

# Minutes of the Committee Meeting held 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023

## 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 through illness. The Minutes Secretary (Christine Willows) was unable to attend.

## Standing Items

### Agenda Item 2(i): Minutes of the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023 meeting

The minutes were approved with no corrections.

### Agenda Item 2(ii): Review of Action Log

The Committee welcomed the inclusion of all actions from the previous meeting, with indication as to which had been completed.

### 11<sup>th</sup> October Agenda Item 9 Action.

The Groups Coordinator stated she would be asking the Group Leaders (during the meetings she was planning to hold with each of them in early 2024) whether or not they were happy for their phone numbers to be displayed on their Group webpages and the Groups Directory. Based on their responses she would then review whether a centralised Groups telephone enquiry number was required.

### 8<sup>th</sup> November Agenda Item 3(v) Action

It was agreed that Newsletter article promoting the new O&A Group 8 programme should appear in the February, rather than the January, edition of the Newsletter.

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

#### Third Age Trust (TAT)

The Secretary stated that she had neglected to include a statement to the effect that the first of the new u3a SiteWorks were now live; she recommended viewing those for Runnymede and Petersfield u3as to get an idea of the SiteWorks potential.

The Treasurer explained that he had learned that the Regional Trustees were not able to access the e-mail addresses of the Officers for the u3as in their Region because the Third Age Trust (TAT) argued that the Officers had not formally granted permission for the Regional Trustee to view their contact details (which are held in the TAT database). If the TAT were to make these contact details available to the Regional Trustees it would contravene GDPR regulations.

### Agenda Item 4: Update on Trustee and Other Volunteer Recruitment

This item was skipped, as there were no updates.

### Agenda Item 5: Purchases, Procurements & Contracts

1. The Treasurer stated that he would be adding the following to the Finance Policy:

That when planning to purchase a one-off item the following procedure should be followed before seeking Committee approval

Cost (inclusive of VAT)	Up to £100	No prior Committee approval needed
	£100 - £500	One price quote required (a copy of the relevant Amazon page would suffice)
	£500	Copies of each of three quotes required

**Action:** Treasurer to amend both Financial Policy and Financial Policy – Delegated Decisions

2. The Committee approved the formation of a Task Group to look at options for alternate providers of the @Crawleyu3a e-mail domain. This Group would comprise the Treasurer, Secretary and Webmaster, with the addition of the Beacon Administrator if he wished to be involved.

**Action:** Secretary to arrange the first meeting of this Task Group for January and to ask the Beacon Administrator if he wishes to participate.

### Agenda Item 6: Committee Approvals for matters not requiring discussion

#### (i) Updated version of the Finance section of the developing Group Leaders (GLs') Handbook

This was approved, subject to correcting Out & About 5 to become Out & About 6.

**Action:** Treasurer to pass amended version to Groups Coordinator so she can update the GL's Handbook.

#### (ii) Draft AGM 2023 Minutes (8<sup>th</sup> December version)

These were approved by the Committee (though they need to be approved by the Members at the next AGM on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2024).

#### (iii) Committee Procedures Draft 8<sup>th</sup> Dec

These were approved and will be reviewed every year at the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting after the AGM.

### Agenda Item 7: Trustees' Calendar Update

The Secretary explained that fixing the dates of the Annual Celebration Event and the Coffee Mornings for the summer and autumn terms would need to wait until we had decided upon the nature of the Celebration Event and the timing of the Annual Fees meeting. The Committee agreed with this.

The Treasurer stated the timing of the Annual Fees meeting should be similar to that for 2023 (30<sup>th</sup> June)

### Non-Standing Items for Discussion

### Agenda Item 8: Post AGM Actions

#### 1. Meeting Times/Dates for 2024

Some time was spent discussing the following aspects of the Committee Meetings:

- Whether we should continue to meet once a month or try to reduce the number to, say, eight a year;

- Whether we should adopt a policy of cancelling a meeting if there were only a few items on the agenda, or possibly holding a meeting by Zoom instead
- Whether we should plan only one month in advance, and at each meeting identify the date and time for the next meeting, depending upon the commitments of each of the Trustees.

The majority view was that, given that a Committee meeting has never finished early, the demand on rooms at St Pauls, and the preference of most Trustees to fix the meetings well in advance so they could plan their other activities and commitments around them, the existing policy of meeting at 16:00 at St Pauls on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month should continue for 2024.

**Action:** Secretary to ensure a room at St Pauls is booked at this time for all 2024 meetings.

## **2. Signing of Charity Commission Trustee Eligibility and Third Age Trust (TAT) Trustee Code of Conduct**

The Charity Commission forms were signed by all present but only one Trustee had brought along a signed Trustee Code of Conduct (the Secretary had not made the need for this sufficiently clear when sending out the papers for the meeting).

**Action:** Secretary to ensure the Members Coordinator also signs a Charity Commission Eligibility Form and that all Trustees give her a signed copy of the TAT Trustee Code of Conduct

(<https://u3asites.org.uk/files/c/crawley/docs/essentialdocumentsforu3atrustees.pdf>)

## **3. Induction of New Trustees**

The Vice-Chair stated he would be scheduling meetings with individual Trustees once he felt himself sufficiently familiar with the way Crawley u3a operated.

## **Agenda Item 9: Group Finances: Restricted Reserves**

The Treasurer explained his thinking behind this policy and reminded the Committee that he produced management accounts termly showing the year-to-date accumulated balances for each Group.

The Chair commented that he believed most Group Leaders (GLs) were not interested in whether their groups produced a surplus or deficit for the year, and that in the near past all balances, whether positive or negative, had been written off at the year-end.

The Committee approved the following:

1. The introduction of a grant of £100 to support new Groups starting up since 1<sup>st</sup> Sept 2021;
2. The application of the Restricted Reserve to fund the Painting & Drawing Group's deficit of £812.78 for the period 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023;
3. The application of the Restricted Reserve to writing off/back the accumulated balance built up over the period 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 for all Indoor Groups listed in Annex 1.

**Action:** Treasurer to both amend the Financial Policy and provide the Groups Coordinator with a shortened version of the report to go into the GL's Handbook.

## **Agenda Item 10: Report on Membership Renewal**

The Treasurer (in the absence of the Members' Coordinator) summarised this report, saying that overall the process went more smoothly than it did the previous year.

He also stated that:

- More members had joined since the report was written
- He had prepared the 2023/24 budget on the assumption that membership would average 562 over the year, so the likely average figure of over 600 would bring in additional fee income

It was agreed that:

1. The actions listed under Actions Outstanding would be input into the Action Log;
2. It was agreed that, because of the difficulty of incorporating signatures into an automatic renewal process, the 2023/24 Renewal and New Member forms (which include members' signatures confirming that they will comply with the principles of the u3a movement and Member Code of Conduct) should be retained for each members' whole period of membership.
3. It was agreed that a new carer/support role be introduced to provide a more ambassadorial support to the older members (who are not able to participate in many groups)

**Action:** Members' Coordinator to define the agreed new support role for older members.

### **Agenda Item 11: Report on Christmas Party**

A full discussion on the Christmas Party was not held, due to the absence of the Trustee who had organised it, though it was commented that several members attending had said how they had enjoyed it and that the food was much better than it was last year (but the budget was considerably larger). The only slight omission (apart from the Friary charging for extra cleaning, dealt with under Agenda Item 14 AOB 1 below) was the absence of a microphone.

**Action:** The Communications Coordinator and Secretary to liaise with the Members' Coordinator to include her recommendations for future Christmas Parties in the Events Guidance document.

The Chair stated we needed to consider the future format of this event, to ensure that a higher number of members could attend. This is to be noted when considering Committee Aims for 2024 (Agenda Item 13).

### **Agenda Item 12: Trustee Tasks List**

The Committee agreed that this would be useful in future and also that:

- The Secretary will cover the Systems Coordinator role until a Trustee is recruited;
- A decision over who will take responsibility for the Celebration Event will be deferred until we have agreed the form and nature of this, as part of 2024 Committee Aims (Agenda Item 13).

The Secretary's outstanding actions will be added to the Action Log.

### **Agenda Item 13: Committee Aims for 2024**

There was not time to discuss these properly. The following actions were agreed:

**Action:** Individual Trustees to submit comments and additional proposals to the Chair.

**Action:** Chair (possibly with Vice-Chair) to arrange to talk individually to Trustees to confirm their goals and strategies for 2024

### **Agenda Item 14: Any Other Business**

Trustees had requested the following six items to be included:

#### **1. Friary Extra Cleaning Charge (Chair)**

The Vice-Chair commented that it was surprising that a Friary staff member had not taken a photo of the alleged mess.

**Action:** The Chair to check with the RUGS member in charge of refreshments that the kitchen had been left as it was found

**Action:** Chair to meet with the Friary Administrator (preferably before Friday 15<sup>th</sup>) to find out more then let the Treasurer know whether to pay the additional charge, as our normally termly payment to the Friary for all hires is due.

**Action:** The Communications C and Secretary add something into Events Guidance on the need for an assigned person to check all Event venues are properly cleaned before locking up

## **2. Crawley Borough Council (CBC) changing conditions of hire for their properties (Treasurer)**

The Bambo Pipes Group is the only one to use an indoor CBC venue, the Furnace Green Community Centre CBC is changing its payment and cancellation policy, which will mean us having to pay hire fees in advance and potentially incur default costs if we have to cancel at short notice. The Group Leader has been made aware

## **3. Three Bridges Cricket Club (TBCC) Charges (Treasurer)**

The Treasurer reported he had received an e-mail from TBCC, used by both Bridge Groups, to not only increase the charge by 50% (from £10 to £15 per hour) but also to charge the additional £5 retrospectively from the start of 2023, despite the absence of an agreement to this effect.

He would not be paying the retrospective charge and will initiate a Group subscription review with the Group Leaders and try to negotiate a lower increase with TBCC

**Action:** Treasurer, supported by the Groups Coordinator, to undertake a subscription review with the Group Leaders.

## **4. Exploring Local History Group (Groups Coordinator)**

It was agreed that the pilot 7 session Exploring Local History should go ahead, starting on 12<sup>th</sup> January.

**Action:** Groups Coordinator to contact proposed new GL to advise 8 interested (have 9 as on 17<sup>th</sup> Dec) members and ask if he is prepared to go ahead with less than his suggested minimum (12) as Committee given their agreement. Also to direct him to contact the Treasurer if he wants to use outside speakers.

## **5. Topical Discussion (Groups Coordinator)**

The Groups Coordinator explained the last situation relating to the leadership of this group.

## **6. Trustees social event in January 2024 (Chair)**

It was agreed that:

- This would be arranged for a date towards the end of January (around Burns Night 25<sup>th</sup>). The Groups Coordinator reminded the Committee that the Assistant Groups' Coordinator would be away from Jan 6<sup>th</sup> to Jan 13<sup>th</sup>.
- The Support Role holders would be invited

**Action:** Chair to canvass Trustees and Support Role holders to determine a suitable date, time & location

*The meeting finished at 18:05*