

Hastings & Rother U3A

Minutes of Committee Meeting

held at 10.30 on Thursday 13th August 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)
Mike Wilson (general)	Ginny Edwards (general)

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 when physical meetings were not possible under Government guidance.

Robert welcomed the committee to the meeting, particularly Ginny Edwards as this was the first meeting she has been able to attend.

1. Apologies for absence

Barbara Spackman (Speakers); Bruce Henderson (membership)

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 2nd July 2020 were agreed to be an accurate record; however Mike Wilson pointed out that on p3 para 2 he should have been named as a co-opted committee member who will need to be elected at the AGM, along with Ginny Edwards (co-opted) and Bruce Henderson (appointed to replace Chris Legg as Membership Secretary). The header should also have been altered from 28th May to 2nd July.

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.

Another **Zoom Speaker Meeting** was held in July, at which Ian Bevan gave an interesting account of the history of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. Considerably fewer members attended however (maximum 35) and in future a reminder email to members may be helpful. H&R U3A member Norman Berdichevsky is booked to speak via Zoom at our first ever August meeting on Monday 24th August, and members will be emailed accordingly, perhaps on the 17th.

Robert commented that **membership renewals** seem to be down on last year (but see Bruce Henderson's report below). Some members have cited a relative lack of activities, e.g. no opportunities for some groups to meet, and also the increase in the subscription from £12 to £15. The rationale for this may need to be explained again, and we may need to undertake a recruitment drive in the months ahead. Ginny suggested that given many groups have waiting lists, if members do not renew, their places should not be held for them and new people should be allowed to join the group in their place, when groups can meet again. It was agreed that a message should be sent to members reminding them to renew membership and pointing out that if their membership lapses then so does their group membership, and those who have renewed or joined will have priority. It was agreed that this message should be sent by Gail and Bruce.

GO/BH

There have been issues around the ongoing **Covid-19** pandemic. (see Groups Co-ordinator's report below).

A number of items had been circulated regarding the **AGM**, in consultation with the Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, including a timeline (see appendix). In addition to this, a membership renewal reminder will be sent to members in August, by email only. The August newsletter will contain a letter exhorting members to join the committee, particularly for someone to fill the role of Business Secretary.

There was a brief discussion on the format the AGM (Monday 26th October) can take, with various options:

- A small physical meeting in a Covid-secure environment, with a very limited number of people attending, and using proxies for those not attending,
- A 'hybrid' meeting combining a limited physical meeting with others attending via Zoom, and using proxies for those not attending,
- A small Zoom meeting for a limited number, using proxies for those not attending
- A large Zoom meeting (this can be up to 100) with the invitation link sent to all members who are on email, using proxies for those not attending.

It was noted that while Government guidance may change, at the moment a gathering of up to 30 people can be held in a Covid-secure environment (e.g. St Peter's Community Centre) but this is only with stringent social distancing and additional mitigating measures, and is not advised for 'vulnerable' people (including those over 70, even without additional health issues). Guidance can also change literally overnight. No decision was made on this.

Gail reported that Barbara Spackman had advised her that she has booked a speaker for Monday 26th. This is presumably at the usual time of 10.30, via Zoom. It was suggested that an AGM could be held before the speaker meeting, or perhaps after (in case the meeting over-ran). No decision was made on this but it now seems likely that the AGM will be held in the morning.

Robert also reported that he has been liaising with Battle U3A and they have swapped suggestions for speakers.

Report from Business Secretary

Ken stated that most issues had already been covered, but reported that the printer will need the bank details to refund the amount previously overpaid; once this is done the current bill can be settled. Most of his work otherwise has been in relation to the AGM. It was agreed that the documents will be finalised by a sub-group of Robert, George, Ken, Gail and Jenny.

GO

RH GW
KS GO
JM

Report from Treasurer

Gail had previously circulated the accounts/balance sheet. One cheque for £12 has not yet been presented to the bank. The outstanding invoice from the printers for £1360 will be paid once the refund is received.

GO

Gail suggested that in the current circumstances perhaps membership could be extended to run until January 2022, rather than renewals being due in September 2021. Some other organisations (e.g. National Trust) have done this. It was agreed that this could be considered next year.

Report from Membership Secretary

Bruce had sent the following report:

‘Following a sharp drop in the number of members renewing from the initial surge in July, the numbers renewing in recent weeks have levelled off. A small upturn this week probably reflects the message on the form "to be returned by 14th August".

In weeks since renewal was first invited, the numbers of renewals have been as follows: 54 - 80 - 81 - 50 - 27 - 25 – 38. Total so far 355, of a total number of current members 752, so not quite half-way.

According to Chris Legg's record, by this time last year, about 370 had renewed, so numbers are not that far down, which is remarkable, considering the lack of activity, i.e. reasons for the uncommitted to re-join. However, I would urge the Committee to re-think its current plan not to issue any reminders to renew subscription until 21st September. Last year, two reminders were sent out. One went with the newsletter around 20th August and the second by e-mail on 10th September, following the end of the subscription year. The positive effect of those reminders is clear from Chris' statistics.

As agreed earlier a renewal reminder will be sent by email (see above under Report from Chair).

Report from Groups Co-ordinator

A member has written to express concern that personal contact data is being misused to contact members for activities/groups outside the aegis of U3A. Members should not be contacted using personal data obtained from U3A for anything outside U3A, as they have not given consent for this. A message has been sent to convenors reminding them of this. Lynda has also circulated Government guidance on gatherings, to convenors and members. There seems to be reluctance in some quarters to accept the rule that people from different households can still only meet in groups of up to 6 outside, or, for certain activities, within Covid-secure public premises such as community halls, and it is thought that some groups may be meeting independently.

Ken, Robert and Lynda have recently received a 10-page document from the Third Age Trust with advice for U3A groups in relation to Government guidance. This will be circulated to convenors and is also available on the TAT website as a newsletter.

LW

It was agreed that convenors and groups should be encouraged to think about how they can start again as U3A groups. The committee must be informed when groups start again, and plans should be submitted to ensure they conform with Government/U3A guidelines and are Covid-secure; it was agreed that Lynda as Groups Co-ordinator in consultation with Carol as Venues Co-ordinator was best placed to vet any proposals and could give agreement or not, on behalf of the committee. Groups that have previously met in members' houses could perhaps consider public premises which are Covid-secure: for instance one group has proposed meeting in a restaurant. Walking groups should follow the Ramblers' Association advice and there is specific Government advice for sports activities. Visits could be made to public gardens in groups of 6 following social distancing guidelines.

Robert suggested that George and Lynda, with others if appropriate, could look at the whole topic of groups, how they might resume and how they might go ahead in future, including the point made earlier about not holding places for members who have not renewed. Apparently some U3As have specific New Members groups, and this could be considered. It was agreed that coffee mornings are still not practical as the venues still have too many restrictions.

GW LW
CC?

Paul Burns had sent a proposal for fortnightly online groups using a free Zoom account (limited to 40 minutes) which could use various available online resources as the basis for discussions. Groups would consist of 6 members. Paul does not wish to convene the groups himself but would be prepared to support others by collecting names of those interested, and helping anyone

prepared to act as a convenor become familiar with Zoom and Beacon. It was agreed that the proposals should be sent to members (who would reply to Paul) and could be taken further if there is sufficient response, including people willing to act as convenors.

LW

Gail reported that she has started a calendar for the U3A Zoom account so that she can keep track of meetings, although individuals log in and schedule their meetings. At present 3 groups are using this.

Report from Venues Co-ordinator

Carol reported that St Peter's Community Centre is now open, although with considerable restrictions and regulations in place. The big hall is limited to 47 (socially distanced). The White Rock is currently closed but has accepted provisional bookings for 2021.

Report from Initial Enquiries

Tricia Jobling has taken on this role, but as with her Beacon role is not a committee member. The committee expressed gratitude to her for taking this on. Tricia reported that she had only received one enquiry about joining U3A this month.

Report from Speaker Secretary

Gail has been informed by Barbara that the following have been booked to speak (via Zoom):

24 th August	Norman Berdichevsky (different topic to that advertised – BASIC English)
28 th September	Tony Harris (Churchill)
26 th October	Ken Brooks (Teilhard de Chardin)
23 rd November	Patricia Thompson (Flanders & Swann)

Newsletter & Publicity, SUN & Regional

Robert reported from Rosemary that Val Greenwood has volunteered to be Deputy Editor of the Newsletter. Val has previous experience of editing and using Publisher and the committee expressed their gratitude to her for taking this on.

5. Any Other Business

The Third Age Trust AGM will be held online on Tuesday 11th September at 11.15. Robert had previously circulated resolutions which included a proposal by Chipping Norton U3A that the membership fee for TAT should be increased from £3.50 to £4.50 per annum. The fee has not been increased for 10 years. Robert commented that expenses (e.g. Beacon) are rising considerably and may continue to do so, and that £4.50 seems a very reasonable sum. He therefore proposed that Hastings & Rother U3A should vote in support of this resolution; Gail seconded this and it was unanimously agreed by show of hands.

RH

6. Date of next committee meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 1st October at 10.30 via Zoom.

Signed

Date

Minutes were taken by Jenny Meteyard. The meeting closed at 12.20

Appendix – 2020 AGM Timeline

Date	Message/document	Contents	Communication channel	Notes
6 July	AGM postponed. Members informed	New date set for AGM Monday 26 October	Email where applicable, post where not	
13 August (Thursday)	Committee meeting (via Zoom) at 10.30am			Review of all items listed below
17 August (Monday)	Committee nomination forms sent to all members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation for committee nominations • Call for committee volunteers 	Post	AJ&T Mailing service
10 Sept (Thursday)	Deadline date for receipt of completed committee nomination forms		Completed nomination forms to Business Secretary by post or email	
21 Sept (Monday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autumn newsletter • AGM agenda • Details of nominations received • Chairman's report • Treasurer's report & Budget • Proxy voting form • Reminder to renew sub. if not done so, in order to allow voting 	<p>NB: see below – deadline for receipt of proxy votes to Business Secretary: Friday 16 October</p> <p>NB A 'contents' page giving a list of all documents to be included with the mailing.</p>	All documents posted by printer AJ&T	NB These should be sent by AJ&T to ALL members – including those who have not yet renewed membership by paying subscription
16 Oct (Friday)	Deadline date for receipt of proxy votes	As proxy votes are received, they should be scrutinised to ensure that voters are members who have renewed subs.		Liaison between Business Secretary & Membership Secretary
26 Oct (Monday)	AGM date			Time/location TBA. NB usually held p.m.