

## Hastings & Rother U3A

### Minutes of Committee Meeting

held at 10.30 on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020 via Zoom video-conferencing

#### Present

Robert Hadland (Chair)	George Webster (Vice Chair)
Ken Saunders (Business Secretary)	Jenny Meteyard (Minutes)
Gail Oswald (Treasurer)	Lynda Wood (Groups)
Josephine Noyce (Assistant Treasurer)	Carol Crossley (Venues)

*NB Database, Website and IT Administrators, Newsletter Editor and SUN Representative are not committee members but may send reports and/or attend meetings at times if appropriate, and receive the relevant paperwork.*

*Note: This meeting was held using Zoom video-conferencing during the Covid-19 pandemic and Government lockdown, when physical meetings were not possible.*

#### 1. Apologies for absence

Barbara Spackman (Speakers); Bruce Henderson (membership); Lesley Almond (general); Ginny Edwards (general, co-opted at last meeting); Mike Wilson

#### 2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020 were corrected to include Mike Wilson as attendee and were then agreed to be an accurate record. There were no matters arising which were not already covered in the agenda.

#### 3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising not covered by the agenda.

#### 4. General Reports

##### Report from Chair

This had been circulated before the meeting. Robert expressed thanks to Gail Oswald and Barbara Spackman for the very successful **Zoom Speaker Meeting** held on 22<sup>nd</sup> June, when London guide Ian Bevan gave an interesting talk on the Inns of Court, accompanied by slides. Around 80-90 members attended and there have been a number of complimentary comments received. There is interest in having Ian lead a physical guided tour of the Inns of Court in 2021 and David and Deborah Slim are getting in touch with Ian about this.

The Committee has tried to maintain a regular **dialogue with members** despite the difficulties and restrictions caused by the pandemic, and many appreciative comments have been received. There have been a few negative comments, mostly concerning subscriptions, and Robert feels there is a need to remind members positively of the careful review of this subject from last year, and to re-state the excellent value which H&R U3A provides to members. There have apparently been suggestions that those not on email should pay a reduced subscription, but it was agreed that this was not appropriate given that the costs for those not on email are actually higher, because of the need to communicate by post.

Robert was delighted to report that Tricia Jobling has volunteered to take on the role of **Initial Enquiries**. Jenny will check whether she wishes to be elected to the committee or remain as a non-committee member as in her Database (Beacon) role.

JM

**AGM.** This is the most important immediate topic for the committee. A sub-committee of Robert, George, Ken and Jenny had met the previous week to discuss the issue. Robert had circulated a report from this meeting, and a few further points and comments were added.

It had been agreed by the sub-committee that there is no realistic chance of holding the AGM on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020, partly because of likely non-availability of the venue for such a meeting, practical difficulties of giving sufficient notice to members, and likely continuing government restrictions on holding large gatherings, particularly for older age groups. It was therefore suggested that the AGM be rescheduled for the alternative date of Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October at St Peter's Community Centre, at a time to be agreed. This would conform with the constitutional requirement for the AGM to be held within 15 months of the previous one.

There is considerable uncertainty about future government advice on gatherings and it may still be impossible to hold a physical meeting on the proposed date, necessitating a Zoom meeting; or a physical meeting may be possible but only with very limited numbers. Either scenario would automatically exclude a large number of members. The sub-committee therefore recommended that proxy voting should take place, to allow the maximum participation by all members who wish to do so.

The October date would enable the necessary paperwork to be sent to members with the next Newsletter, which is scheduled for dispatch from the printer on or around 21<sup>st</sup> September, but could be a few days later if necessary. (21 days' notice is required for an AGM). The paperwork would include the following:

- Agenda
- Nomination forms
- Chair's Report
- Treasurer's report, including accounts for the year 2019-2020 and budget for 2020-2021
- Minutes of previous AGM held in July 2019 (for approval)
- Proxy voting forms

The following actions would be needed:

- A message to all members by email, or post where email is not possible, to clearly inform them that no meeting will take place on 27<sup>th</sup> July.
- Investigation as to availability of St Peter's Community Centre for 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020 at 2 p.m.
- Plans for a Zoom meeting (limited number of attendees), if a physical meeting is still not possible.
- Liaison with Rosemary Bartholomew about production and dispatch of the autumn Newsletters and accompanying AGM paperwork
- Preparation of the necessary paperwork as listed above.

Robert asked the committee members for their reactions to this. There was unanimous agreement that this represented the best way forward. It was agreed that proxy voting should be enabled whether or not some kind of physical meeting becomes possible. It was noted that if someone sends a proxy form but then attends the meeting, their proxy is simply revoked.

Carol commented that she has already tried to contact St Peter's Community Centre regarding bookings but has so far had no response; she may have more success now, with many lockdown restrictions easing on 4<sup>th</sup> July and venues starting to open.

Jenny had circulated a suggested draft proxy form before the meeting, and the content of this was agreed, although further work is needed on the format.

JM/KS

Ken raised the issue of **nominations for the committee**. It will be necessary to elect a Chair, a Vice Chair, Business Secretary, and one committee member, and to elect 3 members who were co-opted (Ginny Edwards, Bruce Henderson and Mike Wilson). Although Brian Gould is resigning as Web Administrator, this is not currently a committee role so does not require nomination or election.

Proxy forms would need to include the names of those nominated for election to the committee, so nominations would be required before these are sent. It was suggested that nomination forms could be sent now, along with the message cancelling the 27<sup>th</sup> July meeting, but Ken pointed out that membership renewal forms have been sent with a deadline of 14<sup>th</sup> August for renewals. Given that not all the current members will necessarily renew, particularly in the current circumstances, this means that by September there will be a new membership, and nominations should only be made by and from this membership.

RH

It was agreed that nomination forms could be sent after the renewal deadline (mid-August), but a plea for volunteers to fill the vacancies could be made earlier. Members would need clear information on exactly what roles are required. If necessary, any volunteers could be nominated by committee members. Although nominations are usually seconded, it was questioned whether a seconder is needed, as this is not stated in the constitution and not all organisations follow this system; it was agreed that the logistics would be easier if only a nominator was required.

If sufficient nominations are not received before proxy forms are sent, but further nominations are received by the time of the election at the AGM, candidates may be elected by those present at the meeting. The proxy may vote as he/she sees fit on behalf of those who have mandated him/her to do so.

It was therefore unanimously agreed that:

- Members will immediately be informed that the meeting proposed for 27<sup>th</sup> July is cancelled, and that the AGM will be convened for Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October at St Peter's Community Centre with proxy voting. The reasons for this will be included (the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting government restrictions/health advice).
- Depending on government advice at the time, the October meeting may be a physical meeting or a Zoom meeting, but in either case all paperwork as detailed above will be sent in advance and members will be enabled to vote by proxy.
- St Peter's Community Centre will be booked for this if possible.
- After mid-August, when membership renewals should be complete, nomination forms will be sent to all the membership (this will need to include a deadline which will enable nominations to be included in the proxy forms). This does mean that an extra mailing will be required; Ken volunteered to organise those going by post. Robert will ask Tricia to print out sets of labels for these.
- The remaining papers (as listed above) will be sent out with the Newsletter around 21<sup>st</sup> September, or at latest by the end of September.
- If necessary a sub-group can meet to ensure everything is on track.

RH

KS

CC

RH KS

KS

### Report from Treasurer

Gail had circulated the following report including attachments:

*I am pleased to advise that the year-end accounts to 30 April 2020 have been approved by the Examiner and the Certificate should arrive in the post shortly. A copy of the balance sheet is attached.*

*Also, I put in our Gift Aid claim and we very quickly received £1170.19. This is much lower than the previous year due to the big reduction in the membership fee for last year.*

*I have updated the Budget spreadsheet (attached) and suggest that it is circulated to the membership to help justify the increase in our membership fee.*

*Moving on to the current year, I am now using a running Balance Sheet and a copy is attached.*

*We have spent £100 on a 12-month Zoom subscription which I have placed under the heading of Venues as it is used to host various virtual meetings. Otherwise, very little expenditure has been incurred other than payments due to Head Office.*

*Renewal fees are already coming in direct to the bank account and, I am pleased to say, no renewal fees have yet been received into the old NatWest account.*

It was agreed that as part of the AGM paperwork, the Budget for 2020-21 should be sent to members together with the accounts for 2019-2020.

KS

#### **Report from Business Secretary**

Ken reported that Ian Packham (printer) had confirmed that the charges had been wrong and that H&R U3A had been overcharged. Ian offered either a refund, or for the amount to be deducted from the summer printing bill. Gail requested a refund which can be paid directly into the bank account, as this makes the accounts clearer. Ken will communicate this. It was agreed that in future Ken should see each bill before it is paid, to check that it is correct.

KS

#### **Report from Membership Secretary**

Bruce had sent a report stating that as at 30 June he had received 53 renewal applications. This compares with 68 recorded for the beginning of July 2019, which given that renewals are only just starting and there have been delays in some newsletters arriving, suggests that membership is holding up quite well. Access to the bank is working well. Bruce has not yet been able to meet with Richard Collisson to discuss IT; he has not yet bought a laser printer and at the moment is not sure if this is required, but time will tell.

#### **Report from Groups Co-ordinator**

Lynda reported that at the moment most groups are dormant. She has mentioned to convenors the possibility of using Zoom, but there has been little interest expressed so far apart from Paul Burns who is successfully using Zoom for playreading and novella reading groups. Lynda commented however that unless groups use Beacon or communicate with her directly she has little information on what may be happening. There are possible alternatives to Zoom, for instance Skype, which groups might prefer to use. It was therefore agreed that George, Gail, Lynda and Ken should jointly investigate different ways that groups might be able to get together and continue to function, and Robert suggested that they might consider writing a 400-word article for the next Newsletter. Gail also suggested that it might be possible to hold virtual coffee mornings via Zoom.

GW GO  
LW KS  
GO

#### **Message to convenors re Covid-19 advice**

Lynda has sent out the information and risk assessment sent by TAT, and convenors have been reminded that while under current guidelines up to 6 people can meet outdoors, there are a

number of issues to consider such as distancing, length of meeting, weather, toilets etc. If convenors or other members use U3A resources such as Beacon to communicate with groups to arrange gatherings or outings then these will be considered to be U3A meetings and must conform to government and U3A guidelines. If members organise gatherings that do not conform to guidelines then these should not be done under the U3A umbrella. It was agreed that Lynda and Robert will write to all members on this issue, not just to convenors.

LW RH

**Report from Venues Co-ordinator**

The Convenors' Tea scheduled to be held in June at the Victoria Hotel was cancelled, with the deposit being held by the hotel. Carol has written to St Peter's about potential dates but has had no response yet; she has also written to the White Rock and the dates have been reserved.

CC

**Report from Initial Enquiries**

Tricia Jobling has taken this over, and reported that there are two new members.

**Report from Speakers Secretary**

Barbara and Robert are looking at a possible Zoom Speaker Meeting for 24<sup>th</sup> August 2020 to be presented by H&R U3A member Norman Berdichevsky. It was queried whether any of the speakers already booked for the autumn and into 2021 would be able or willing to deliver their talk via Zoom. Ian Bevan has other talks and Gail will suggest to Barbara that perhaps he could be booked for 27<sup>th</sup> July. It was agreed that use of visual aids is important and also that some light-hearted talks might be welcome.

GO BS

**Newsletter & publicity, SUN & Regional information**

Rosemary already has some material for the next Newsletter in September. It was agreed that Robert and George (as prospective Chair) might jointly write the next message.

RH GW

**5. Any Other Business**

H&R U3A needs to vote at the National AGM (proxy).

RH

**6. Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting will be held via Zoom at 10.30 on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

GO

Signed

Date

*Minutes were taken by Jenny Meteyard.*