

MINUTES OF U3A COMMITTEE MEETING 20 SEPTEMBER 2023

1. Present

Mike Best (MB)	Chair
Terry Parker (TP)	Membership Secretary and Beacon Administrator
Anna Fletcher (AF)	Executive Secretary
Derek Jones (DJ)	Assistant Treasurer
Pat Jones (PJ)	Outings Coordinator
Rosemary Jensen (RJ)	Groups Coordinator
Peter Watson (PW)	Committee Information Administrator
Maureen Best (MaB)	Welfare Coordinator
Heather Quiney (HQ)	Newsletter Editor
Philip Garrison (PG)	taking Minutes

Apologies for absence were received from Hilary Jinno (HJ) and Ian Marshall (IM).

2. Minutes of the previous meeting (19th July) were accepted.

3. Matters arising from previous minutes:

Item 7: The contact details of Patricia Geraghty are now known to the membership secretary.

Item 16 (final paragraph): Sandra Walker is herself now very ill with pneumonia, and a care package is being developed for her. MaB is taking over Sandra's role of sending out cards to unwell members.

Item 18: Bobby Seagull can only be booked through agents, and he is too expensive as a speaker at a monthly meeting.

4. Chair's Report (MB)

A reminder has been sent to Gaynor Jones of the Town Twinning Association to let MB know before the end of the month whether she (or a colleague) can do a ten-minute speech at a future general meeting.

MB asked if we have a list of potential ten-minute speakers. HQ said that a member of Dunmow Women's Institute had told her that the WI would like to do a ten-minute talk. MB to follow this up with Margo Rogers.

MB

Hilary Jinno (HJ) has been recently widowed. It was reported that her husband Michi's funeral would be next Tuesday (26 September) at 10am at Dunmow Crematorium, and MB suggested that members of the committee might like to attend.

Following on from this, AF asked who in u3a should be notified if a member dies. MaB suggested it should be herself, as welfare coordinator.

In HJ's absence as events manager it was decided not to hold an autumn quiz this year.

There was a lengthy discussion about catering arrangements for the Christmas Concert, featuring the Rock Choir, to be held on Wednesday 29 November. The names of some caterers were mentioned, and the option of doing the catering ourselves was explored. It was required for somebody to coordinate it all. PW and RJ agreed to follow this up, whilst DJ offered to control the number of people booking, and HQ said she would include a paragraph about the event in the newsletter.

PW
RJ
DJ
HQ

4a East of England u3a Zoom meeting (HQ)

HQ attended this meeting in July 2023. The meeting was about how to recruit new members and encourage members to be more active. HQ's notes on the meeting will be sent to committee members as a separate document. It was suggested a social event be run for group leaders.

5. Finalise games afternoon (HQ/PG)

HQ reported that Foakes Hall has been booked 1-5pm next Wednesday (27 September) for this event. Doors open 1:30pm for a 2pm start. After 2.5 hours of games playing, the event will end at 4:30pm. It was requested that everybody involved in running the event be there by 1:30pm. Registration will be as usual. As well as the usual initial refreshments, further refreshments will be available at 3pm. A total of 24 games have been planned, played on 20 tables (eight games share tables).

PG added that a number of welcomers have been recruited, whose function will be to encourage members to circulate and try out the games. Each game will be led by a designated person whose purpose would be to show people how to play the game. A table plan has been given to caretaker Seery (who will set out the room accordingly), and copies will be circulated to all committee members. A large (A1 size) plan has been prepared by PG and mounted on cardboard; its function is to enable participants to locate specific games as they enter the hall.

MB will give a short speech welcoming everybody and introducing the event, and PG will scriptwrite this speech for him.

PG

6. Treasurer's report (IM)

There was some discussion about (the absent) IM's report, particularly about his first written bullet point. IM states that members paying directly into u3a's current account – various amounts, for various purposes – causes problems in managing the account. MB stated this related to a particular group, but it did raise a wider issue. There will be further discussions when IM is present.

TP reported that a Gift Aid claim of £1100 has been submitted.

7. Group coordinator's update (RJ)

RJ reported that the pickleball group now has a slot: Fridays 3-5pm at Dunmow Leisure Centre starting on 6 October. Two courts available, which would accommodate eight people playing and eight people sitting out at any one time (so maximum sixteen people at a session).

There have been problems with purchasing pickleball equipment from the USA via Amazon, but it was agreed at the last meeting that Du3a would purchase 16 wiffles (balls) which would remain our property. It would also buy 16 paddles (racquets or bats) of which 12 would be available for members to buy if they decide to continue playing the game. The remaining four paddles would be for the use of new members.

Pickleball players would be charged £10 per month, which is a total of £160 for 16 players. Hire of the sports hall is £15 per session, which is a monthly total of £60 for a four-Friday month and £75 for a five-Friday month. This would give a surplus of either £85 or £100 per month. The committee agreed that it was permissible to build up a surplus, and that more paddles could be bought as and when required.

Moving on from pickleball, it was agreed that MaB could use the CD player no longer required by the gentle exercise group. The u3a mobile phone has been passed to MB.

8. Potential walking group holiday (MB)

For the past few years, Gillian Warren has led a u3a walking holiday in the Cotswolds. She has now moved from the area and doesn't want to do it any more. To replace this, two members of Du3a walking group are prepared to run a walking holiday based in Ashbourne in Derbyshire, probably a Monday to Friday period (incorporating three days' walking) in early September 2024. It would be aimed at "serious" walkers and would be promoted to the walking group first. There was some discussion about travel insurance.

9. Membership secretary's update (TP)

TP reported that Du3a now has 577 members, including 77 new members. Many new members heard about u3a through a friend or the library.

10. Outings and trips (PJ)

PJ told the committee she'd received good feedback about the Lion King trip (13th September).

There are waiting lists for both forthcoming trips: Waverley Paddle Steamer on 8th October and Ely Cathedral on 17th November.

PW suggested a 2-3 day trip to the Chichester area and its various attractions.

PJ mentioned the following possible future outings:

Gainsborough House, Sudbury (for the art group), Margate, Chanel (V&A), Drop the Dead Donkey (play, with original TV cast) at Cambridge Arts Theatre, Cluedo, 39 Steps, and a nuclear power station visit (science group).

11. Newsletter (HQ)

Deadline for submissions is this evening (20 September). HQ has rejected requests to include advertising and sales pitches in the newsletter. She welcomes feedback regarding the Facebook page. HQ asked the committee for suggestions as to what she should submit to local parish magazines over the next couple of months. AF suggested a look back over the past year. MB suggested a Christmas Quiz, or similar “filler”.

12. Welfare (MaB)

MaB requested that her newsletter article – about transport for those attending general meetings – be published again.

Part of MaB’s role is to send cards out to the ill or bereaved.

Earlier this morning MaB had a meeting with Lois of MIND, which can provide online access to relevant courses and other materials. MaB will investigate further.

13. Next meeting: Wednesday 18th October 2023 at The Hub

14. AOB

AF is trying to submit information about the AGM, finances, etc to the Charities Commission, but they won’t recognize her. MB to help.

MB

PW reported that Wordpress is replacing SiteBuilder as the u3a website content management platform. Adrian Hoodless has asked if all current pages on the u3a website need to be transferred across. PW thinks probably not, and asked to be told of any pages no longer needed, for example, those for groups no longer in existence.

The meeting closed at 12:20pm.