

# Minutes of the Committee Meeting held 15th December 2022 at 4pm

## Saint Paul's Northgate

**Attending:** Chair (Jim McGough), Secretary (Margaret Lloyd); Communications Coordinator (Sue Parker), Group Leaders' Coordinator (Peter Beckley), and Access Coordinator (Janet Newson).

### Standing Items

#### **Agenda Item 1: Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from the Treasurer (Graham Friday) and Members Coordinator (Jacqui Mercer).

#### **Agenda Item 2: Minutes 22<sup>nd</sup> November meeting**

These were approved with no amendments.

#### **Agenda Item 3: Chair's update**

##### **3.1 Review of Action Log**

The Chair went through the outstanding items. Matters arising included:

- Actions 26<sup>th</sup> April 11 & 13. The Secretary promised to complete her outstanding actions on logging the contents of the crates received from Janet Boniface and completing the current version of the Trustee's Handbook within the next month.
- Action 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov 3.1 (b/fwd from 31<sup>st</sup> May 8.2) There was a brief discussion on whether it was necessary for an IT data protection specialist to review the Crawley u3a's policies in this area given that they had, presumably, been based upon the Third Age Trust's template policies which could be assumed to be fully compliant. The Group's Coordinator mentioned that, on a past occasion when this matter had been discussed, the point had been made that the information on Beacon on members' past occupations was classified as data coming under the aegis of GDPR. It was pointed out that new members were not required to give this information (many in fact did not) and, if a member were willing to disclose it, it could be helpful when recruiting to roles or looking for expertise on a particular subject.
- Action 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov 3.1 (b/fwd from 26<sup>th</sup> July 11(i)) It was not immediately obvious how the proportion of members who regularly read e-mails sent by Crawley u3a, as opposed to merely possessing e-mail access, might be assessed. A sampling method was suggested but nothing agreed.

##### **3.2 Approval of Chair's Expenses**

The Chair explained that he had been very uneasy about approving his own expense claim, though this had been unavoidable due to the lack of other committee members able to approve payments. Once the new payments approvers are set up on the bank mandate this situation should not recur.

##### **3.3 Any other matters**

The Chair stated that at some point the Committee should try to ascertain Crawley u3a members' preferences as to the provision of events and group activities, and of other aspects of membership such as regular newsletters.

#### **Agenda Item 4: Secretary's update**

##### **Recovery of document files following SiteBuilder problems**

The Secretary explained that the Sitebuilder problems in early November had necessitated reuploading all the document files to the Crawley u3a website. This had now been completed with the exception of:

- A couple of older files (on the Privacy and Safeguarding policies) for which she had neither electronic nor paper copies. She had asked Jan Morris if she still had electronic copies, and if not she would recreate them from the latest TAT templates (the relevant policies were due to be reviewed in any case), obtaining approval from the Committee.
- The files requiring protection (all of which appear on the [For Trustees](#) page) because they included TAT material itself subject to protection. The previous process for protecting files appeared not to be working and the secretary was investigating this with the webmaster.

**Action:** Secretary to complete reload

## **Agenda Item 5: Treasurer's update**

**Question on when outdoor activity fees become payable, and impact of reduction taper.** The Access Coordinator, who has had extensive experience in operating an O&A group, explained that the fees become payable from when the member commits to joining the group.

- Joining in Autumn Term = £3.80
- Joining in Spring Term = £2.50
- Joining in Summer Term = £1.30

Trips tend to be organised monthly and if a member elects not to attend any of the trips until the next term that is their choice. The criteria applied is whether they have the opportunity of going on a trip, not whether they take advantage of that opportunity or not.

The Committee agreed that the fees become payable when the member signs up. This could be before or after the free trial session, depending upon whether the member is entitled to a free trial. If a new member signs up in September then they will pay £3.80, irrespective of whether they choose to go on any of the trips offered in the first term.

## **Agenda Item 6: Communication Coordinator's update**

The Communications Coordinator reported that she was making good progress with the January newsletter which is one of the larger quarterly ones which are delivered (by post or manually) to non-email members. She suggested posting them would be a good opportunity to use up the old stock of stamps held by the Soles and which cannot be used after 31<sup>st</sup> January (but note that it is only non-picture stamps i.e. those with just the late Queen's head and without bar-codes, which become invalid after 31<sup>st</sup> January). It was pointed out that refunds for these stamps covering their whole original purchase price could be obtained from post offices up to end January 2023.

### **Recovery of picture files following SiteBuilder problems**

The Communications Communicator reported that all the picture files had disappeared from the website. Some of these had been very old and outdated so this was convenient, but some new pictures did need to be loaded to add some interest. This would take a while as posting pictures to the website was a time-consuming process and would thus form part of the ongoing website redesign and update process (on the Agenda for the 11<sup>th</sup> Jan meeting). Right now there was only one picture on the site, St John's Church on the Home page. This had been placed there as a temporary measure and a member had commented that as it showed gravestones it was not the best introduction to Crawley u3u (the u3a motto is learn, laugh, live).

## **Agenda Item 7: Group Leaders Coordinator update**

The following was reported:

- Isabel Baker has now stood down from being temporary leader of [O&A Group 5](#). [O&A Groups 5 and 2](#) are now both without GLs;
- The new [Family History Group](#), to hold its first meeting in January 2023, now has 13 members;
- The new [Rummikub/Canasta Group](#) now has 17 members.
- The [Smartphone Photographic Group](#) which started in September has 20 members.

- He himself has now taken possession of Alan Pay's boules sets.

Some discussion on the difficulty of getting O&A group members to be GLs then followed, with these points being made:

- GLs serving for very long terms (over 10 years) could present problems, in that many of their members tended to have been in the group throughout their term, meaning that they then felt too old to volunteer themselves. Also such GLs tended to run out of new ideas for outings.
- It could be beneficial if a general O&A trip template were to be created, meaning members would be less apprehensive about taking on a GL role.
- Some O&A and walking groups appoint Deputy GLs, or share the responsibility for arranging trips amongst a small group. This means there is a ready replacement available.

Various matters relating to O&A groups are to be addressed at the January 2023 meeting.

#### **Agenda Item 8: Members' Coordinator's update** [via phone update with Secretary 14<sup>th</sup> Dec]

The members' coordinator has processed some new members (suggesting her Beacon Access is correct) and despatched membership cards. The previous Membership Secretary has been passing on new member applications. The Membership Coordinator and Treasurer are meeting in January to start planning the 2023/24 membership renewals process.

#### **Agenda Item 9: Access Coordinator update**

The Access Coordinator was liaising with the Beacon Administrator about obtaining data on the following categories of members which are listed as Groups within Beacon.

- Relaxed Seniors
- Members not in groups

### **Non-Standing Items for Discussion**

#### **Agenda Item 10: Report on Christmas Party 9<sup>th</sup> December.**

The Communications Coordinator explained that since producing this report a "wash-up" meeting had been arranged for the party organisers on 4<sup>th</sup> January. She would attend this and update her initial report accordingly. The amended report would be presented to the Committee at the January meeting.

Due to last minute cancellations all members on the waiting list were able to attend.

#### **Agenda Item 11: Proposed Amendment to the Constitution requiring members to approve fee increases**

The proposed amendment, agreed with Clive Morris subject to final approval by the Committee, had been the subject of a long e-mail correspondence between the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer over the two days 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> December. The Chair had also spoken at length with the Treasurer on the matter

The Secretary suggested that she, the Chair and Treasurer meet together to agree on a final form of words which both complied with what was agreed at the AGM and which would not impose too onerous a burden on future Treasurers and Committees. This would then be circulated to other Committee members for their approval before being submitted to TAT for their approval.

**Action:** Chair to arrange the meeting, preferably before Christmas.

#### **Agenda Item 12: Financial arrangements for opening out Crawley u3a Groups to other u3as**

The Committee agreed that, although this proposal at first sight seemed sensible, it could cause problems.

- The suggested policy stated (rightly) that priority would always be given to Crawley u3a Full or Associate fee-paying members over members of other u3as paying only group fees. But what would be the position if, in one year, other u3a members were able to join a group but then at the start of the next year several new Crawley members wished also to join to the extent that the group was now over-subscribed. Would these other u3a

members be told they could no longer be members of the Group unless they became full Crawley u3a or Associate members? If so then this would need to be made very clear to them at the start. Would an exception be made if they had become Group Leader?

- It was also questioned whether there were enough groups with vacancies for such a scheme to be worthwhile. It would not be good for long-term relationships with neighbouring u3as if we were to advertise the scheme and then interested members from these u3as discovered that the groups they wished to join were already full.
- Group Leaders should be consulted on this scheme.
- Further discussion by the Committee is to take place before any further action is taken in contacting external u3a organisations.

**Actions:** 1. Groups' Coordinator to establish how many Groups do have vacancies (Beacon records should give this information but they are not always fully updated) by circulating GLs  
2. Treasurer to report (if possible) how many Crawley u3a members are also Associate members of neighbouring u3as, and how many groups they belong to.  
3. Treasurer to confirm his intended solution in the event of the circumstances described in the first bullet point.

### **Agenda Item 13: Report on 2022-23 Fee Renewal Process**

Comments on this paper made in advance of the meeting by e-mail can be summarised as follows:

- 1) The instructions on the renewal e-mail were difficult to follow. The less IT literate members struggled with electronically updating the early September renewal e-mail. Several members were heard to say it was all so much easier when they received a paper form.
- 2) Some members who had renewed and paid were confused when they received the reminder e-mail on 17th Nov. This should have been sent only to those members who had not yet confirmed, or paid for, their membership?
- 3) Some cards were not sent out until quite late on, because of running out of them, and it would have been helpful had the reason for delay been communicated to those members (if we do discontinue with membership cards then this ceases to be an issue, but we would still need to confirm membership in some other way).
- 4) The note explaining gift aid eligibility was appreciated and did prevent at least one member from stating they were eligible when in fact they were not

The Treasurer made the following points [e-mail 12<sup>th</sup> Dec]

- Having now been directly involved in the renewal process. I understand the stresses and frustrations that the process can generate.
- My main overall observation would be that given the wide skills and knowledge diversity within in our membership, whether that be related to age or IT skills, whatever we did was going to be liked by some and equally disliked by other. The key issue for us as the Committee is to ensure the task is completed in the most efficient and economical way possible.

The Committee felt there was little point in discussing this report further now, given that neither the Treasurer nor the Members' Coordinator was present and in view of their planned meeting in January to start planning the 2023-24 process.

The Chair emphasised the importance of contingency planning, and that this required processes to be documented. The membership renewal process was probably the most complex of all processes.

**Action:** Following their meeting the Treasurer and Members' Coordinator to bring a report to the Committee stating how the 2023-24 renewal process would be run and reporting progress on the documentation of the processes.

## **Agenda Item 14: Draft Outline Committee Calendar**

The Committee agreed the following:

- The format was fine
- The annual RUGS event should be included
- One coffee morning each term would be held, late Feb/March, June/July and Oct/Nov. The last coffee morning held was on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2022.
- The coffee mornings did not necessarily need to be held at the Friary, though given the book and jigsaw swap a reasonably spacious hall was required. The possibility of using St John's Hall instead would be investigated by the Groups' Coordinator.
- Holding a new members' meeting immediately before a coffee morning would work well.
- Impromptu meetings should not be held in St Paul's lobby (effectively using St Pauls free of charge), as this could damage the relationship with St Pauls.
- The Committee should be informed of all meetings open to Crawley u3a members or prospective members, other than those relating to Groups, and at least one Committee member should attend such meetings, to avoid any inconsistencies being communicated to members.
- The "celebration event" should be scheduled for late May/early June, so it can take place out of doors. Something similar to the June 2021 bandstand picnic event was a possibility, with perhaps the Folk Dancing Group asked to give a display.
- The Groups Coordinator and Secretary would liaise on what locations needed to be booked, and the required dates and times.

**Action:** 1. Groups' Coordinator to investigate using St John's Hall for coffee mornings  
2. Communications' Coordinator to check with Jean Elmer at the 4<sup>th</sup> January meeting how many coffee mornings used to be held each year and the timings thereof.

## **Agenda Item 15: Proposed Disciplinary Policy and update of Complaints Policy**

These were agreed, subject to the following actions:

**Actions:** The Chair and Access Coordinator to collaborate on:

- (i) Drafting a short section to be inserted into the EDI policy stating that the Committee will take disciplinary action against any member who contravenes this policy
- (ii) Drafting a short note for the website on how a member or external person or organisation should go about lodging a complaint

The Chair confirmed that, in the event of a complaint being made, he would be responsible for identifying which Committee member (if not himself) is to be responsible for investigating the complaint.

## **Agenda Item 16: An Update on Third Age Trust Board Activity.**

No discussion required.

## **Agenda Item 17: Aims for the next 12 months**

**Action:** The Chair to contact all non-Officer committee members individually regarding their ideas on what improvements they hope to bring about for Crawley u3a during the next year.

## **Agenda Item 18: AOB**

The Chair agreed that obtaining a group Microsoft licence would seem to be a good plan.

**Action:** Secretary to investigate whether Crawley u3a would be eligible for a non-profit Microsoft licence, and if not what the costs of a corporate group membership would be.

*The meeting closed at 18:00*