

CALDICOT AND DISTRICT U3A

Minutes of Committee Meeting No.4 (2020/2021)

Date: - 15th October 2020

Venue: Portskewett Inn

Time: 10.15am

Rob Harry	Chairman
Tony Hodson-Hirst	Treasurer
Linda Stewart	Vice Chairman
Elaine Yeomans	Committee and Network Secretary
Betty Waite	Link Secretary
Linda Howells	Committee Member
Helen Wormald	Committee Member

1.4.2020 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

ACTION

Chairman thanked everyone for coming, apologies from Angela, Pam and Glenice

2.4.2020 TREASURERS REPORT

October Balance Sheet

The October monthly balance sheet will follow in due course as and when the bank statement is available. The September figures were circulated following last month's meeting, which was also brought forward from its accustomed timing. Income this period is entirely from the collection of subscriptions and is awaiting banking. As reported last month, there are still problems paying into our Barclays account, due to new procedures and Barclay's ineffective service. I have again chased up for the paying in cards which are still not forthcoming after a lot of sucking of teeth and more promises. It will be necessary to pay cash into the U3A account via my own account, which is, of course, money laundering but allowed.

Some group financial reports for the year ending March 31st, 2020 remain outstanding and work is ongoing to rationalise and combine into the overall U3A Summary that was due to be put before the AGM last month. This will not be available or, fortunately, required until certainly later in the year or, most likely, now in the New Year.

The overall financial position in the central accounts at the end of last month, and including my float, is still healthy at a total of £8,980.21 but we have taken the Gift Aid rebate due this year which, otherwise, would have followed the AGM and this sum is “plugging the hole” resulting from the number of membership subscriptions still outstanding. That notwithstanding I am receiving these at a steady rate from the membership secretary.

Bank Signatories

The new signatories to the Table Tennis account still await verification. There should be less work to do in respect of changes to signatories with the committee relatively unchanged for next year unless we lose any treasurers of course.

Expenses

Whilst no trustee or officer of the U3A is permitted any financial reward for services rendered, under Clauses 10(v) and 10(vi) out of pocket expenses properly incurred are reimbursable. These must be submitted on the appropriate proforma claim sheet which I can supply if you have none and have incurred such costs as I describe. I am thinking of the cost of postage, envelopes and stationery incurred in respect of the collection of subscriptions. No one should be out of pocket in this respect and I include in this treasurers and conveners some of whom have gone “the extra mile” and, in some cases, even provided stamped addressed envelopes to their group members. With the committee’s approval I would approach those that I know have borne these costs. Car mileage costs are recoverable, if incurred, but worn shoe leather is not. This does not include costs otherwise recoverable from within the activity groups’ own funds as in normal times.

Should you require any further clarification or have any questions I will do this now by exception rather than provide a full verbal report.

3.4.2020 **MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

Lots of members still not able to download the newsletter or have printers. In future we will try to deliver them.

Fully paid up members 324, this included 13 Honorary members and 2 numbers had not been included.

There were 103 copies of the Newsletters delivered this month.

4.4.2020 **THE AGM WITH PLANS AND PREPARATION FOR EARLY 2021**

There will be a postal vote, a ballot paper to be produced. To be sent out at the beginning of January 2021 to be returned by the 3rd week in January. Contact all convenors to hand deliver. The AGM will be the 3rd week in January

5.4.2020 **ESTABLISHING THE SUB-COMMITTEE GROUPS TO DEVELOP FUTURE INITIATIVES**

Caldicot and District U3A. Committee and Sub- Committee Groups.

ANGELA

Public Relations Sub-Committee. Lead; Linda Stewart.
Members. Dave Edwards, Ann Taylor Herd. Betty Waite. Angela Hodson Hurst.

Option to also co-opt other members if required.

The Brief. To develop the Committee Link/welfare role.

To develop a U3A Welcome Pack for new members.

To further develop our U3A Website and Newsletter in line with the TAT Branding and Marketing material.

To develop our links with other local voluntary agencies and Community and Town Councils and the Town Team.

To contact other U3A's and TAT with a view to ascertain information/expertise in Public Relations.

To aim to re-join the Wales U3A Network.

Finance Sub-Committee. Lead. Tony Hodson Hurst.

Members. Angela Hodson Hurst, Glenice Dallow, Rob Harry.

Option to also co-opt other members if required.

The Brief.

To look at the viability of the Beacon System (Possibility of talking with Newport U3A who have Beacon)

The opportunities presented by Online Banking.

Possibly changing our bankers following advice from TAT.

25th Celebrations Sub-Committee. Lead. Pam Caines.

Members. Elaine Yeomans, Lyn Howells, Betty Waite.

Option to also co-opt on other members of the original 25th Celebrations sub-Committee as required.

The Brief.

To maintain links with the Cornfield Project team.

To utilise the ideas and work originally developed by Interest Groups e.g. Craft, art, computers.

Also put the pic of the Bench and planters on the Website. There are also pics of the Cake and brochure design again put these on the Website.

The lockdown gives us time to complete the 25th Brochure

possibly except for the group photos. Angela i think has some of the notes written by Convenors about their interest groups asking those who have not done that yet to do so.

The minutes of the 25th Subgroup contain all this info and we still have commemorative pens to give to our members.

Let us know when you want us to order the bench and Planter plus check out with Science if they will still donate a tree.

Also keep in contact with Gardening on progress at the Cornfield Project

Interest Groups Sub-Committee. Lead. Glenice Dallow

Members. Helen Wormald. Rob Harry.

Option to Co-opt other Convenors /members.

The Brief.

Short Term Goals: Over the Lockdown period or up to 6 months.

To ensure that all members are contacted and have a copy of the Newsletter.

To contact the Convenors and members of all our groups and

ask them to put something in the Newsletter or on the Website every month for 6 months.

Under the Heading of Remember When they can use old or new material inc of previous pics, competition wins, or just put in an article or maybe a quiz

Other examples are. The committee to sponsor an Art Exhibition. A themed Craft Exhibition, A Photography Exhibitions. All of which we could show online on our website.

The Next 6 months for us as a Committee.

It would be good if we could get in one more Meeting possibly at the Portskewett Inn again, but with the probability of more Lockdowns that is unlikely. So i would surmise that most of our further discussion will have to take place via email or telephone unless we revert to Zoom. I am not sure however if we did revert to zoom that all our Committee would be willing/able to be involved and because everyone has been so committed, worked hard, and supported me that I would want to split us up at such a difficult time.

As such the following are ideas, for us to utilise as a structure or aims that we can build upon for the future. Some of these aims I would want to see developed as early as possible to meet deadlines in early 2021 whilst others can be part of a longer term 2-year plan. But let us be honest the way that things are with Covid now it is exceedingly difficult to plan.

There are however some things that we have started planning for and they were identified in our last meeting e.g. Setting dates for our AGM in Jan 2021 and identifying what we need to do to prepare and inform our members of the fact.

We have so far concentrated on keeping our members informed of what we are doing or trying to do as a Committee, via our Committee News in the Newsletter and thanks to Angela and Tony we are fully informed of our Membership and Financial standing. The Information that we gleaned from our meetings with Convenors will be summarised for our members in next month's Newsletter. Hopefully, we will have enough returns from our Members Questionnaire in Nov to inform us of the action we will need to take to keep in touch with and update our members. So, in the short term we will have information on the following.

- The % of members who have re-joined.
- The % of members who are not receiving a copy of the Newsletter.
- The % of members who were not contacted by Convenors and in doing so hopefully discovering what % of Convenors are not doing so and why that has been the case.
- Useful as it is I believe that we need now to change from looking at our structure via Questionnaires to become a Doing U3A. That will not be easy, because for nearly 9 months there has not been any Interest Group activity for most of our groups and not a lot written in our Website and Newsletter. That will need to change because it looks as if we are getting good support from our members via the re-joining stats, so we need to at least try to give them some

value for their money We can do that by filling our Newsletter every month with Caldicot U3A news even if it is old news. Similarly, our website should be full of past and present successes.

- Here the reaction and % of Convenors and members who are willing to take part with us in developing our inputs into our Newsletter and Website will be crucial. (See the notes for Interest Groups, 25th Celebration & PR working Groups)
- The outcomes of those Working Groups initiatives will be crucial for our U3A in the future and integral to a 2-year plan.
- Potentially restarting our U3A next year may be more difficult than closing.
- Finally, if it is possible and we can meet again it would be good to further develop the Roles and responsibilities/ job descriptions that we have. Also, to look at succession planning for roles, plus to then put them on the website. I am not sure when it will be ok to try to get more members to join us and so the completion and implementation of the Committee Opportunities Booklet may not be viable until we can meet again.

COMPLETED CONVENORS QUESTIONNAIRE

Report on Convenors Questionnaire

This report has been compiled from the analysis of the Convenors Questionnaires. Please also find the Statistics obtained from the same questionnaires.

Introduction

The aim of the Committee in August/September was to re-engage with our Interest Groups via their Convenors/Representatives, following a long period of isolation due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. Another aim was to ascertain whether our Interest Groups could be re-started. We discovered that most of our groups could not be facilitated in the present venue because:

1. Size of groups could not fit into venue and be able to keep 2 metre distance, as prescribed by government.
2. The activity carried out by the groups has been banned i.e. singing.
3. The Game Format requires proximity or sharing of equipment.

We also discussed alternative venues, but new rules brought in by the Welsh Assembly Government prevented this happening.

Financial

Our priority was to re-start our Interest Groups if possible and the finances were an aside. However it came to light during this analysis that the costs for each group for the venue averaged £2,000 annually, and when the monthly meeting and committee meeting costs were added to this, the annual spend rose to £9,000 plus. We discovered that there was only one formal agreement in place with the venues meaning that there was no agreement with the other four. This, of course, means that we have no negotiating power and explains why, as an organisation, we were not formally informed

when venues closed or their decisions to remain closed. Going forward, it is imperative that we have formal agreements in place with all venues we use. An annual spend of £9,000 is not to be laughed at. As one venue put it, it beats putting on Jumble Sales to raise money. These venues, after 9 months of no income, are in a more precarious situation than us.

Member Activity

The figures for membership activity are based on averages provided by the Convenors. They can be skewed as some Members belong to several different groups resulting in multiple attendances per week/month. However, we have almost 500 members and each member who attends a session is:

1. Not at home alone
2. Meeting other people
3. Learning or engaging with others in a safe and friendly environment.
4. Gaining a sense of achievement.

The annual figure for member visits is more than 17,300 which includes monthly meetings, walkers, etc. The number of members in each Interest Group is particularly good and some groups actually have too many members for one convenor. It would be easy to forget that we have four thriving walking groups that involve 100 members each week in healthy and mindful activity.

If we put the above information into context Caldicot and District U3A is the principal provider to older people in our community.

Communication

What has been revealed by the data collected, is that if you are contactable via Email you stand a higher chance of receiving information, as most groups use either Email or session/meeting to impart information to their members. Obviously during lockdown there are no meetings/sessions and therefore many members have fallen through the cracks. This is also true of the collection of subscriptions and membership renewal forms. This entire system has been tested during lockdown and we therefore put some relevant questions on the Members Questionnaire regarding this.

Session Delivery

The data regarding session delivery was very pleasing in that it shows that most groups deliver their sessions either by convenor or other members. This is proof that we are a self-help and self-learning U3A. We cater for most tastes and offer a range of ways to participate. Our Interest Groups and the experiences we gain from them are part of our life- long learning and not a narrow academic process. Learning in this U3A IS FUN!

Where Next

Most data gathered establishes that when we are open, we do a lot of things well. Our range of groups has great variety and our delivery

methods show a good mix of learning, participation, and experiences.

We have found out that if we grow in membership some of our venues will not be suitable but there are alternatives.

We are also aware of the relative costs of hiring venues and the lack of formal arrangements with these venues. This may affect future decisions if membership dips and costs increase.

Lockdown has also unearthed some great initiatives e.g. Zoom, Bridge online but also deficiencies in communication with our members especially those members without access to a computer/Email. In the future ensuring that every member is kept informed is essential especially if another lockdown is implemented.

Our members have supported us by paying their subscriptions therefore we must support them and continue to support them in every way we can.

7.4.20 NEXT MEETING

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