

Hastings & Rother U3A

Minutes of Committee Meeting

held at 10.00 a.m. Tuesday 2nd May 2023 in the Bell Room, St Peter's Community Centre

Present

Committee Members:

Richard Collisson (Acting Chair)

Josephine Noyce (Treasurer)

Matilda Jarvis (Membership)

Lynda Wood (Groups)

Jenny Meteyard (Minutes)

Virginia Edwards (Business Secretary)

John Goodwin (Newsletter)

Christine Evans (co-opted member)

Non-committee: Brian Gould (Website); Sue Shilstone (Initial Enquiries); April Yasamee (Venues/risk assessments); Patricia Jobling (Database);

NB non-committee members in certain roles may attend meetings, and are sent the paperwork, but do not have voting rights.

1. Chair

Richard welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Derek Hussey; Carole Benton, Ewa Goulding, Wendy McNally (new volunteers).

Richard reported that Gail Oswald has resigned as Assistant Treasurer with immediate effect.

3. Minutes of last committee meeting

The minutes of the last committee meeting held on 28th March 2023 were unanimously approved as an accurate record.

4. Matters arising (not covered in the agenda)

None.

5. General reports/areas for discussion

a) Chair

- Richard thanked the **volunteers** who have stepped forward to fill various roles:
 - Derek Hussey is prepared to stand as Chair at the AGM and is already shadowing Richard, so will be co-opted to the committee.
 - Christine Evans, co-opted on 28th March, will be dealing with bookings for the venues of the monthly (speaker) meetings.
 - Wendy McNally is currently considering whether to join the committee and may take over organisation of social events.
 - Ewa Goulding is currently unable to attend meetings, but will be taking over the role of Assistant Treasurer and it was agreed that because of the access to data involved, this needs to be a committee/trustee role, even if she is not always able to attend meetings.
 - Carole Benton is prepared to take on the role of Regional representative but not as a committee member.
 - Barry Taylor had initially agreed to take on the role of Vice Chair, but apparently experiences considerable difficulty with internet/email communication, and as a result there is now some uncertainty as to whether this will be viable. He had suggested to Richard that if another candidate cannot be found he might be able to reconsider by the end of June. Richard will phone him to discuss this; if Barry is not able to carry out the role then another candidate for Vice Chair will be needed. Derek will be made aware of the situation (Richard is meeting with him informally on 16th May).
- Richard had a place for **Beacon (Database) Chair's training** on 26th April, which was offered to Derek.

RC

- **Third Age Trust AGM** This will be held on October 18th but the deadline for resolutions is between 24th April and 30th May. Resolutions need to be proposed by one u3a and seconded by another. There is an East Sussex East Cluster Group meeting on 25th May in Bexhill, at which this will be discussed.

(VE)

Each u3a needs to nominate a representative to vote at the AGM and it was agreed to nominate the Chair of Hastings & Rother u3a.

(Chair)

- **Database Administrator:** Richard had received the following communication from TAT:
If there is person who is currently responsible for Beacon who is not on the committee, we recommend they are co-opted to the committee and that they attend at least once a year to report on their role. The strong advice is that anyone dealing with member data is on the committee, so they can benefit from the Trust's trustee indemnity insurance. It is the committee responsibility to ensure that the admin (and anyone dealing with personal data) is aware of their requirements under GDPR and confidentiality. In both cases, the u3a is recommended to appoint a nominated data protection officer to support safe and proper data handling within the u3a generally.

H&R u3a's Database Administrator Patricia Jobling is not currently a committee member although she does attend some meetings and sends reports if absent. In view of the above advice it was agreed that she would become a committee member/trustee, but as before will only attend when this seems necessary.

(PJ)

b) Treasurer

Josephine circulated a copy of the Annual accounts and expressed concern at the depletion of the reserves and rate of expenditure as compared to income. She projected that at current rates of income and expenditure, income for 2023-24 could be just over £10,000, while expenditure could be around £13,800. While we currently have sufficient reserves to cover the discrepancy, it was noted that this does not allow for potential increases in costs, e.g. venue hire, which might well increase because of the current high cost of energy. TAT also did not put their capitation fee up last year, so this is likely to rise after October's AGM, and other costs may also rise. Income is mainly from membership fees i.e. mostly in August/September, and the amount depends on the number of members and is therefore unpredictable. There is some additional income from Gift Aid and interest but Gift Aid again mostly depends on membership numbers. There are currently 584 members

Josephine considered that keeping membership fees at the current level would lead to increasing deficits and then potentially having to make a large increase in fee rates in a couple of years. She considered that it would be preferable to have a small increase in fees now. She therefore suggested that membership fees should rise to £18. It was noted that this had been the subscription rate about 5 years ago, but the rate had been reduced after TAT advice that H&R u3a's reserves were too large and should be reduced (now achieved!). Members need to be advised of any increase in subscriptions in the membership renewal form which accompanies the AGM papers. (Note: The constitution does not require members to approve the subscription rate, which is set by the trustees).

There was some discussion of this issue and most of the committee felt that an increase from the current £15 to £18 seemed too much in the current climate. Some committee members felt that any increase might be unacceptable to members in the cost of living crisis, but others felt that members would accept a small increase, particularly if the reasons for this were clearly explained. The fee is still extremely low compared to the fees charged by many other organisations, and the Groups Coordinator felt that the main obstacle to people joining was usually lack of groups rather than financial. It was suggested that as inflation is currently

around 10%, a similar level of increase seemed reasonable. This would take subscriptions to £16.50, but it was pointed out that a round number is better administratively.

Richard therefore proposed that Hastings and Rother u3a's annual membership fee be increased to £17 with effect from 1st September 2023. John Goodwin seconded this and it was approved by a majority of the committee, on a show of hands. Joint membership would therefore be £34 and it was agreed that the associate membership fee should be increased to £12 (joint associate fee therefore £24). Josephine proposed that full members joining after April be charged £9 and associates £6, and this was agreed.

c) Business Secretary

As yet there has been no word from the **White Rock** about taking bookings for Speaker meetings from January 2024. Ginny has asked for an update. As of now a full programme is booked at St Peter's CC.

VE

Paperwork for new Trustees is in hand and the Charity Commission records will be updated when the forms are returned.

The **East Sussex East Cluster Group** is meeting at St Peter's CC on 25th May from 10.30-12.30. Discussions will include the results of a Zoom meeting on 17 May regarding arrangements for ESBN Network (East Sussex & Brighton) and how ESE fits in - or not. Susie Berry, TAT representative for the Southeast region, is invited to attend the ESE Cluster meeting.

VE

Lorna Couldrick is willing to organise the **tea party to follow the AGM**, with volunteers from Strollers as before, but will not be able to do this for the Christmas Party. It was agreed that Wendy McNally should be asked to liaise with Lorna, if she is going to be involved in organisation of social events. John hopes to see Wendy shortly and will mention this.

JG

AGM timeline Ginny had produced a timeline for the AGM and deadlines were agreed. The Newsletter and accompanying AGM documentation needs to be sent to the printers in sufficient time to enable all members to receive them within the timeframe specified in the constitution. Ginny will liaise as needed to finalise the AGM documents.

VE JM

d) Membership Secretary

There are a few outstanding (pending) new members. The membership form needs some amendments including the deadline for payment/renewal. Tilly and Ginny will liaise on this. Members will be asked, if attending the AGM, to bring their renewal form and cheque (not cash), in an envelope. Members can also pay online but still have to submit a renewal form.

VE MJ

e) Groups

A new Creative Crafts group has been set up and already has a waiting list. There are a couple of other new groups taking the total to 66 currently, which is encouraging.

f) Venues

April commented that she has only received 3 Venues Risk Assessment forms. Lynda felt some established groups may not be fully aware of the need for these or have not got round to doing them, so April will send a reminder with a Risk Assessment form attached, via Lynda as Groups Coordinator. The Risk Assessment is only required if using public venues. Christine will do the risk assessments for the monthly meeting venues.

AY LW

CE

<p>The Venues role is being split, with April covering Groups venues and Christine booking meeting venues; Ginny, Christine and April will liaise to amend the job descriptions. The website can then be amended as necessary.</p>	<p>VE, CE, AY</p>
<p>g) Initial Enquiries Sue will amend the enquiry forms and give them to Ginny, who will sort out printing etc. along with a new Groups List.</p>	<p>SS VE LW VE</p>
<p>h) Speakers St Peter's CC is booked for the coming year. Because of the uncertainty over the White Rock, some speakers have had to be warned that the venue will need to be confirmed. Details need to go on the new bookmark from September.</p>	<p>(VE)</p>
<p>i) Database Richard will continue to support Tricia on the Beacon Database.</p>	<p>(RC)</p>
<p>j) Website Brian had produced a summary of page visits on the website but had nothing otherwise to report. Brian was thanked for all his work, including getting the Garden Group photos up on the website.</p>	
<p>k) Newsletter John commented that he needs any content for the Newsletter as soon as possible, including the Chair's message. He will liaise with Pandora (Speakers) about speakers for early autumn and descriptions of speakers/content for the newsletter and website.</p>	<p>JG/PB</p>
<p>6. <u>AGM organisation</u> This had mostly been covered earlier (see Business Secretary). Lynda suggested that as in 2022, a questionnaire asking people what activities they would like to see and suggestions for groups could be useful, and this was agreed. One of the suggestions from the last AGM had been a quarterly Quiz/social evening. This has never quite got off the ground but should be seriously considered, and John said he would be prepared to organise this.</p>	<p>?? JG</p>
<p>7. <u>Convenors' Thankyou Tea</u> An annual Tea has previously been held at the Royal Victoria Hotel to thank convenors (and possibly other volunteers?) for their work. This was held in 2021 but not in 2022. It was agreed that there is insufficient time to organise this for June, but early autumn could be considered. This will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.</p>	<p>(JM)</p>
<p>8. <u>Open Day</u> This had been suggested for the autumn, after the original April date was cancelled. It was agreed to shelve this for the moment, in view of a new Chair taking over shortly. This could be reconsidered at a later date.</p>	
<p>9. <u>Social Evening</u> The Manor Barn in Bexhill is up and running again as a venue. It was suggested that October/November might be a suitable time to hold an event, and a weekday would probably be preferable. John will investigate options and report back to the committee.</p>	<p>JG</p>
<p>10. <u>Any other business</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ginny noted that if the Christmas party follows the format of the last couple of years, then a Quiz would be needed. John would be prepared to do this. ○ Richard said that the Council have sent asking for a submission for their Older People's Day leaflet. 	<p>JG ??</p>

11. Date of next committee meetings

Tuesday 6th June 2023 10.00 a.m. in the **Cotton** Room, St Peter's Community Centre

Tuesday 18th July 2023 (tbc)

Jenny will be away from 6th June, so someone else will need to finalise the agenda and take the minutes.

?

Signed

Date

Minutes were taken by Jenny Meteyard.