

**Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on
Monday 4 December 2023 at 2.00pm
at the Methodist Church Hall**

Present: Peter Halse, Richard Spoerry, Peter Searl, Kay Edge, Stuart Jones, Martin Long, Val Frood, Val Crawshaw-Gander, Jackie Moran

Minutes: Kay Edge

23/176 Chairman's Introduction

Peter Halse welcomed everyone to the meeting.

23/177 Apologies for Absence

Peter Williams sent apologies.

23/178 Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 6 November 2023

Approved.

23/179 Matters Arising

23/138 CPR/Defibrillator Training Workshop

The Training Workshop took place on 28 November, 1-3pm, at the Mountbatten Sports Hall (no charge), at a cost of £100; 15 members attended, including 11 group leaders and committee members. One person who had signed up was ill, another had a family emergency and there were three no-shows. It was a really helpful and stimulating session, and made attendees more confident about dealing with an emergency. Free tea, coffee and biscuits had been organized by Val C-G.

23/170 Tabletop Games Afternoon

Again, this took place in the Mountbatten Sports Hall, for no fee on this occasion, on 24 November, from 2pm onwards and was attended by 20 members who thoroughly enjoyed the occasion and the free tea and biscuits. Further afternoons are planned on Friday 26 January and Friday 23 February 2024; the charge for hiring the Hall will be £20 per session and attendees will be charged £1 (to include the cost of refreshments) and we will take a view if this fee is sufficient. Jackie Moran suggested we put out a notice so that people might turn up *before* the 2pm start to help set the room up, as this task shouldn't always devolve to the Events group. Martin Long will include this information in the January Bulletin. Val C-G reported she now had a short list of willing helpers.

23/173 Costing of 'Zero Value' Property Items

Stuart Jones had gone through the list of 'zero value' 'property' (which Peter S suggested should actually be termed 'equipment' – and he mentioned that the Charity Commission are actually happy with a 'zero' value). Stuart had come up with a figure of £700, a sum which will be included as a note at the bottom of the next annual accounts. Peter H felt this was an important exercise in case a member ever queried the value of items we hold.

23/180 Treasurer's Report

Peter Searl circulated the following figures:

Bank reconciliation on 30 November 2023: £3237.70.

Book figures: Brought forward 01.01.23 £3872.75; Receipts £5336.25; Payments £5971.30; Balance £3237.70.

Petty Cash: £60.

Receipts since last meeting: Subs (£45); Visitors (£6); Writing Group (£19.50); Knitting Group (£170); Bellringers (£14); Christmas Social (£500); **RWH Travel (£60).**

Payments since last meeting: Awliscombe (£30); Speaker (£62); Beehive (£100); Refreshments (£20.54).

The **RWH Travel** money had come in unexpectedly!

23/181 Secretary's Report

Kay Edge had forwarded an email from the Third Age Trust regarding workshops in December to all committee members in case anyone was interested in signing up. Val F had put the notice on the Website. The Trust is also running a Poetry competition and inviting members to submit original poems.

Our Public Liability licence expires on 31 December – this is provided free of charge by the Trust; Kay will make sure we have the necessary cover and paperwork.

She had found some old paperwork 'job descriptions' of committee members' roles (dating from about 2002, according to Stuart): see below at 23/192(1).

23/182 Membership Secretary's Report

Stuart Jones reported that we now have 291 members, with 52 new people joining us since 1 April. Attendance at the last Beehive meeting was 85 members and 3 visitors.

He said the membership card will go ahead in its present form, as will the application form for new members, but neither can be finalised until after the AGM in March.

23/183 Group Coordinator's Report

Peter Williams was stranded at home by the floods and there was nothing to report.

23/184 Webmaster's Report

Val Flood observed that many u3as published their committee minutes on their Websites, so as to be available to all members. Currently ours are only seen by the committee and group leaders. It was felt this would be a useful thing to begin doing, and she will post them in the New Year (November and December's minutes) and henceforth each month, but removing the earlier one each time (so a total of only two lots of minutes on the Website at any one time). Martin will put a Notice about this in the next Bulletin, and it will then no longer be necessary to email minutes to group leaders (though group leaders not online will still need paper copies).

23/185 Programme Secretary's Report

Val C-G reported that a problem had occurred with last month's speaker, who'd insisted he needed no technical help and sadly proved to be quite inaudible. In future she, and Stuart, who liaises beforehand with speakers about the technical aspect of their talks, will insist speakers go along with our tech support, mics, etc.

Richard Spoerry asked if speakers were aware that the Beehive is quite a large hall and Val confirmed she always tells them.

23/186 Publicity Report

Martin Long had circulated the December draft Bulletin to the committee before this meeting, and thanked those who had responded with suggestions and corrections. It can now go out as soon as possible. There will be a Bulletin in January, and he would appreciate items being sent to him in good time, and a Newsletter in February. The Bulletin is generally a four-page format but the March one may have to be longer in the run-up to the AGM. He will get back to 'normal' publicity duties in the New Year, including a drive for more new members.

Peter H thanked Martin for all his excellent work, which obviates the need to send out a stream of emails to members to let them know what is going on.

23/187 Events Group Report

Jackie Moran reported that plans were well in hand for the Christmas Social on 13 December; 57 tickets have been sold, and we are well within budget; she has bought raffle prizes (budget £25, spent £17.40) so there is money over for paper napkins etc. She is aware that the Events group need to more aware of the amounts that are spent. The group is meeting this Friday to discuss final arrangements. Richard has the drinks organized and will collect the glasses from Lauraine Etheridge.

23/188 Network Coordinator's Report

Richard Spoerry had nothing to report.

23/189 Interest Groups Survey

A draft of the survey questions had been circulated to the committee by Richard, although this won't be the final format – Val F is working it into a form that can be easily used and sent out electronically. She showed a sample on her phone and it was agreed she would email this out to the committee as a test run. Some questions are yes/no; some need a longer answer or you need to click on a link to receive more information. It was agreed it should be kept as simple as possible.

Richard felt some members might be happier with a paper copy – which could be distributed at the Beehive meetings – as they might not have printers – but there is then the question of how to gather the information back and how to collate it. The answers (email or paper) would be anonymous. He would be happy for people to return the survey to his house, or to other committee members. Group leaders should be involved so they can ask their members to take part.

Richard, Jackie and Val will continue working on this and come back to the committee with further proposals.

23/190 Suggest Roles for Committee 2024-25

Peter Searl had circulated a paper detailing the roles on the committee that are required for 2024-25 and what he felt needed to be added in the way of new committee members – basically a ‘Communications’ person (to send out all the paperwork to members, including non-computer users, update member lists, look after print requirements and monitor the u3a email inbox) and an ‘Events’ coordinator (who would oversee the Events sub-committee and represent it on the main committee, bringing forward proposals for future events, monitoring progress and seeking approval for expenditure).

As regards the other roles on the committee, Richard Spoerry is willing to stand for Chairman, Peter Searl (Treasurer), Kay Edge (Secretary and Minutes) and Martin Long (Publicity and the Bulletin) are happy to go on with their roles for the next year, and Val Frod (having served for six years) is willing to be coopted to continue as Webmaster. Peter Halse offered to take over as Membership Secretary (as Stuart is retiring). Val C-G and Jackie Moran are not yet up for re-election; Jackie is possibly interested in taking over from Peter Williams as Groups Coordinator but needs to talk to him about the details. The Events group are meeting on Friday and will discuss the Events coordinator role.

A vice-chairman would certainly be useful, and as regards the Network Links role, Richard would go on doing it until someone can be found to take over.

It is certainly worth saying repeatedly to the membership that more help is needed to keep the committee flourishing and this should be mentioned regularly at Beehive meetings and by group leaders to their members and by committee members to members they know. Martin will put something in each of the next Bulletins and tell anyone interested to contact us via the general u3a email; Peter H said he was happy for his email address to be a direct contact too.

23/191 Interest Group Matters Workshop

Jackie Moran had attended a Trust workshop on Interest Groups, circulated a report and said that it had been a very interesting and useful experience. Many of the attendees were group coordinators or group leaders, and almost all said they used Beacon and now found it useful, although it had been clunky to begin with. She felt its use of encrypted data would be invaluable, and mentioned that an ‘Introduction to Beacon’ was being run by the Trust in January; she will send links out to the committee. The idea of STAR for events was a good idea (Small Tasks As Required), as calling members who helped out ‘Stars’ might incentivise them to offer their services! Also CAMEO (Come And Meet Each Other): it is always worth reminding members that u3a has a lot to offer. Peter Halse said we should keep all these useful ideas on the table.

23/192 Any Other Notified Business

1. Peter H and Stuart had suggested committee members might usefully revisit or update/rewrite their 'job descriptions'. A couple of people had sent theirs to Kay, and she said she would await updated information from the rest of the committee in order to have this safely on file for future use.
2. Richard was concerned about disabled access at the Beehive. It was felt the fire exit door on to the car park might usefully be opened (and guarded by a committee member) just prior to and just after our Beehive meetings. He offered to contact Beehive manager Shaun to ask about this. NB The Disabled Parking bays are at the other end of the car park, which might also be worth querying._

23/193 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 3 January 2024 at 2.00 pm, in the Methodist Hall.

Peter Halse thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 3.30 pm.
