

Hastings & Rother U3A

Minutes of Committee Meeting

held at 10.30 on Thursday 28th May 2020 via Zoom video-conferencing

Present

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

Carol Crossley (Venues & Initial Enquiries) from 10.55

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)

2. Minutes of last meeting & any matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting held on 14th May 2020 were agreed to be an accurate record. There were no matters arising which were not already covered in the agenda. Robert thanked Carol for taking such excellent minutes at the last meeting.

3. Response from Third Age Trust re legal aspects of meetings

Ken had circulated a document containing advice from TAT regarding Annual General Meetings during this time, which is specific to our constitution. Regarding AGMs, the constitution states that:

“There shall be a quorum when at least 10% of the number of members of ‘The U3A’ is present at any General Meeting. If within half an hour from the time appointed for the meeting a quorum is not present, the meeting shall stand adjourned to a suitable day and time as the Executive Committee may direct, provided that 21 days’ notice is given to all members. If at the adjourned meeting a quorum is not present within half-an-hour of the time appointed for the meeting, the members present shall constitute a quorum”.

TAT’s advice was therefore that

“To take advantage of this you would need to advise your membership now that it is your intention to call the AGM but it being unlikely, given the lockdown, that you can achieve the quorum, then you will reconvene the AGM later in the year. It is important to keep a record of the decisions you make collectively and the current reasons (Government Advice Covid) for taking these actions”.

It was noted that a quorum is 10% of the membership, so around 75 members at present. It is highly unlikely that such a large meeting will be possible in July. At the last meeting it was agreed to postpone the July AGM to a provisional date of 26th October and Robert had drafted a message for the Newsletter to that effect.

George suggested that alternatively, following the constitution and TAT advice, the AGM should be called for July but if, as seems highly likely, a quorum is not obtained, it should then be adjourned to 26th October. If the meeting still cannot be held physically in October, or if it seems

likely that large numbers of members would not be willing or able to attend, provision would need to be made for participation in a different format. A Zoom meeting would not be possible for all members and could also throw up technical difficulties, but alternatives such as post/email and the use of proxies may be possible, so that only a small number of people need attend (and social distancing could be maintained if necessary) but members can vote on propositions, approve accounts and elect new committee members, and make any other comments. Although there is no provision for proxies within the constitution, larger charities and limited companies operate in this way and another U3A has recently held an AGM using proxies. It was noted that the number required for a quorum may change, given membership renewals take place in September, and in the current circumstances some members may not choose to renew.

It was therefore proposed by George and seconded by Gail that the AGM should be called for 27th July, with members being informed that as it is unlikely that a quorum can be obtained, the meeting is likely to be reconvened at a later date, with 26th October having been provisionally set aside. This was agreed unanimously by a show of hands.

It was agreed that the usual Notice and supporting documents (agenda, nomination forms for committee) should be sent for the July meeting. Ken will produce these to be sent with the newsletter. Membership renewal forms will be sent out at the same time. Robert will need to amend the Chair's message he had drafted for the newsletter and there will probably need to be an extra sheet to cover the AGM and associated matters so that members understand the rationale and do not feel they are being excluded from the AGM. Robert will circulate a redraft of his message and draft of the AGM information for approval. (If necessary, a small sub-group could meet via Zoom to discuss these).

KS
RH

Carol had circulated a list of proposed meeting dates for 2020-2021. Robert has spoken with Barbara Spackman (Speakers) to confirm that because of the pandemic and lockdown, all meetings are cancelled for the foreseeable future, which at present goes up to and including 28th September. He commented that given the nature of the pandemic, it is likely that groups such as ours may be among the last to be allowed to hold meetings. There would be no speaker meeting on 26th October since this will be replaced by the adjourned AGM, the time of which will be decided later: either 10.30 a.m. replacing the speaker meeting, or at 2 p.m. which is the usual time for the AGM. A venue will need to be booked for both AGM dates.

CC

5. Follow-up from printers re their account

Ken has been in touch with Ian Packham of A J & T Mailing regarding their charges for printing and distribution, but because of Ian's illness does not yet have an answer on this matter.

KS

6. Report from Treasurer re Zoom subscription

The Zoom Pro subscription has been set up; this costs £11.99 plus VAT per month, therefore costs £14.39 in total. It auto-renews but can be cancelled at any time, and uses a separate email address which is not used for anything else. This can be used for committee meetings and Gail pointed out that this is still cheaper than the £25 fee for meeting at St Peter's Community Centre. Gail has liaised with Paul Burns, who wishes to test the use of Zoom for two groups for a minimum of 3 months, although he is also investigating the use of alternatives. It was agreed that Paul could use the U3A account as a trial to run 2 groups for 3 months, when it will be reviewed to see how it is working and whether/how to go forward with this. If larger meetings are not possible for some time, it might be possible to hold speaker meetings via Zoom, although not all members would be able to access these. It had been suggested that other groups could use the same account for meetings but it is not clear that this is allowable, only one meeting can be held at a time, and it would be difficult for the committee to have an overview of who was using the account and for what purposes.

GO/PB

Lynda has not had any further enquiries about using Zoom for group meetings, although it is possible some groups may be organising this for themselves. It is thought around 80-90 people are on the Facebook group, but this is not very active.

7. Committee membership recruitment

Ken reported that Bruce (who replaced Chris Legg as Membership Secretary), George (appointed Vice Chair) and Mike and Ginny (both co-opted) will all need to be formally elected at the AGM. Nominations and elections are needed for Chair, Vice Chair and Business Secretary (all officers). George will stand as Chair and Mike is happy to stand as Vice Chair, but as yet there are no nominees for Business Secretary. This needs to be ‘advertised’ in the Newsletter with a brief description of what is entailed, but individuals can also be approached and encouraged to consider standing. Ken commented that it is basically a straightforward admin job and is not very onerous; he will circulate the description he has created. Three other roles need to be filled: Webmaster, Newsletter Assistant, and Initial Enquiries. It was agreed that Brian should be asked to produce a short piece outlining what is required as Webmaster.

RH/RB
KS
RH/BG

8. Equipment purchases for Membership Secretary

The following had been agreed at the committee meeting held on 20th February:

- *The Treasurer needs a U3A laptop and will have a new one; the old one will be given to Lorna for use at monthly meetings*
- *The Groups Co-ordinator should have a U3A laptop (new) rather than using her own*
- *Richard will cost the purchase of 2 new laptops and will also look into the best way to acquire the Office suite for these – possibly a corporate licence. Costings will be sent to the Treasurer for approval.*
- *Bruce, in consultation with Chris, will purchase a suitable mono laser printer.*

The Equipment Officer Ernie Grice needs to be kept informed of all changes in equipment owned by H&R U3A.

Bruce may also need a laptop; he will discuss his IT needs with Richard Collisson. Lynda will also contact Richard to establish if she will get a new laptop in time before Office needs renewing on her current laptop.

BH/RC
LW/RC

9. Date of Newsletter dispatch

The Newsletter will be sent out on or around 22nd June. Many articles have been included and the newsletter is complete apart from the Chair’s message, which needs revision as discussed above.

RH/RB

10. Subscription renewals and forms

Gail and Bruce have worked to update the forms based on the agreed £15 annual subscription. Those who join after 15th April 2021 will be charged £8, and the Associate membership charge will be £11, £6 if joining after April 2021. Light green paper will be used to differentiate the forms from the rest of the paperwork sent with the newsletter.

GO/BH

11. Any Other Business

None.

12. Date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held via Zoom on 2nd July 2020.

Signed

Date

Minutes were taken by Jenny Meteyard.