

Final minutes of the Committee Meeting for Basingstoke – Old Basing u3a

7th July Christ Church Chineham

Attendees:

Rod Marshall
Paul Dodge
Tony Summers
Janet Field
Richard Field
Madeline Hussey
David Noble
Chris Vickers
Janice Vaughan
Elaine Budd (minutes)

Guests and potential committee members

Nick Gosby
Colin MacDonald
Christine Rowell
Alastair Sim

There were no apologies.

1. Guests

RM welcomed our four guests who have nominated themselves for the Committee to be ratified by the AGM. This meeting gives them a flavour of what is discussed and will help them get up to speed for September.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes were approved as distributed.

3. Finance

CMD asked if we should be polling existing members to sign up to Gift Aid. Currently this is only done for new members. NG stated that legally it needs to be done every year. **ACTION Jul/01:** JV to add opt-in question into renewal notice.

TS confirmed that within the AGM paper, it clarifies what our members should return as part of their tax return.

TS restated that the finances distributed as part of the AGM papers are correct and audited.

TS confirmed that the actuals for room hires have increased this month as many of our meeting rooms have now submitted invoices. They represent a quarter of the year's rental costs. TS confirmed that this is not an issue as we will be using the current reserves in line with the reserves policy. TS will review the reserves policy in September.

DN stated he has observed that the accommodation costs have increased substantially (78%) during the year, but our members had not gone up by the same percentage (12%). TS highlighted that DN was looking at last year's numbers and he is reporting on this year. However, DN's point was still valid, but mainly that at the time, room costs did increase year on year because during Covid we were not using halls all the time.

TS asked if the potential new Chair would like to be a signatory to the Lloyds bank accounts, which was confirmed. TS will remove all other signatories, other than himself, RM, PD, JV and EB.

TS mentioned that the business cards were a positive mechanism for attracting new members.

4. AGM

EB outlined the logistics for the meeting and confirmed a final mail will go out on Monday. Concerns were raised that we would not be quorate as only 30 people have responded positively plus the Committee, but this is in line with historical experience so we should hit quoracy. DN believed quoracy was achieved with 5 trustees, but RM confirmed that our Constitution states: 5 trustees or 10% of members whichever is greater.

It was asked if the AGM could be recorded. RF will request this on the day from Alastair, but it will only be for the business part of the meeting as we would not get permission to record our speaker.

CMD reconfirmed that he is joining the Committee on the understanding that he will be travelling a lot so will not be able to attend regular meetings. However, managing the technology can be done anywhere and this is not an issue. He said he would not be able to pick up the role of running Zoom meetings. CR volunteered to support CMD where she has the skills to do so.

JF raised that training needs to be done with group leaders on the use of Beacon. This could be done online if necessary, given CMD's availability.

Post AGM, PD stated he will be asking the Committee members without roles to pick up some additional activities. **Action Jul/02:** New Chair to discuss with Committee members.

Action Jul/03: Committee to agree who will take over the Zoom licence as RF hands over.

RF offered to continue to support CMD in his role with Beacon. EB raised concerns about a non-trustee having access. RF said we have this situation today.

Action Jul/04: EB to check with central u3a.

DN raised concerns about our reporting to the Charity Commission, specifically that we did not appear to submit at TAR. TS said we follow the rules and whatever the Charity Commission website asks for, we have responded to. DN said we do not follow the Charity Commission legislation - for example, providing our Reserves Policy. TS stated this was made available last year but DN said he has not seen it. EB pointed out that not all the information that we submit shows on the website. It is difficult to miss out information as it will not allow you to progress through the online input process. DN said that all trustees should see the data, not just the Officers working on it. It was agreed he is correct. JF confirmed that the process described is one she had followed as Business Secretary.

EB confirmed that RM is completing the TAR and the finances will then be added. **RM expressed some scepticism at the value of the TAR given that other reports are produced but DN stressed that**

the template provided can be useful in shaping policy, eg Public Benefit. After the AGM, once this has been completed, it will be sent to all trustees. It will be discussed at the September meeting and both the new Chair or Treasurer, and the Business Secretary will be present when the data is added to the system. **Action Jul/05: EB to finalise report with those responsible for input and publish.**

Current nominations were reviewed and there are no nominations for Marketing and Events. JF commented that this is the sixth year that we have not had anybody in the Events post despite suggesting different role titles. RM said he had written to all members a year or two ago and it was clear that many people valued the monthly meetings. This was picked up later in the agenda under monthly meetings.

5. Meet and Greet

CV updated that progress is positive:

- 100% of group leaders have come back to confirm availability.
- Excursion and Holidays are working out if a deputy can come as JC is not available.
- JV confirmed she does not require a helper on the payment machine but somebody for cheques. TS volunteered.
- NG will have a new groups table to help people interested in starting new groups.
- CV confirmed we will be sending out mails, putting up poster and going on social media. The Committee reviewed the poster which will be put around the town. TS suggested that we put the main hall details on the poster – CV to make changes. CR suggested we put #loveBasingstoke on all social media to get multiple hits. EB reminded the committee to increase the social media output for all aspects of the u3a. Rod agreed to change website to include the poster on the front page.

Action Jul/06: EB to pass laminator to CV for signage.

6. Group update

JF updated the Committee on progress last year.

- There were 17 new groups, 3 of which will start post September - wine tasting, short mat bowls and cribbage.
- 405 members have joined the 17 groups which is excellent.
- We have 76 groups. JF reminded us that the u3a health check suggests 1 group to 10-12 members. We have 11 members per group which is healthy.
- 24 GL were trained on Beacon which puts us in a stronger position than last year.
- Changes to existing groups:
 - Meditation and mindfulness should resume next year.
 - Environment and Us will close.
 - Bridge improvers folded due to illness, but it looks like it will carry on in September with a new GL.
- We still have issues with groups that do not take learners. Cribbage group will start without beginners but will review the year. Canasta is considering changing its approach. Ukulele group is up and running but won't take beginners, however clear guidelines have been written so people don't join and are disappointed.

- Short mat bowls has an outstanding issue which is now with the facility committee, and we are hopefully this will go forward. There is also the potential for an external summer bowls activity.

Some groups have a member that helps the group leader or runs the group, and they are not u3a members. An example is the leader of the French group. This might also apply to a helper in the ballroom dancing group. JF said the concern is around insurance, EB supported this concern. There is an option that they go onto Beacon as an Honorary member but do not pay a fee.

CR voiced concern that if we use this approach, we may open up to other potential GL's that don't want to pay the fee but who want to be a member of a group. The Committee agreed that our policy is that as our u3a is for members run by members, we should not permit outside people to run groups.

Action Jul/07: This situation needs to be addressed before September. A subcommittee of PD/CR/CV to submit a pros/cons paper via email to the Committee and a decision should be made via an online vote.

7. Monthly meeting requirements

RM gave an update on the current situation and confirmed that Julie (who organises our guest speakers) is happy to continue, but Natalie (NL) is going to stand down. Although Bev Sturdy has said she is willing to support, she does not want to take over NL's role. RM said that he would be willing to take this over if BS will work with him. CR said she may be happy to get involved.

Action Jul/08: CR/RM to work together on what is possible for the September monthly meeting and report back to the Committee. They will also approach QMC to overcome some of the existing issues.

Action Jul/09: TS and EB to book QMC for Sept/Oct/Nov/Dec.

Where we have the picnic, and how many to arrange each year, to be discussed when a calendar is pulled together.

8. Marketing

MH gave an update:

- Sherfield fete produced a new magazine article and we believe resulted in a few new members.
- The marketing sub-committee drafted an outline plan and budget which will be passed to new sub-committee.
- RF asked who will carry on with the newsletter. MH said she was happy to do so if the Committee requested after reviewing in September. There was a comment that some of our groups are entering into a short story competition and MH felt that she is getting more information from groups for news articles.
- JF said she thought that the 25th anniversary should form the foundation of the marketing plan.

9. 25th anniversary pamphlet

JF gave background on the production of the pamphlet and passed around a copy. The final copy will be ready for action shortly and she has the costs for printing, but it depends on what we want to use it for. It was agreed when published it should be given to all existing members. Ideas were put forward on what we are going to do for the celebrations and that it should be the foundation of our marketing next year (currently not in the draft marketing plan). Ideas include: radio, social media, mailings, a summer ball and celebrating members who have been there for 25 years.

Action Jul/10: a subcommittee to be set up to discuss the 25-year celebrations – PD

10. Supporting other charities

RM asked for views on whether we should support charities as a previous Committee had decided against this. JF explained that the blanket no from a previous committee was due to commercial enterprises asking us to advertise.

DN suggested that we should co-operate with local charities, MH agreed and said that we could work with others to form local networks. DN gave as an example St Michael's Hospice where the General Manager had already placed a U3A poster in the welcome pack and had allowed DN to hand out cards at Hospice meetings publicising the U3A. TS reminded us that we are not a charity in the same way as others, as raising money is not something we do, but we can work with others such as BBVA. EB said that she supported working with charities, but not via e-mail, the preference was an area on the website, newsletters. We also need a criterion that we stick to. CR suggested that we form partnerships with good causes. JF stated she felt we must have a criterion and we are not a service-providing charity. DN said our aim should be integrated into the fabric of our community.

It was agreed that we are supportive, but our business must come first. The approach would be to have up to six local charities that we support over the year. Members will have the option to nominate different charities for the future.

Action Jul/11: DN, CR EB to come up with a list of six charities to push forward and present to the Committee.

11. Farewell to committee members/ Chair summary of his tenure

RM thanked MH, JF, RF and wanted to pass on thanks to Sue Seamour. This was supported by all Committee members.

RM gave an overview of his time as Chair, how he was picked and the challenges through the covid crisis. He feels that he leaves with the u3a in a good position. The Committee thanked him for the supportive nature of his chairmanship.

TS welcomed the potential new Committee members and hoped after they are confirmed at the AGM that we will have positive debates and activities in the coming months.

12. AOB

- a) New committee members to send email to EB to confirm if they will allow us to share mail addresses within the Committee so that we don't have to use Beacon.

- b) EB informed the Committee that a previous decision to stop membership if the fee had not been paid within a month is unconstitutional. The Committee agreed to go back to the two-month period within the Constitution.
- c) CV presented a situation where a member left due to hosting a Ukrainian family. CV asked if they could become an honorary member and rejoin at no cost for a year. This was voted on and agreed.

Action Jul/12: JV to implement

- d) CMD asked for confirmation of membership fee which will be £38 and RF asked that a new copy of the membership form be put on the website.
- e) CMD asked why we don't let the members see and amend their records. **Action Jul/13:** CMD to send the u3a video link to all Committee members and add to the agenda in the future. Several Committee members raised concerns that we need to be careful about giving the facility to change data and we need to ensure all other information remains confidential. EB said the bigger priority is to clear out information that should not be there to comply with GDPR.
- f) Based on first review, CMD believes it would be beneficial to buy the uk domain as it would help to manage the website, though this would have a three-figure upfront cost. CMD was asked to put together a benefit statement. **Action Jul/14:** CMD to put together a benefit statement to buy domain.
MH suggested that the whole website should be thought about and what functionality we need.

Action Jul/15: All Committee members to provide ideas to CMD on suggested functionality and in addition ask the new marketing subcommittee to confirm what they require to support the marketing plan. CMD will then review and put together a paper for change. Rod/Colin to have conversation about any perceived issues with the functionality of the website.

- g) Trustees signed Eligibility form

Action Jul/16: CMD to review terms and return online with physical signature.

Next meeting venue to be confirmed - 9.30 – 12.30 7th September.

Meeting dates for the future are:

All except 7th September to be at Christ Church Chineham

2nd November

4th January 2024

7th March

2nd May

4th July