

MINUTES OF U3A COMMITTEE MEETING 24 JANUARY 2024

1. Present

Mike Best (MB)	Chair
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
Hilary Jinno (HJ)	Events Manager
Philip Garrison (PG)	taking Minutes
Debbie Miller (DM)	Observer

Apologies for absence were received from Terry Parker (TP) and Ian Marshall (IM).

MB welcomed Debbie Miller (DM) to the meeting; she was present as an observer.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting (22nd November 2023) were accepted with the following amendment:

Item 11: "Redbourne Lodge" should read "Redbond Lodge".

3. Matters arising from previous minutes:

Item 4: Following a suggestion from RJ, it was clarified that "sharing arrangements" do not permit the amalgamation of two similar interest groups from different u3as.

Item 5: MB reported that the Christmas Concert collected £305 for the Cash For Kids charity.

Item 8: MB reported a good turnout for the new cribbage group: recently there were 14 cribbage players present along with 10 whist players, making a total of 24 people in the room. It was also reported that the new Wool & Waffle Group, which started on 9 January, is going well.

Item 9: Du3a annual membership fee is now £10.

4. Chair's Report (MB)

Next Wednesday's monthly meeting is on the subject of "Big Cats".

This will be preceded by a 10-minute talk on the Dementia Adventure charity by MB.

HQ enquired as to how the new registration process had gone at the last monthly meeting. The response was that it had gone well, and MB has the clipboards. MB and MaB will find the visitors' book.

It was suggested that group leaders could promote their respective groups at the monthly meetings in a low-key way, from a table in the Talberd Room.

5. Website

PW reported that the transfer of the u3a website to Wordpress has still not happened. DJ asked about training of members who need to use it. PW thought this would be in the form of webinars. HQ stated such training could be in-house, developed by u3a members with relevant experience. AF said she doesn't want her u3a business emails to come from her personal email address. PW promised to find out how to achieve this, and at what cost.

MB suggested that the website be updated before the move to Wordpress (house-moving analogy). It was further suggested that somebody with a journalism or English-teaching background ("who's good with words") could do that for all the groups. Rather than find someone within Du3a, DJ suggested paying a professional to do this as a "short-term project" (AF). MB suggested the formation of a small working team to find a suitable person, then have a discussion with that person. HQ and PW said that references to Covid should be removed from the website, and historical content needs to be added. DJ asked if we would still have legacy access to the existing system? PW said no.

HQ reported that she had done a survey among the Friday Art Group. She had asked how many of those present received the newsletter by email, and found that, although everyone received it, not all people read it. HQ concluded that there is no one way in which we are reaching the entire membership, so we have to pursue all avenues (newsletter, email, website, Facebook, etc) and they all have to be kept up to date.

6. Social event for group leaders (MB/RJ)

A more formal meeting for group leaders will take place from 11am on a Saturday in April. The exact date is to be determined depending on the availability of the venues (St Mary's Church, Rowena Davey Day Centre, or possibly others) and the people concerned. A social event for group leaders will take place in the summer (June/July).

MB
/RJ

7. Quiz (HJ)

As for the previous quiz which HJ organized, this will be at the Rowena Davey Day Centre. The majority of those present will be u3a members, who should bring their own drinks and snacks. HQ will set the questions.

8. Wellbeing Day (MaB)

This will take place on Wednesday 25 September 2024 in Foakes Hall, and it will be an all-day event.

MaB has set up a five-person sub-committee, and has made some progress on events. There is a volunteer for armchair yoga, and initial enquiries have been made with the police, safety, etc. The sub-committee will meet this Thursday. Jane Tadman has sent information about the last time a similar event was organized, five years ago, and has offered talks on diabetes. First aid demonstrations will be on offer. There was a suggestion that healthy food snacks be offered for lunch on the day.

9. Treasurer's report (IM)

In IM's absence the committee perused his written report, which raised no concerns, except that the credit from commission for Riviera Travel is shown under expenditure rather than income.

10. Group update (RJ)

HQ has received an enquiry concerning a bird watching group. RJ will write an article for the newsletter to see how much interest there is in this.

A group of Du3a members would like to set up a coffee and chat group.

Anne Preece is stepping down from the Tuesday lunch group she runs. Kathy Restarick and Sheila Stanley to take over as group leaders.

11. Weekend breaks (HJ)

Three members of the canasta group would like to organize weekend breaks (open to all Du3a members, not just canasta players) and have requested feedback from the committee on such issues as insurance cover and other practicalities. Initially these would be to local centres (eg Potters Five Lakes) moving further afield in time to, for example, the south coast. These would be advertised in the newsletter or by email. ("Start small.") The committee supports this initiative.

12. Charity Commission (AF)

AF expressed her total frustration with the Charity Commission. She has been unable to submit a return (due last October) as the Commission has changed its system of registration, and doesn't respond to emails, applications and phone calls. PW assured us that Rotary was having a similar problem.

13. Membership secretary's report (TP)

The absent TP's report was discussed. Membership of Du3a has reached record levels. We have 605 members, of which 502 are renewals and 103 are new members. (We had 577 members last year.) Several recent new members have joined to play pickleball.

14. Outings and trips (PJ)

PJ reported health problems which are making things difficult for her, particularly in running trips on the day. She has appealed for help in this. MB will write something for the newsletter. Despite this, PJ intends to organize a trip to Gainsborough's House in Sudbury. The committee offered encouragement, and the desire to find practical help, especially on the coach trips.

MB

15. Welfare (MaB)

It appears nobody currently has transport problems in getting to the monthly meetings. MaB is sending bereavement and get-well cards.

16. Newsletter and publicity (HQ)

The deadline for submissions to the newsletter is this evening (Wednesday 24th January 2024).

Uttlesford Council are conducting a consultation, with a 2nd February cut-off date, on local car parking charges, which are set to double. PW suggested that the newsletter should prompt our members to react.

There was some discussion on paper copies of the newsletter. One suggestion was that an extra £10 per year charge be made to those who wish to receive paper copies. That was not adopted yet because HQ is making a change to the newsletter this month to add a summary of forthcoming activity which should solve the problem of recipients not reading the full newsletter.

17. Next meeting: Wednesday 21st February at 10am at the Hub.

18. Any Other Business (AOB)

DJ reported difficulties in using Du3a's archaic mobile phone. He'd like to buy a new one or offer to make his own phone available for u3a calls. He'll try to keep the existing phone number as this appears on Du3a publicity.

MaB proposed that a New Member's Day be organized, similar to last year's, in April/May in the Dourdan Pavilion. Debbie Miller offered to help on the day.

The meeting closed at 12:15pm.