

Hastings & Rother U3A

Minutes of Committee Meeting

held at 10.30 on Thursday 28th November 2019 at St Peter's Community Centre, Bexhill

Present

Robert Hadland (Chair)	George Webster (Vice Chair)
Gail Oswald (Treasurer)	Jenny Meteyard (Minutes)
Josephine Noyce (Assistant Treasurer)	Lynda Wood (Groups)
Carol Crossley (Venues)	Sue Deeks (Initial Enquiries)
Chris Legg (Membership)	Mike Wilson (general)

NB Database Administrator, Website Administrator and SUN Representative are not committee members but may send reports and/or attend meetings at times if appropriate.

1. Apologies for absence

Ken Saunders (Business Secretary); Lesley Almond (general)

Robert reported that after a fall three weeks ago and operation to repair his patella, Ken is recovering at home – good wishes for his recovery were expressed by the committee.

2. Welcome to Mike Wilson, new committee member

Mike Wilson, who was co-opted as a new committee member at the last meeting, was welcomed to the committee.

3. Minutes of last meeting

Ken had pointed out that on p4, Business Secretary's report paragraph 3 should read HVA, not HBA. With this correction, the minutes of the last meeting held on 17th October 2019 were then agreed to be an accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

4. Matters arising (not covered in the agenda)

The minutes from the Special General Meeting of 23rd September were signed by the Chair.

5. General Reports

Chair

- **Update on talk by Dr Mucci 23rd October.** 70-80 people attended the talk, including some Battle U3A members and some of Dr Mucci's patients. The organiser had requested that leaflets be printed but because of a misunderstanding these were in rather small print. More were printed than required, so those left over were distributed at the last Speaker Meeting. Sue commented that a member had said she found it difficult to hear, and thought the venue was a bit chilly, but there were no other complaints and most people seemed able to hear. It was agreed that it is better if speakers use a throat or lapel mike rather than the hand-held mike, where head movements can create inconsistencies of volume.
- **IT help from Bruce Henderson.** Robert circulated copies of a letter and survey drafted by Bruce Henderson, to be sent in January to members who do not use email. Since the last meeting, attended by Bruce, it has been established that 49 members do not use email, of which 24 are not in groups. It is not known how many do not have email, do not want to use it, or simply do not want to join groups, but it was agreed that we need to find out. Lynda commented that people wishing to join groups can find out by phoning, as contact information is included in the paper list sent out, but agreed that for new groups or when places become vacant, those on email do have an advantage. Some members may find

computer lessons useful both for email and other aspects. A small sub-group including Carol, George, Chris and Richard will meet after Christmas; Robert will link the potential members with Bruce and they will take it from there.

RH, BH
CC GW
CL RC

Treasurer

- **General report.** Gail reported that she has submitted the Annual Return to the Charities Commission, and also the Gift Aid claim. This should be received shortly and should be approximately £2,000. Total funds held at the bank are £25,228 (as at 19 November 2019).
- **Proposal for new bank account** Lloyds Bank can provide us with a Charities Bank Account which provides online banking with dual authorisation for making payments, which NatWest are unable to do. Any signatory can set up a payment, and a request for authorisation is then automatically sent to any other signatories. Once someone has made a payment, they would immediately inform the others.

Advantages:

- it would enable payments to be made more quickly and easily, without having to get signatures for cheques,
- it would allow online access for signatories, so that for instance the Membership Secretary could check for membership receipts etc.
- if at any time in the future banks begin charging for charity accounts, online payments cost less than cheques.

Disadvantages:

- membership forms would need to be changed
- a little hassle for signatories to set up, although apparently only a very limited amount of information is required (full name, date of birth and address for the last 3 years)
- the savings account interest is lower – but we can get a better rate for a 32-day notice account.

Gail suggested that we apply to open a current, a savings and a notice savings account with Lloyds and transfer the bulk of our funds to the new account. It is supposed to take about 10 working days to set up the accounts. The NatWest account should be retained at least until it is certain that no more online payments will be coming in, and it might be prudent to retain it in any case.

Chris suggested that it would make sense to carry on using the current membership forms with the NatWest payment details until membership forms are reprinted in time for renewals (June). At that time both renewal and new membership forms can be amended. The change would need to be very clearly marked. This was agreed.

Carol proposed and George seconded that new accounts should be opened at Lloyds as described above, and this was unanimously agreed with a show of hands.

Membership Secretary

- Chris reported that there are now 706 members, and Sue commented that she receives almost daily new enquiries. Robert suggested that in future membership application forms it should be made clear that this is an organisation run entirely by volunteers, and that members should be prepared to contribute. This should also go in the Welcome Pack.
- Carol presented the following suggestion about **Social Prescribing**, sent by Lorna Couldrick:

RH

Professionally I am very aware of the health benefits of the U3A. Currently there is a drive for

GPs to reduce the medications they prescribe and instead encourage patients into local activities that could improve their health and well-being. I believe we have a responsibility to ensure GPs know about the U3A. I appreciate Hastings and Rother U3A has a growing membership and is not actively recruiting. However I still think it is important for GPs to have information about us.

It is also in accord with the principles of the Third Age Trust (TAT) which we as members have agreed to i.e.:

- Members promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging to a U3A
- Members should do all they can to ensure that people wanting to join a U3A can do so.

To this end I would like your permission for the following:

1. Send an information pack to the GP surgeries in Hastings (14) and Bexhill (7)
2. Each pack to consist of a covering letter (copies attached); 20 TAT leaflets designed with social prescribing in mind; 20 copies of our local leaflet and 2 laminated posters.
3. I have included my contact details at the bottom of the covering letter and am willing to lead on this initiative and be the contact person for GP surgeries (although very happy if someone else wanted to do this).
4. The costs are negligible. The TAT posters and leaflets are free. We have copies of our local leaflet. We would need to buy more laminating pouches (less than £10). Distribution could be via the NHS courier service.

Risk: increase in membership

Benefit: Raising awareness of our self-help organisation to health professionals in the area.

It was agreed that this should go ahead, with a few changes to the covering letter: Lorna had stated that ‘by joining the U3A people could do all 3’ of the ingredients for ageing well (learning new things, developing friendships/social connections, physical exercise). It was felt that this amounted to a promise, which particularly in the case of physical exercise, could not necessarily be guaranteed. It was agreed that this should be changed to ‘By joining the U3A people may have opportunities to do all three’. It was also agreed that the sentence ‘There are other local U3As in Battle, Rye, Eastbourne and Hailsham’ should be changed to ‘There are other local U3As’, giving the national website address, because the other U3As should probably not be advertised without their knowledge and consent, and more information can be gained from the national website. The draft will be returned to Lorna for approval by the Minutes Secretary.

LC

JM

It was commented that we have already had a few new members as part of ‘social prescribing’, as some local counsellors and other health professionals as well as GPs may be recommending U3A. It therefore seems a good idea to send specific information. Some concern was expressed however that we are already struggling to find new convenors and therefore provide enough groups or spaces in groups.

Website

Brian had sent the usual page visit statistics.

Business Secretary

The trustee eligibility declaration forms given out at the last meeting were returned, to be forwarded to Ken by Robert.

RH

Groups Convenor

Lynda reported that 2 groups have gone, but there are 3 new ones, and there has been a good

response to her request to convenors for group member lists. Lynda has removed the names of public places where some groups take place (e.g. pubs) from the list that is sent out to potential members, as some people have been apparently been turning up without becoming members. Many groups are still heavily over-subscribed.

Robert commented that this is an area urgently needing work and support. It might be useful to have his newsletter article about groups printed separately. We also need to encourage people to start new or additional groups, for instance if a group is full, another one on the same topic could be started. Lynda felt that a major problem is that people don't want to become convenors, and often existing groups become cosy cliques who don't want to change by having new members. Several points were made in discussion:

- Convenors do need to give habitual non-attenders a nudge to leave and free up space for other people.
- There needs to be a clear waiting list system so it's apparent when a new group on a topic is needed, and perhaps people on the waiting list can be contacted and helped to form a new group.
- Groups can hire a space such as a meeting room and there can be joint convenors; this might encourage more people to start groups without feeling it is such a big responsibility or commitment.
- People need to be made aware of how to start a group, and given support.
- There could be short 'pop up' groups meeting for perhaps 6 weeks. These could cover short topics or an aspect of a topic, e.g. cookery – bread making, art – specific artist, era.
- People might benefit from being given ideas for new groups.

Robert also wondered if it would be helpful for Lynda to have someone working with her.

Venues

Carol will check the arrangements for tea/coffee at the Sussex Room in the White Rock. This was supposed to be in place for the Dr Mucci meeting but didn't happen. Carol commented that their communication didn't seem to be great: they cancelled the November meeting because of a double booking but didn't inform their own technician, Adam. Carol will also check where the bills from the Azur have been going, since Gail has not received any, and will ask for the final bill to be sent to her (Carol). There were 107 people at the last meeting. Carol suggested that a letter should be sent explaining why we are leaving but this was agreed to be unnecessary.

CC

CC

Parking – the underground car park opposite is not great, but there is parking on St Margaret's Rd and a car park at the top of the road, and other street parking including near Clambers. The theatre is also on a bus route. The White Rock hotel has said that if there is a space in their car park, the speaker can park there. Someone loading or unloading can also park temporarily at the side.

SUN

There was nothing of note to report.

Newsletter

There continue to be issues with printing and difficulties working with the printer. The paper quality is poor as is the colour matching for photos, and Rosemary has had difficulty getting responses to emails. George showed a copy of a similar colour magazine which has a similar circulation, which is of better quality. Ken, Robert and Rosemary will continue to work on these issues in the hope that they will be put right for the February newsletter.

KS RB
RH

Christmas party arrangements

Robert and Tricia Jobling had circulated detailed arrangements for the Christmas party/Quiz and these were discussed. Robert has purchased small prizes for the winning team. The Cotton

Room has been booked to lay out the food. Helpers should arrive from 12.30 onwards. The money raised by the tombola will be given to a charity and the local homelessness charity Seaview was agreed. Carol proposed a vote of thanks to Robert for his meticulous preparation and organisation.

6. Any other business

Proposal for an event with an Elvis impersonator.

A proposal had been made for an evening or afternoon's entertainment with an Elvis impersonator. The suggestion was that 'the event could be self-financing as I believe Ian charges around £250. If we offered light refreshment maybe a ticket charge of £3 per head for a maximum of 120 people would be viable'. After some discussion it was agreed that this event was not suitable; it would require a lot of organisation, a suitable venue, and it is not clear that enough people would be interested.

Proposal from retired lecturer

A retired lecturer had sent a list of lectures on various topics that he would be able to present. It was agreed to forward the proposal to Barbara Spackman (Speakers). As a member, he would not be paid for lectures.

RH

Proposal to visit other large U3As

Carol reported that she and Lorna Couldrick (former Chair) thought it might be useful to visit some U3As which have a large membership to see how they handle this. It was agreed that this was a good idea and it was suggested that it could feed into an AGM presentation – this will be discussed further at the next committee meeting.

(RH/JM agenda)

National U3A Day

This is on June 3rd 2020 and Carol wondered if this would be a good day to have a Groups Showcase event.

7. Dates/venues of future meetings

Thursday 9th January 2020 10.00 a.m.

Thursday 20th February 2020 10.00 a.m.

Thursday 2nd April 2020 10.00 a.m.

Meetings will be held in the **Bell Room, St Peter's Community Centre**

Signed

Date

Minutes were taken by Jenny Meteyard