



MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 3rd SEPTEMBER 2019

AT 23 BULLFINCH LANE, RIVERHEAD

In attendance: Richard Clout, Alan Heyes, Delma Moore, Pene Stambollouian (Sec), Magda Sweetland (Chairman), Christine Walls, Janet Willcox

Apologies: Lesley Allum-Jolly, Harry Reeves, Gill Walker, and Sharon Willmore

1. Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 2nd July 2019

The draft minutes of this meeting were circulated for approval by those who had attended the meeting, and once agreed by email, were placed on the website. Magda has signed a hard copy of these minutes for the file. There were no matters arising not included in the agenda at this meeting.

2. Science Group/Accessibility

Christine said that she had heard it is unlikely the Science Group will be able to meet in Weald Village Hall in the coming year. This is very disappointing, but various alternative venues have been considered. Holmesdale is available and will be a popular choice, being more accessible than Weald and providing easy parking. There may be a need to provide some blackout curtains.

There have been no further requests for lifts but the offer will continue to be publicised. Help with transport and access is not just for people who are disabled but also for those who lack confidence or experience of travelling to U3A events around the district and beyond.

There followed a discussion on the need to keep under review the changing demographic of our membership and the needs of older members. It was agreed that our principal focus should be on creating opportunities for members to be as active and as engaged as possible, whilst providing less demanding activities for those unable to sustain their former involvement.

3. Study Groups

Delma reported on two recent meetings. The first was a follow-up meeting on 23rd August with Sevenoaks U3A on shared groups, having met last in April. Their new Group Development Co-ordinator, Elaine Elston, is now in post. The Sevenoaks representatives were impressed with the range of our groups and how they are publicised on our website and through the newsletters. It was agreed by those attending that they should continue to meet in order to identify opportunities for shared groups, and to exchange ideas.

Delma next reported on the Knole Group Contacts meeting held on 2nd September with 35 plus attendees. There are currently 75 group activities on offer. Many of these are well-established groups that continue to run successfully due to the commitment and energy of the group contacts. While the coffee mornings have drawn up to 25 members each month, and Committee members attend as often as possible, few group contacts attend. It was agreed that they should be urged to do so, to highlight their groups and attract new members.

The Open Afternoon was the major item on their agenda on the 2nd, and following Delma's report of what had been proposed and agreed, Magda similarly briefed the Committee on the arrangements. Two diagrams were circulated showing the hall layout and the table layout. To avoid last year's queues, the Meet & Greet Team will invite newcomers to look at what is on offer, to fill in application forms if they wish to join up, and then take them over to the Membership Table for processing (where Lesley will be further helped by Suzi Morgan). Newcomers can be signed up for groups before formally joining, as long as they understand that they will have to show their membership cards on their first attendance.

It was agreed that Alan should buy four 2-sided noticeboards for Knole's regular use at monthly meetings and public events (est. cost £500) which will display the posters produced for the 10th Anniversary and any directional signs deemed necessary at the Open Afternoon. Magda also circulated a Checklist for the Open Afternoon.

4. Report on Finance and Accounts

Richard circulated a statement of receipts and payments for the first quarter of the year. April - June, and for the two month period July- August. He drew attention to revised headings for some categories of expenditure. It was noted that the figures for the 10th Anniversary event show a net cost of £841 after ticket sales.

Richard said he would work with the Committee to produce a budget for 2020/2021 but in the meantime he was still getting on top of U3A's financial policies and procedures. He is currently reviewing the process for paying invoices, including the authorisation of expenditure and the verification of final costs incurred.

5. New Members

In Lesley's absence, Alan reported that 85% of the membership had made renewal payments by cheque, cash, or online and have been sent the new Handbook and a 2019/2020 Membership Card. Some renewals from some of the remaining members are waiting to be processed. Only six members have formally notified their decision to cease membership, most for health reasons. It was hoped that the Beacon system, introduced over two years ago, would streamline the renewals system, but there have been a number of hiccups again this summer, putting a lot of pressure on those who have had to sort out the irregularities. Alan will be meeting with Lesley and Gill to see what can be done to remedy any difficulties as we go forward.

6. Social Events

The two Festive Lunches at Miller & Carter on 6th and 7th January will be highlighted in the September newsletter, so that members can "save the dates". Final details will be circulated with payment instructions in November, once menu options have been agreed with the Restaurant.

Knole's new crockery will be used at the Open Afternoon; no charge will be made for refreshments.

7. Communications

Alan said the Newsletter will be sent to the printers by the end of the week, and would be 12 pages long. He again encouraged the Committee to read the website themselves and to encourage others to do so. Some members are still having difficulty accessing the member section on the website, and it was suggested a PowerPoint presentation at a monthly meeting might be helpful, or one-to-one help given at the coffee mornings, using members' own laptops.

8. AOB

Delma asked the Committee their views on asking Group Contacts to provide some form of written feedback on their groups once or twice a year. The Committee felt that this would not be welcomed by some contacts, and that one-to-one or group discussions would be more appropriate.

Pene said she thought the Committee's appreciation should be recorded for all the hard work that had gone into making the 10th Anniversary such a success, particularly by Alan and to Janet and their volunteer teams. Much appreciation was expressed on the day and positive feedback received since; the weather was glorious, and the musical entertainment very much enjoyed.

Date of Next Meeting: 5th November 2019, and bi-monthly thereafter on the first Tuesday of the month.