

MINUTES OF EXMOUTH AND DISTRICT U3A COMMITTEE MEETING 1 mar22 by Zoom

V3

Present: Christine Chittock (Chair), Ian McLauchlin, Maurice Chittock, John Hunt, Olwen Smith, Lyn Holmes, Alice Robson, Bryan Webb, Stephen Rixon.

1, Apologies for absence

Maureen Phillips, Richard Morgan.

2. Any New Business

IM mentioned a communication from John Petty about a possible u3a involvement in Active Travel day event due to take place in The Strand on 30apr22. It was decided to hold this over for the next newsletter **Action JH**.

3. Minutes of 1feb22 Committee Meeting

CC asked if the minutes of 1feb22 were a true and accurate record.

IM reported that he had received a request from MP for the following wording to be added: 'AR interrupted MP by over speaking and raising her voice saying that she had more experience in mental health than MP will ever have.' CC asked for comments from the committee. JH said that he had been appalled and if AR were here he would ask her what she thought. AR joined the meeting at this time and IM repeated the wording AR had missed. JH then added that he thought it would be appropriate for AR to make a statement. AR explained that she had tried to contact MP but had been unable to contact her and she would be willing to talk to her. AR explained her frustration had been with the pressure she had been in with all the arrangements the Social committee were involved with.

CC explained that she had spoken to MP directly after the meeting and that MP was extremely upset and disturbed by AR's comments, as were other Committee members and that if AR could talk to MP I am sure she would appreciate it. JH asked AR how she thought that MP had felt. AR explained that she felt that anyone with knowledge of mental health would have appreciated the immense pressure the Social Committee were under. CC added that her understanding of MP's words were that they were about people's reactions to the pandemic in general and not about the Social Committee. IM said that he was appalled and shocked by the attack on a fellow Committee Member and that lots of people work extremely hard yet remain civil. AR said that she would consider stepping down from the committee. SR explained that although he wasn't at the meeting that it wasn't necessary for AR to step down and that we all come with different backgrounds and skills; we need to find a way that we can work together at how we respond to different opinions, we should accept each other's views and that IM had summed it up well. CC said SR's comments were very useful and added that it wasn't necessary for AR to resign and that we all need to have the opportunity to express our opinions and reach a consensus. JH added that we have a responsibility to all our members, including Committee Members, to behave properly towards each other.

All approved the modified Minutes.

4. Actions from 1feb22 Meeting

1. Guidance document for Interest Groups on Devon Link Agenda – CC has contacted Frances Berry and the topic will be on the 12April Devon Link Agenda. Teignmouth u3a Chair has sent a leaflet which has been passed to LH. There was discussion about the readability but the .pdf was said to be OK.
2. Help with 10th Anniversary working group – CC said that nobody had come forward but we do have a good functioning working group – see Chair's Report.
3. Social Committee and Beacon Hotel Bookings – AR said that all had been arranged and names coming in for both sessions.

5. Review of Trustee Code of Conduct and Members Code of Conduct

CC introduced the documents, which gave a framework for how we move on. It was important to note that we should treat fellow committee members properly and courteously at all times. For the Members Code of Conduct, members need to know that it's in place. OS said that she didn't send out the document specifically and nor does LH for Group Leaders. OS said that she did list requirements separately. CC suggested that it should be mentioned in the next Newsletter that we've reviewed the document with a link to it on our website **Action JH**. CC emphasised that we do need a Code of Conduct and mentioned problems with a member last December. It was suggested that both documents should have words in common and all agreed the codes and that they should both say that individuals should be treated with 'courtesy' rather than 'dignity'. IM would amend appropriately before putting the documents on the website **Action IM**.

6. 10th Anniversary arrangements and Budget

Attention was drawn to the Treasurer's Report which had a separate section related to our 10th Anniversary budget. LH said that the Coffee Morning budget was roughly correct. Figures for the cost of the Boat Trip were discussed and there was confusion over what had been agreed, After some discussion, MC pointed out that any activity not open to all members must be self-financing. He would like to see a summary of all the costs so that we could properly consider them. JH said that, if we decide to subsidise it, then an allowance needs to be made in our Accounts e.g. Boat Trip subsidy to be confirmed. CC clarified by saying that if we offer events throughout the year, if members can't get to one event then they have another opportunity for another event. CC asked all involved in organising any events to let RM and SR know any costs for the next Committee Meeting **Action ALL involved in 10th Anniversary planning**. BW asked about the significance of costs spanning two financial years and CC said that we just need to note that. LH said we need to decide on Boat Trip details quickly otherwise the date may already have been taken. And CC said that she hopes to have tree planting details by the next Committee Meeting. CC updated us on progress of a small working group, mentioned in her Chair's Report. The Pavilion event would have to be a ticketed event as tables would be set out cabaret style and so numbers would be limited. A video of Contraband would be shown and a cake will be baked! Then she mentioned the raffle of the quilt, which was magnificent. Getting a licence to raffle is quite complicated and CC will contact SR on this. It would be much easier to sell standard cloakroom tickets on the day. MC thought that this needs more investigation. We need clarification on whether we can use proceeds of the raffle for our u3a and again this needs input from RM/SR. OS suggested that the proceeds could be used for the tree planting in Phear Park. All thought that was an excellent idea. Feedback is awaited from a local councillor and CC will report back to the Committee.

7. Chair, Vice Chair Role Descriptions

CC said that the Chair Role is a Review. All happy to accept and approve. JH pointed out that we should be consistent and use lower case u3a throughout. IM will check through and change **Action IM.**

8. Succession Planning

Groups – LH left the meeting at this point after saying that she was still thinking about whether to stay on the Committee.

Chair – CC is willing to stand again for another year but will step down at the end of this period as required by the Constitution.

Vice Chair – all happy that we continue to advertise this position.

Secretary, Facebook and Technical – IM will stand again, all being well.

Treasurer – SR was happy to stand.

Newsletter, Youtube and Technical – JH will stand again.

Database – MC wishes to come off the Committee but is happy to continue looking after the database for another year.

CC reminded us that we got more response on Nominations when we sent out an email to members.

BW – is thinking about it and will see what other nominations come up. CC said that we would like BW to stand and thanked him for his superb and very professional efforts dealing with the confidential matter last December and also for his work on the technical side..

AR – will reserve judgement at the moment. She felt that providing feedback from the Social Committee perhaps doesn't require her to be a Committee Member.

OS – is considering her position but is enjoying dealing with the membership.

Website – CC mentioned Marion's website role although she's not on the Committee. The Committee wanted to express their thanks to Marion for doing a sterling job and for uploading items to the website very quickly. All of this was very much appreciated.

Equipment – Melanie has looked after our equipment but doesn't want to do it any more. It's quite an onerous job, booking items in and out. JH has taken the laptop out on permanent loan. IM noted that he'd arranged PAT testing of electrical equipment before Christmas but wasn't sure whether it had been done yet. Since the laptop was now not held by Melanie, PAT testing of that will need to be arranged separately. **Action IM.** BW asked whether there was a list of equipment and wondered whether we still need all the items. AR mentioned that equipment stores are available but CC said that the major problem was booking out and making sure equipment comes back. CC asked IM if he could contact Melanie to ask what the total equipment inventory was and what items were frequently booked out and, just as importantly, what items weren't **Action IM.** CC summarised: we're advertising for a Vice Chair, Speakers Co-ordinator (not too onerous as lots of speakers booked in advance), Database (MC will help with that) and Equipment Supervisor. JH mentioned that we do need an official Publicity and Communications Officer. CC will contact Sheila and Camilla out of courtesy. BW suggested that we should advertise for Committee members who may have their own expertise and specialisms to bring to the Committee.

9. AGM arrangements

IM had contacted our local u3a Representatives and a number of nearby u3as, to find out how they have been organising their AGMs, as covid was still with us. He had circulated a summary of

his findings. Many u3as had been struggling and doing their best in difficult circumstances. The general feeling was that, since covid is still with us, and u3as have many vulnerable members who still feel the need to protect themselves, there was a requirement to use the earlier dispensation, dealing with Covid and beyond, to allow a hybrid AGM ie. meeting in person and also by Zoom electronically. IM himself was in the vulnerable category and as Secretary needed to be able to attend the AGM remotely. He proposed that we plan for a Hybrid AGM.

CC accepted the recommendation and emphasised that we have members who still will not attend a face-to-face meeting and asked for Committee Member's comments. JH supported the proposal and said that we don't want to disenfranchise members who can't attend in person. IM mentioned that we will need to decide the detail of how we conduct the technical aspects as there will need to be constant feedback between the in-person meeting and the 'Zoom Controller'. There was discussion about registering votes and making sure voters were paid up members. It was noted that this was easier when postal and online votes were able to be checked prior to the meeting. CC noted that we will need a quorum of 20% of 921 members = 185 members and OS mentioned that with postal and email voting we knew we were quorate last year before the AGM had begun. CC then proposed that we go ahead with a Hybrid AGM meeting under arrangements discussed. All agreed.

OS said that the earlier the AGM notification goes out the better as this will help in checking the membership status of voters. IM had devised a Timetable detailing dates when the Notice of the AGM must be sent out according to the Constitution, with other associated dates for circulation of documentation. He will circulate this to the Committee. **Action IM.**

As time was running out CC proposed that we delay discussion of Committee Members Reports. OS said that before we moved on, she wanted to discuss the dwindling number of blank membership cards she had left and that she needed more. They were now not readily available from TAT and she had approached a local printer who quoted a cost of £50-65 for around 500, depending on the exact number ordered. Other u3as had complained about the costs of printing. OS asked for approval of that expenditure should it be necessary. All agreed.

10. Reports from Committee Members

Because of lack of time, discussion was deferred till another meeting.

11. Discussion regarding return to 'in person' Committee Meetings

This Agenda item was requested by OS. As a result, IM had prepared and circulated a comprehensive and detailed document setting out his reasons for wanting to continue holding Committee Meetings via Zoom. This included, in confidence, details of his state of health, mentioned on the previous occasions when this subject had arisen. It should not have been necessary to divulge this personal information but he felt that, because previous mentions seemed not to have been understood, it clearly was. The document also dealt with the ongoing large number of covid cases in East Devon and the need for the vulnerable to protect themselves. He listed the many advantages of meeting by Zoom. OS thanked IM for his comprehensive explanation of why he wouldn't attend in person. The main advantage put forward by those who wanted to meet in person was that it enabled them to mix socially (see Item 9, 7sep21 meeting). In response to the IM document, LH, OS and AR had circulated reasons to meet in person. These included a feeling that zoom meetings weren't effective, occasions where members had to wait for their turn to be heard, apparently causing the unacceptable behaviour recently witnessed, and poor internet connections causing screens to freeze occasionally.

OS put forward the suggestion that we could hold hybrid meetings. IM said that such meetings weren't suitable for taking minutes as not enough information would be available about who was speaking in-person, their voices may not be audible and their faces wouldn't be clearly visible as they are on Zoom. JH said that hybrid meetings were useful in a less formal circumstance but that Committee Meetings were more formal and required detailed attention by the Secretary. OS mentioned the possibility of having a Minutes Secretary.

SR would prefer face-to-face meetings and mentioned hybrid meetings. However he said that for these to be effective, there would be a need for advanced technical equipment which we don't have and also an internet connection with sufficient bandwidth. There may be specialist venues available but that would involve extra costs and perhaps further to travel.

MC agreed with the benefits of continuing to use Zoom. On the subject of poor internet connection, there was the option of upgrading one's internet as others have done, with u3a assistance/finance. Alternatively, members could consider the option of meeting in the home of a friend who had a better internet connection.

BW said that use of hybrid for monthly meetings worked well but requirements were much less onerous and he was in favour of continuing Committee Meetings using Zoom. There were currently all sorts of difficulties if we didn't use Zoom and the Zoom solution is already available. He added that, even if a few have had occasional technical difficulties, he didn't think that meeting by Zoom had failed our membership in any way. Furthermore, if anyone needs technical help accessing Zoom then please ask for it.

CC said that Zoom was really effective, saves time, no need to travel and all can see documents on screen without having to print them out. To her knowledge there was nowhere in Exmouth with a large screen or other facilities for a suitable hybrid meeting. We could use the Zoom facility of raising our hands if we wanted to speak. It was also important that IM was able to be present. She mentioned the accessibility requirement outlined in all our guiding documents and she thought we should have meetings that were accessible to all of us. However, it was also important that new Committee Members could have the opportunity to meet socially and this could be arranged outside, and separate from, a Committee Meeting. CC said that MP had written separately to say that her vote was in favour of Zoom. A vote was taken to continue meeting by Zoom. 6 voted in favour with 4 against and one not present. We will thus continue holding Committee Meetings via Zoom.

CC thanked everyone for their Reports and for all the work that everyone has done for our u3a.

12. A.O.B.

There was no other business.

13. Date of next meeting 13:00, 5apr22 by Zoom.

Ian McLauchlin, Secretary

date 12mar22

Signed:



Date: 5ap22

pp. Christine Chittock, Chair