

Hastings & Rother U3A

Minutes of Committee Meeting

held at 10.30 on Thursday 9th January 2020 at St Peter's Community Centre, Bexhill

Present

Robert Hadland (Chair)	George Webster (Vice Chair)
Ken Saunders (Business Secretary)	Jenny Meteyard (Minutes)
Josephine Noyce (Assistant Treasurer)	Lynda Wood (Groups)
Chris Legg (Membership)	Lesley Almond (general) <i>from 10.40</i>
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

Gail Oswald (Treasurer); Sue Deeks (Initial Enquiries), Carol Crossley (Venues), Barbara Spackman (Speakers)

2. Chairman

Robert informed the committee that Chris Legg, Membership Secretary, will be moving away from the area at some point this year. Robert made mention of Chris's contribution to the work of the committee and of his role as membership secretary, and added that a more formal tribute would be paid in due course.

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 28th November 2019 were agreed to be an accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

4. Matters arising (not covered in the agenda)

None.

5. General Reports

Chair

- **IT help from Bruce Henderson follow-up.** It was agreed at the last meeting that a small sub-group including Carol, George, Chris and Richard would meet after Christmas; this is in process and Robert hopes a report will be available for the next meeting.
- **Social prescribing.** The changes to Lorna Couldrick's letter which were agreed at the last meeting have been approved by Lorna, who will be taking this forward as a one-off project. Robert suggested that we should also produce a new local leaflet, including up to date photographs, and he will work with Sue and Chris on this.
- **Experiences of other larger U3As.** Lorna has suggested contacting Burgess Hill U3A, which is thought to have around 1000 members, to gain some ideas on how they deal with a larger membership. Robert said that at the last coffee meeting he had co-incidentally met two former members of Burgess Hill U3A who had been involved in running it, and who may have some useful insights.
- **Brief review of Christmas party.** It was agreed that it generally went well and the Quiz was very successful and well-organised, with good time-keeping and level of difficulty. 112 members attended (there was provision for 120). The quality of food was good but it was felt that another time there should be a better balance of savoury and sweet items (the only savoury was one very small sausage roll each). It was suggested that more varied refreshments could be provided if there was a slightly larger charge, perhaps £5 rather than

RH CC
GW CL
RC

LC RH
SD CL

RH

£3. We also need to ensure that next time everything is cleared up properly at the end.

Treasurer

In Gail's absence her report including accounts up to 31 December 2019 was circulated. Gail reported that we are currently running with a deficit of £7,843 but are still waiting for the Gift Aid payment, which she expects to be around £2,000. The application to open a new account at Lloyds Bank has been approved and the paperwork is currently being processed, and she hopes this will be completed by 31st January 2020. As one of the current signatories declined to give all the details required by the bank, there will only be four signatories for this account. The NatWest account will be retained for the moment although most money will be transferred to the new account, and the Theatre Account will also remain with NatWest. The next membership subscriptions will be paid into the new account.

It was commented that around 2/3 of the deficit was the result of the 30th Anniversary event. It was agreed that as much as possible had been done to reduce the reserves, including this and reducing membership subscriptions. The latter may well be encouraging more members to join, and this is highlighting a shortage of groups and convenors. Robert expressed thanks to Gail who has worked hard to set up the new Lloyds bank account

Membership Secretary

Chris reported that there are now 722 members.

Speaker Secretary

Robert reported that he met with Barbara Spackman with regard to the new August meeting, to be held on the 4th Monday of August. A speaker has been lined up who is a retired university lecturer and can offer a number of topics. The importance of having someone who is a good speaker – not necessarily the same as a lecturer – was agreed, but it can be difficult to predict. Barbara does hear each speaker before booking, but a change of venue or audience can make a surprising difference. Robert commented that Barbara manages to find a good range of speakers and topics and books them well in advance, and reminded the committee that the budget for fees had been increased. Speakers from within the U3A cannot charge a fee; other speakers can charge a fee but can also choose the fee to be paid to a charity of their choice. George wondered if a couple of meetings should be left open each year to give more flexibility to include highly current topics, but the general feeling was that having speakers booked well in advance provided more security, plus many speakers prefer this.

Website

Brian had sent the usual page visit statistics.

Business Secretary

- **Charity Commission.** Ken reported that he had discovered that not all the trustees were on the Charity Commission register (website); he is updating this and he will add this job to the Business Secretary's job description. This was previously in the Treasurer's job description. It was agreed that anyone who is co-opted during the year needs to be added to the Charity Commission register, but if not elected at the next AGM would need to be removed, along with any other trustees who are not continuing. Only the trustee's name is visible to the public; other details as given on the trustee forms are only visible to those who have access. Ken and to Gail were thanked for working to fill in some gaps.
- **Volunteer bulletins.** Ken receives bulletins from Rother Voluntary Action, of which we are a member, and wondered if these should be forwarded to the committee and perhaps at times to members, who may be interested in some of the volunteering opportunities. He does not receive the Hastings Voluntary Action bulletin although Lynda apparently does. It was agreed these might be of interest and Ken will forward to the committee.

KS

- **National U3A mailing** This is sent to U3A Chairs and Secretaries. There is some useful information, including the fact that Riviera Travel have a partnership with U3A and pay a commission on bookings to local U3As, which in future will be paid to the TAT to distribute. Ken also mentioned the 3rd June National U3A Day; at the last meeting it was suggested that we can hold a Showcase event to mark this.

KS

Groups Co-ordinator

- Lynda expressed concern regarding one group whose convenor does not appear to have renewed membership and has not responded to queries about this, or to requests to know who is in the group. It was agreed that a letter would be sent to follow this up.
- The question of venues for groups was briefly discussed: Lynda said that she is struggling to understand which groups are paying to hire venues and the details. She will contact some groups who appear to be paying, to try to establish what is happening. It was agreed that all groups who need to pay for venues and equipment (e.g. sports or safety equipment) should have the costs covered by the U3A; this can be agreed by Lynda as Groups Co-ordinator unless there are any doubts, in which case she can bring these to the committee. Groups should be encouraged to find free venues where possible, for instance some pubs or hotels allow free use of a room provided people purchase a drink.
- A few new groups are starting, or are possibilities. There have been enquiries about fitness groups. It was agreed that activities requiring a qualified instructor are probably not suitable for U3A groups and these activities are usually available elsewhere.

RH LW

Venues Co-ordinator

Carol is checking tea/coffee arrangements at the White Rock theatre. Robert will send members a reminder that the next speaker meeting is at the White Rock, and warning about parking difficulties.

CC
RH

Newsletter, publicity, SUN/Regional

The issues with newsletter printing are still being dealt with. Better quality paper is needed to improve the colour and clarity of photos.

6. Any other business

Robert commented that committee recruitment needed to be considered given that the positions of Chair and Business Secretary will become vacant at the next AGM in July, and as already mentioned, a new Membership Secretary will be needed when Chris moves. He asked the committee to think about possible candidates. Robert felt that it would be helpful to point out to potential trustees that some roles/responsibilities can be shared, and that some work previously done in full committee is now done by small sub-groups or at pre-meetings. Committee meetings have therefore become shorter (2 hours maximum) and more efficient. A potential trustee could be invited as observer to a committee meeting to see how things are run. U3A members do need to be aware that the organisation cannot function if the necessary roles are not filled. It was agreed that Robert will email the members as a whole.

RH

7. Dates/venues of future meetings

- 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