

**Minutes of Committee Meeting held at the
Laura Trott Centre at 1.30pm on Thursday, 21st September 2023**

Steve Sell (SS) Chair	Sue Allum (SA) Speaker Secretary
Stewart Walter (SW2) Vice Chair	Andy Smith (AS) Committee Member
Christine Luff (CL) Secretary	Frank Sluter (FS) Group Co-ordinator
Christine Dugdale (CD) Membership Secretary	Malcolm Luff (ML) Committee member
Rob Scott (RS) Treasurer	Vanessa Lucas (VL) Committee member
Tony Knight (TK) RUGS Co-ordinator	

1. Apologies: Peter Harris, Stewart Wagstaff, John Durrant.

2. Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 17^h August 2023 agreed.

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

Group Leaders Lunch: RS spoke to Delphine before last months meeting and she was happy to confirm availability of the room. RS had not had confirmation so emailed Linda (who is responsible) and she had not been informed, but has now confirmed availability of the bar area from midday until 15.30 but is waiting to hear from the assistant centres manager regarding the anteroom.

Barry Wallace Square email: Barry had told SW that he thought if he deleted his email then it would cancel the entire account. CD stated that all access through email and password was unique and Barry cancelling his account would not affect her access. **SW to go back to Barry and ask him to delete his account.**

Walking Netball: RS had still not spoken to Jacqui about the situation. He has had the invoice for the hall booking Sept-Dec and is getting reminders to pay this and will have to do so in the very near future. RS has drafted an email and will send it to Jacqui requesting an update this week.
Action: RS to follow up.

4. Chair's Report:

I would like to welcome you all to our September committee meeting.

The August main meeting seemed to be reasonably well attended. The speaker was not outstanding unfortunately, although I believe some members did enjoy the presentation.

As you know following Malcolm's recommendation I approached both Barbara Cordina and National u3a for their opinion in relation to the letter addressed by Sean Waters to the Rail Minister. I received a return phone call from TAT on the Monday following the closure of the

consultation because the person tasked with providing advice had been away on holiday. I must admit that I think the consultation was deliberately timed to coincide with the summer holiday period. The TAT advisor agreed with Barbara's earlier advice and agreed that the penultimate paragraph effectively negated the statements in the prior paragraphs and made the letter worthless. At the end of the day, I received an overwhelming majority committee vote not to support the letter. The letter was clearly political and as Barbara said it was far more effective for individual members to have registered their views.

I hope that the u3a Day at the Brookfield Centre went well. As I write this I see that the weather forecast for the later part of the day is not too promising; hopefully the gusty winds and heavy rain held off sufficiently.

A member expressed concern that there was no commitment by the Centre to finding a suitable replacement caterer when Herts Catering Limited cease operations. I subsequently spoke to Sharon who assured me that although Kirsten was currently on holiday they were both actively assessing replacement caterers. Sharon said that there would however likely be no one in place initially come November.

I have booked for an estimated 30 (committee members and partners) for the Bulls Head on 29th February 2024 at 7pm. They wanted a £50 deposit as soon as possible. I haven't used the debit card I have for some time and unfortunately I discovered that the card I hold expired in June 2022.

5. Vice Chair's Report:

The August monthly meeting was well attended. The speaker was perhaps not as inspiring as we might have hope, his anecdotes and stories from his career as a toastmaster I found largely uninspiring. That said, others did seem to enjoy his presentation.

Weather for the u3a day yesterday was pretty unpleasant, strong winds all day and rain in the afternoon. I arrived just after 1pm and congratulations to Jacqui and the team (too many to mention) for organising the gazebo and display. Thanks also to Peter and the band who once again proved to be a hit and enticed a lot of shoppers to stop and listen. Having now attended 3 of these u3a days I am not sure that there is a lot of value from them in gaining new members, our u3a being in the fortunate position of already being well subscribed. Most of the people who stopped at the stand were already known to and members of our u3a, but at even so it does publicise Cheshunt u3a and perhaps lead to people joining in the future.

Following various appeals I have been approached by Brian Peel who was interested in assisting in the treasurer role. He was going to have a chat to Rob to understand what is involved, so hopefully we might be able to fill this gap.

6. Business Secretary's Report:

u3a mailings and web contacts circulated.

Cheshunt library (June Hogate via Jean) are booked to have the community table for this month's meeting.

Janet has offered her help at the meeting if required.

7. Treasurer's report:

<u>Monetary Assets as at 18th September 2023</u>	
Main Account	£5,847.85
Groups Account (Restricted)	<u>£18,620.86</u>
	£24,468.71
Cash Floats:-	
Membership Secretary	£50.00
Books	£5.00
Tea & Coffee	
Cash in hand held by Groups	<u>£4,609.04</u>
	<u>£29,132.75</u>

At the August meeting, the lady (Hilary) who has taken over running the tea and coffee didn't think she needed the float so gave it back to me and it has now been paid in and deducted from the monetary assets float.

There has been a total of £337.71 paid into the main account - raffle £88.55, Books £42, puzzles £30.50, tea and coffee £29.85 plus the T&C float of £10 and membership fees of £139 less the Square charges of £2.19.

Payments out of the Main a/c were: August speaker £100, 2024 diaries £197.99, July programmes £144 and August programmes £156 (extra cost because 50 more ordered).

The Group a/c receipts were £6131.50 and outgoings £5146.92.

Unfortunately I didn't get a chance today to ask Jacqui Fry about Walking netball, but the deficit is still £46.76 and the latest invoice for the next 4 month's court hire is overdue at £554.40.

I spoke to Delphine before last month's meeting about the Group Leaders' meeting on the 19th Oct (Linda was on holiday). She was happy with everything but I had to email Linda as I hadn't had any confirmation. She now confirms that we have the bar area from midday until 3.30pm, but has to wait to hear from the assistant centres manager regarding the anteroom.

I understand that Brian Peel is willing to shadow me. *Note: Brian did come to meet Rob before the committee meeting.*

8. Membership Secretary's Report:

Beacon can be set up to take payment on line, but a paypal account is needed. Saffron Waldon u3a use this for memberships and Christine will investigate how this works and if we could implement the same system. Their system also generates membership cards and emails them out to members. Andy mentioned that non-laminated cards might wear over time and prove difficult to read by the log-in system at meetings.

We currently have 702 members and are averaging around 10 new members per month. Christine has cleaned up the database and removed lapsed and deceased members.

252 members attended last months meeting.

9. RUG Co-ordinator's Report:

Tony Knight has taken over this role and was welcomed to the committee by the Chair. He has organised a rota with Hilary to man the tea bar and proposes in future to have 3 volunteers helping rather than the current 2. This will allow more flexibility for them to take a break and to go around the tables at the meeting.

Tony asked for what roles other than the tea bar, volunteers were required. Malcolm explained this varied and could be to step in as meeters and greeters or to help on any of the admin tables when the regulars were unavailable.

Tony has also been approached by someone who may be interested in shadowing the treasurers role. He is not sure of her name but will check with Rosemary Trundell who he thinks knows her and we can then follow up.

10. Speaker Secretary's Report:

The speaker for this month will be Dr. Helen Fry talking on "Women in Intelligence in WW1 and WW2". She will require a table for her books and bring her presentation on a USB stick and use our equipment.

Sue has been contacted by the March speaker 2024 who represents a charity. We cannot pay directly a charity so he has asked if he can bring a collection tin and will require a minimum donation of £60. It was agreed that as in the past we will pay him by personal cheque to the value of £80, an amount which he can then donate. He will also be allowed to have a collection tin for any other donations on his table (but no "rattling").

Action: SA to contact him and explain.

11. Group Co-ordinator's Report :

Frank has received an email from Carole Batter who is not happy because she has not seen any new members either at the meetings or on Mondays recently and was wondering if it was worth continuing with this role. It was commented that Carole had not been available at the last meeting and that August Monday meeting had been cancelled due to bank holiday. Frank has replied to her that the new members group is very important and we need her to continue to run it.

It was agreed that Carole should have a table next to the membership table at future meetings and that new members should be directed to her. If there are several new members it may be that Carole needs help.

Frank has informed all GL's about the lunch next month and nobody has so far declined.

There are no Meeters and Greeters available from the groups this month so RUGS need to be provided.

Frank reported that Singing for Fun group is now full and they do not need a table for the foreseeable future and that the Theatre Trips only need 1 table.

It was noted that Barry and Jan Wallace will therefore not be manning a table so could be available to help, either with new members or as M&G.

Action: CL agreed to contact Barry and Jan to check availability.

12. Website co-ordinator's Report:

No report and no news on the re-design from u3a central office. Our website is in need of a revamp. Vanessa volunteered to take on the role of helping with the website, but is not sure that her computer meets the necessary specifications. There is some information on the u3a website about how the new website will operate, although the timescales are still uncertain.

Andy Smith also agreed to have a look at the u3a website to try to understand what is required.

It was acknowledged again that our website is very poor, but the decision not to do anything but wait for the new roll out was a good one when it was made a few months ago.

We really need to know what is the current realistic timetable for the website.

13. Programme Editor's Report :

500 copies are required this month. Vanessa commented that several entries are not up to date but include "cut-and-paste" derived errors carried through from previous months. At the GL's lunch next month it needs to be emphasised that GL's need to make sure their entries are current.

Steve commented that we should try to aim for a more consistent format to the programme.

14. Events Co-ordinator's Report :

I can confirm that the cafe at the LT Centre will provide the usual refreshments including tea/coffee, orange squash, sausage rolls and sandwiches for the Group Leaders Lunch on Thursday 19th October. It is necessary to advise the estimated number to be catered for which on the previous occasion was sixty.

Frank had not received any apologies for absence from the GL's, the meeting agreed that catering for 60 was appropriate.

Action: JD to confirm with the cafe to cater for 60 people.

15. Any Other Business:

- **u3a day review**

Weather was unkind with strong winds all day and rain in the afternoon meaning the gazebo had to be tied down and the display boards laid flat. The band was popular and was a draw for people to stop and listen.

The morning was busier than the afternoon and because of the adverse weather and consequent lack of footfall we finished at 14.30 rather than the scheduled 16.00

Location again worked well, thanks to Tesco.

Not sure it was very effective at bringing in new members on the day but did have good visibility for Cheshunt u3a.

Stewart said that to improve the display boards for next year we should aim to get all display photos professionally printed (cost £0.80 each for 12x8, so very reasonable) rather than having some printed at home on paper.

- **Need to encourage more groups**

Vanessa noted that recently 3 groups had closed and that we should try to encourage new groups. It was also noted that a lot of existing groups are full. There followed a discussion on how we could encourage more groups and duplicate full ones.

Tony suggested that we follow Broxbourne's approach and have a sheet of paper at the main meetings where members could write down suggestions for new groups and then see if there was any general interest. A notice about this to be included in the program.

Sue suggested that where a group is full the GL should check if there is anyone in the group who would be prepared to organise a duplicate group.

This topic will be raised by Steve at the GL's lunch next month.

16. Main Monthly Meeting : 1.30pm on Thursday 28th September 2023

17. Next Committee Meeting : 1.30pm on Thursday 19th October 2023

The meeting closed at 15.20.