

**Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on
Wednesday 3 January 2024 at 2.00pm
at the Methodist Church Hall**

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

Minutes: Kay Edge

24/001 Chairman's Introduction

Peter Halse welcomed everyone to the meeting, wished us well for 2024 and thanked everyone for all the hard work they do both individually and as a team.

24/002 Apologies for Absence

None.

24/003 Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 4 December 2023

Approved.

24/004 Matters Arising

23/187 Christmas Social

Peter H thanked Richard Spoerry for deputising for him as MC at this event, which we all agreed had been very successful and enjoyable, with thanks due to everyone who helped it run smoothly. See 24/012 for further details from the Events group about the arrangements. Peter Searl asked that Peter H write a letter of thanks to June Brown who has done so much over the years to help set up and organize events (she has recently resigned from the Events group).

23/189 Interest Groups Survey: update

Richard, Jackie Moran and Val Frood have been collaborating on the best way to put this survey out, to elicit the maximum response, and to whittle it down so it is not too onerous to complete. Richard asked if the committee needed to see the final version before it is released; Peter H suggested he send it to them and they can respond as needed. There was much discussion about methodology – do we send it out by email, will members respond, would paper copies be needed for those who can't or won't reply online, should paper copies be collectable from one of the committee's houses and/or be given out at the Beehive (which could happen when Kay Edge greets and ticks off attendees). It should not be in PDF format online as it's not editable, but as a Word attachment instead. Anonymity was discussed but the general feeling was that it would be more useful to know who the respondee was, particularly if they came up with negative (or constructive!) comments. The hope was that it could be sent out before the next committee meeting; the team were having a further discussion after today's meeting.

23/190 Committee Roles

Only Jackie and Val C-G will not need re-electing at the March AGM as they have yet to complete their three-year term; the rest of the committee who wish to remain in their current positions or take on new roles will need a proposer and a seconder. We are legally obliged to give notice of our AGM three weeks ahead of time, and to have received nominations for committee members four weeks before the event. Martin Long is about to put out the January Bulletin, which will mention the forthcoming need for new committee members to keep our u3a buoyant and viable, with particular reference to the suggested 'new roles' of Communications Secretary and Events Leader.

23/192(2) Beehive Disabled Access

After the last committee meeting Richard spoke to Shaun, the Beehive manager, about having the exit door to the car park open for 15-20 minutes before the meeting to enable easier access for anyone with mobility issues (and so people can leave that way too). He perfectly understood the position and Richard will be responsible for monitoring the door at the next monthly meeting.

24/005 Treasurer's Report

Peter Searl circulated the following figures:

1. Reconciliation on 31 December 2023

Bank £2,392.76

Books

BF 01.01.23 £3,872.75

Receipts 5,534.25

Payments 7,074.82

Balance £2,332.18

Unpresented cheques: 804 £33.18; 807 £27.40

Petty cash £60.00

2. **Receipts since last meeting:** Subs (£10); Bellringers (£28); Christmas Social (£160)
3. **Payments since last meeting:** First Aid Training (£100); Awliscombe (£30); Refreshments (£4); Honiton Methodist Church (£242); Christmas Social (£628); Beehive (£100)
4. The Christmas Social produced a surplus of £32.
5. During 2023 payments exceeded receipts by £1,540. This points to the need for an increased membership fee for 2024/25.
6. For 2019-20 the standard membership fee was £13. Since April 2020 the standard fee has been £10. The reduction was designed to reduce the reserves carried forward.

Year Ending	31/12/19	31/12/20	31/12/21	31/12/22	31/12/23
Balance	£5,095	£4,875	£4,566	£3,933	£2,392

7. Have bookings been made for Beehive Meetings for 2024 and has a hire fee been agreed?
8. Following the committee's recent decision about "property" values I recommend that we delete from our finance policy the sentence:

The value of all assets is estimated by straight-line depreciation over four years.

9. Similarly I have now deleted from the 2015 Treasurer's Job Description the phrase: *prepare depreciation recommendations for committee.*
 10. I have checked that Alison Tucker is willing to continue as Independent Examiner of our accounts.
 11. Full accounts for Year ended 31/12/23 will be brought to the next committee meeting together with a draft budget for 2024.
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24/006 Secretary's Report

Kay Edge had contacted the Third Age Trust about our Public Liability insurance cover, which expired on 31 December. She received a reply that she was 'in a queue' for an answer, but actually received one while she was at the committee meeting, with the necessary paperwork.

She has received updated 'job descriptions' from most of the committee and the rest are 'on the case'!

In answer to Peter S's query about the Beehive bookings and fees, Kay agreed our preferred dates with Caroline Retter for 2024 and 2025 some months ago, and will now contact them about any increases they might be proposing so Peter can work on his budget. As the hall hire charge was only increased last summer it is to be hoped no change is imminent. Peter H mentioned the long-standing unhelpful attitude of the local council to the Beehive and hopes this will change now new personnel are in place.

24/007 Membership Secretary's Report

Stuart Jones reported that we now have 294 members and he had just sent the TAM return in (238 members receive it; NB for the return we make to the Third Age Trust every April!) Martin asked if members had to let Stuart know if they didn't want to receive this publication – the answer is yes, but it had not happened lately!

Stuart asked Peter S to check about the card colour for the next set of membership cards.

24/008 Group Coordinator's Report

Peter Williams said he was trying to get his paperwork in order before standing down from this role in March, particularly the Risk Assessment sheets and the lists of group members. The Lunch Group seemed to need advice about their Risk Assessment (they go to a different pub each month) and had asked for a sample from another group to help them (which could be anonymised).

24/009 Webmaster's Report

Val Frood had nothing to report.

24/010 Programme Secretary's Report

Val C-G has lined up a fascinating-sounding speaker for the AGM about dogs being able to detect illnesses; his publicity says he talks for 45-60 minutes but she guaranteed it wouldn't be that long! The talk will take place *after* the official business is over.

Stuart said the January speaker (about Valentine's Day music) does not want any projection facilities, but will wear a lapel mike and play music, from CDs and live if a keyboard can be provided. Peter W said Janet Young had a suitable 'table' electronic keyboard and he will ask if we can borrow it.

24/011 Publicity Report

Martin Long had circulated the January 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 no Bulletin in January, a Newsletter in February and the next Bulletin will be in March. Submissions to Howard Lyne for the Newsletter should be sent by no later than Sunday 28 January

24/012 Events Group Report

Further to the praise of the **Christmas Social** at 24/004, Val C-G summarised the pluses and minuses – it had gone really well but there was too much food (although none of it was wasted) and no non-gluten option; she will write and thank Mary Bolshaw and also Red Stitches (the band) who were very good, although it was a shame members seemed more intent on the quiz than the music; in future the quiz should be timed not to clash with the live entertainment. Jackie said a second (or even third) kettle was vital to ensure a steady supply of tea and coffee. In future the Mackarness Hall booking must be paid in advance (the administrator has changed) and it should be noted the Fire Exit door cannot be closed from the outside. Val has a list of STARS (helpers), five of whom worked well to make the catering run smoothly.

Richard brought up the proposed **Pickleball taster session**, scheduled for Tuesday 13 February at 10am – six members have expressed an interest in trying it out. (There is also a meeting on Friday 12 January at 2pm at the Beehive, organized by June Brown and himself, for anyone who would like more information.) Two courts would probably be needed for the February session and Richard asked if the committee would fund the hire charge of £13.60 for each court for an hour (four people play at a time) and this was agreed, as a way of trying to form a viable Pickleball group.

24/013 Network Coordinator's Report

Richard Sperry had nothing particular to report, although he had circulated a 'Pilot Council' report for general interest.

24/014 Any Other Notified Business

1. **Storage:** Val C-G has cleared out her large garage where there is now space to store u3a equipment, which will be really useful (both Peter S and Stuart have boxes they would like to clear out, and Kay is housing the group's Gazebo in an outhouse that can be damp). Richard mentioned that he is now storing a large number of wineglasses which groups are welcome to borrow if they are putting on social events.
 2. **Beacon:** Jackie had attended a u3a workshop which mentioned how valuable Beacon can be in streamlining our data and as a way of sending out information to members; as it is encrypted it should be secure, and costs £1 per year per member. Stuart was concerned that using it would then mean we would cease to be managers of our own membership data, and would become users of a remote system with our data being managed by a third party hosting service. Both of them, and possibly Peter S, are intending to take part in a Beacon workshop on 29 January and will then come back to the committee with further information.
 3. **An E-card from Susan Parker**, from the Regional Network, was kindly sent to Peter H and Kay, which was intended as her greeting and good wishes for 2024 to all members. As these minutes are now available to members on the website it was not thought necessary to actually distribute it, but just to mention it.
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24/015 Date of Next Meeting

Monday 5 February 2024 at 2.00 pm, in the Methodist Hall.

Peter Halse thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 3.15 pm.
