

Committee Meeting Minutes

Venue: John Storer House

Date & Time: Wednesday 9th October 2024 10.00am

Present: Pam Upton (PU) - CHAIR, Geetha Bala (GB), Bev Gillman (BG), Garry Rigby (GR), Sue Ronald (SR), Pam Towers (PT), Helen Reid (HR) (minutes)

Apologies for absence: Debra Hardwick, Phil Bass, Margaret Kelvey

Pam U welcomed Jennie Lock to the meeting as an observer, and everyone introduced themselves to her.

1. Minutes of last meeting to be ratified and signed

- 3b, Groups Coordinator report:
In sentence commencing 'Bev introduced...' delete 'potential' and 'and is likely to join the u3a.'
- Page 3, 'Reporting to the Charities Commission':
Insert 2025 after October.

These corrections will be made and then minutes signed and sent to be put onto the website.

Action: PU

2. Matters Arising and Actions (items not included in agenda)

- Members Handbook: Pam T said she wants to rewrite the Financial section. Everyone to have another look at the handbook before the next meeting. **Action: ALL**
- Coffee & Chat: Pam U and Helen will do the first session on Thursday 17th in the afternoon. Further sessions are planned for once a month on different days. Pam will draw up a provisional rota. Garry pointed out that we need to check when the cafe is open. **Action: PU**

- Membership forms: Revision of these is still ongoing.
- Reporting to the Charities Commission: Pam T and Debra will meet to discuss this after the next Committee meeting.
- Riviera Travel: It was difficult to put in the newsletter without appearing to advertise the company. A flyer on the website with disclaimers might be better; one such from Brixworth u3a's website was passed round as an example. After some discussion, it was felt a carefully worded piece should go in the newsletter, mentioning the donation and referring members to u3a Matters magazine for details. Garry mentioned other funding streams, where you can nominate a charity when ordering online, which would be worth investigating. Pam said she would ask on the Chairs Forum Facebook page. **Action: PU**
- The problem with the Treasurer's email address has now been sorted. No other problems, except Bev has been receiving junk emails purportedly from Pam U.
- Fit for the Future: Pam U has registered as voting delegate for the TAT AGM and will report back at the next Committee meeting.

3. Reports

a. Secretary (DH)

Most points in the report are on the Agenda. Debra has also circulated the email from the Charities Commission with useful links to information for new Trustees.

b. Groups Coordinator (BG)

Pam U mentioned that she'd spoken to the leader of a group which has closed due to lack of numbers; as the meetings were at Gorse Covert it was too costly for just a few people. She mentioned to the GL the possibility of a startup loan if he wants to restart the group. Pam T said this group had money but she couldn't access the account as it had been removed from the website, so she would need to contact the group leader about this.

Another group had closed due to lack of support. The group is still on the website and there is £440 in the bank account.

Group leaders need to be made aware of the process for closure and that any residual funds go into central funds, unless they use the money before formally closing down.

Active groups may retain small amounts in their account which they no longer need for possible future use.

c. Membership Secretary (GR)

Garry reported that numbers are now down to 1107 (from 1125 in his report) due to several resignations. The number of renewals still to go is down to about 160, similar to last year. People get their final warning on 1st November and on 1st December, Garry starts phoning people. People have 50 days from 1st November to renew before being removed from the list.

Garry doesn't always get told directly if a member resigns or dies.

Garry confirmed that only 'renew by post' members are sent a printed Activities list each year. He also mentioned that he has removed unwanted columns from the automatically produced Activities list and it would go on the website.

d. Treasurer (PT)

The report reflected the member subscriptions recently received with more to come.

Total income to date is mainly from groups. The startup loan to a new group has now mostly been repaid with the remainder expected to be repaid by year end.

The admin of the charge cards has now been transferred from the previous Treasurer to Pam T, but HMRC is still ongoing.

Year End Accounts:

The information required from group leaders at year end can be simplified. For the Charities Commission return, only total group income and total group expenditure is needed, with detail only given for the central funds.

The 66 groups who don't use accounts on the website (so either have no money or are just using cash) just need to give total income and expenditure for the year and their new balance.

The 17 groups who use banking just need to give total cash movements for the year. For the 6 groups using the system for banking and cash, no further information is needed.

Anyone using the system for cash only does not need to provide any more detail. Group leaders need to share the information with their group members, and will be reminded of this in the letter Pam T sends to them.

One group needs an independent examination as their income is over £2.5K and this is already being done.

Pam T asked about terminology: it was agreed to use the term 'on the website' (rather than on-line or Simple Membership).

Financial Reserves:

The Charities Commission return asks about financial reserves. We can say we don't have any, but our policy says we should have 9 months reserves. The budget is agreed at the AGM, but we could change the wording of the financial policy if appropriate. Pam T will think about this.

Garry pointed out that historically the lowest point of the year is July and we used to say we needed around £7K at that point, but we should reconsider whether this is still appropriate.

e. Web Manager (PB)

There will be fliers for the I.T. for Everyone group to be distributed at this afternoon's meeting. Krystal offer a cheaper web hosting package that appears suitable for us. Currently we are paying £132 per year for the Ruby plan because we needed space for the old website. The Amethyst plan – free for UK registered charities - should be sufficient for us. We just need to take down our old website, and it was agreed we can do so. Pam U will check we still keep the other services that Krystal supply: our domain name (which we still pay for - £9.59 was paid for this in July) and the email forwarding service. Garry suggested we back up the old website before closing it.

4. Web Management

The future of the management of the website system was discussed and it was unanimously agreed to divide the role into two and appoint a Systems Administrator and a Web Manager. Arrangements are in place to enable this.

5. Agenda for Group Leaders Meeting 28th October

Suggested items (not necessarily in order):

1. Pam T to talk about financial matters, including requirements of end-of-year reports, group closures, etc.
 2. Could we increase the general membership fee to cover venue hire to spread the cost? This had been looked at and found unviable – subscriptions would need to double. It was agreed to include this as it had been raised by a group leader. Bev to send Pam T the wording from the GL so she can prepare a response.
 3. Martyn will present a 'briefing paper'.
 4. Should every group have a deputy group leader? Again, raised by a group leader.
 5. Display on notice board – could include in EDI, Pam U to cover this.
 6. Debra to update group leaders: risk assessments, updated group leaders guidance document, ICE details.
 7. Group leaders need to ensure email changes are notified so that forwarding addresses are updated.
 8. After lunch: Group leaders to split into groups to discuss case studies, each group to be given all the case studies and cover as many of them as they wish, making notes and reporting back on their decisions.
- Bev reported that we currently had 30-odd attendees. She will send out a last call, giving them a few more days to respond.

6. Notes from EDI Meeting 16th September

Most of this has already been discussed under the Group Leaders Meeting and we have already mentioned the Coffee and Chat sessions. The next meeting has been changed from Monday 4th to Monday 18th November. There were no further comments.

7. Revised Guidelines for Group Leaders

Debra has inserted the piece about Risk Assessments on page 10. Pam U suggested we mention the Accessibility Audit. This could go in the section on accessibility with a link to the Accessibility Audit of venues.

The Accounting Guidelines need to be rewritten. Pam T to look into this.

On page 5, change the last line to 'please let the Secretary know.'

On page 3, point 3, delete the sentence 'Please inform the Groups Co-ordinator if a non-member attends a meeting.'

It was suggested we need to include an instruction to inform the Web Manager if changing your email address.

We could also include something about splitting groups if they get too large, and also include the procedure for group closures.

Last paragraph of p.9: It was agreed to remove the last paragraph and replace it with a reference to the Accessibility Audit, which the group leader should check for a venue's suitability.

It was agreed that a revised draft would be drawn up for the next Committee Meeting.
Action PT/PU/DH/BG

8. AOB

Pam T commented that the Committee discussion papers are normally on the website, but they hadn't been uploaded this month.

Pam U will check who to send the signed Minutes to. At the next meeting, we will look at the draft role descriptions for Systems Administrator and Web Manager to clarify who does what.

Date & Time of next meeting: Wednesday 13th November 2024, 10.00 am

Meeting closed at: 12.10 pm

Accepted as a true record. Pam Upton - Chair.



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