



MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 5th NOVEMBER 2019
AT 23 BULLFINCH LANE, RIVERHEAD

In attendance: Lesley Allum-Jolly, Richard Clout, Alan Heyes, Delma Moore, Pene Stambollouian (Sec), Magda Sweetland (Chairman), Harry Reeves, Gill Walker, Sharon Willmore, Janet Willcox. **Apologies:** Christine Walls

1. Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 3rd September 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 signed a hard copy of these minutes for the file. There were no matters arising not included in the agenda at this meeting.

2. Study Groups

Delma reported that there are now 79 groups. The new Genealogy 2 group is now full; Village Studies has approx six members. The compiling of the London Studies booklet is going well.

Delma felt the Open Afternoon had gone well despite space restrictions. Four additional groups had arrived unannounced. The layout may need to be reviewed next year. She thanked those who dealt with the tables and chairs, and the Meet and Greet Team for their support and welcome.

3. New Groups

Sharon reported that a second Knitting for Living group was being formed, as well as a Wine Appreciation Group. Interest in a second Music Appreciation group is also being sought. She has plans to launch a Boules group in the spring. The Newsletter is useful in advertising new ideas but 4 - 5 interested members are needed to make a start on any new group. All groups require someone to act as group contact, and new members seem loathe to take on this responsibility. Sharon is willing to work alongside new groups initially. Magda emphasised the advantage of group contacts working in pairs with one leading on arrangements and the other on the subject matter itself.

Alan referred to the new Gresham Lectures group that will hold its first meeting next week at Holmesdale to listen and then discuss an arts lecture. Members will have the opportunity to select lectures from the Gresham Handbook for future meetings.

4. New Members

Lesley reported that we have 37 new members and that three welcome meetings have been held. Two of these had elicited a good response to helping with running groups and events, the third less so.

Lesley said that asking members to renew their membership at the AGM had worked well. But over the summer and still not fully resolved has been a wide range of difficulties with the renewal process. The problems were mainly with Paypal and BACS payments, and with the postal distribution of the Handbooks, Membership cards and the Newsletters. Some arose from members misunderstanding or misreading online instructions, and others to problems with the printer. As a result an inordinate amount of time has been spent cross-checking and correcting renewal applications. We currently have 484 members with 47 outstanding renewals.

The Committee expressed its concern for the amount of additional work that Lesley and Gill and others have had over the last three months. In particular it was agreed that Lesley's extensive role was not sustainable, and her request to relinquish responsibility for renewals was unanimously accepted, with thanks for all she has done to date. It was agreed that she retain her role as the New Members contact, and that someone preferably with IT background be sought to deal with membership records and renewals.

Alan commented that this summer's problems stemmed with hindsight from inadequate handover and not enough training on Beacon and on other areas of Knole's modus operandi. Magda said she understood from other Kent U3As that Beacon was generally considered to be a very valuable online tool. It was agreed to ask someone from the Third Age Trust to run a training session on Beacon for the Committee.

5. Monthly Meetings

Harry said that he agreed that the layout of the Open Afternoon had not been perfect but otherwise the venue had worked well. He said that he would speak to the Church staff about further improvements in seating and layout. With regard to the first Monthly meeting he thought it had worked well; despite the presentation being somewhat pedestrian, there had been positive feedback on the topic. We are still to learn how visual presentations will work at the venue, although he believes others have had no difficulty with the use of the floor screen.

The location of the tea and cake tables worked well. It was agreed that more thought needs to go into how to set up the notice boards and how to mount general HUB information alongside Groups notices, so that they could be easily seen and read.

6. Finance and Accounts

Richard presented a statement on Receipt and Payments for the year to date, and there were no queries on the figures. He confirmed that he was working towards producing an annual budget for Committee approval at the start of next year. He raised a query about outstanding invoices from our printers and Magda had also queried why we were being charged VAT. It was stressed that we are not committed to use Creative Productions if we can get better quotes elsewhere.

7. Communications

Alan said that 148 members have logged on to Knole's website so far this year but some Committee members have still never accessed it! Most members obtain the information they need from our regular Newsletters. The website is widely accessed by the general public (with a range of 15,000 - 25,000 hits per month this year) and serves as a good advertisement for the U3A movement generally. Some members complained that they have difficulty accessing the Members Only pages and wondered why these need to be discreet. Our "webmasters" do a great job maintaining the website, but a lot of effort also goes into sourcing material to be placed on the site.

8. Social Events

Janet said the flier advertising the Festive Lunches to be held on the 6th and 7th January will be finalised after next week's Coffee Morning at Miller and Carter. She asked that the invite and menu details be sent out in a separate email to members (ie not included with the Newsletter). The form will however be posted out with the Newsletter to those that, by request, receive hard copies. Members who wish to attend will be asked to post the form and their menu selection with their cheque (made out to Knole U3A) back to Janet by 6th December. There will be 50 places on each of the two days; it was suggested that half the Committee should attend on the 6th and half on the 7th (please advise Janet of your

availability). As there will be no seating plan Committee members are asked to ensure that new and lone members are helped to find places to sit amongst others.

It was agreed that those attending will be offered a glass of wine on arrival, but that subsequent drink orders will be at members' cost.

Janet said that Wendy Willsher had agreed to alternate with her in attending Committee meetings in the coming months. It was agreed that Wendy should be co-opted so that she could formally represent the Social Events team on the Committee. Janet will stand down from the Committee at the AGM.

9. Science Group

In Christine's absence Alan confirmed that Science meetings will until further notice be held at Holmesdale. On average about 35 members attend these meetings and the venue is just adequate for this number. Alan commented that new members were needed for the Science Committee to ensure continuity and to help develop next year's programme of speakers. Reference was made to some new members with scientific backgrounds who might be persuaded.

10. Review of Administrative Procedures

Magda said she was aware that some of our systems needed reviewing and updating. The first area she would like to remedy is the compilation of job descriptions outlining the different roles Committee members play. She asked if over the next two weeks Committee members would write down the roles they play and the tasks they undertake, and said she would then review these with each individual member. Secondly Magda said she felt there was still work to be done in building teams around each of the Committee posts to avoid overload and to plan for succession.

11. A.O.B

Pene referred to an email received from The Third Age Trust about the proposed National U3A Day to be held on 3rd June next year. The aim is to publicise U3A nationally through a series of locally organised celebratory and publicity events. The general membership are to be encouraged to come forward with ideas and to run them locally. Pene agreed to draft a flier for insertion in January's Newsletter, based on the information sent from HQ.

12. Dates for 2020 Meetings

7th January, 3rd March, 5th May