

## SOUTH LAKES U3A

### Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on

July 11<sup>th</sup> 2023 at 10.00am at Abbott Hall Social Centre

1 **Present:** Martin Douglas (chair), Samantha Ridgway (vice chair), Mavis Crawford (secretary), Chris Guy (assistant secretary), Jeff Hickin (treasurer), Derek Ridgway (assistant treasurer and monthly meeting organiser), Cath Sharpe (membership secretary), Pat Dalzell (assistant membership secretary), Ann Quintilla (newsletter editor), Colin Edwards (Beacon), Peter Bunney (website manager), Anne Urquhart (minute secretary) ,

2 **Apologies for Absence:** Nil

3 **Minutes of the last Meeting held on June 13<sup>th</sup> 2023:** approved

4 **Matters arising:** (4) Martin Douglas asked about stopping automatic TAM . 1 person has requested to continue to receive the magazine.

(5) Colin Edwards confirms that the beacon email issues have been resolved.

(10) Colin Edwards has enquired from other u3a groups about contact details for publication. Several have a dedicated mobile phone to be passed around as necessary; several have a virtual telephone number which can be diverted to a nominated phone. After discussion, the committee decided to use a mobile phone donated by Samantha and Derek Ridgway who are happy to field enquiries, and will pass on the phone when away. **Action SR/DR**

5 **Correspondence:** Chairman has read the TAT board meeting minutes, and confirms the only resolutions for the AGM in September are not relevant to SLu3a and he will abstain from voting on either issue.(needs of smaller groups, and marketing)

Secretary has received a charity commission email and is dealing with it.

There has been a query from a member who wonders if there is a 'laughing therapy' group; there is not, but Samantha Ridgway has noted the query which may be relevant to one of the groups already in place..

6 **Finance Report :** financial report for June circulated in advance. Treasurer made the committee aware that there is a date discrepancy in the year end

account balances taken at 11.4.23 and he will note this shortened accounting period on the 2023-24 accounts.

Jeff Hickin does not yet have full access to the deposit account and he is unable to clarify the balances, so there appears to be a discrepancy which he will be able to correct when he has access to all the accounts.

Reserves of 6 months operating costs (approx. £10,000.00) are at the moment too low. This varies during the year but need increasing to avoid vulnerability. The £9.00 annual fee does not contribute to SLu3a finances (£4 capitation, £3.35 TAM, £1.00 beacon, £0.5 DD= £9.00). TAM costs will be reduced, but after discussion the committee decided to consider increasing annual fees. Treasurer will provide a forecast for the year at the next meeting **Action JH**

Derek Ridgeway pointed out that room hire fees are due to increase substantially in October, some groups have been making a loss since Covid due to lower attendances and SLu3a has been carrying the extra costs. After discussion the committee decided to propose an increase of attendance fee from £1.50 to £2.00 from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023. Martin Douglas will send an email regarding the increase in both room fees and proposed increase in annual fees to the membership. **Action MD**

It is difficult to distinguish between affiliated, concessional and late - joining members in the accounts as they are all set at £5.00. Proposed that people who join after April 1<sup>st</sup> be charged £6.00 to simplify identifying them the following September when they will pay the whole year's annual fee. **Action CS/PD**

Historically income from groups has been recorded as 'net' with minimal expenses deducted. Guidelines state that it should be recorded as 'gross' and expenses noted separately, but as the difference is minimal, it will continue to be recorded as 'net', this approach approved by the committee.

The donation to the air ambulance (donations for refreshments at the monthly meetings) should not appear in the accounts. Agreed the assistant treasurer would send the collected money separately. **Action DR**

At present the online bank account has a single sign off, after discussion it was agreed that Derek Ridgeway and Martin Douglas be set up as a 2nd signers for e-banking, (NB approval via the app) **Action JH**

7 **Membership Report:** 1357 members. Renewal letters are ready to be sent out in August **Action CS/PD**

677 members now pay by DD, but there are still about 181 Standing Orders in place in spite of several years of trying to persuade members to change to a different method of payment to simplify any annual membership charge change.

- 8 **Vice Chair Report:** All group coordinators have been contacted for inclusion in the information fliers containing contact details. These will be prepared for display on the open morning and monthly meetings, for those who have responded (about 1/3<sup>rd</sup>). These fliers are for members only, whereas the handbook entries are for marketing to the general public. **Action SR**

Suggestion that the handbook includes instructions for members to contact coordinators via the website, explaining the 'eagle' symbol used to send the email to the correct contact. **Action AQ**

Science and Technology group have requested a table space at the open morning although the group appears to have closed. Pat Dalzell clarified that a coordinator had stepped forward again, and expects support every meeting from one of the group.

- 9 **Beacon Update:** A membership card for 2023-4 has been designed and agreed with the membership team together with accompanying text, which will include the web site address and the access credentials for the members' area as suggested at the June meeting. The membership team are trialling it to make sure that it can be used satisfactorily.

There is now demonstration Beacon site for this purpose, and it may have some uses as new facilities are introduced or if we need to make use of features that we have not needed thus far.

550 u3a groups nationally use beacon, many more fully than SLu3a. The latest Beacon news indicates that the next enhancements due out soon include an upgrade to the email capabilities, which will provide an improved editor with spellcheck, an improved token selection system for the delivery of personalised emails and the ability to paste images into emails. The Third Age Trust's Digital Strategy has been updated, one interesting intention is to investigate the "feasibility and scope of integrating the membership management system (Beacon) and the website platform (SiteWorks)". SiteWorks is a collaborative development intended to eventually replace Site Builder.

- 10 **Newsflash and annual handbook Update:** Ann Quintilla notes the handbook needs to be ready for printing by 16<sup>th</sup> August, 12500 to be printed. She has had an unusually poor response to her email to all coordinators. It

became apparent that the similar email from the vice chair for the same information for 'advertising fliers' has caused confusion and irritation for some coordinators. It was agreed that the chairman will email coordinators explaining the different purposes of each piece of information, and the importance of both, to try to clarify the situation. Ann Quintilla will list all the groups in the handbook, but note 'no report received' where necessary. **Action MD**

Ann Quintilla asked what generic email to include in the handbook-suggest use the same as on the website <https://u3asites.org.uk/south-lakes/home>. AQ suggests [info@southlakesu3a.org.uk](mailto:info@southlakesu3a.org.uk) would be a suitable address, and if no one else is prepared to, she is able to deal with any enquiries that result

- 11 **Website Update :** The response to the advert for a new website manager resulted in 4 queries. Peter Bunney has started to hand over to Judith Warren who already has website experience. Martin Douglas suggests she be invited to the September committee meeting., and that she be introduced to Ann Quintilla as they will be working together for the handbook and newsflashes. Samantha Ridgway suggested it is important that a deputy is identified at this point (succession planning), but Peter Bunney objected to this, feeling it is better just to introduce one person at this time to the role. He plans that she has full access to the website with immediate effect. **Action PB/AQ**
- 12 **Monthly meetings:** Derek Ridgway has 3 meetings booked and confirmed for autumn, and well ahead with 2024 bookings. Martin Douglas suggests advertising the monthly meetings at the open morning. The singing group has already offered entertainment at AGM in May 2024. **Action DR**
- 13 **Open Morning Wednesday September 6<sup>th</sup> 10-12am Town Hall:** Mavis Crawford and Chris Guy have responses from 30 groups., they will be in touch with Debbie at the town hall to confirm arrangements of tables, and will be organising the team to do refreshments. 6 people need trained for fire evacuation, and an extra 4 committee members will be required. Advertising in the Westmorland Gazette and radio Cumbria discussed, posters to be distributed by committee members **Action MC/CG**
- 13 **AOB:** Nil

Date of next meeting: **September 12<sup>th</sup> 2023**

10am at Abbott Hall Social Centre

