

**MINUTES OF THE 109<sup>th</sup> COMMITTEE MEETING OF STOKE-ON-TRENT SOUTH u3a,  
HELD IN METHODIST CENTRAL HALL, LONGTON, AT 2pm ON THURSDAY 9<sup>th</sup>  
FEBRUARY 2023.**

**PRESENT**

Andrew Devin	Chairman
Keith Ward	Vice-Chairman
Lynne Stevenson	Treasurer
Alan Stevenson	Membership Officer
Kevin Ford	Deputy Treasurer
Beverley Maher	Entertainments' Co-ordinator
Phil Rowley	Publicity Officer
Joe Neilson	Committee Member
Diane Ellis	Catering Officer

**1. APOLOGIES**

None

**2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the last committee meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2023 were approved, and signed by the Chairman as an accurate record.

**3. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

**4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

a General

The Chairman had received an email from Bruce Evans, the acting Secretary of the Neighbourhood Link Group, expressing his sadness regarding Fay Howell's passing. The Chairman added that Bruce held Fay in high regard, and made the point at meetings that her report was again the first to be submitted.

b u3a Trust Matters

(i) An email had been received from the Company Secretary encouraging members of branch committees to consider applying for the vacancy of West Midlands Regional Trustee. The closing date for application being 15<sup>th</sup> February. No committee member expressed an interest in the post.

(ii) A second email was received from the Company Secretary informing the committee that a new portal was imminent. It will permit branches to update details of committee members whenever necessary. Allocation of account, and log in details would be sent to branches before the end of March.

**5. BUSINESS SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Contributions to agenda items were made by all present.

a Correspondence

An email detailing current funding opportunities had been received from the Council's Community Section. Grants relating to accessing business services, and a mental health fund were not considered relevant to the branch.

- b AGM Matters  
 (i) AD attached two relevant documents to the agenda for committee members to peruse prior to the meeting. The first document related to the Invitation Letter, to be issued to all members, advising them that the AGM would take place on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023. The Invitation also contained the agenda for the meeting, thus obviating the need for the extensive administrative effort and cost involved in a follow-up letter.  
 (ii) The second document related to an Application Form for vacant committee positions. A brief description of the roles and expectations was also included.

Both documents accorded with the obligations contained within the Branch Constitution. The committee consequently approved their issue to members, and to be distributed with the Annual Membership Application Forms.

LS/AS

- c (c) Contact with City Council Community Section  
 Publicity Officer (PR) confirmed that he had emailed Kevin Hawkins in the Council's Community Section, requesting that future correspondence and contact with the u3a should be routed through him.

**6. TREASURER'S REPORT**

- a Treasurer, LS, presented a Statement of Income and Expenditure as at 7<sup>th</sup> February 2023. Details were as follows:

	£	
Current	-1,153.95	Balance 2022/23
	17,942.05	B/F from 2021/22
	<b>£16,788.10</b>	<b>TOTAL BALANCE</b>

- b LS stated that we continue to have a deficit for the current year, largely due to low attendance. She did however note that there was an improvement relative to the previous month, due to the receipt of some £268 in respect of Gift Aid.

- c Take up of TAM  
 The matter of the u3a Trust increasing the cost of TAM per member from £3.35 to £3.60 from April 2023, was again discussed. This cost has always been funded by the branch, but AD mentioned that other u3a branches had decided to commence charging members. After discussion, the committee decided to continue funding the magazine. It did however ask AS to include a sentence within the 2023/24 Membership Application Form requesting members not to tick the relevant box if they have no interest in receiving the magazine. This would save the Branch £3.60 per member. AD agreed to reinforce the request by inserting an article in the Feb/March Newsletter.

AS

AD

- d Annual Subscription Fee  
 Due to it being an AGM matter, the proposed value of the Annual Subscription fee is a discussion item at each February meeting. After lengthy debate, the Committee accepted the proposal of LS that the fee should remain at £10 for a further year.

- e BM raised a question as to how much the branch should be paying to speakers who do not charge a specific fee. The committee concluded that the value would be left to the discretion of LS and BM.

**7. MEMBERSHIP OFFICER'S REPORT**

AS reported that at the date of the meeting, the number of members was 426, this was an increase of 10 relative to January 2023.

**8. GROUPS CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT**

The report was delivered by various members of the committee.

Computer Group

- a JN reported that he was pleased with the attendances at Longton Library, with up to 8 members attending. The issue with poor internet reception had generally been resolved, via the personal purchase of a mobile router, and obtaining a data sim card from the Library.

b Group Leader's Information Pack

AD reported that Deputy Co-ordinator, TR, had handed over the pack just prior to the meeting. The matter therefore needs to be deferred until the next committee meeting. LS and AD will examine the contents of the pack.

**AD/LS**

c Incident Report Form

AD confirmed that he had arranged the completion of an Incident Report Form relating to an injury sustained by a member of the Table Tennis Group. A copy has been provided to LCH for completeness of their records.

d Parchment Craft and Beading groups

The joint leader of the Parchment Craft and Beading groups had informed AD that their meeting venue, Red House, was to close with a final meeting date of 9<sup>th</sup> March. Both groups are very small but would like to continue and have suggested LCH as a venue. The committee was however a little concerned about the financial impact of the two groups, meeting in total three times each fortnight. LS agreed to discuss the matter with the joint leaders.

**LS**

- e AD explained that he had received a request from a student at Staffordshire University who was undertaking a research project into the experiences of older adults. The student asked whether we could advertise within our Newsletter the opportunity for members to take part in the research. The committee had no objections, but AD stated that he would first await confirmation that the research had been approved as being ethical.

**AD**

**9. ENTERTAINMENTS CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT**

a Future Bookings

(i) 23/02/23: Well-known Local Historian Mervyn Edwards, will present a talk about The History of Longton Park.

(ii) 30/03/23: Jack Holmes from Green Doctor who will provide advice on energy saving.

(iii) 27/04/23: Rachel Hawkins will talk about "The British Red Cross."

b Business Card Update

JN distributed a sample card that the committee found acceptable.

**10. PUBLICITY OFFICER'S REPORT**

PR confirmed that he sent publicity information on 17<sup>th</sup> January to Malcolm Swann at the Pensioners Convention, (having previously spoken to Cliff Hathaway). Unfortunately, no-one appeared to have opened the email. PR has subsequently spoken to a member of the admin staff who acknowledged the oversight and promised to include a whole page in their April Newsletter. PR has also provided a general narrative about Stoke-on-Trent u3a, and confirmed that he will be speaking at the May Convention Meeting.

PR concluded by stating that he had sent an updated Activity Schedule to Trade Local.

**11. CATERING**

DE considered that since the April monthly meeting would precede the King's Coronation, she thought it would be appropriate to provide cake that is known to be the King's favourite. The committee was supportive of the proposal.

DE

**12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

a AD raised the question of the Coalfields Regeneration Trust Logo still being shown on many of the branch documents. A grant was received from the Trust in 2011 and was tied to specific equipment. Much of this equipment has either been disposed of, or has a written down value of zero, therefore all obligations to the Trust have ceased. The committee agreed to remove the logo from all branch documents.

AD  
AS  
PR

b PR explained that he had amended the branch publicity flyer, such that less ink would be used when printing. LR noted that the picture of the walking group was a very old one. Accordingly, AD agreed to provide PR with a current group picture.

AD

**13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

9<sup>th</sup> March 2023

The meeting was formally closed at 3.50 pm.

Chairman: *Andrew Devin*

Date: *13<sup>th</sup> April 2023*