

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held 10th January 2024 16:00

St Pauls Room 2

Attending: Chair (Jim McGough), Vice-Chair (Alan Rew), Secretary (Margaret Lloyd), Treasurer (Graham Friday), Communications' Coordinator (Sue Parker), and Groups' Coordinator (Janet Newson).

Apologies: Members' Coordinator (Jacqui Mercer) was unable to attend as a result of other commitments. The Minutes Secretary (Christine Willows) was also unable to attend.

Standing Items

Agenda Item 2(i): Minutes of the 13th December 2023 meeting

The minutes were approved with no corrections.

Agenda Item 2(ii): Review of Action Log

The Committee went through the actions in some detail, agreeing which had been superseded or were no longer relevant. The Action Log will be updated accordingly.

Agenda Item 3: Monthly Updates from the Third Age Trust and Committee Members

1. West Sussex Network (WSN)

Action: Chair to offer the Treasurer's services to set up a West Sussex Treasurer's network at the next WSN meeting on 12th January.

2. Chair

The Chair stated that the RUGS member in charge of refreshments had confirmed that the Friary kitchen had been left in a clean condition after the Christmas Party. He had had a brief meeting with the Friary Administrator who had told him that the rubbish left behind after the party comprised of cocktail sticks. The Chair was intending to have a longer conversation with the Administrator on Friday 12th January, to reach an agreement on the party cleaning bill and to discuss disabled parking facilities.

Action: Chair to meet with Friary Administrator to reach an agreement on the £60 party cleaning bill and to discuss disabled parking facilities, and then to let the Committee know of the outcomes.

3. Treasurer

The Treasurer announced that the first session of his new Afternoon Exercise Group was being deferred from the original date of 15th January to 29th January, because of delays in the Friary's completion of the paperwork. The cost of the hire for the Friary Hall is increasing from £25 per hour to £30 per hour, with effect from the 1st January.

4. Secretary

The Secretary commented that she was making sure the u3a had copies of the terms and conditions relating to the hire agreements with each venue.

Action: Secretary to report to Committee which venues' terms and conditions we did have copies of, and to make them available to all interested Trustees.

5. Members Coordinator

The Treasurer reported that, because the Members Coordinator is moving home and unable to fulfil her role properly at the moment, the Membership Support (Ann Sole) would be undertaking the Members' Coordinator's administrative duties and updating Beacon until informed otherwise.

The Treasurer had met with Membership Support on 8th January who had confirmed that Beacon was now fully up to date. Three of the members reported as being lapsed in early December had now in fact rejoined. Another was discovered to be deceased.

Action: Previously developed procedure for the reporting of a Members death throughout the u3a to be recirculated to the Committee for reconsideration, before being recirculated to Group Leaders (possible item for the Summer Group Leaders meeting to ensure they will have taken it on board).

On new Members Meetings, the Membership Support had stated that there were two periods in the year during which many new members joined and for which we should hold formal New Member meetings:

- On or soon after the early September Open Day
- On or after the Spring/Summer "Celebration" event

Because of the number of new members who are not able to attend the formal New Member meetings (held late September/early October) and the subsequent number joining over the subsequent few months it was suggested we also hold a New Members meeting early in the calendar year, in January or February.

The Membership Support would continue to hold small informal meetings on the 1st Thursday morning of the month in St Paul's foyer with up to 3 or 4 new members.

It was agreed that tables would be set aside at the next Coffee Morning on the 20th February for new members, as was the case at the October 2023 Coffee Morning, but that we would plan in advance how the Committee should interact with them. This would be an item for the 14th February Committee Meeting, as would the content of the Membership Support's monthly informal sessions at St Pauls.

We cannot arrange the post Celebration event New Members or Summer Coffee Morning events until we make a decision on the timing and nature of the Celebration event (including on who is to organise it).

Agenda Item 4: Update on Trustee and Other Volunteer Recruitment

The Secretary stated that the webmaster was willing to undertake the web migration to SiteWorks, should nobody else volunteer.

The Chair said he would be reminding members attending the Friary monthly meeting on 12th January of our need for more volunteers.

Agenda Item 5: Purchases, Procurements & Contracts

Nothing to cover.

Agenda Item 6: Committee Approvals for matters not requiring discussion

Action: Treasurer to send round his latest versions of both the Financial Policy and the Financial Policy – Delegated Decisions documents amended for the Secretary's suggested changes and recent developments. Formal approval would then take place at the 14th February Committee Meeting.

Agenda Item 7: Trustees' Calendar Update

The following dates were agreed:

- The Autumn coffee morning would take place on Friday 25th October, subject to venue availability
- The RUGS party would take place on Friday 22nd November, subject to venue availability

Action: Once he has prepared his budget preparation timetable, Treasurer to liaise with Secretary on suitable dates for the Annual Fees meeting and Group Leaders summer meeting. The Secretary can then propose dates for both of these, and for the Summer coffee morning, to the Committee for approval.

The Chair confirmed that he would be available to introduce the speakers at both the 12th January and 9th February Friary meetings, and would Chair the 5th Feb Group Leaders meeting also. The Secretary stated that Peter Beckley's absence on holiday this month had revealed the number of actions which had to be taken before each of these meetings, and she would ensure these actions were all incorporated into the Events Guidance.

The Groups Coordinator stated she would not be able to trial the priority seating arrangement until a later meeting.

The Secretary announced she would not be able to attend the 10th April Committee meeting, and the Groups Coordinator said she would likely be away for the 13th September Open Day.

Non-Standing Items for Discussion

Agenda Item 8: Group matters for Discussion

(i) Three Bridges Cricket Club (TBCC) back-rent

Sequent to the previous correspondence provided to the Committee, the Treasurer had had further correspondence with the TBCC, who indicated their wish to draw a line under this issue and not pursue any claim for backdated rent.

The Treasurer had met with the Group Leaders for Bridge and completed a Fee Review with them that would see their Fees increase from £2 to £3 a session, as a direct response to TBCC increasing their rental charge from £10ph to £15ph.

(ii) Use of the £100 start-up grant for new Groups

The Chair stated that, given that the Committee must be responsible for all the policy decisions it approved, he was wary of creating too much and too detailed policy. It was agreed that there should be no caveats to this policy as currently expressed. Any questions raised at the forthcoming Group Leaders Meeting would be addressed by the Treasurer on the day.

Agenda Item 9: Proposed Agenda for 5th February Group Leaders (GLs) meeting

The Committee agreed to the suggestion that, in addition to introducing new Trustees, new GLs should introduce themselves at the meeting.

The Chair wished to talk to GLs about EDI policy.

The Groups Coordinator would be sending out the initial draft agenda with no supporting documentation to GLs shortly, seeking their views on what other topics they would like to be included on the agenda. She would then send out the final agenda, plus any related paperwork, on 29th January, to give the GLs a week to absorb the material.

Agenda Item 10: Updated of EDI & Accessibility Policy

This new policy was approved by the Committee, excepting the proposed responsibility attributable to the potential new Support Role for Older/Senior Members, as this role was yet to be established.

An amended version of the new policy (with no reference to the potential Support Role for Older/Senior Members) would be placed on the website but would not be included within the papers sent out to the Group Leaders in advance of their 5th February meeting.

Agenda Item 11: Committee Aims for 2024 (2)

The Chair stated that, whereas most of the discussion at the meeting today had revolved around internal management matters, our primary focus should be outwards, determining how we can:

- Maintain & enhance resilience, and
- Continue to grow

When it was asked whether he was referring to growth in members or growth in the number of groups the Chair responded that the two were interdependent. We needed to reach out to the many people who could benefit from becoming members of the u3a, but who currently either had not heard of the u3a or thought it was too academically focussed for them.

Action: Chair and Vice-Chair to set up an Innovation and Development working group, and to invite interested Trustees, Group Leaders, other Crawley u3a members and representatives from relevant Crawley organisations (such as Crawley Volunteers and Crawley Community Action) to participate.

The Treasurer stated that in respect of any aim on developing the number of groups, then the SMART objective that should go with it, and which is reported on by the Secretary in the Annual Report, should be the ratio of Total Membership to Total number of Groups (the Third Age Trust recommended this should be no higher than 20 to 1).

Agenda Item 12: AOB

The ongoing situation with regard to the Short Mat Bowls Group was briefly discussed.

Action: Groups Coordinator to arrange a face-to-face meeting with the Group Leader (GL), and to request the GL to send his latest financial projections, to which he referred in his e-mail of 8th January, in advance of the meeting.

The meeting finished at 18:05