

MINUTES OF U3A COMMITTEE MEETING 22 MARCH 2023

1. Present

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

Apologies for absence were received from Rosemary Jensen (RJ) and Hilary Jinno (HJ).

2. Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted.

3. Matters arising from previous minutes:

Item 3: T shirts have arrived and been distributed.

Item 4: MB reported that Sandra Walker of the flower arranging group is making two bouquets, which MB will present to Mary Jensen and Jan Barlow (outgoing refreshment providers) at next Wednesday's (29 March) monthly meeting.

Item 10: MB's earlier suggestion of a musical variety evening will not be actioned. On a related theme, PW asked (on behalf of the Rock Choir) whether Du3a would like to host a Rock Choir summer show, but this was politely declined as no slots are available.

4. Chair's Report (MB)

We are still seeking a speaker finder.

It is proposed that the successful new members' meeting held last April is repeated this year. The dates 16/17 May were suggested. MB to discuss with HJ (events manager).

MB informed the committee of the difficulties and personality clash between two people in the scrabble group which resulted in one of them, and two other members, leaving. It is hoped that things are now settling down, but we need to keep an eye on the group leader and hope that she is okay.

MB has received an email from Lesley Wood, who plans to revive an Essex network of u3as. She has invited Du3a, and others, to join the network. MB will respond to the email and nominate HQ as our contact person. MB

The purpose of the network would be to share experience and knowledge, share ideas between groups, peer support for specific roles, training, and handling events too big for one u3a to handle on its own. TP pointed out that there have been "cluster" meetings of local u3as (Du3a, Bishop's Stortford and Thorley) before. HQ will represent Dunmow on this; she is willing to attend (Zoom) meetings but not to take a definite role or serve on any committee. HQ

5. Treasurer's report (IM)

Receipts of membership renewal fees are increasing rapidly. Group finances are still good. The gentle exercise group's accounts are deficit-free, though that group is likely to close when the current leader leaves, and the hall booking has been cancelled from the end of April.

On the subject of the gentle exercise group, AF spoke to u3a headquarters about any legal or insurance issues with members being physically assisted when participating in the group, but did not get any definitive answers. AF was told that infirm participants should be assisted by carers and that manhandling was "not a good idea", but nothing helpful.

IM has received a fundraising letter from Uttlesford Community Travel (UCT). Du3a cannot participate directly as it is itself a charity, but HQ will put UCT information into the newsletter. IM has renewed our membership so that Du3a groups can use the buses.

IM mentioned that Du3a's accounts are showing a healthy credit balance. DJ suggested we offer money to groups, and that we encourage people to start new groups where finance would otherwise be a problem. AF felt there should be a limit to the support we give each group. MB suggested DJ and IM get together to discuss this, and to make a proposal to be considered at the next meeting. DJ
IM

6. Group Co-ordinator's Update (RJ)

RJ was absent, but key points from her report are as follows:

From April the general crafts group will meet at the Rowena Davey Day Centre on the third Monday of each month from 2-4pm.

A new group leader has still not been found for the gentle exercise group, so the future of this group is in doubt.

A new group leader may be required for the scrabble group.

There has been a lot of interest in a second line dancing group, which will start on Wednesday 12 April in Priors Green Community Hall. Group leader is Jean Hull (a member of the original group) and Cindy Brown, instructor of the original line dancing group, will be instructor for this group as well.

Jane Tadman has taken on the role of Group Support.

7. Membership Secretary's Update (TP)

TP reported that 265 members have renewed so far, and 23 new members have joined since January, giving a total of 288 signed-up members.

Debbie Miller and IM will be helping TP with member renewals at next week's general meeting.

8. Outings and trips (PJ)

51 members went on the British Museum trip on 2nd March, which went really well.

The De Havilland Museum trip (19th April) has been a slow seller so far. It clashes with the next committee meeting.

The David Hockney Immersive Experience trip, planned for April/May, has been abandoned due to poor reviews and insufficient interest.

Most tickets have been sold for The Mousetrap at Milton Keynes Theatre trip, which will happen on 23rd May.

The coach and manor have been booked for the Hemingford Grey Manor trip on 6th July, but there are some logistical problems and the details of this outing are still being discussed.

Coaches have been booked for both the Leeds Castle (20th June) and Southwold (2nd August) trips, which are ready to launch later in the year. These trips were both suggested or approved by members through the questionnaire that PW organized.

9. Events (HJ)

As HJ was not present, discussion of events was postponed to the next meeting.

10. TAT committee information and communication (AF)

AF has received an email from the Third Age Trust (TAT), who have changed their computer system. Sensitive information such as committee members' personal phone numbers and email addresses are now in the public domain.

To resolve this unsatisfactory situation, generic email addresses - eg membership@dunmowu3a.org.uk – will be used in publicly-available documents, along with the official Du3a mobile phone number.

[IM left the meeting at this point.]

11. Website (HQ)

HQ asked what the current situation is with Du3a's website. PW said that the website builder used will change from SiteBuilder to WordPress, but added that he expects this process to take at least a year. PW also said that, currently on SiteBuilder, group leaders should be maintaining their own pages on the website.

There are clearly ongoing difficulties with the website, and HQ asked PW if he would like some help in maintaining the website. PW replied that any help would be welcome. HQ will seek help through the newsletter, to find out if there is anybody in Du3a's current membership who has the skills and time necessary to offer such help.

There was also some discussion about broken links currently on the website – can we repair or remove them?

12. Newsletter (HQ)

The deadline for submissions is this evening (22 March), and the newsletter will be limited in length to 24 pages, for postal weight reasons.

HQ will appeal for members' contributions relating to u3a's "learn, laugh, live" strapline.

The annual general meeting (AGM) is on 28 June, and members will be informed of this via the newsletter.

MB agreed that Du3a could contribute to parish magazine Outlook, even though we would have to pay to do so. The same goes for the publication covering Hatfield Broad Oak, who charge £10 per page.

Also included in the newsletter would be requests for a speaker organizer, gentle exercise group leader, and help with the website.

13. Next meeting date – 19 April 2023 (DJ and IM will not be present)

14. Any Other Business (AOB)

PJ has received an email from Judith Lawrence of Rodings and Ongar u3a, who is the tour co-ordinator for a three-day coach tour to the World War 1 battlefields in Ypres in northern France on 12-14 September. The committee agreed that this trip could be promoted by email to members.

MB informed the committee of a twinning association trip to Dourdan in May, as well as a Felsted Choral Society event, and PW mentioned a concert in Foakes Hall on 25 March.