

**Minutes of Committee Meeting held at the
Laura Trott Centre at 1.30pm on Thursday, 19th January 2023**

Stephen Sell (SS) Chair	Sue Allum (SA) Speaker Secretary
Stewart Walter (SW2) Vice Chair	Lesley Casson (LC) Groups Coordinator
Christine Dugdale (CD) Membership Secretary	Malcolm Luff (ML) Committee Member
Rob Scott (RS) Treasurer	John Durrant (JD) Events Coordinator
Jean Wardrop (JW) RUG Co-ordinator	Andy Smith (AS) Co-opted member
Christine Luff (CL) Secretary	Frank Sluter (FS) Co-opted member
Stewart Wagstaff (SW) Ast. Programme Editor	Heather Douglas (HD) Co-opted member
Peter Harris (PH) Website Coordinator	Ray Lucas (VL) Programme Editor
	Vanessa Lucas (VL) Observer

1. Apologies: None

2. Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 17th November 2022 agreed.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes, not being discussed later:

No items.

4. Chair's Report:

Happy new year to everyone and welcome to our first committee meeting of 2023.

The December meeting was well attended as usual. The Singing for Fun got the Christmas party off in style as usual. After this Vee and Mark of Andante entertained us in their usual way and helped get the Christmas spirit flowing. Many thanks to everyone who helped make the meeting a success, especially Jean who provided the drinks and eats.

Although Covid was not the issue it was the previous year, this time we were experiencing an early cold spell. The Laura Trott Centre Sports Hall is not ideal when there are weather extremes, but unfortunately, we have no alternatives given the numbers attending our monthly meetings. We know that most members disappear after the interval raffle, so I'm not sure that the temperature made much difference to this. Most of those staying the course enjoyed the second half dancing. It shows how cold it was; Christmas jumpers stayed on this year!

Last year we agreed to hold the AGM at our April meeting with the main membership renewals at the March meeting together with two earlier dates for informal renewals. I propose that we agree two suitable dates today so that we can get these booked with the Centre.

We had a reasonable number of newsletters left at the end of our meetings in November and December some of which I left in the racks at Laura Trott Centre again and Steve Gollop kindly agreed to take a handful round to Cheshunt Library.

Peter has managed to get our website working reasonably well. However, we appear to have lost all earlier newsletters and committee meeting minutes. Site Builder certainly is not ideal, and Peter proposes to take us through our options in his report later.

5. Vice Chair's Report:

I thought that the Christmas meeting went well and the entertainment both from our own Singing for Fun group and Andante was excellent. As I think we all know, unfortunately it was very cold in the sports hall: it is not built for sedentary activities in the middle of winter cold snap. Nothing that we can do about that but unfortunately perhaps more people than normal did leave after the raffle, feeling the chill. Hopefully the current cold weather will have disappeared by the time of next weeks meeting, but I think it would make sense to send out an email to the membership through Beacon warning people that there is no effective heat in the sports hall and they should come wrapped up and prepared to keep their coats on! Perhaps a word to the speaker too.

I made a commitment at the last committee meeting to write a brief paragraph about the u3a click and save scheme which has been done and included in this months programme by Ray and Vanessa. It has my name attached so will be ready to field any questions that arise. I have also checked the contacts in the group sharing section and found that all are still active, mostly Broxbourne, although 2 contact numbers had been mis-transposed so have now corrected these numbers.

Finally, I will be away during the whole of February so not able to attend either the next committee meeting or monthly meeting.

6. Business Secretary's Report:

u3a mailings and web contacts circulated.

Christine - Anything to add?

7. Treasurer's Report

<u>Monetary Assets as at 13th January 2023</u>	
Main Account	£4,048.92
Groups Account (Restricted)	<u>£11,720.48</u>
	£15,769.40
Cash Floats:-	
Membership Secretary	£50.00
Books	£5.00
Tea & Coffee	£10.00
Cash in hand held by Groups	<u>£4,609.04</u>
	<u>£20,443.44</u>

Since November's Committee meeting money paid into the Main a/c has been just £340; comprised from Diaries sold - £19, November Raffle £90, Sales of Books, Puzzles and T&C £120, Refund of Canasta float - £61 and a receipt of £54 from our resident 'A' Train pop group for printing.

Outgoings of £2229, was made up from the Nov Speaker - £90, the December entertainers - £420 and Raffle - £500, programme printing £450, and hall and room hire until March - £770.

The Groups have paid in a total of £5111 and out £12362.

Rob then presented his budget analysis for the coming financial year up to 31st October 2023. Details are included as an Appendix to these minutes. The result of Rob's analysis was that we are likely to overspend by £950 in the coming year, so reducing our reserves from £5,711 in October 2022 to £4,762 in October 2023. Rob stated that recommendation from u3a is to hold a reserve of 50% of total annual income (TAI). The estimate for TAI for the current year is £10,428 so our reserves would then be 45% of this figure.

With this background there followed a discussion on increasing membership fees. Among the key points considered were:

- the current membership fee of £12 has not been increased since 2011
- the current inflation rate impacting LT hire and other costs
- not to price members out of joining our u3a
- membership costs of other surrounding u3a - generally more expensive up to £20
- the need to remain financially viable

Following the discussion it was agreed by the committee that a proposal should be put to the AGM in April to raise the annual membership fee to £15.

There then followed further discussion on whether or not we should continue to offer associate membership and at what price. Main points considered were:

- most of the surrounding u3a's have done away with associate membership
- how much money is raised from approximately 100 associates?
- it cannot be policed, relies on members being truthful
- it causes administrative issues for the membership secretary

After the discussion a vote was taken and a majority were in favour of not continuing with associate membership from 2024.

The proposal to be put to the AGM will therefore state that to simplify administration and to reflect increasing costs there will be a single membership fee of £15 from March 2024.

It was further agreed that group sharing with other u3a's where it is necessary to make the group viable will continue at the group leaders discretion.

It was further agreed that the visitors fee for attending meetings will be increased from £2 to £3 and visitors will be limited to attending a maximum of 3 monthly meetings in a year. **NOTE - need to clarify if this increase also effective from March 2024 and to be included in the proposal at the AGM.**

8. Membership Secretary's Report:

Christine reported that she will not be able to attend the March meeting when renewals will be taking place. She will ask Carol to stand in for her, but as additional cover Frank Sluter volunteered to help.

Renewals can take place at the February meeting (23rd February) and in addition 2 further dates of 8th and 9th March from 13.00 - 16.00 in the bar at LT have been arranged to help to spread out the rush for renewal. These dates will be posted in the January newsletter. Committee members will help out on one of these if dates if possible.

Action: CD to write a paragraph for the newsletter

Christine informed the meeting that with Andy she has been looking at the option of moving to plastic membership cards and scanning technology. She reported that Hertford u3a estimated the cost as £1500, which was too expensive for our funds at present.

Our current membership cards printed from Beacon do have a bar code and Andy will investigate if and how we might be able to read this and if there are cheaper scanner technologies which can be used. He will also check with our current printers if they can print plastic cards and at what cost.

Action: DC and AS to investigate and report back in due course

9. RUG Co-ordinator's Report:

Jean had spoken to Kelly at the cafe in LT and Kelly had agreed to do the catering for the Christmas meeting this year. This proposal was agreed by the committee.

Nothing else to report.

10. Speaker Secretary's Report:

Sue reported that a lot of members had told her that they left the Christmas meeting after the raffle because they were too cold. Sue thought this was unacceptable and that negative feedback should be given to LT in the strongest terms. Suggestions for space heaters etc, either hired by u3a or provided by LT for next years Christmas meeting were made and it was agreed that options for next Christmas need to be investigated.

Action: JD to provide feedback to LT and investigate options for next year.

This months speaker, Martin Lloyd, does not require a projector it will be a talk only.

Sue reported that she has had 2 cancellations for this year: speakers for September and October. She is working to fill these gaps.

Sue also reported that Andante are not now available for the Christmas meeting and have been replaced by Mike Morundi, an entertainer that we have had previously.

As agreed at our November committee meeting Sue has approached one of our previous speakers, Andy Smith, to request his presentation on a memory stick at a cost of £60. She is still waiting to hear back from Andy Smith.

11. Group Co-ordinator's Report:

Waltham Abbey u3a has asked for their new Spanish beginners group to go into group sharing and to be promoted in our programme. Our Spanish group GL has been consulted and feels this will not impact her group.

Query received via the website from Herts Help asking about 'referring a client'. My reply came back as undeliverable so will try to contact them by other means. A number of agencies have made similar requests and appear to view us as some sort of social service.

The Canasta group will now be run by Sylvia Lyons. I have emailed the former GL, Allan Smith, to thank him for his efforts.

The Meeters and Greeters rota has been updated for this year and sent to relevant GLs. This month is Walking Football.

The Community Table has been booked by Parkrun. I suggest we ask the Three Valleys Male Voice Choir if they would like to use it in February as they were very keen to come back.

12. Website co-ordinator's Report:

Peter reported that the recent major problems with our website on sitebuilder have resulted in a loss of information (photos, previous committee meeting minutes and others) and recommended that we look at a new system for hosting the website and build a completely new web page. Peter has been in touch with Hertford and they use a system called Joomla 4. The Hertford web coordinator has been very helpful and using the same system would be beneficial because there would be somebody local to ask if we have any questions. A new system would give us more control, allow backups and generally give the site a more up to date look.

SW2 has agreed to help Peter with this project and Peter will draft a notice for inclusion in the program to call for other volunteers to help. This will be an ongoing project and no immediate rush.

Peter also noted that normally we have 4000 hits per month but to date there have been 5000 hits already. The sudden interest is possibly due to the website being down for so long before Christmas.

13. Programme Editor's Report:

The January program is ready to go.

There was favourable feedback on the December edition with colour and Ray asked if it would be possible to include colour on a more regular basis. It was reported to the meeting that costs were £108 for black and white and £288 for colour (450 copies). The committee decided that the additional cost could not be justified other than for the Christmas issue so the program will continue in black and white. It was also noted that the printing costs had been the same for both 450 and 500 copies, SW commenting that the printer did not always count accurately.

Print run for January is to be 450.

14. Events Co-ordinator's Report:

Nothing to report.

15. Any Other Business:

- AGM - it was agreed that this will be held at the start of the April monthly meeting.
- Andy Smith informed the meeting that he was scheduled for a knee operation and would be unavailable during February and March to lead the Short Walks group and

from the committee. Heather volunteered to lead the walks in February and March if nobody else from the group would step in.

16. Next Meeting: 1.30pm on Thursday 26th December 2023

17. Next Committee Meeting : 1.30pm on Thursday 16th February 2023

The meeting closed at 15.40.

APPENDIX - TREASURER'S BUDGETARY ESTIMATE

Budget Details

Membership Fees

As at the November meeting we had 709 members; for this year I'm assuming we may lose 3%.

Associate - 103 @ £8.50	£875	
Individual & Joint - 586 @ £12	£7032	
TAM 76 @ £3	£228	
Received until 13/1/23	£197	
	-----	£8332

Other receipts are general assumptions.

Speakers figure is an actual figure from Sue.

Hall and Room Hire

I have spoken with Linda at LTC and although she hasn't heard officially yet what the increase is likely to be, she thinks that it will probably be 5%. I am also assuming that we might receive a 5% Grant from the council and have based my calculations on those assumptions.

Affiliation Fees and Beacon Fees are based on the assumed Membership Fees:

586 X £4.00 = £2344
689 X £1.00 = £689

Printing

We are due to pay £255 for TAM to March 2023
Assume the same number take it again at the slightly increased rate of £3.60 = £274.
Monthly Printing (with 5% increase) £1050.
Odds and Sods = £200

Sundries

Raffle prizes - £500
Dec refreshments - £150
Grp Leaders meeting - £225
Cups for meetings - £150
Odds and Sods - £225

I am aware that I haven't put anything yet into the expenditure for membership cards and the appropriate recording system.

Although it would appear that we will overspend by £950 this year, I can't see any real reason to increase our membership fees at the forthcoming AGM, especially if we think about Gift Aid in the future.