

Minutes of the executive committee meeting November 3, 2017

Present: Liz Day (LD, chair) Roman Bednarz (RB) Neil Abrahams (NA) Rona Black (RoB) Lore Arthur (LA) Caroline Knapp (CK) Diana McInnes (DM) Susan Elias (SE) Mary Fyfe (MF) Di Deudney (DD) Helen Graham (HG) Pamela Ruben (PR)

Apologies: Chris Henry (CH)

1. Agenda Review. Matters concerning Insurance under 14. AoB

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising. DD queried the accuracy of reporting under 6. No further action was needed.

3. Reporting back: The Open Meeting on October 13 on 'The Golden Age of Caricatures': 66 people had attended, slightly fewer than usual. Nevertheless the topic and its speaker were well received. The Financial Workshop (October 23) had attracted 42 Members with 30 for the Hearing Loss Workshop (October 24). Both workshops were thought to have been worthwhile. NA confirmed that two speakers for each session had been chosen deliberately, to avoid potential bias. However, some concern was raised re one of the speakers at the Financial Workshop, who seemed less well informed than expected. The committee's view was that in future potential speakers for such events should be carefully vetted. Furthermore, outside speakers should be discouraged from handing out their own evaluation sheets with contact details. Evaluation was a matter for committee members. Thanks to NA for organising these events.

With regard to a possible workshop on dementia, RoB felt that at the moment there was no suitable speaker who would be readily available. Furthermore, the focus of such an event was not yet clear. HG, NA and SE to discuss this further with the conveners who had previously expressed an interest for such a meeting. LD raised a more fundamental question about the nature of the U3A which, after all, was not a 'caring organisation'.

4. The next Open Meeting on Monday, 13th of November with Michael Baum was well in hand. SE has liaised with RB re technical issues. DD reported that she has the U3A data projector, in case it was needed. The short U3A presentation will be by Ian McInnes on Modern Architecture. The Knitting for Charity group would like to sell some of their products at the meeting for fund raising purposes (Action: DM). MF and HG will accept registrations for the Christmas lunch.

Possible further short presentations in the coming year: The American Song Book, Local History Research. (Action: NA, HG, SE)

5. Xmas lunch, December 20th. MF had already received some applications. Members not online had received forms in the post. Further details to be discussed at next meeting (Action: MF, HG)

Xmas Quiz, December 13th. SE reported that she had received enough questions. It was difficult to predict number of members likely to take part but based on last year it would probably close to 100. The issue of needing a screen with questions was discussed again. People with hearing difficulties should be encouraged to sit in the front. (Action: SE, RB).

6. Treasurer's report. MF had circulated a lengthy paper giving update on the current financial situation. She also raised questions with regard to future planning. There will be a substantial surplus by the end of the year. Should we reduce membership fee? What would happen to our reserves? Are there things we should be spending money on? CH had circulated a well-received response, arguing against the reduction of membership fees. Instead, the committee should look at suitable venues for future activities which might cost money. MF proposed that we should look at a room/rooms suitable for about 25 people which we could hire on a more permanent basis with sole occupancy on perhaps specific days of the week. The committee decided to look at a number of possible venues (Health centres, the Bell House, Carnegie Library etc.) It was agreed that this would be discussed at the next committee meeting (Action: all).

There was a suggestion that two members of the same household could have a reduction in membership fees. (Action: CK to investigate).

It was agreed to spend £200 on a hearing loop (Action:NA)

MF was thanked for her excellent paper.

7. Membership: CK reported that we now have 509 members. 22 had joined in October.

8. Interest Group Coordinators' report. The next conveners' meeting will take place on December 15 with food and special thanks to helpers such as the 'tea ladies'. There are a number of new groups which have either started already or are starting in the New Year. NA produced a draft of a 'new group' leaflet which can be inserted in current booklets, it can will be sent out either online or used for New Members Tea together with existing booklets. This was approved. It was agreed, however, that members would be consulted if they are happy with having only two instead of three booklets a year (Action: NA).

A suggestion was made that In future it might be possible to hire a larger room elsewhere so that all conveners could attend at the same time. (Action: SE,NA,HG) LA to talk about research and shared learning project in the New Year at a conveners' meeting.

Clarification is needed re fees when members from other U3As join one of our groups (Action: CK, LD).

New Members Teas: There was some discussion about responsibilities and procedures for these events. Who would keep the attendance list, for example? Also, it is not quite clear if Angela wants to continue in her current role in the New Year. (Action: CK to liaise with Angela).

9. Welcome leaflet. More work had been done on the leaflet which has now been approved. The colour will be yellow. It was agreed that all U3A members will be sent a copy online. It will also be given to new members.

It was noted that subscriptions are due by April 1, the new booklet should be prepared in March (Action: DD, NA, SE, HG).

10. SE London Network. LD stressed that it was important that we become actively involved with external U3A bodies. RB reported that the Workshop on 15th on Membership systems was cancelled.

11. London Regional Meeting. LD and RoB serve on committees, RB is the named delegate but other committee members are welcome to attend.

12. Newsletter: RoB and SE need more photographs.

13. Succession: MF reported that she will have a meeting with three members about the roles of treasurer and perhaps membership secretary.

Future Planning

Monthly Open meetings: January 15 with Rob May on 'Altruism in a competitive society'; February 21, Henry Hemming on Spies and his book 'M'.

March 23, Daniel Greenwood on Sydenham Woods;

April 19, Benny Dembitzer on his new book 'The Famine next door'. (Action:LD).

LD noted that speakers currently invited are all male. We needed to look out for female presenters.

Dates for New Members Tea: to be confirmed (Action DM, CK).

14. Any other business.

NA had asked RB to check the terms of the U3A Public Liability Insurance Policy. It appeared to be stating that we are covered for negligence, but not necessarily accidents where no legal liability had been established. Would this cover e.g. spilling coffee on a carpet, breaking a chair, tripping over a rug (Action: RB)