [AR] has not been well

**4. Chair Update [Margaret]:**

- asked for Committee views on co-operation levels from other U3A Groups using example of holiday visitors from North England wanting to be 'guests' some groups during their stay. Agreed that one-off attendance at groups was acceptable as per our 1st time visitor's policy. Some suitable groups were identified.

*MH to respond directly and inform JC. [Action]*

- asked for Committee views on name change request from [Edward Mitchell], a member whose recent emailed advocated that Old Basing should be dropped from the title of our U3A Group, giving justification for a shorter and more accurate title of 'Basingstoke U3A'. All agreed that as Founding members were from Old Basing, founded our group there and were still active members, it was a necessary courtesy and consideration to them that this longer, two place title should remain for a period before renaming to Basingstoke. The high impact on administration to change was also acknowledged as this would be more than just a change to our Constitution involving all formal contracts, Bank Account etc..].

- notified Committee of the National Workshop on 25th September running U3A Governance Trusteeship Planning for AGM in September. MH invited another Committee Member to attend as she is away at this time. There was a similar Regional workshop being run later in Kent which MH will aim to attend if no other Committee Member is able to attend main National one.

**5. Finance Update [Ian]:** as this was the start of the finance year IS just gave a brief summary [no Finance Statement handouts]:

- banked 1st tranche of membership renewals cheques [total 182 so far]. HW noted that PayPal renewals stood at 170 members, noting the encouraging 50:50 approx cheque:online payment ratio.

- social events, good balance with income of £2.5 K and outgoings of £3.2K indicating improvements in GL governance especially the Social Outings [Joyce Cook] where the main concern had been.

- Healthy cash flow to kick-start the year but noted the Pay Pal monies do need to be moved soon into the U3A account. HW confirmed he was working on this, steadily 'moving through the PayPal hoops'.

- ordered 36 diaries

IS then queried about no Music License payment as yet, which suggests this has been missed as usual gets paid earlier in the year.

*BR to chase up with Head Office [Action].*

**6. National U3A Notifications [Barbara]:** BR positively noted how the transition of self-service for U3A HO notices and updates had reduced her activity in downloads, printing and typing out in the member post monthly meeting emails. This suited her work-style. MH confirmed that she was now receiving the postal and email notifications also sent to BR as Business Secretary. BR then raised for discussion the following matters:

- National AGM Proxy Vote. Committee agreed to register our proxy vote to National AGM as even though there were no significant matters to vote on, it would help the overall quorum needed by the National U3A AGM and also demonstrates our involvement / interest.

*BR to register and vote 'approved' for all Group voting matters [Action]*

- our own group AGM preparation, in particular the need for manual and paper notification to non-email members. BR noted that this has been done these past 2 years by retired chair AR, and she was not aware and so unprepared to do the necessary paperwork preparation and posting for this July AGM [not been discussed or planned at the May Committee Meeting]. The Committee recognized that AR retirement had left them unprepared and gave full thanks and appreciation to MW & IS who stepped into the breach and pulled together the reports and AGM notification and posted to the 50+ non email members.

- The Committee then discussed how to address this manual process for the future, with BR advocating one Committee Member taking responsibility for any manual postings to 70+ grp of members, combining it will team effort was needed for 'envelope stuffing'. The Committee noted that it was only a 1x year effort for the annual AGM papers, as Group Leaders took care of any other information cascades needed. However, LW flagged the high manual effort for the annual membership renewals letters and new membership packs and it was agreed that she should have Committee Member support on this. [LW has subsequently confirmed the team effort details for 15th Aug at 2pm at her home. It is anticipated that BR, IS and MW will be the 'Committee Team' . ]

- Hall Hire issues both with Everest [missing documents] and Elizabeth Hall was incorrectly contracted for August month. After discussion it was agreed that BR as Business Secretary should co-ordinate both contract [legal & finance], but the schedule was down to individual group leaders who booked directly with the halls. Where there was a printed schedule BR to check with the main GL.

*Action JC to reinforce cancellation responsibilities [especially the 1 month for Elizabeth Hall].*

**7. Beacon Update [Liz]:** LH gave positive report on the overall working of Beacon apart a recent blip in HO Beacon team notifying her of the system being taken off-line and the subsequent slow access for the next 2-3 days whilst the system 'caught-up with itself. She has requested better communications in the future. LH then covered the following items of interest:

- email sends: significantly improved sorted which has been achieved with outside technical support to the hard-pressed HO Beacon team. BR noted ow delighted she was with this progress as what was a regular high number of auto failed send notifications which required manual follow-up emails / phone calls is now minimal.

- Database data quality: LH is now part of a Beacon committee that helps with further data improvements, this will give get benefit of early visibility of issues / membership response trending. LW gave a formal and sincere thank you to LH for her help in processing the high volume of membership paperwork printing.

BR flagged that the annual membership renewal time triggers high activity of members notifying her via the Business Secretary published email address of corrections / queries etc. Since only three Committee Members [LH; HW; LW] can update Beacon, it was agreed that LW should process any correction updates and all address change / error notifications should be sent to her directly [BR or any other Committee member made aware of need to change membership details].

- Future of Beacon: likely to involve increase in costs as founders who operated on a volunteer basis will be retiring. Replacements likely to be on a payment / contract basis. LW noted that only 220 U3A UK groups

currently use Beacon, which is a small percentage of total UK Groups. The Committee noted that this likelihood of Beacon fee increase will have to be taken into account for future membership fee considerations.

#### **8. Membership Renewals [Linda]:**

- LW asked for guidance on the renewal letters postage policy as the envelop dimensions, bulk and weight moved them into the special-post charge category. Agreed that all membership renewal packs should be sent by 2nd class postage, with the 79p special-post charge. Also, not to put joint membership into one envelope, have a Membership Pack per member i.e. joint membership households receive two packs. The date for team effort stuffing was agreed as 15th Aug. with time tbc and MW, MH, IS BR to confirm their availability.
- few missing admin details which LW is managing on an ad-hoc basis.
- some non-renewals, but for usual reasons [moving, lack of time, ill health etc..]

#### **9. Enrolment Day Planning [Margaret in behalf of Joan]:**

MW talked through the draft plan proposed by JC. The Committee agreed that the same 2017/18 enrolment day table arrangements should be used as this worked well and teas served throughout the afternoon. Whilst it was generally noted that last year's new approach and changes brought in by JC overall worked well, the Committee did have some areas of concern and made the following recommendations for MH to take back to JC:

- reduce cycling video and Walks with Camera Group to be located elsewhere to reduce the crowding on the stage.
- need for Committee floor walkers strongly recommended: at least 3 recommended [1x front door welcome, 2x table / floor guides]
- reduce congestion at front desk, by just asking guests to sign-in, rather than complete form and be issued with Guest Badge.
- blocked car parking / car congestion issues of last year were discussed. It was agreed that a dedicated parking marshal is needed [similar to the U3A Swiss Bridge Tournament].

*JC to arrange a car parking marshal Graham Blackburn to help or another if he is not available [Action].*

- discussion about maybe not using the extra side room, but due to the amount of detail needed to find a solution, it was agreed that the final plan should be discussed and agreed between MH and JC.

*MH to have separate prep meeting w JC to finalize table location / grouping [Action]*

- encourage more examples of Group work / outputs to make the Groups table's appealing and informative (especially for the craft groups and literature groups e.g. Flower Arrangements example, sample of poems selected through the year etc....)
- have chairs in enrolment room as some new members were elderly / infirm and also at busy times there was a queue
- pre- enrolment email to all members making it clear that this meeting is for enrolment for new groups and the only method for renewal forms & cheques is via an unmanned renewal box which will be near the hall entrance.

*MH/JC to agree who is to write / send tis email [Action]*

- to send separate email about group changes.

*MH/Jc to agree who is to write / send this email [Action]*

LH confirmed that she will again assist by taking photos of Group listings on departure, rather than have them having to type-up and send through to her. She will use the photos to enter the new members directly onto Beacon for those who would like/need such assistance.

*JC to instruct GLs to check-out their new group listings to LH on departure [Action]*

**10. Monthly Meeting Management [Margaret]:** The committee were asked their views on how to manage these through the 2018/19 year with no Programme Secretary formally in place. It was agreed that as the programme is already planned and speakers booked [bar November meeting] that LW with assistance of MH / MW will host the meetings. It was also agreed that the consequence of no Programme Secretary for the 2019/20 Academic Year would be that no Monthly Meetings will happen.

The Committee recommended ongoing and additional promotion of this role repeatedly through the year e.g. MH will include this vacancy in the 'Welcome to New Members' enrolment letter and at each Monthly Meeting to note that this 'will be the last one, unless a Programme Secretary is found'. To also send a clear message that this role can be shared e.g. filled ed by more than one person or rotated through the year i.e. Programme Lead handover every 3-4 meetings.

The special November Monthly meeting was then discussed as this meeting was a new approach set-aside for a new members: lunch followed by an U3A introductory session. Committee Members were encouraged to support this with their attendance.

Considerations were then given to which would be the most suitable groups to present for the full Members meeting between 2-4 pm. LW recommended the following Groups as the most suitable: Words and Music - Walking with Camera - Ladies who Lunch - Science & Technology - Bridge - Environment & Us - Family History. As this was the first time this idea had been tried, it was agreed that the fall back speaker should either be Barbara Cummins - Ladies Cycling Group or MH to present photos and experiences of one of her overseas trips. BR recommended an incentive of cakes / chocolate bar treats to help encourage good member attendance.

*LW to make contact to the GLs of the suggested groups and also make the decision on the need to the cake / chocolate treats incentive. [Action]*

**11. Projector [Linda]:** LW asked for Committee steer on management of projector loan at St Leonards for one of Rose Holstein's language groups. LW was quickly made aware of the two projectors stored at Christ Church which can be used on loan for just this purpose. HW agreed that he would talk to Rose Holstein direct, so she is aware of both the availability and the loan process.

## **12. Committee Member Updates/Feedback [All]: / AOB**

- IS: membership of Croquet & Bowls club. A proposed charge of £50 per member i.e. full fee which IS is resisting and asked for Committee view on this. The Committee fully supported IS's much back on such a charge being taken on.

- HW: none

- MW: raised two matters

1) concern of low number of groups & group types and proposed a group subcommittee run by Joan to help kick-start formation of new groups and help support potential GLs who have an element of nervousness of this role. Committee supported this. BR asked about evening group option, the Committee had concerns but after discussion, agreed that this could be tried.

2) asked for Committee clarification re: reciprocal guest membership using an example of an Alton U3A member who wants to join German. As no consensus on this matter was reached it was put to the vote, the outcome being that the majority vote was for all 'guest member' should pay full fee after the initial look see introductory visit

- LH: none

- LW: the photo compilation of U3A members taking part in various activities had been unchanged for this year's U3A Members Yearbook, unfortunately this included a photo of Ralph Kay who had sadly died earlier

this year. It was agreed that a personal call needs to be made to his widow making her aware of this oversight. LW volunteered to make this call.

- BR: none

**13. Date of next meeting:** October 16th 2 - 4 pm. Venue: Hannah More Room, Christ Church, Chineham.  
*MH to book and propose future 2018 Committee Date meetings [Action]*