

Agenda for Committee Meeting at 4.00 p.m. on Wednesday 8th November 2023

Room 6, St Pauls

No	Description	Lead	Pages
Standing Items			
1.	Apologies for absence	Chair	
2.	(i) Approval of Minutes of the 11 th October meeting (ii) Review of Action Log as of 4th November	Chair	2 - 6 7 - 8
3.	Monthly Updates from Third Age Trust and Committee Members, including decision on whether to buy a new projector screen (page 12)	Chair	9 - 14
Non-Standing Items for Discussion			
4.	Proposal for addressing Short Mat Bowls loss	Chair	15 - 16
5.	AGM Update	Secretary	17 – 18
6	30 th October Coffee Morning: Report & Decision	Secretary	19 – 21
7.	Group Development: Discussion	Chair	21 - 22
Final Standing Items for Discussion			
8.	Trustees' calendar update: (i) Upcoming events (RUGS & Christmas Parties) (ii) Agendas for next meetings	Secretary	See separate document 22
9.	AOB	Chair	
Next Meeting: Wednesday 13 th December St Paul's Room 2			

Agenda Item 2(i) Draft Minutes of the Committee Meeting held 11th October

St Pauls Canteen

Attending: Chair (Jim McGough), Secretary (Margaret Lloyd), Treasurer (Graham Friday), Communications Coordinator (Sue Parker), Groups Coordinator (Peter Beckley), Members Coordinator (Jacqui Mercer) and Access Coordinator (Janet Newson).

Standing Items

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

The minutes were approved with the following corrections:

- **Title** that “September 2023” be added after “13th”
- **Agenda Item 6** “Groups Register” to be corrected to “Groups Directory”
- **Agenda Item 7** The date of the Open day Working Group (WG) final meeting to be corrected from 21st October to 21st September

Agenda Item 2(ii): Minutes of the 4th October meeting

1. The minutes were approved subject to the following being added to the Minutes for **Agenda Item 2: Selling Items at Coffee Mornings and Monthly Meetings for Charity:**

An exception will be made for the sale by Monique Tovey-Mansfield of knitted animals to raise funds for St Catherine’s Hospice as:

- (i) This sale is a “one-off”*
- (ii) The makers of the goods for sale had themselves provided the materials themselves and spent considerable time making the goods.*

The Treasurer would report this back to Monique.

Agenda Item 2(ii): Matters Arising: Membership Support

1. A discussion then took place as to whether the policy was too restrictive and off putting to Members, and whether it needed to be amended to allow consideration of verbal complaints instead of requiring them in writing. There was a consensus for considering that change and reviewing the Policy after the AGM.
2. The Chair reported that the Membership Support had expressed her opinion that the Committee was discriminating against older members in that it had decided that the next edition of Third Age Matters (TAM), for which we had to send the distribution list to the Third Age Trust very soon, would not be sent to those 2022/23 members who had not yet renewed their membership for 2023/24. This was because the more elderly and/or longstanding members were likelier than other members to have been prevented from renewing because of health or caring responsibilities, or through finding the instructions difficult to understand.
3. The Committee agreed that this was a good point and so that all non-renewing members would still receive the next copy of TAM.
4. The Treasurer stated that when he and the Members Coordinator came to prepare the report (timetabled for *the 13th December Committee meeting*) on the 2023/24 Renewal Process they would

ask the Membership Support to submit in writing the aspects of the process which she believed should have been undertaken differently.

Agenda Item 2(iii): Review of Action Log as at 8th October

On Short Mat Bowls (9th August) it was stated that the Monday afternoon group had now 7 members and the Wednesday lunchtime one 12 or 13. The fees were still £2 per session. It was agreed that the Chair would speak to the Group Leader very soon about charging a higher subscription per session and that he would report back to the next Committee meeting (8th November) on the steps he and the GL had agreed upon to improve the financial position.

Action: Chair to report back to the next meeting on the GL's proposals to improve the financial position.

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

Members Coordinator

The Members Coordinator reported that approximately half of the new members who joined at the June celebration event had not joined any groups to date.

The latest Membership Renewal Statistics were given:

Overall: 561 Paid Members (compared with 562 assumed for the budget).
 This includes 49 new members joining since 1st Sept 2023
 49 Members from 22/23 who have not yet renewed

The longest serving member by joining date – Myrtle Taylor (1/9/1995)

14 Members have been members for over 20 years

Members from last year who have not renewed so far:

54 members have not renewed from last year and are shown on the system as Resigned or Deceased. This includes 9 members who have passed away.

Within the 54 Members who did not rejoin 8 had less than a year's membership (5 coming from Celebration Day). Potentially more within the 49 still to review.

Financial Statistics

13 refunds will need to be made to:

- 3 Ex-members who paid
- 5 New members, who automatically paid for TAM, when it was free.
- 5 Others who overpaid, paying the wrong Fee level.

Of the 561 paid members, 67% renewed by Cheque and 33% by Bacs.

Some concern was expressed on the fact that five who had joined on the Midsummer Eve's Celebration day on 23rd June had failed to renew.

It was agreed that we needed to make more contact with new members during their first few months, for example making a point of inviting them to the next coffee morning or to restart the policy of holding smaller and more frequent meetings with recent new members. It was also felt that it might be better to hold the Celebration Event in early June or even May so that new members recruited would have more of the summer term remaining in which to join Groups.

The Secretary would note both these points on the Trustees Calendar for when we discuss (on 13th December) the timings of the key actions and events for 2024.

Non-Standing Items for Discussion

Agenda Item 4: Approval of the 2022/23 Financial Outturn Reports and Final 2022/23 Accounts

The final 2022/23 accounts approved and signed subject to the Independent Examination.

Agenda Item 5: AGM: Update and Draft 2022/23 Annual Report

1. On the AGM agenda it was agreed that:

- (i) Under [2. Tributes](#) only those deceased members who had played an important role in the organisation, such as Mary Russell, would be mentioned by name
- (ii) Under [10 Awards and Prizes](#). The following would be acknowledged (by an honourable mention):
 - Any members resigning at end 2022/23 who had at one time been Committee members (e.g. Mary Mayne)
 - Members of 20 years or more standing

Action: Secretary to bring lists for (i) and (ii) plus any awards proposed by Group Leaders, to the 8th November meeting for final approval.

2. The Committee agreed to purchase a new microphone (two if the Friary was not to replace their own microphone which had gone missing).

Action: Group Coordinator to ascertain the specification for the new microphone.

The Secretary would be disseminating another version of the Annual Report shortly once she had included a few extra pieces of information..

Action: Trustees to submit comments by end Friday October 27th

Agenda Item 6: Third Age Trust AGM 18th October

The Committee agreed that the Crawley u3a would be voting “No” to both of the resolutions.

Action: Chair to vote “No” to both resolutions and report on the outcomes to the 8th November meeting.

Agenda Item 7: Final Report on the 8th September Open Afternoon

The Committee approved this report and its placement on the web subject to the following additions:

- (i) The Comments submitted by the Access Coordinator in her e-mail of 28th September;
- (ii) That there should have been a list of tasks stipulating what needed to be done on the day, as this would have ensured the equipment items brought by the Treasurer were used and would have sped up at the setting up of the hall.
- (iii) The Group Leaders (GLs) had no previous sight of the map showing the table layout (to avoid complaints about their positioning). As the person with the map did not arrive until after most of the Group Leaders this meant that time which could have been spent setting up the equipment was lost. It was suggested that in future they could be informed of their table number, and the numbers or Group labels placed on tables, so that GLs could spot which table was there in advance of the map being made public.

See also [Agenda Item 9 \(i\)](#) below 1st bullet point

Action: Communications Coordinator to add these comments and place the report on the web For Trustees page

Agenda Item 8: New Members Meeting

The Committee approved this report and its placement on the web subject to the following additions:

- (i) That 65 new members (including those who joined at the June Celebration Event) were invited of which 32 attended
- (ii) The attendance of Ann and Stewart Sole to be acknowledged; their help was invaluable;
- (iii) The set up of the room should have been agreed in advance.

Agenda Item 9: 2nd October Group Leaders Meeting: Minutes and Actions

In response to the Secretary's queries on the potential actions arising from the minutes the following were confirmed:

(i) Agenda Item 2: Discussion on 8th September Open Day

- The Treasurer and Members Coordinator would, at future Open Days, operate a system in which new members could be allocated temporary membership numbers and cards, enabling them to join Groups at the event;
- Subject to getting a Trustee focused on IT the Treasurer and Members Coordinator would be looking at a renewal process for 2024/25 in which members who are confident with systems are asked to update their details on Beacon themselves.

(ii) Agenda Item 3 Finance Matters (c) Group Subscriptions

The Committee agreed there was no need to display the individual Group subscriptions publicly

(iii) Agenda Item 3 Finance Matters (d) Taking Fees by Debit/Credit card

The Treasurer agreed that whilst offering the ability for members to pay membership fees and Group subscriptions by debit/credit card was not an immediate priority, he would start to investigate the practicalities so that he was fully prepared when the time comes to do so.

(iv) Agenda Item 4 Group Leaders Handbook

The Secretary would place the Draft GL Handbook on the web GLs page, with the newly approved Finance section and other existing sections, replacing the current Procedures & Reference Guide.

(v) Agenda Item 6: Group Resilience

Action: Chair to pass to Trustees the comments he had received from a prospective new GL on things to consider when setting up a new Group

(vi) Agenda Item 7(iii): Phone numbers on the website

Action: Chair to ask George Redgrave if he still has a u3a mobile phone.

Action: The post AGM 2023 Groups Coordinator to ask GLs their views on using a centralised phone number once in post

Action: Secretary to look into GDPR implications of GLs operating WhatsApp communication systems within their group.

Agenda Item 10: Events for the Remainder of 2023

On the 30th October Coffee Morning the following actions were agreed:

Action: Groups Coordinator to let the Friary know that round tables would be required for members to sit around, and long tables for the books and jigsaws and Monique Tovey-Mansfield's sale items.

Action: Chair to agree with the Communications Coordinator the wording of the Beacon e-mail to be sent to all members emphasising the attendance of new members and those members interested in volunteering.

Action: Members Coordinator to e-mail new members who missed the 19th Sept New Members meeting to specifically invite them to the Coffee Morning

On the 8th December Christmas Party the Members Coordinator said that Isabel Baker, and possibly Jean Elmer, would be meeting with her to assist her in planning the party. The Communications Coordinator promised she would also send her the planning notes she possesses from last year's event.

Agenda Item 11: Draft Committee Procedures

Action: Trustees to send comments on these to the Secretary by end Friday 27th October so she could bring the final version back to the 8th November meeting for approval.

Agenda Item 12: Draft Agenda for the next two meetings

These were agreed

Agenda Item 12: AOB

The Members Coordinator announced she would be away on the 24th to 27th October.

Membership Support would be away from the 24th October to 28th November and the 13th to 21st December.

The meeting finished at 18:05

Agenda Item 2(ii): Action Log as at 4th November 2023

Includes all actions arising from the minutes which are not completed by the time the papers for the subsequent meeting are sent out.

Actions will be removed once they are completed or superseded by an action from a subsequent meeting.

Comments *in italics* in the right-hand column indicate that the action is not yet fully completed and will be carried forward to the subsequent Action Log.

Meeting	Agenda Reference	Action	Progress/Comments
26 th April	11. Contents of crates handed over by Janet Boniface	Sort and log the historic items and old u3a papers held by Janet Boniface	<i>Work in progress. Yielding some useful info.</i>
14 th June	3. Comms Coordinator	Comms Coordinator to produce an Events Checklist - a list of actions which need to be carried out prior to monthly meetings, coffee mornings, and other events.	<i>In progress</i>
	6. Outstanding Beacon Access Privileges and GDPR actions	General Management Items 4 & 6: Secretary to establish processes to ensure and demonstrate compliance	<i>In progress</i>
		Amend Beacon Roles as approved and communicate to all Beacon users once done so	All Committee and the Seasonal Outing & Speaker Organiser ones done. <i>Others still o/s</i>
12 th July	Newsletter hard copy distribution	Communications Coordinator to update the hard-copy Newsletter delivery and postage list for early September	List now updated with 35 members who have no e-mail, and 19 with e-mail but still included on the postal/hand distribution list. Of these 19, 8 are to remain on the list for age/infirmity reasons for age and infirmity reasons and the remaining 11 still to be reviewed.
	O&A Phase 2.	To produce a checklist and guidance for organising outdoor trips.	Phase 2 Leader sent draft version to members of the WG for approval on 25 th Sept (a few sections still outstanding and Priority Seating on Coaches to be added).

	1. Priority Seating on Coaches and at Friary Meetings	Access Coordinator to amend the proposal to take on board the Committee members' suggestions before sending to the leaders of the RUGS and/or the O&A Leaders to seek their views on the practical and best approach to implement this idea.	To be trialled at the 12 th January monthly meeting with view to being incorporated into the planned Events checklist.
4th Oct (Extra)	2. Selling items for charity at coffee mornings & Monthly Meetings	The Treasurer to communicate this decision to Monique and to add the above policy to the Finance Policy Delegated Decision Schedule.	
11th Oct	9. Actions from 2 nd Oct Group Leader meeting:	New Groups Coordinator after the AGM to ask GLs their views on a new centralised phone number being used for phone Group enquiries (would need to purchase a new phone as the 2 nd phone – the 1 st phone being retained by Membership Support for responding to calls to the Support number quoted on the reverse side of the 23/24 Membership cards - cannot be found).	
		Secretary to look into the GDPR implications of GLs operating WhatsApp for communications within their group	
		Secretary to place the Draft GL Handbook on the web GLs page, with the newly approved Finance section and other existing sections, replacing the current Procedures & Reference Guide.	

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

Action for the Committee: To note

Third Age Trust (TAT): National Level

See Chair's report below for the outcome of the AGM. No other matters to report.

Third Age Trust: Regional Level

A West Sussex Network meeting was held on Friday 20th October 2023 at 10:00am with the Chair will be attending. See below for his report.

Chair (Jim McGough)

This was a quieter month for me since I managed a short holiday away from Crawley in the last week of the month. Three external zoom meetings occurred, the TAT AGM, the West Sussex Network (WSN) and the u3a Chairs Forum, at all of which I was present.

1. TAT AGM

While the TAT proceedings were recorded and placed online for all to see I must report that nothing significant occurred, save the votes on the two motions we discussed at our last meeting. A resolution on greater autonomy for small clusters was heavily defeated, while that on encouraging the TAT to spend more on publicity was passed with a significant majority, 3 to 1. We voted against both motions.

The voting aside, the meeting itself witnessed the statutory reports, some engaging video presentations on various events, like the Hadrian's Wall activities, and a strong plug for the upcoming festival at York University from the 18th – 20th July. Overall, a rather tame affair which lasted longer than scheduled.

2. West Sussex Network (WSN)

The WSN meeting was a more detailed affair, the minutes of which are on the website. One advantage is that Susie Berry, our regional representative, appears, and reports on current TAT Board activity. In common with many of the meetings I attend there are multiple examples of most u3as having common problems, say, recruitment of trustees and group leaders as foremost, but also indications of many acting in different ways, in the detail. Some points which arose are:-

- Use of Card Readers is common, and growing, in our region.
- Many different methods of renewals, one u3a, using a Google Sheet (please Google!), Early Bird discounts, discounts for those on benefits...etc
- Susie Berry arguing that no Group Leader should be paid but also, of course, should not be out of pocket.
- Susie Berry pointing out the need for more short courses
- On risk assessments we heard of the example of an aspiring member of a bike group who had never ridden before!

3. Chairs Forum

The Chairs Forum is a curious affair with some suspicion that it may have been founded to influence TAT policy. Participation is well-nigh impossible in a 1 hour zoom meeting with over 100 chairs in attendance, and on this occasion it focussed on communication issues, particularly those with TAT. While I learned nothing new, I will continue to attend in the hope that some key problem is solved.

Secretary (Margaret Lloyd)

Tasks undertaken not covered elsewhere on the agenda are:

1. 2nd October Group Leader (GL) Meeting Minutes & Actions

Only one GL came back by the 23rd October deadline with any amendments to the draft minutes and that was to add, under item 7(ii) that risk assessments must be available/shared with participants to ensure that the possible risks are highlighted

There were no responses at all to the requests on:

- What topics GLs they would like to see in the Groups Handbook, and interest in assisting in its creation;
- Whether any GLs (in addition to that for Smart Phone Photographic) wished to make any sort of award to a member of your Group at the AGM on 10th November
- Submission of photos on Groups activities (other than those which have been included in the Newsletter)

The minutes are now on the web. The date of the next meeting has now been confirmed as Monday 5th February at 14:00.

2. Annual Report for 2022/23

This was completed with the Treasurer providing the financial narrative. The Independent Examiner signed off his report on 19th October, confirming that the accounts were correct and consistent with the financial commentary in the report. The Chair's and Treasurer's Signatures were also obtained. The Access Coordinator usefully detected some typos and small errors in the text which were corrected. The Report was e-mailed out to all members on e-mail on 1st November, together with the final agenda and list of Trustee nominations received at that point.

3. Use of Key Statistics

I and the Chair were keen to include a final data page, showing statistics such as membership numbers, fee levels, and the number of groups covering the last several years. The focus would be on those items of data ("Key Performance Indicators") which are useful in assessing the extent to which we are meeting our aims.

However, when discussing it with the Treasurer I realised that time was too short to be able to do this properly, and it would have implications for the text of the Annual Report. Hence we agreed we would produce such statistics for the committee meeting in December or January as supporting evidence when deciding on our aims for 2024.

4. Committee Procedures and Trustee Tasks List

Thank-you to all Trustees who submitted comments on the draft Committee Procedures sent out with the papers for the last meeting. I incorporated most of these into the version I discussed with the Treasurer at a meeting with him on 2nd November. This version now includes sections on delegation to working groups, communications with external bodies and other matters raised.

We also looked at the latest Trustee Tasks schedule which has some connection to the Committee Procedures.

The Treasurer and myself decided that, rather than rushing through the various changes to these two documents which we agreed at the meeting with a view to final approval at the 8th November Committee Meeting, it would be better for me to let you have the latest revised versions soon after the AGM and let Trustees have sufficient time to really study them, so I can incorporate final comments before bringing both documents to the December meeting. That will also be useful for any new Trustees joining us then.

5. Correspondence received

None

Treasurer (Graham Friday)

1. **2022/23 Accounts** - Completed, documentation passed to Independent Examiner and examination now complete.
2. **2022/23 Annual Report** – Financial narrative provided and incorporated into document. Provide further assistance to the Secretary to help her complete the report.
3. **2023/24 Accounts** – Control spreadsheets set up and all September transaction input and reconciled. October transactions in the process of being input and reconciled to the Bank Statements.
4. **Membership Annual Renewal process**
 - Reconciliation of Beacon to Bank receipts has now been completed. Process took about 3-4 hours about a quarter of the time it took last year. This was due to the Members Coordinator and I agreeing in advance a way to ensure we were matching individual Member transactions as we went along.
 - Produced and sent 13 letters and cheques to people who overpaid during the renewal process.
 - We have 1 bacs payment received on the 12th September for which we are still awaiting a Membership Application form, or for that person to contact us.
5. **Committee Procedures** – Worked with the Secretary to help produce the next version
6. **Group Fees** – Though saying at the GL meeting that I do not want to receive electronic payments for these fees, because of the additional work it creates for me. I have now received 3 electronic payments for group fees. The GLs has been informed.
7. **Investment Strategy** – As preparation for developing our Strategy, I have been seeking to find out where other u3a's invest their surplus cash. I initially posted an information request on the Trusts Facebook 'Fit for the Future' Treasurer chat group. This yielded only one response. I have now asked the National Treasurer if he would include my request in his next Newsletter to all u3a Treasurers, he has agreed to do that.

In the meantime, until I have completed by survey and prepared a formal strategy for consideration. I have taken the opportunity to move some of our surplus cash for our Lloyds deposit account into some fixed term cash deposit accounts with Lloyds, which means the money has not technically left our bank account, so is 100% safe and protected by the Government guarantee but will earn us more investment income. We currently have around £50,000 surplus cash, generated from a combination of the reserves we hold and the 23/24 Membership Fees; this will go down as we spend over the year. I have therefore split the money as follows.

£20,000 – Instant Deposit account, with immediate access. To cover our day-to-day spending needs over the year.

£10,000 – into a 32 Day Notice account.

£10,000 – into a 3-month fixed term account.

£10,000 – into a 9-month fixed term account.

These investments on their own will generate investment income of over £1,500 this year, compared to the £400 assumed when setting the Membership Fee. This is due to a combination of having a greater capital sum to invest and higher than assumed interest rates.
8. **Afternoon Exercise Group** – From the initial list of 17 potential Instructors, I've narrowed it down to 2. Both of which have the appropriate insurance cover and are registered as Self Employed with HMRC.

Both are offering different types of sessions, therefore I'm in the process of surveying the potential membership of the group for them to choose which one to engage. I hope to have this group running early into the new calendar year.

9. **O&A 8** - This Group is now operational and held its first planning meeting on the 6th Nov.

10. **Purchase of a new display Screen** - Based on a comment from our last monthly speaker (Bill Avenell) that his pictures would have been clearer and more visible from the back of the room if a screen was at the front of the stage. The Speaker Organiser has asked whether the Committee would consider purchasing a larger mobile projection screen. The potential cost of this would be over £100. We already have a smaller screen, which is suitable for smaller venues like a classroom.

As the cost will be over £100, it is down to the Committee to decide whether to purchase one.

My issue is where it would be stored and how it would be transported to the venue. Our existing equipment already take up a significant space within one of my space rooms, and I would not like to add to it, especially as the existing equipment is rather rarely called upon to be used. I feel the Committee need to, as a priority consider the u3a formal administration and storage space requirements.

Decision: The Committee need to decide on whether to purchase a new projector screen.

Communications Coordinator (Sue Parker)

- 1) The **November newsletter** was emailed to members on Monday 6th November. The postal copies were dispatched on the same day. Work has begun on the December newsletter.
- 2) I attended the **coffee morning on Monday 30th October**. I am delighted to report that two people expressed an interest in helping out with publicity. I intend to take them up on the offer. One volunteer is used to doing displays and I plan to ask her to help with the noticeboards.
- 3) I have worked my way through the **newsletter distribution list**. Below are the figures for non-email copies:

- I have been able to cross six postal copies off the list: five due to resignation and one due to error on my part
- This leaves 35 people who have no email address showing on Beacon and will continue to receive postal/hand distributed copies
- A further 19 people do have email addresses but have indicated that they would like printed copies of the newsletter
- Of the 19, I plan to leave eight on the postal/hand distribution list for reasons of age and infirmity (for example, one member is 99, two I hand over at quiz group 1)
- I will make a few enquiries before contacting the other 11 members to ask whether they will agree to receive the newsletter via email

It should be borne in mind that as soon as I completed the exercise, the figures changed. I will repeat the exercise towards the end of November.

- 4) I contacted Social Prescribing at Crawley Community Action to see whether they needed more **leaflets**. I dropped off 50 copies recently, urging them to contact me again if they need more.
- 5) I met with the Secretary on 27th October. We discussed ongoing **work on the website** as well as the **events checklist**. Margaret made some helpful suggestions for the latter which I have taken on board.
- 6) My priorities for the rest of the month are the December newsletter, a wider distribution of our new leaflet, finishing the events checklist and belatedly redesigning our flyer.

Groups Coordinator (Peter Beckley)

1. Graham Crozier is proposing to start a Local History Group, based at Crawley Museum. Proposed start date is Friday 12th January 2024, 11.00 to 13.00, meeting monthly on 2nd Friday each month. Two terms are proposed initially (details below). To be promoted in the November newsletter.

Group title:	Exploring Local History
Group Leader	Graham Crozier
Venue:	Crawley Museum
Duration:	Monthly, second Friday of each month / 11.00 – 13.00 2 terms
Cost:	£2 per session
Group size:	15-20
Outcomes:	Group members will be given the opportunity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access and examine a range of objects and materials (artifacts) from the Museum collections;• Explore the nature and scope of local history, and how local history can help with the understanding of wider national events;• Undertake their own research into aspects of local history, and present their findings in a number of ways.
Methods:	Group leader input, group discussion and small group work, input from outside experts and enthusiasts, group presentations, exploring the Museum collections.
Content:	The exact content of the sessions will be open to discussion to meet group interests, but will cover areas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is 'local' history?• How to research local history, using primary and secondary sources• The use of artifacts such as photographs, documents, diaries and memoirs, using oral history, examining buildings and wider environment.

2. Sue and Phil Light would like to set up a Bus / Strollers group, run on similar lines to the Weekenders group, but on a weekday. Current membership is 8. Details were in the October newsletter
3. Peter Beckley and Janet Newson had a meeting on 1st November to discuss the way forward regarding the Group Coordinator's post. It was a very productive session, prior to Janet's adoption at the A.G.M. After the A.G.M. we will agree on the precise details of who does what.
4. The Petanque group decided not to play on the final day of the current term, due to Storm Ciaran. A social gathering planned to take place the same day at the Ewhurst Social Club at 6.00 pm, organised by Julie, the Group Leader, was postponed. Activities will resume in the New Year when the weather and daylight hours are suitable.
5. By the time you read this, Out & About 8 group will have had their initial meeting on the 6th November
6. The Friary has informed us that in future, when they have a funeral on the day of our meetings, we will only be allocated 4 parking spaces.

Members Coordinator (Jacqui Mercer)

Access Coordinator (Janet Newson)

This is the last Monthly report being submitted by the Access Coordinator. The role ceases as at the AGM 2023.

1. MS 365

My shared access to Ann & Stewart Sole's personal account has now ceased and I have now set up sharing with the Family Licence that Margaret bought for the Committee.

2. Email (1) New Groups Coordinator Email Account

I have spoken with Stuart Spreadborough in anticipation of the need for a Groups Coordinator u3a email account. Stuart will set this up on his return from holiday. At present we have assumed that I will be the owner of this account, but I do not intend to start using it until after the AGM. Therefore, if someone else is elected as Groups Coordinator then Stuart can be advised, and the ownership swapped to them.

3. Email (2) Use of Access Coordinator Email Account

I have tested synchronising my existing Access Coordinator account with a new Outlook.com account, and it is working so I have now ceased using Gmail for any u3a business, except personal membership. I have also now removed the synchronization between my Gmail account and the Access Coordinator account. This means that I can only see new emails sent to the Access Coordinator account if I log into my Outlook account. Stuart Spreadborough is aware not to shut down the Access Coordinator account until I have advised him to do so. I hope that when given access to the new Groups Coordinator account I can set that up equally easily.

4. Email (3) Responding to Committee emails

Please note that I cannot see new emails on my phone as I do not want any additional synchronization challenges. This will be interesting for me as I have been used to looking at your emails regularly throughout the day. Now it will be only when I am at home and when on my computer. Please note that if an urgent response is required, may I suggest that WhatsApp is used to give notification
[Secretary: included in the latest version of the Committee Procedures]

5. Membership Renewal on Beacon

As the Members Coordinator is aware, I visited Ann Sole to thank her for sharing MS 365, and as happens, we got completely side-tracked and I found myself sitting with her documenting the Beacon renewal process. The first draft of this document has been sent to Ann & Jacqui for them to check for accuracy, but also for Jacqui, as Members Coordinator, to verify if it is needed. I have since been made aware that Beacon may have documentation that is far better than my efforts. <https://felines1st.org/> <https://felines1st.org/> <https://felines1st.org/>

6. Meeting re Groups Coordinator Role

Peter Beckley and I have arranged a meeting to discuss the Groups Coordinator tasks in anticipation of my election at the AGM. If someone else is elected, then I will pass all information to them. We will review the tasks and advise the Committee of our suggestions.

7. Observations from serving on the Committee

A recent report has been sent to you. The document is a result of my reviewing my time on the Committee. About to respond to this

8. Review of quantity of printing required for Committee Meetings

A recent email has been sent to the Committee querying how much paperwork is needed. One way of reducing paperwork is not including things in the papers twice. The point of including the Action Log is so Trustees do not have to state what they have not done in their monthly report.

Agenda Item 4: Proposal for addressing the Short Mat Bowls loss

Action for the Committee: To reach a decision on the proposal below

Aim: To examine the current operation of the Short Mat Bowls Group in order to reach a decision on its future viability

Background: You will be aware that The Short Mat Bowls Group has been operating at an increasing loss since its inception and that the deficits incurred have reached a position where they are harming our ability to maintain sound budgetary management (refer to [Annex 1](#))

The position has been discussed on several occasions with the Group Leader and advice shared on how to retrieve the situation. Among the suggestions made were the implementation of an increase in fees, a reduction in hire time, and the amalgamation of two groups. These were set against the background of an attempt to increase participation through greater publicity, the introduction of 'Guest' membership and the possible recruitment of new members at our Open Day. An agreement was struck to allow some time for these measures to take effect. While a half hour reduction in one session has taken place, and while there has been some recruitment of new members, reports suggest that the situation has not improved and that some of the more effective suggestions have not yet been implemented.

In order to achieve some clarity, I delivered the following message to the Group Leader on the 20th October:

"I wanted to see how close you were to sustainability and ask whether you intended to apply any scheduling or fiscal adjustment as a means of attaining that goal. We do need to reach a meaningful conclusion preferably before the end of this month, and certainly before our last committee meeting on the 8th of November.

While I sympathise with your possibly having to recommend actions which would cause some unease among your membership, I feel sure that they would welcome some compromises in the bid to see the activity continuing. And of course, that would be the preferred wish of myself and the committee"

While neither I nor the Secretary and Treasurer have received any reply to this communication, I have learned informally that the Group Leader has raised the likelihood of an increase in the session fee from £2 to £3, which may alone help to move closer to meeting the hire costs, but this is uncertain, and may need to be accompanied by other measures.

I have therefore gone back to the Group Leader and stressed the need to respond before our meeting, to give us a clear picture, and to provide information sufficient to allow us to make a decision.

Proposal: If the Group Leader does not respond then I propose that we ask the committee to delegate to the Chair and Treasurer the authority to negotiate directly with him, but to firstly inform him that we cannot support the continued operation of the Monday Group beyond the end of the winter term. Upon receiving any further proposed solution, we will scrutinise it, and bring an appropriate recommendation back to the committee.

Note: Any proposed solution we may be asked to consider must be robust and contain an assurance that any emerging financial deficits are to be notified to the Treasurer as soon as they occur.

Annex 1

Short Mat Bowls

Monday

9 registered in Group (excluding Heather and Max), of these 4 are indicated as their main playing day being a Wednesday.

Attendance over first three sessions 7, 3, 7 (Average 5)

Cost 2.0hrs @£16.50ph = £33.00 (equivalent to 17 paying members at £2).

At current average attendance level of 5 this does not pay for an hour of time.

Options

Increase fee – At an average of 5 paying members than the cost per session would have to be £6.60 per person per session.

Any shorter playing time, may be seen as not being feasible, given setting up and putting away time.

Wednesday

13 registered in Group (excluding Heather and Max)

Attendance over first three sessions – 4, 13, 12 (Average 10)

Cost – 2.5hrs @£16.50ph = £41.25 (equivalent to 21 paying members at £2)

Options

Increase fee – At an average of 10 paying members than the cost per session would have to be £4.20.

Reducing length of session, by ½ an hour, would save £8.25 (equivalent to 4 paying members at £2) or if introduced with an average of 10 paying members, this would make the cost per person £3.30 per session.

Agenda Item 5: AGM Final Update

Action for the Committee: To approve items in *green italics*

Information on the completion of the Annual Report for 2022/23 and the dissemination to e-mail members of the final agenda is reported in [Agenda Item 3 Secretary's Monthly Report](#)

1. Responses to Chair's Plea for Volunteers

The plea below was e-mailed out as a stand-alone item on 23rd October. It generated a few useful responses, as opposed to the similar requests in the AGM Notification and October Newsletter, and the new Volunteers page of the website, which generated nothing. This could be because these latter requests were softer in tone and possibly not read as they were surrounded by text on other matters.

I have to bring to your attention a situation which if not resolved will seriously impact the ability of the committee to offer the level of performance needed to maintain Crawley u3a as a viable organisation.

For the last 12 months a depleted committee has worked tirelessly to achieve the highest standards of compliance, but at the cost of delaying vital commitment to developmental activity. Frankly, we cannot continue our work without the recruitment of new committee members, and other supporting roles.

I am, therefore, asking you to come forward to help, by taking on an important role. And, I should say that volunteers are particularly welcome from new members whose recent skills and experience may be particularly suited to committee and developmental work.

If you can help in any way, or would like further information please reply to myself (chair@crawleyu3a.org.uk), or our Secretary, Margaret Lloyd (secretary@crawleyu3a.org.uk)

The Secretary sent out an update on the Volunteer situation on 28th October and another update will be sent out to Trustees just before the meeting on the 8th.

There will be implications for the Elections of Trustees (agenda items 7 & 8 below) for any member submitting a Trustee nomination form since 31st October.

2. Update on Agenda Items (*comments in green italics for the committee to approve*)

1. Welcome and Introduction from the Chair

Presumably just a summary of Section 3 chair's Report in the Annual report

2. Tributes. A minute's silence to remember ex-members who have died during the past year

Agreed to specifically mention Mary Russell.

3. To receive and approve the minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 11th November 2022

4. To receive and approve the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st August 2023

5. Questions from the floor

Expecting one querying the lack of racial diversity in Crawley u3a

6. To vote on the resolution to amend clause 10(1) of the Constitution so that only Membership fees (and not group fees) are covered at the recently instituted annual fee setting meeting in June/July

No sign to date that there will be any opposition to this

7. Election of Officer Trustees

8. Election of Other Trustees

9. Need for more volunteers

A repeat of the Chair's plea above, moderated for volunteers who have come forward since.

10. Presentations to Volunteers standing down and acknowledgement of long-term members

Current Committee member finishing their term

Brenda Ashenden for her work over the last two years as Welfare Officer

Anybody else?

Mary Mayne, past Treasurer resigned after ??? years membership.

11. Presentation of Smart Phone Photographic prizes

The Chair is presenting these. We also have slides of an example of the work of each of the 4 winners (1st, 2nd, joint 3rd) which will be shown straight after each announcement is made. This has been cleared with Monique.

12. AOB by permission of the Chairman

3. Entertainment “Crawley u3a Highlights of 2022/23”

Tea will be served alongside slide show “Crawley u3a Highlights of 2022/23”

Sent to you separately. *Need to be sure we test this with the projector before the AGM starts.*

4. Other things to remember (from 2022 AGM Points for Future AGMs)

- The Friary has agreed to provide a wired microphone for use by the Top Table and the wireless microphone for use in the audience. *Who will carry the roving microphone around?*
- Secretary to bring paper copies of the agenda (25 were taken last year) and around 10 of each of the 2022/23 Annual Report, 2021/22 AGM minutes and nomination lists (the numbers taken last year although 25 of each were available)
- Trustees to either be based on the stage or to stand up when introduced and speaking so that members can see them
- *Although members did say who they were when they asked questions those sitting behind then could not see their face – should members from the floor who have significant points to make to come to the front so that everybody see them properly?*
- It would help members to understand exactly what is being asked if the relevant Trustee repeated it clearly, elucidating where necessary
- Chair needs to give a safety briefing at the start and explain the fire evacuation procedure.
- *Communications Coordinator to take photos?*

5. Timings

Difficult to predict how long the formal business will take. Will need to be flexible over timing of tea and length of slide presentation.

6. Remaining Timetable

w/c 13 th Nov	Secretary to circulate 1 st draft minutes
w/c 20 th Nov	Friday 25th deadline for notifying the Third Age Trust of any changes to the Constitution
4 th Dec	Monday 6th November Newsletter issued. Secretary to provide report on AGM outcomes
w/c 11 th Dec	Wednesday 13th December Committee Meeting. 1 st meeting of New Committee. To review draft minutes, any actions arising and agree what could be done differently next year.

Margaret Lloyd, Secretary 4th November

Agenda Item 6: 30th October Coffee Morning and Decision on Future Events

Action for the Committee: To agree the matters under “Decisions for the Committee”

Committee Decision after the 30th May Coffee Morning

The attendance at the Tuesday 30th May coffee morning was so low (probably no more than 20 or so, inclusive of Committee Members and RUGS) that the Committee agreed at their subsequent meeting on 14th June that no bookings would be made for Coffee Mornings in 2024 until after the October 30th event. Numbers attending the October coffee morning would be assessed and a decision made on whether we should continue with Friary-based coffee mornings.

Attendance at the February Coffee Morning, held on Tuesday 21st Feb had been good so the low attendance at the May event was a surprise but factors contributing to low attendance could have been:

- It was held on the day after the late May bank holiday and in Crawley’s schools’ half-term. We now show Crawley schools’ holidays on the Trustees calendar and avoid scheduling events with flexible dates in those periods
- There had been no advance publicity other than the usual listings in the monthly newsletter and on the website. Whilst in the past we had attracted good numbers using just these mechanisms, the timing of the previous newsletter, published 1st May, more than four weeks beforehand, meant that there was a particularly long gap between this and the event.
- The summer effect – attendances at Groups and monthly Friary meetings seem to be lower than during the winter, perhaps because members are more likely to be on holiday/going out for the day/involved in their garden during the summer
- It may have been overshadowed in members minds by the later Midsummer Eve’s Celebration Event, held on 23rd June.

30th October Coffee Morning: Measures of Success

- Approximately 100 members attended in total (inclusive of Committee Members and RUGS), as counted by Maggie Berrill and Jean Manuel using the clicker devices.
- Of these members probably somewhere between 30 and 40 (this is an estimate based on the numbers sitting at the hastily allocated tables for new members) were new members who had been sent a specific invitation to attend by the Members Coordinator.
- The second-hand book sale raised £44.60 (£22.30 of which goes to the Friends of Crawley Hospitals). Also many members bought their own old books so by the end of the morning the Friends’ stock of books had increased, despite the numbers sold.
- The St Andrews Craft Group raised £255 for St Catherine’s Hospice. Monique Tovey-Mansfield organised this and the Committee agreed that they would not take any part of the proceeds for rent since the Craft Group had made the items sold themselves and paid for the materials personally.

What was done well

1. Sue Parker sent out an e-mail to all members 5 days previously on 25th October, as well as placing a post on the Cawley u3a Facebook page 3 days before.
2. In both of these communications Sue mentioned that there would be, besides the usual jigsaw and DVD swap, a sale of craft items for which the proceeds would be going to St Catherine’s Hospice. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the craft sale was the reason why some members decided to attend.

3. The circular tables worked well and they looked attractive. The number and spacing was such that there were sufficient spaces at the tables for all members attending without the hall seeming too large for the number of people present, and hence inhospitable, as was the case at the May coffee morning.
4. The flow of attendees to the counter to receive their drinks and biscuits was very even; at no point did the queue become too long or unwieldy.
5. The long tables set along the side of the hall, with those for the St Andrews craft Group next to the books worked well.
6. There was a steady buzz of chatter and members seemed to be enjoying themselves.

What could be done better another time

1. The Committee should have allocated specific roles amongst themselves, particularly with regard to the meeting and greeting. Fortunately Maggie Berrill took on this role inside the hall but perhaps a committee member should have been in the Friary hallway as well.
2. Only five New Members Application forms were bought along though fortunately two spare Renewal forms were available and were adapted so meeting all demand.

Relationship with the Friary

- 1) The Friary has informed us that in future, if there is a funeral that clashes with one of our events, then they will be restricting the number of parking spaces available to us to only four. It is not clear how we control this unless we ask for the code on the barrier to change – it is suggested that we leave that to them to suggest. This restriction would also mean problems for Blue Badge holders.
To be considered at the December meeting
- 2) The Friary administrator contacted the Treasurer to say that we should have been paying a separate charge for the hire of the microphone. The current and previous RUGS leaders have no recollection of this being charged.

Decisions for the Committee

- 1) Do we continue the Coffee Mornings in the current format, but making efforts to provide extra offerings such as craft stalls, cake stalls etc as well as the 2nd hand books and jigsaws?
- 2) How should we deal with new members for 2024?
 - (i) Conduct dedicated meetings similar to the one in September for New Members soon after the Celebration Day and the Open Day but otherwise continue with the monthly small gatherings at St Pauls (the responsibility of the Members Coordinator & Support) and make a point of sending them a special invitation to the 1st Coffee Morning subsequent to their joining OR
 - (ii) Some other way – any suggestions?
- 3) Should we label tables for the New Members in advance?

Pro: This would help us know which tables to direct them too and assists Committee Members in knowing where they were so they could talk to them.

Con: Good for new members to mix with existing members – if we can be sure existing members will include them in conversation.

- 4) The date of the next Coffee morning

Our policy of using different days of the week and, as far as possible, slots in which no groups are taking place, indicates the 1st, 3rd & 5th Tuesdays of each month. This gives us a choice of:

- Tuesday 16th January – NOT good as only a few days after the 12th Friary meeting
- Tuesday 30th January (this would be exactly 3 months' time)

- Tuesday 6th February NOT good as we have now confirmed the next Group Leaders meeting to be 5th February
- Tuesday 20th February - 4 months away which seems correct if we are to hold 3 a year
- Tuesday 5th March NOT good as in the same week as the March Friary meeting

So the options are either 30th January or 20th February (depending upon Friary availability)

Coffee Mornings for 2023/24 3rd term and 2024/25 4th term

We probably need to fix the dates of the Celebration Event and New Members events first before looking at Coffee morning dates.

Agenda Item 7: Group Development & Support

Action for the Committee: To agree whether a small working group should be set up with the terms of reference below

Proposed Terms of Reference

“To consider and examine procedures we might implement to ensure that the quality of those indoor groups with an academic flavour is of an appropriate level without alienating existing Group Leaders or discouraging potential Group Leaders from volunteering. To suggest mechanisms which will help group leaders develop and consolidate new skills and so grow their confidence.”

Background

I have rehearsed these points often over the past two years without getting any detailed comment from Group Leaders. We are an organisation focused on learning, with a duty to uphold the vision and spirit of the u3a, through the self- help principle. Members join the organisation with the expectation that it will provide them with a rich experience which will satisfy that ambition. The consequences of our failing in this duty will see us lose members, face reputational sleights, and damage resilience across the board. While another aim may seek to consider the development of the organisation as a whole, now our primary focus is on the academic groups, Art Appreciation, Family History, French Experience, Painting and Drawing, Science, History, Poetry, and possibly others. We now need to take positive and continuing action.

This working group would look at, amongst other matters:

1. Appropriate quality
How is this defined and how do we recognise inadequate quality (e.g. by monitoring numbers over time especially whether members new to the group seem to fall away after a few meetings, talking with members who leave quickly, reviewing the future programmes etc)
2. Procedures when setting up new groups e.g.
 - Asking potential GLs to complete pro-formas asking questions on learning style
 - All new groups start up as fixed term e.g. 8 meetings to start with
 - Operating a mentoring scheme – and whether this should be compulsory or voluntary.
3. Procedures when the quality of existing groups is recognised as being poor e.g.
 - Offer assistance in improving the quality by engaging the group leader in a critical discussion of the programme, perhaps encouraging the current leader to take on another leader so they both act together as joint leaders,

- Consider the possibility of offering some coaching.
- Encourage Group Leaders to consult the u3a's subject advisers.

Who might participate in the Working Group?

While it would be prudent to include some group leaders in this party, committee members may wish to participate. Graham Crozier has already said that he would like to have some involvement, and has indicated his willingness to be Chair

Resolution Do the members of the committee support this proposal?

Proposed next steps Chair to discuss version of this paper (subject to any changes agreed by the Committee) with Graham Crozier and any other potentially interested u3a members and come back to the December committee with concrete proposals for the first meeting of the WG.

Agenda Item 9: Trustees' Calendar Update

Action for the Committee: To agree draft agendas for next two meetings

13th December Meeting (1st post AGM)		
1 AGM: Draft Minutes & Actions Arising	Secretary	
2 Post AGM Actions:		
Forms for Charity Commission & TAT	Secretary	
Induction of New Trustees	Secretary	
Recruitment to vacant Trustee Posts	Chair	
3 Aims for 2024 & Committee Timetable	Chair/Secretary	
4 Committee Procedures	Secretary	
4 Tasks for each Trustee	Secretary	
5 Final report on Membership Renewal	Members Co/Treasurer	
6 Complaints Procedure - amend to include oral complaints	Chair	
7 Report from O&A Phase 2		
8 Events Check List	Comms Coordinator	
Discuss date & time for evening meal together in January		
10th January 2024 Meeting		
1 Data Sheet	Secretary	
2 Draft Communications Strategy	Comms Coordinator	
Other items depend upon outcome of item 3 above		