

U3A

SOUTH CENTRAL NETWORK

Notes of the SCN Group Liaison Officers Meeting

held on Thursday 10th May 2018

at the Old Court Room, Chichester City Council, Chichester PO19 1LQ.

Present: Sally Ingledew (SI) – SCN Manager; Geoff Smith (GS) – GLO Horndean; Judith Sims (JS) – GLO Warsash; Joan Clarke (JC) – GLO Locks Heath; Joyce Wilkinson (JW) – GLO Portsdown; John Cannon (JC) – GLO Solent; Romina Conner (RC) – GLO Waterlooville; Kathy Parker (KP) – GLO Gosport; Alex Bone (AB) - Website/Vice Chair Gosport; John Ponting (JP) – Treasurer Stubbington; Sue Ponting (SP) – GLO Stubbington; Maggie Morter (MM) – GLO Stubbington; Sheila Liggins (SL) – Ex GLO Stubbington; Mauren Wealleans (MW) – GLO Chichester; Bridget Watts (BW) – GLO Emsworth; Kevin Stock (KS) – SCN Administrator Waterlooville; Bunty Davison (BD) – SCN Report Secretary.

1. The Chichester U3A Group Liaison Officer, who was hosting the Meeting, welcomed Sally Ingledew and the Group representatives to the Old Court Room in Chichester.
2. Sally Ingledew gave a brief introduction regarding the Agenda items and confirmed that questions would be welcomed when discussing representatives' details of their activities.
3. Agenda Items to be reported by each representative were – Job Descriptions, Group Finances and How They Are Managed, Waiting Lists and How They Are Managed, Developing New Groups, Do Groups Hold an Annual Workshop for Group Leaders? Do Groups Hold an Annual 'Thank You' for Group Leaders?
Reports given in response to the above issues were:
Job Descriptions:
4. BW – Emsworth: Reported – 250 membership, as new GLO gives support to Group Leaders when necessary, talking to Groups, administration duties reference vacancies, waiting lists, e-mails, new members first point of contact and her attendance at Coffee Mornings.
5. MW – Chichester: GLO for a few years but was hoping to be replaced in the near future, membership 900; 80/85 groups, administration duties reference new members, group vacancies, provides lists for non-computer group leaders, Bulletin adverts and attendance at Coffee Mornings.
6. Four representatives from Stubbington - Two new GLOs plus two existing GLOs: Duties similar to those previously reported concerning monthly meeting, lists of group vacancies, £50. 00 grant allocated to a group leader when setting up a new group, 435 membership, 60 groups and claimed as a busy officer's role.

7. KP - Gosport: Two GLOs and KP had just taken over this role. KP felt a range of skills was required for the work involved but considered it exciting. Similar duties covered as previously reported but do not hold monthly meetings. Information sheets/leaflets available which provides 'phone numbers of every group leader.
8. RC – Waterloo: Administrations duties to cover waiting lists treated as a priority particularly reference new members, group wish-lists and group vacancy lists provided, duties involved information for the website and bulletin news sheets, e-mail usage, Beacon and spreadsheet used for control of groups. GLO manages the group waiting lists although group leaders provide details of vacancies concerning new nominations from the waiting lists. Network Meetings take place which are managed by a Committee member and the GLO. GLO requests updates from each leader concerning the group's membership.
9. JC – Solent: Five years as Group Leaders Coordinator (Group Liaison Officer never used by Solent U3A) and stated duties similar to previous GLO reports. Group Leaders and members generally receive information via our website and at our twice monthly Talk Meetings with notices posted on our Notice Board and a Power Point Presentation running on continuous loop prior to the meeting starting. Group Leaders are encouraged to add information to this either preparing slides themselves or through me. In addition to our 44 Groups, Stubbington U3A welcome Solent members to their very successful Choir Group and Southampton U3A some Solent members to their Sailing Group. We reciprocate by inviting members from Gosport, Locks Heath, Stubbington, Warsash and Meon U3A's to join our Cinema Group (currently membership now exceeds 500) as well as members from other U3A's joining our Bird Watching, Canasta, Opera, Ten pin bowling and Titchfield Theatres Groups. Our "Group Leaders Handbook" is issued to all Group Leaders/potential Group Leaders as an aide memoire. It is also available on-line.
10. JW – Portsdown: New to role and reviewing the job description details, gives support to group leaders reference the Beacon system membership covering lists of names and amendments when required. Beacon system considered useful and GLO deals with the management reference data protection, advertising vacancies, web-site issues and handbook. Group Leaders' lunch organised as a 'thank you' event.
11. JC – Locks Heath: 240 Membership, monthly meetings held, list created reference contact details received from the Membership Secretary, details with enquiries, checks any confusion regarding group membership and Beacon System used. Lower subscription joining fees are permitted when members from neighbouring Groups seek membership but original Group membership cards must be produced as evidence.

A query was raised regarding combined Group membership as discussed in Item 9 and it was noted that such issues would be acceptable by the appropriate Chairman's agreement if a group space exists.
12. JS – Warsash: GLO as a very new U3A member and was getting to know procedures adopted previously. GLO had set up two new groups, 200 membership, co-ordinators' events and workshops organised, new members' lists used and encourages members to use the web-site. Some events/workshops had been held at Fareham College.
13. GS – Horndean: GLO's Job description as issued and in line with National Office's copy format. To deal with insurance policy issues two Group Leaders meeting are held

each year to encourage leaders to express views and ideas. Use of Newsletters when recruiting new group Leaders, provides assistance for new Group leaders/co-ordinators regarding venues. A web-site not in use but newsletters are circulated which identifies groups and vacancies. Each Group leader runs their show!

- 14. National Office recommendations:** Reference job descriptions, SI informed the meeting that the National Office Blue File now longer updated but the National Office website provides up-dated copies to cover all appropriate issues. This would cover advice relating to length of service as two years had been suggested with the maximum being four years. A membership fee of £10. 00 was noted when a member wishes to join a second established U3A Group. JC (Locks Heath) stated Locks Heath's Constitution guidance recommended a service length of three years as a non-officer but seven years' service would be acceptable for a Treasurer. It was noted the National Office offers advice on this and it was necessary for each Group's Constitution to be followed.

15. Group Finances & How They Are Managed?

Stubbington: Group leaders manage and keep their own accounts which would deal with group expenses but the Treasurer provides cheques amounting to £50. 00 or more which would cover cost of Group equipment or books.

Horndean: Small groups and payments are made in advance according to requirements. Reference venue charges, cheques should be paid by the Treasurer and any Group leader making payments 'out of their own pocket' would be considered as a crime.

SI reminded the GLOs that when money does not go through the Treasurer, there is no insurance cover.

Chichester - Discussion took place concerning members of a Cinema Group, who pay for their own entrance fees/seat purchases and are responsible for their own tickets. It was considered the use of a debit card or a pre-paid card might be better alternative for cinema seat purchases. One payment by cheques was noted to be necessary when organising trips to e.g. - Garden Centres or arranging Coach Bookings. Again, it was emphasised that no Group leader should make payments out of their own pocket reference the insurance issues.

SI stated that if financial payments do not go through the Treasurer, leaders must be made aware that no insurance cover exists.

Gosport – It was noted that in this Group payments concerning hire of venues are covered by the members' subscription fees.

Portsmouth: Subscription fee of £40. 00 covers all venue costs as all Group meetings are held at the Somers Town Community Centre which at times it was noted it was not always that ideal. The use of Super Store venues was discussed but sudden cancellations could occur due to staff commitments

16. Waiting Lists/Developing New Groups:

Stubbington: Two models used by Group Leaders or the Group Liaison Officer.

Chichester: Beacon system used for Group leaders to submit information. Group leaders have access reference members' details of their Groups only since they were different privileges and variations to the many of the Beacon system facilities.

Waterlooville: Preferences given to new members, when 10/12 members have indicated interest in a group, e-mail messages are circulated to identify a set-up meeting to be held and information provided. GLO will book the venues for 'Setting

Up' Group Meetings. Once a Group is formed members then decide where future venues should be arranged as a charged venue or home venue and this dependant on the topic to be covered.

Group leader communication skills required.

Stubbington: One Group can escalate into six Groups by the original members of the first Group advance and then progress to setting up their own individual Group.

17. Workshops:

Horndean: Two meetings each year held to discuss communication issues and financial matters.

Warsash: No workshops held at present but plan to do so in September/October. These to take place on different days regarding the meeting dates.

Portsdown: Many workshops annually held and circulation through the Portsmouth City Council publications.

Waterlooville: Workshops are held for new Group leaders and an Open Day event which is advertised to attract public attendance. It had been agreed there should not be a 'cap' regarding membership.

Support was suggested reference the Portsmouth University Aging Project which would raise awareness of the whole movement – an age limit 40 years was noted but not working fulltime.

Stubbington: Two meetings held – two speakers and meetings arranged for a.m. and the other – a p.m. meeting.

Gosport: Two meetings held each year – well attended. Workshops and publicity events are held in the local Library. Workshops for new Leaders are arranged.

Suggestion concerning in local GP Services publicity was made and a U3A Surgery exercise be established to overcome loneliness problems. This to be re-launched in October and an Older Peoples event was held during May.

Chichester: Group leaders' meeting held for information and a 'thank you tea' event arranged.

Emsworth: Group leaders' meeting arranged to get to know them and each other.

18. Developing New Groups: Surgery Sign posting suggested.

19. 'Thank You' events:

Portsdown: Best month - Considered to be August.

Stubbington: Fareham College lunch. Time for meeting – during any fifth week of a month.

Gosport: March and October combined with 'Thank You' event.

Solent: An annual new Members Coffee Morning, where members who have joined in the past 12 months can meet Committee members and Group Leaders, is held which is followed by a Group Leaders Buffet Lunch as a "thank you".

Waterlooville: 'Thank You' Evening meal combined with a Quiz for entertainment.

20. SI informed GLOs consent policy should be agreed to show all contact details – regarding the new data protection regulations.

21. Any Other Business: Comments received from:

Stubbington – The net-working facilities were considered good.

Portsdown – ipo.gov.uk – useful information re data protection. SI reminded the GLOs that Committees needed to be reminded of the data protection regulations but not a great deal is actually held by Groups.

Warsash – Joining members may attend one General Meeting and two Group meetings before giving commitment to join.

Waterlooville – Visitors may attend General Meeting by payment of £2. 00 entrance fee.

- 22.** On behalf of herself and all the members SI expressed thanks to the Chichester Group for organising the meeting arrangements and facilities which were most appreciated.

The Meeting closed at 4.00 p.m.