



## Hampshire South Central Network

### MEMBERSHIP SECRETARIES MEETING NOTES

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 - Bedhampton (Havant) Community Hall commencing at 2.00 p.m.

#### Attendees:

<i>Name</i>	<i>U3A</i>
Sally Ingledew	SCN Manager/ Gosport
Graham Woodbridge	SCN Secretary/ Waterlooville
Geoffrey Porter	Havant
John Worley	Havant
Alison White	Havant
Les Hill	Locks Heath
Nick Hammond	Warsash
Bob Duckmanton	Warsash
Denise Davis	Gosport
Jan Almond	Gosport
Maureen Houlihan	Portsdown
Tony Harrison	Horndean
Joyce Cook	Stubbington
Ginny Foy	Stubbington
Sheila Dawson	Stubbington
Jill Cook	Chichester
Shirley Varnish	Rowlands Castle
Julie Bloomfield	Portsdown
Kevin Stock	Waterlooville
Lincoln Allen	Emsworth

#### Apologies were received from the following U3As:

Isle of Wight, Ems Valley, Meon Valley, Hayling Island, Solent.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The meeting attendees were welcomed by John Worley of Havant U3A who had kindly agreed to host the event and provide refreshments. They showcased their very impressive bar code scanner member registration system which they use at their monthly meetings. Sally Ingledew, Secretary of the SCN, then chaired the meeting.

#### 2. U3A BEACON MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Emsworth & District U3A has been using this system and Lincoln Allen gave a presentation which provided an overview of its capabilities as well their experiences during initial set up and subsequent operation of the software at his U3A.

He stated that it contains all of the functionality to manage members' details, subscriptions, group memberships, accounts ..... and so on. Furthermore, it is a secure, internet-based system and does not require any particular make of PC and will accept downloads in most formats.

He also explained that a national U3A IT sub-committee was overseeing the project and its development which is on-going. As it is sponsored by the Third Age Trust it will be supported and offered free to all U3As in the long term. However, the working group was quite small and although prototype testing had been completed and the system seamlessly rolled out to just over 30 U3As there was now over 40 U3As (and growing) waiting to get their membership data populated into the system.

Lincoln explained that it was relatively simple to use and intuitive. A good overview of the system can be found at: <https://demo.u3abeacon.org.uk> (you have to register to gain access). This includes an informative 40+ page user guide.

Some discussion took place exploring the financial capabilities of the Beacon management system but it was decided this would be more suitable for inclusion into a separate SCN meeting for Treasurers. SCN manager to arrange a meeting later in the year. Tony Harrison agreed to investigate whether Horndean U3A might host the meeting.

Further information on Beacon and other available management systems can be obtained at: <https://u3asystems.wordpress.com>. The aim of this website is to provide a place where U3A members can exchange ideas about membership systems. Currently there are 9 systems whose developers or users have provided a features list. U3A's already using these systems have been encouraged to share their experience on the site. Also on this site are two helpful videos providing an overview of Beacon and talks about how you might customise the system to suit your U3A.

*SCN Secretary Note: The name "Beacon" has been taken from the title of a book written by Eric Midwinter to celebrate the first 500 U3As. It's title? 500 Beacons.*

### 3. GIFT AID

Horndean raised concerns over the difficulties they had experienced with HMRC over getting Gift Aid claims accepted and responses to their queries. Most representatives at the meeting were not aware of any difficulties experienced within their own U3A. Waterlooville U3A had recently claimed £1,500 without any issues. It was agreed this should be an agenda item for the future treasurers meeting to fully explore the regulations e.g.:

- Gift aid forms should be retained for 6 years etc.
- Rules for spouses and people living at the same address making a joint declaration, in effect making two or more Gift Aid declarations on the same form assuming both pay income tax.
- Etc.

Action: SCN manager

### 4. Hayling Island U3A issues raised

- a. Does the Membership Secretary hold the prime responsibility for compliance with the Data Protection Act?

*Trustee for U3A SE Region response:*

*All Trustees (i.e. Committee) have responsibility under Data Protection Act (DPA). Basically the least number of people with the information the better. It is recommended that information is kept encrypted but this may be beyond some U3As.*

This subject prompted general discussion about DPA issues. Most U3As limit access to their full membership database to just a few members of their committee one of which, normally the membership secretary, would be nominated as the data controller. It was believed that postal addresses were not subject to the DPA as this information was already available from a number of sources on-line. All U3As should have a data protection policy/statement and make a DP statement on the membership information fliers and application/renewal forms.

Here is an example:

*“Privacy Statement. Your personal details will be held on a secure database and comply with The Data Protection Act 1998. They will be used solely for the purposes of administration and communication of U3A matters. They will never be supplied to an outside agency or 3rd party other than for you to receive ‘Third Age Matters’ directly mailed from the Third Age Trust and to HMRC to claim for Gift Aid.”*

- b. How long do other Membership Secs wait for members' renewal to occur? – I've been leaving it 4 months this year (5 months the previous year)

*Trustee for U3A SE Region response:*

*It is up to the Committee - I think 3 months is an absolute maximum personally. What we did was to take the list of people who had not renewed after 2 months and divided it between the Committee Members and we each rang them up to see if they had forgotten, moved away, decided not to renew. This worked well. Most had forgotten. Group Leaders should be checking to see that the members of their Group are fully paid up to date U3A members this should take care of it.*

The general view at the meeting was that 4 months was too long. The majority limited the period for one to two months with plenty of advance warning that members would not be able to attend meetings, events or activity groups after the set period of grace. Most U3As sent out reminder emails/letters or telephoned individuals.

- c. How long do other Membership Secs keep sensitive data of deceased or lapsed members on file? (Delete immediately? Or desensitise and keep for 12 months for statistics? Or just keep it?)

*Trustee for U3A SE Region response:*

*If you don't need it discard it. What are you keeping it for? You may wish to keep non-renewed members details for a while, just in case they come back and it will save you re-entering the details.*

## **5. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

Attendees compared responsibilities between different U3As which the most recently formed groups found useful. Each U3A is unique in the way it operates so not all U3A JDs will be the same. Job descriptions can be useful when encouraging members to join committees as they help to explore whether the tasks matches an individual's skill level or whether adjustments could be made. It is always a good idea to ask other U3As for a copy of specific job descriptions they hold to help with drafting their own.

## **6. NEW MEMBER INFORMATION PACKS**

Attendees compared contents and also discussed how they made their new members feel welcome.

### ***Information packs:***

These were mostly in the form of a flier or booklet with some U3As posting a copy on their website. Waterlooville U3A enclosed a credit card size “In Case of Emergency” (I.C.E.) card with an information sheet in the pack which have been popular.

### ***Welcoming new members:***

Ideas to make your U3A more welcoming:

- a. Hold frequent new member coffee mornings and send them an individual invite within their new joiners pack. Ensure committee members and existing members attend the coffee morning to help answer questions.
- b. Identify new members at monthly meeting with a badge and encourage existing members to talk to them.
- c. Nominate meeter/greeters and/or mentors to make them feel welcome at monthly meetings
- d. Have a new joiner's team to contact new members one month after joining to assist with any enquiries.

- e. Run group activity waiting lists centrally within an expanded group liaison team to form a “wish list” of potential new groups or start up additional existing activity groups to ensure members are not waiting too long to join a group.
- f. Publish a monthly list of groups with vacancies and communicate within a monthly news bulletin and display at monthly meetings.

#### **7. ON-LINE PAYMENT OF MEMBERSHIP FEES**

It was decided to transfer this item onto the agenda for the forthcoming SCN Treasurers meeting.

Action SCN Manager

#### **8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- a. Havant U3A and Gosport U3A suggested that if any U3A has bulk requirements for printing to contact their local council as they often offer reduced cost printing for charity groups.
- b. Locks Heath asked if some of the larger U3As had any experience of 'Restricted Membership'. There was some confusion over this expression. It was noted that “Growth Matters” gives good advice on this matter including introducing “associate members”. If any SCN U3A has knowledge of this system please contact Locks Heath. This topic will be on the agenda for the chairpersons meeting.
- c. SCN manager suggested setting up a “Discussion Forum” section within the SCN website for member U3As to pose questions and swap ideas. It was agreed to investigate this further and raise it again at the forthcoming chairman meeting.

#### **9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

SCN Manager will canvas membership secretaries in about 12 months and if required propose another meeting if required.

***The meeting closed at 4.10***