



MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 5th MARCH 2019

AT 23 BULLFINCH LANE, RIVERHEAD

In attendance: Stewart Armstrong, Lesley Allum-Jolly, Lionel Parks, Alan Heyes, Delma Moore, Pene Stambollouian (Sec), Magda Sweetland (Chairman), Christine Walls, Janet Willcox, Sharon Willmore.

1. Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 8th January 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. There were no matters arising.

2. Communications

Alan reported that all was in hand regarding the March Newsletter. Feedback on the Newsletter and website continues to be very positive, especially from new members.

3. Social Events

Janet said the coffee mornings are working very well, attracting old and new members. The space at Miller and Carter suits our needs for introductions and networking.

Two Festive Lunches to be held in January 2020 are under discussion, each accommodating 50 – 60 people. A 2 course menu would be c £10.95, £13.95 for 3 courses. The Committee could consider paying for drinks on arrival. The Committee roundly supported this proposal.

Magda had circulated details of the arrangements which will apply at St Nicholas Church where the monthly meetings will move to once the Community Centre closes for refurbishment. A contract with the Church is still to be signed. On the 2019 Open Day in September members will be signposted to the café in the crypt for refreshments. Thereafter tea will be served in the Church itself. Janet is considering the acquisition of crockery. The hunt is on for a large teapot.

Janet has assembled a large team to plan and execute the 10th Anniversary event. The event will run for approx. 3 hours during which there will be tea, something bubbly (to be bought in France by Lesley), visual displays on U3A activities (photography, art, handicrafts, knitting, Historic Houses, Industrial Heritage, U3A holidays) and musical entertainment and as well as the cutting of an Anniversary Cake. Time slots will be given for tea. Janet is in discussion with a professional caterer to provide crockery, sandwiches and little cakes at approx. £8 per head. Janet's team will provide and make up the scones. Numbers attending will need to be known as early as possible for catering purposes. Between 150 and 250 members are expected to attend. A charge of £5 or £6 is suggested; the return of booking form, SAE envelope and cheque will be required by a set date.

The Committee approved expenditure of up to £1500 for the event to include catering costs, printing of photos and other material for the displays, and a tip for the caretaker. A meeting of the Anniversary team is being held on 14th March.

4. Arrangements for Holiday 2019

The May holiday is now fully booked (with just one spare space on the coach) and interest is already being expressed about the location on the 2020 holiday.

Christine said that numbers were a little down at Science meetings. She will produce a flier for all future events. It was agreed that these Science talks and the monthly meeting talks should be more heavily promoted on the website and in Newsletters, profiling the speaker and expanding on the topic to be presented.

Christine also referred to the text she circulated for comment on establishing a list of members willing to offer lifts to those without transport. It was important to stress that a lift offered once, was not forever! Christine needs alternative contacts for the scheme in her absence and it was suggested that those who sign up should be asked to help run the scheme by being the telephone contact for their area.

Lifts to and from the 10th Anniversary party may be very much welcomed (although the Russell House School is immediately opposite the Otford Station there are no buses) and if there is high demand locally run shared transport schemes could be investigated.

5. Report on Study Groups

Delma reported that she had held a meeting for newly appointed group co-ordinators the day before, with five attending and just two apologies. Some of these groups are already well underway in terms of numbers. (Evening Dining 2 already has 10 members; Mah Jong 2 has 10; London Studies 8 has 12; Walking with Dogs has 11; and Bridge has 16, the maximum if the sessions are to be held in members' homes. So new groups need to be established – Bridge 2 and Walking with Dogs 2. Magda said that Music Appreciation group has also been brought together with Harry Reeves as Co-ordinator with a flautist among its number.

The two groups which mounted and hosted table displays at the Hub in February's meeting had worked well. Delma had purposefully chosen two different types of activity to be represented – bird watching and London walks. It is hoped that there will be recessed space at St Nicholas for these displays to be continued, hopefully alongside a noticeboard. The noticeboard has drawn interest, most notably by members putting up entertainment fliers. Pene suggested that a separately demarked area for member's notices on the Board would emphasise that member notices were not endorsed or verified by the Committee.

6. Report on New Study Groups

Sharon commented that she was pleased the Bridge and Mah Jong enthusiasts can now run as two separate groups. Efforts to set up an Interim French groups have not as yet been successful. Interest has been expressed in starting up Quilting and Crime Thrillers groups. Bryan Rawlins suggested a group is needed to encourage more men to join. The idea was raised of having an early evening meeting in a pub once a month to complement the coffee mornings.

There followed a discussion on health and safety. It was agreed that Group Co-ordinators need to ensure risk assessments are undertaken where deemed necessary by the activity. It was stressed however that individual members of a group should take care of themselves; members are not legally responsible for each other but should be aware of and help any member in difficulty. It has been suggested that some groups would like to carry first aid kits (these can be bought at Boots for c £9 and the cost will be re-imbursed by the Treasurer). It was agreed to return to this important subject at a subsequent meeting.

Alan said that he was about to start in April the first series of Gresham College Lectures in order to re-introduce seminars in Knole U3A. Each lecture would last an hour and be followed by discussion. A charge would need to be made and around 20 people would need to attend to cover costs. These sessions would be open to our neighbouring U3A's are likely to be held at Holmesdale.

9. New Members

Lesley reported that there are 485 members listed on the Beacon system. 12 new members have joined and 2 renewals have at last sent in their payment. The application form and the renewal form need to be changed to include a Title for each member (Mr, Mrs, Ms, etc) and to amend the section on Gift Aid.

To avoid confusion between their roles, Lesley will from now on be referred to as the Membership Secretary and Gill Walker will be simply be listed as Database. Alan will sort out their individual anonymised email addresses on Beacon.

10. Monthly Meetings

Stewart confirmed his reluctant decision to stand down from the Committee, as he needs to spend more time in Scotland for family reasons. He will not be disappearing however and will be very happy to help the new incumbent settle into the role. Stewart then ran through the programme he has booked for the rest of 2019. Stewart was asked to confirm the speaker for the 20th May and to advise him of the later start due to the AGM being held on the same afternoon. Stewart's role has included representing Knole at Sevenoaks Town Council meetings regarding the use of the Community Centre and other matter when appropriate. This has been re-assigned to Lionel for the time being.

11. Report on Finance and Accounts

Lionel drew attention to the financial statement circulated before the meeting and highlighted categories of expenditure which remain underspent. He will be drawing up the final accounts for the year early in April for immediate examination so that they can approved by the Committee and sent out with the AGM notice at the end April. He asked that any outstanding expense claims be forwarded to him as soon as possible. It was agreed that Alan should purchase a new laptop for the Science Group before the end of the financial year. Lionel was unsure if income due from Gift will be received by the year-end but this should be the only significant change in the income figure at the year-end. The expectation is that we will have a small surplus of income over expenditure at the year-end reflecting astute budgeting and budgetary control over the year.

Lionel recommended that we collate Knole U3A's key documents, most specifically original signed papers so that they could be easily accessed if required and duplication avoided.

12. AOB

Magda referred to upcoming Third Age Trust seminars and workshops, details of which had been circulated in recent weeks, and it was suggested that Delma could attend the "Interest groups matters" in Southampton on the 11th April, and that Pene would speak to Richard Clout regarding jointly attending the Financial Matters workshop in East Horsley on 16th April.

Date of Next Meeting: 7th May, and bi-monthly thereafter on the first Tuesday of the month.