

**Minutes of the committee meeting held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019 at 3 Glendale Close.**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Geoff Hoskin	GH	Chair
	Pete Burrow	PB	Social Activities
	Averil Fendley	AF	Membership secretary
	Lesley Patterson	LP	Treasurer
	Ian Webb	IW	Website Coordinator
	Chris Cann	CC	Social Secretary
	Pauline Wilson	PW	Business secretary
	David Tanner	DT	

**1). Apologies for absence.** John Rutherford

**2). Minutes of the last meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2019.**

Taken as a correct record.

**3). Matters arising**

David Tanner was welcomed to the meeting

**4). Convenors' meeting.**

**4.1 Finance and Recording and Membership Checking**

JR has produced a pro forma so that each group can quantify their expenditure record during the year in order to provide an audit trail for all monies handled. It was well received but GH said that there should be an additional column for group numbers.

**4.2 Communications**

IW tabled a paper on the email/communications system. He explained how the current Gmail account had been set up to record membership details and to communicate with members. AF inputs membership using Xcel and he imports the data from the spreadsheet. As the membership has increased this now has to be done in 3 lots and there is the possibility of errors. Sometimes the emails bounce back and sometimes the system will not allow you to copy. DT said that this maybe



because a Libre office package is used instead of Microsoft. IW had previously looked at the Beacon system but felt that this did not meet our needs. There is now a second iteration of the system and it has been contracted out to ATP solutions, plus there is a per capita charge. He has looked at Mail Chimp. DT said that he would look at Mail Chimp and report back. This maybe free and there is an upper limit of 3000 people.

PB communicates a lot by email and he said that often people reply to T A Matters instead of using his own email address so he has to sift through his Gmail account. DT said that a solution would be to have a separate Gmail account for social activities.

DT agreed to take on the role of Communications coordinator. This was warmly welcomed by the committee.

### **5). Committee/Succession Planning**

GH reminded the committee that he will be stepping down at the AGM. This is a requirement for the chair. Other committee members can be re-elected. PW commentated that it is useful to have role descriptions for each of the current committee members, which she will keep on file so that in the future as committee members change they may have different responsibilities. There is a template for the role of chair, treasurer and secretary. GH will continue to remind members that we need a new chair. It was acknowledged that GH had taken a lot of responsibilities as chair such as introducing the monthly meetings, finding speakers and setting the agenda for committee meetings. It was suggested that some of these duties could be taken on by other committee members and there could also be a separate role for finding speakers.

### **6). Social Activities**

PB presented the following report.

**6.1** For the **Christmas Quiz** at the Golf Club on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December, the arrangements are very similar to last year;

- £5 per head to include buffet, free raffle, quiz prizes, Christmas crackers etc.
- Timings – Set up 18.30, entry from 19.00, start 19.30.
- Food – Last year we decided to buy a mix of sweet and savoury party food totalling around 10/12 types of food, mostly savoury Last year people arriving late at the buffet had little choice so we need to ‘police’ the amount that people take and perhaps hold some food back. PB said that we will be providing smaller plates. He also said that we aim to add some ‘colour’ to the buffet with vegetables and dips.
- As a precaution, we need a large sign warning about the possibility of nuts in some foods. Vegetarian food should be identified.



- Teams – people will form their own teams of between 4 and 6, either in advance or on the evening.
- We should encourage members to stay and socialise after the quiz.
- 57 members including guests have contacted PB to say that they will be at the quiz.

PB said that in addition to his own group he would like committee members to help set out the room and buffet, take money and hand out raffle tickets, welcome people and sort teams if necessary. We should arrive by 6.30pm and bring platters for the buffet.

Last year the total expenditure for all food, prizes, plates etc was approximately £160, plus £24 paid to the golf club for room hire. The total take was £255 and therefore a profit of around £70, to support social activities was made, though this was not our main intention. PB said that we could therefore spend a little more on food and prizes if we had a similar attendance.

## 6.2 Other events

PB said that he has launched four new shows since the September Social Activities meeting. All the shows generated a lot of interest but that, unfortunately, did not result in the expected bookings. We still had 3 spaces for both Simon and Garfunkel and As You Like It, though both visits will be taking place and will be subsidised by quiz profits. PB said that he needs to make it even clearer in future that showing interest in going to a show indicates that members would then book the tickets that have been reserved for them. He cited one member reserving 6 tickets and then not taking them up. The events are set out below;

- Messiah at the Sage on 14<sup>th</sup> December is sold out
- Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony at the Sage on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2020. PB cannot confirm until booking opens on January 1<sup>st</sup>. He can only book on-line for a maximum of 10 seats so it would be useful if someone else has a Sage account if they could book as well
- The Marriage of Figaro at the Theatre Royal on Saturday 7th March 2020 is sold out
- Royal Shakespeare Company. 'As you Like it.' On Thursday 19th March 2020. The booking is closed
- Alnwick Playhouse. 'Feast of Fiddles' on Friday April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Also sold out
- Alnwick Playhouse. The Simon and Garfunkel story on Wednesday 6th May 2020. Booking is closed
- 'We will rock you' on Wednesday 17th June 2020. Booking is closed



- Theatre Royal. 'The book of Mormon' on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020. Again, booking is closed

### **6.3 Possible future shows**

- Alnwick Playhouse. Kate Fox. 15<sup>th</sup> April 2010. Tickets £12. This is open for interest and currently 5 or 6
- Ballet Rambert 2. Northern Stage. Not viable.

If the visits to the Sage prove successful then we should be looking at booking more. The Alnwick Playhouse will be releasing more dates including live broadcasts. The following ideas will be looked into at the next Social Activities meeting

- Free afternoon music events at Paxton House next summer. Awaiting details
- Handlebards, a touring Shakespeare Company (if in the area).
- Outdoor films e.g. at Alnwick Castle (if they are happening next summer)
- Open Gardens
- Heritage Open Days (September)
- Summer BBQ and quiz. This would be held at the Golf Club and they would do the catering, so if it rains there is no risk
- The Garden Group are organising a visit in June to Mount Grace Priory in North Yorkshire and would open up any spaces on the minibus to other U3A members. As a result of this PB intends moving the proposed visit to Jupiter Artland towards the end of the summer, possibly September.
- The play 'Quiz' based on the 'coughing major' scandal on 'Who wants to be a Millionaire' has been very well reviewed and is on at the Theatre Royal in September.

### **6.3 Booking arrangements**

After the last meeting with Jen and Ros the following was agreed that;

- There would be separate cheques for each event
- All cheques would be made out to Coquetdale U3A Events
- We would try not to have 'multiple sales', though there will often be times when bookings may overlap. Some members also like to choose events from a list of possibilities.

## **7) Monthly Open Meetings**



GH tabled the Open Meeting programme for 2020. In January there is the music from Chantry event. PW agreed to take responsibility for the refreshments again and CC agreed to order the drinks and to include glasses but she will be away. PW will need help to set up the table. Cloths, paper plates and napkins will need to be provided plus some platters. LP and AF agreed to do this. At this event GH will give the caretaker Fiona 2 bottles of wine as she is always available to set up the room.

The 2020 calendar has mostly been completed. The Discussion group will do a debate for the October meeting. PW said that she would ask Citizens Advice to do a presentation on the history and work of the Citizens Advice for the June meeting. GH said that last year the speakers had been free with the exception of Penni Blyth who had charged £50. This is the maximum amount that has been paid.

## **8). Standing items**

### **8.1 Chair's report.**

GH reported from the North Northumberland Network meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> October. The U3A stand at the Glendale Show was deemed a success and will be repeated. Wooler held a Parliament week in November which coincided with Guy Fawkes Day and they hosted a study day on the 5<sup>th</sup>. Their numbers are 120 and they have some new groups- exercise and bridge. Berwick has 400 members and their new groups include Ancient Greek History, basic German, French conversation, Spanish and Music. Alnwick has a membership of about 200 and are now affiliated to the Charities Commission but do not meet the criteria for claiming gift aid. They have produced new membership forms so that subscriptions can be paid by BACS. LP thought that members would have to get a form from their bank in order to do this. GH also stated that ICE cards are available from the Trust. These are 'In case of emergency' and the intention is that people have their contact details on the card which they carry with them and can be used in an emergency.

### **8.2 Business secretary's report.**

PW attended the Regional meeting in Durham on 31st October. There will be a summer school at the Northumbria University on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2010. The total cost will be £280 for 4 days and will include en- suite accommodation. The themes have yet to be finalised. A day rate will be available. The U3A Open Day has been arranged for Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June and it is up to each U3A to determine if and how much they wish to be involved. There will also be a Regional 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in 2020. The date is yet to be set and the current proposal is to have an afternoon tea at either Jurys Inn or the Copthorne Hotel in Newcastle.

There was also discussion about producing a new pull up banner. PW spoke to Martin Rowell from Berwick and suggested that we have one that can be used across the network. GH said that he would pursue at the next network meeting. PW will attend the next regional meeting at Darlington in January

### **8.3 Treasurer's report.**



LP stated that we have £3970 in the main account and £975 in the social events account. However we have still not been invoiced from Rothbury Motors for the sum of £420. There is more events money to come in. PB has used the debit card successfully. There have been problems with Direct Mail. A couple of members have asked to be removed from receiving the publication but it has proved difficult to stop because of the way that the Trust sets up the system.

#### **8.4 Membership secretary's report**

AF said that there are now 168 members. She asked again about simplifying the form for existing members.

**Action: GH will revise form**

#### **8.5 Convenor coordinator's report**

No report

#### **8.6. Website coordinator's report**

IW stated that it was still difficult to get convenors to put information directly onto the website but he is willing to input if they send it to him. The website is not user friendly and it takes time to input.

#### **8.7 Social secretary's report.**

Nothing further to add from item 6

#### **8.8. Publicity secretary's report**

CC said that there has been a post on the social media board for Rothbury and Coquetdale which is encouraging.

#### **9). Any Other Business**

CC said that the 'Pop in for Peace' group had used the refurbished URC which is a lovely venue.

#### **10). Time and date of next meetings**

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March at GH's house at Woodend. As this will be his last meeting as chair he has kindly asked the committee to come for lunch 12.30 to 1pm. AF was thanked for her hospitality today.