

**Minutes of Basingstoke – Old Basing U3A Committee Meeting held on
Tuesday 15th January 2019 at Christ Church, Chineham**

Present: Margaret Hayes (MH), Ian Stimpson (IS), Marie White (MW), Barbara Robson(BR), Liz Horner (LH), Vee Holliday(VH), Joan Carnell (JC)

1. Apologies for Absence: Harvey Wallace(HW), Linda Wain(LW).

2. Minutes of last meeting held 16th October 2018:these were agreed and signed.

3. Open Actions:

Archiving of > 4 years records [MH] - still no progress due to continued poor health of previous Chair, Alan Robinson. MW offered to call round.

IS queried whether he can destroy the finance records older than 7 years which were handed over to IS when he undertook this position. MH noted that the new GDPR changes make a legal requirement of destroy all paper membership records.

Action: IS to proceed with his plan to destroy records > 7 years old.

4. Chair Update [Margaret]:

- Regional U3A Chairperson meeting: the Regional U3A meeting was cancelled for a 2nd time due to lack of acting chair. MH now waiting a new date as a volunteer to chair this meeting has come forward.
- on the recommendation of Valerie Wills [previous Chairperson & current resident], Oakley Hall Nursing Home has put in a request for our U3A to publicise an invitation to our members to visit & give talks / demonstrations for their residents. Committee agreed that this was not a U3A organisation responsibility. MH will respond as such, but she will visit with her travel photo slides on a personal capacity.
- Annual Inter U3A Quiz challenge in March - invitation details with JC who will take to the Quiz Group who most likely will want to form a team to enter this event. It is recognised that these inter U3A Regional competitions foster positive relations / connections amongst the U3A Regional Groups.

5. Finance Update [Ian]: provided an amended budget statement due to significant cost increases created by various changes e.g. increase in hall facilities & the U3A capitation charge. The new budget showed there is not a shortfall, with just enough cash to meet the increase budgeted costs for this year. IS noted there was now no margin of safety and any further unexpected increased costs would have to be funded from the contingency budget fund.

To improve our U3A finance status we need either more members or a further increase in membership fee or both.

The Committee agreed that the fee should return back to 2017/18 £35 rate.

It was noted that surrounding U3A Groups had enjoyed fast membership growth with Tadley now at 900 and Alton over a 1,000. Whilst our membership has levelled out between 750-800 with no real growth. It was noted that interest in new groups was low in spite of promotion at the November Meeting.

Some discussion ensued about promoting our U3A to increase membership e.g. local community publications about group activities or a U3A promotion leaflet similar to the example shown by VH created by Alton U3A. The Committee agreed that whilst the Alton leaflet approach was good in principle, the higher priority and most pressing issue was the weakness of our Committee and the need to recruit new blood. Membership growth initiatives can only happen with a viable Committee in place.

6. National U3A Notifications [Barbara]: significant reduction in HO events other initiatives, most probably a symptom of general U3A volunteer interest malaise.

7. Beacon Update [Liz]: a U3A Beacon Meeting was held to communicate HO plans for a major Beacon upgrade as the current platform & system was not sufficient for growing demand by groups. The founders, who acted on a volunteer basis, have now retired. Moving forward the Beacon system will be run on a commercial basis by a service provider and migrated to a new platform. This will happen over the next 2 years.

There will be cost increase from 50p per member to £1 per member. But risk of further significant cost increases is low as with user volume increasing the cost per user will become more efficient. We are in a fortunate position as early users. LH as our U3A, representative will have a strong 'user voice'.

The Committee concluded that overall this increase in cost was reasonable and, with Beacon moving to a professional support arrangement, our IT status will be on a secure footing.

MH, supported by the Committee, thanked LH for her skills and commitment [past and ongoing] to this task.

8. Monthly Meetings [Margaret]: the Committee all recognised the seriousness of no replacement Programme Secretary, along with a general lack of volunteering interest amongst our members. Both the the future of our Monthly Meetings and the need for a more robust Committee was discussed at length. It was noted that the Official Committee positions of Chair, Treasurer, Business Secretary and Group Organiser are all due for replacement. IS and BR are very keen to retire this year. The discussion outcome was:

- the Monthly Meeting message has not worked and a new approach is needed which reaches ALL members
- our members need to understand the seriousness of the situation with the two key Committee roles of Business Secretary and Treasurer becoming vacant this year with MH as Chair wanting to step down next year. Without a Treasurer and Business Secretary our U3A cannot legally operate.
- the best way to communicate the gravitas of this situation is to send an official Committee letter. This letter needs to be created, approved by Committee and sent by early February.

Actions:

- ensure message in letter makes in clear that without a Secretary or Treasurer our U3A cannot continue [MH].
- prepare this letter draft ASAP and circulate to the Committee for approval. [MH/VH]
- Email to GLs with request that this message is raised at their meetings [MH/JC]
- Define additional communications to GLs based on response to the letter [MH/JC]

Monthly Meetings for the new 2019/20 Academic year were also discussed alongside the issue to the retiring Committee members. MH pressed for a contingency plan for Monthly Meetings up to Christmas 2019 and the Programme Secretary role shared by the Committee to relieve LW. It was also agreed that the best approach was for a balance of quality speaker with more local low cost speakers. There was also some consideration as to how essential the Monthly Meeting was to the core of our U3A and whether it should be treated as just another group. No conclusion was reached on this.

The plan agreed was:

September: usual enrolment to be run by JC

October: topic of interest by outside speaker. MH to host. A topic and speaker needs to be identified.

November: repeat the GLs November's meeting presentations and some suitable Groups were shortlisted for JC to approach. JC or MH to host.

Christmas Meeting: to consider just a social event with no outside speaker. MH or another Committee Member to host.

Actions:

- review Odiham U3A speaker list for possible topics for 2019 meetings [MH/MW]
- contact GLs of the shortlisted Groups to gauge their willingness to present at November's meeting [JC]
- send Committee her proposals for GLs presenters for November meeting and speaker for October [MH]
- check Beacon for member numbers who don't attend Monthly Meetings [LH].

9. Other U3A Member 'Guests [Margaret]:

MH asked the Committee to reconsider this matter due to the number of requests from members or other Groups to have a 'guest' arrangement[s].

There followed lively discussion with polarised views on allowing a formal guest arrangement versus an introductory guest arrangement. It was agreed to find out more about what how our neighbouring Groups handle guest members

Action: MH to contact Overton, Tadley, Odiham and Hartley Whitney to check on their Member Guest arrangements

12. Committee updates:

IS: is meeting a potential Treasurer Candidate

JC: interest in a Gardening Group to share experiences / give advice. Would like to retire end of this year but happy to assist with Enrolment Day and is prepared to assist with bedding in her replacement.

BR: echoed JC's desire to retire this year with a replacement Business Secretary in place by the summer.

VH / LH / MW: none

13. AOB:

IS: continuing issues with drop-box. Has not been able to meet up with Harvey. MH will follow-up directly.

VH: website management. Could Heather Frazer take this on so HW has less work?

Action: MH to speak to HW once he has recovered. LH to also speak to Heather to see state of Website change work she has undertaken.

MW: issues with chairs and lack of hot-water at Monthly Meeting. Also not that helpful response from the Hall to LW email, indicating element of bad feeling / mis-communication.

Action: MW to follow-up so can understand the underlying issues

14. Date of next meetings:

March 19th Tuesday 9:30-11:30 am Venue: William Tyndale Room, Christ Church, Chineham.

June 6th Thursday 9:30-11:30 am Venue: William Tyndale Room, Christ Church, Chineham.