

**Minutes of Committee Meeting held at the
Laura Trott Centre at 1.30pm on Thursday, 15th February 2024**

Steve Sell (SS) Chair	Andy Smith (AS) Committee Member
Stewart Walter (SW2) Vice Chair	Frank Sluter (FS) Group Co-ordinator
Christine Luff (CL) Secretary	Tony Knight (TK) RUG Coordinator
Rob Scott (RS) Treasurer	Malcolm Luff (ML) Committee member
Sue Allum (SA) Speaker Secretary	Vanessa Lucas (VL) Committee member
Peter Harris (PH) Website Co-ordinator	Heather Douglas (HD) Committee member
Stewart Wagstaff (SW) Asst. Program Editor	

- 1. Apologies:** Christine Folland, John Durrant, Brian Peel
- 2. Minutes of the previous Meeting** held on 18th January 2024 agreed.
- 3. Matters Arising from the Minutes, not being discussed later:**

Further to the increased membership fees, Rob reminded the meeting that some members who have maintained the previous membership payment schedule have already paid £8.50 through standing order in November 2023.

Action: Rob to identify and contact these members and ensure they pay the additional £6.50 to meet the current membership fee and to advise them to change the SO date from November to March.

4. Chair's Report:

Welcome all to our February committee meeting. As our AGM approaches I need to do a check on those willing remain on the committee for next year.

The January meeting was once again well attended. Our speaker at that meeting, Mike Barbakoff, delivered another interesting talk. It was quite a short but very concise talk. Fortunately, Eddie Slaughter had several questions at the end, because without these we would have finished in record time.

I did notice that we had an exceptional number of members leaving after the raffle at the January meeting. I know that this has been a long-standing concern for our committee, but it did make me wonder whether the fact that nowadays many members need to collect grandchildren from school around 3pm. At the same time, I have received several complaints from Group Leaders about the

fact that members have been let into the Hall so early that they have not managed to set up properly and used a few spare minutes to check out other group tables. Once again I fear we need to re-consider our timings.

In-meeting follow-up to the report:

All members of the committee confirmed they were willing to stand for re-election. Christine L indicated that she would step down from Secretary at the end of the next membership year, i.e. 31st March 2025, or sooner if anyone comes forward to take over the position.

To avoid people leaving before the speaker, timings for the meetings were discussed and various options considered (including starting the meeting earlier, shortening the meeting with the speaker starting earlier, moving the raffle) but it was concluded that none of these were feasible. An announcement from the platform that people having to leave early should take seats at the back of the room will be made prior to the raffle taking place.

5. Vice Chair's Report:

Our last meeting in January was again well attended with a very good speaker, Mike Barbakoff. Not only was his talk well-presented he was a very amiable chap, happy to use our equipment and completely undemanding, unlike some of our previous speakers.

I will not be able to attend this months meeting but have agreed with Andy that he can take charge of the sound system.

Congratulations to Stewart and Frank for organising the initial meetings for the potential new groups. I attended two of these in which I had expressed an interest and was very disappointed to see the complete lack of anyone in either group prepared to take on any responsibility or do anything to help move them forward. In one of those I reluctantly agree to find out some additional information regarding options for future meetings. I did so and sent out a follow-up email with options to those present, of which only about half of the 7 people who attended could even bother to reply. Very disappointing.

6. Business Secretary's Report:

u3a mailings and web contacts circulated.

Caroline Baynes of Isabel Hospice will have the community table at our February meeting.

7. Treasurer's report:

<u>Monetary Assets as at 12th February 2024</u>	
Main Account	£3,656.98
Groups Account (Restricted)	<u>£19,191.55</u>
	£22,848.53
Cash Floats:-	
Membership Secretary	£50.00
Books	£5.00
Cash in hand held by Groups	
	<u>£2,520.46</u>
	<u>£25,423.99</u>

This last month hasn't seen much activity in the Main Account: there has just been the raffle money of £91.65 and one membership fee of £19 paid in. The outgoings have been the January newsletter £156.00, the speaker's fee of £95.00 and the cost of hiring the bar area for the membership renewals in February and March of £154.43.

The Group Account however has seen £8634.90 paid in and £3528.00 paid out.

I have a further £79.97 to pay in from Sue for the money left over from the £200 given to her for the December refreshments.

I'm pleased to say that the Walking Netball members are now paying their subscriptions in advance and their balance is now £95.91.

Stewart Walter passed on feedback from Brian Peel that although he has been making bank entries from information passed by Rob, he is unclear whether this is "shadowing" entries that Rob has already made or not. He would like to sit down with Rob and clarify things. Rob confirmed that he has already been in touch with Brian and they will have a face-to-face meeting to review progress and future action.

8. Membership Secretary's Report:

No report

9. RUG Co-ordinator's Report:

As a result of last months appeal with contact forms, a total of 4 new RUG volunteers came forward and 1 other former RUG agreed to return, so this initiative was considered a success.

2 RUGs are required as meeters and greeters for this months meeting.

Andy told the meeting that the rubbish bin had been found in the wrong cage and returned to the catering cage.

10. Speaker Secretary's Report:

Sue told the meeting that Jackie Yeardye had complained to her that people had been let into the meeting too early last month and that she had been unable to get into the hall to set up her table due to the queues outside. Jackie had also made the same complaint to Steve and Christine.

It was accepted that it had been a mistake to let members in earlier than usual. There then followed a discussion about what is a perennial problem. Members arrive early to secure a car parking space and to be first in the queue to get to popular tables such as Theatre Trips and Holidays. The situation has not been improved by the closure of the café. The queues cause problems for LT, blocking access to the gym and other areas.

After much discussion it was agreed that we cannot change members behaviour, but in future doors will not be opened before 13.20 at the earliest. M & G's can encourage members to wait in the now vacant café area, but this may not be effective as people want to preserve their place in the queue.

It was also noted that GL's and other helpers can access the hall through the side door at the end of the corridor rather than through the main entrance.

The speaker for February is Andy Strange with a talk entitled "RAF Special Duties, Service & Special Operations execs". He will bring his own laptop but has asked for ours to be available as backup.

Speaker for March is Tim Perkins speaking on "Midshires Search and Rescue".

Sue asked if Rob can find out the dates for 2025 meetings.

Action: Rob to confirm meeting dates for 2025

11. Group Co-ordinator's Report:

Frank and Stewart have now completed initial meetings with the potential new groups. Of these:

- Bird Watching will go ahead and the first walk has already taken place
- Gardening is viable and may combine with Waltham Abbey u3a
- Pet lovers will go ahead
- Art appreciation does not have enough support
- Scrabble and backgammon may go ahead, venue at Tesco community room preferred
- Pickle ball – members have joined the LT session on Wednesdays
- Cooking for one – none of those attending were prepared to do anything to organise. A further meeting has been arranged in the café after the main meeting to see if it can be moved forward
- IT sessions – options are still being investigated. Unlikely to become an interest group but may be possible to organise some instructional sessions with external agencies

The Love to Dance group is being organised by Jackie Williams.

12. Website co-ordinator's Report:

Peter and Vanessa have continued work on the new website and have been reviewing existing sites for ideas. Peter circulated printouts as examples from Buxton and Chelmsford u3a's and discussed the positives from these examples.

There is a zoom meeting scheduled for 27th February with u3a webmasters which Peter will attend for further information. Cheshunt u3a is in the next tranche of sites scheduled for roll out so once our new site is completed it will be able to go live.

On the u3a records, Andy is listed as Peter's deputy rather than Vanessa and it is only possible to have one deputy. Andy agreed to continue in this role and is preferred because of his knowledge of Beacon, which will be important with links to the website.

Once the website is up and running there will be as charge of £50 annually for hosting, which is comparable with the industry norm.

13. Programme Editor's Report:

550 copies required this month.

100 pages of the membership renewal form (2 per page) will be printed as per CF request. Change to last years form to include contact phone number is required.

14. Events Co-ordinator's Report:

A request has been made for new Parking Permits valid from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 to be available for the March monthly meeting.

It was noted at the meeting that Jackie Yeardye requires an extra table this month. This can be taken from Heather's group because she only needs one less for this month only.

15. Any Other Business:

- New Groups initiative: Already covered under item 11.
- The committee dinner will be held on 29th February at the Bulls Head, 6.30 for 7pm. Meal for committee members and partners will be paid by the u3a, all drinks at their own cost. Steve to send out an email to confirm details.
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- Rob noted that if the new Gardening group paid £45 to join the RHS, the entire group would get 1 free entry to an RHS property.
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- There will be no committee meeting on 5th December so Rob to cancel date with LT.

- Membership afternoons. Committee members will attend to help for part of the afternoons if and when available. Stewart will send out Beacon reminder about the membership renewal dates.

16. Main Monthly Meeting: 1.30pm on Thursday 22nd February 2024

17. Next Committee Meeting: 1.30pm on Thursday 21st March 2024

The meeting closed at 15.15.