

SUDBURY GROUP OF THE THIRD AGE TRUST

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday 8th August 2023

Present: Brian Orton, Tony Lee, Ian Mathews, Richard Thomas, Bruce Clegg, Brian Hemmings, Colette Bentley, Jennie Leech, John Freeborn, Nicola Godwin, Derek Connah, and Terry Straight.

1. **Apologies** - Dorothy Beal, Anita Tuddenham
2. **Proposal to co-opt Derek Connah and Terry Straight to the Committee.** Proposed by Tony Lee, seconded by Brian Hemmings. All present in agreement.
3. **Minutes of 13th June 2023** - approved and signed by Brian Orton.

4. Matters Arising

3.4 Basil Ambrose Bequest & St Peters update - BO said he had emailed St Peters and explained the difficulties we would have using St Peters. The reply from St Peters had been circulated to committee and there was nothing to add regarding St Peters as it is not a viable option at the moment.

Discussion turned to Basil Ambrose Donation. IM asked about interpretation of Basil's wishes and suggested a reduction of membership fees by £2 next year instead of funding a party, as Basil had wished, was not a viable option due to the current number of members, and finding a suitable location and date. TL said subs are agreed at the AGM so would have to go to that and asked if that would comply with Basil's wish. RT suggested using the money to fund refreshments at the Christmas meeting, but that would only benefit those that attend. BO said any action would have to be announced to the members in advance. If the money was used against subscriptions it would have to be limited to existing members which would make more work for the treasurer and membership secretary.

TL then raised how reducing subs would impact financial policies of TAT (see Treasurer's Report). It was agreed that BO would seek advice as the will said a party was only a "suggestion" and only "some" of the money spent in that way, to clarify how the bequest can be used.

Committee asked to consider the options - to be carried forward to next meeting **Action ALL**

4.4 First Aid - IM reported that September agreed for a course and 2 dates have been proposed. Gryphon will run the course at a cost of £400 substantially less than Red Cross.). **Action IM**

4.14 Gallery - BC is trying to get more up to date photos. **Action BC**

5.15 Transport to Rugby Club - BO reported that this is working OK but little demand.

6. U3a day - BO will not be there IM to lead. BO and IM to meet and arrange a rota, etc. BO had looked at stabilising the display boards but as they have no fixing points it is not easy. If windy boards will probably need to be laid flat on table. May be able to suspend the boards from the frame of the gazebo. Sufficient leaflets and membership forms will be available. BC to update the two display boards **Action BO/IM/BC**

5. Chair's Report - previously circulated.

BO reported on the Chairs' Forum set up by some u3a chairs and said he has joined the Forum. TAT is now launching a Facebook page and say that the Chairs' Forum is nothing to do with TAT National Office who had not approved the Forum. BO and TL both felt that the organization is becoming too bureaucratic - u3as should be guided by National not ruled by them.

BO uncertain as to the what would happen to the u3a Eastern Region Office as one member has left, one is ill and Barbara Cordina the East England Trustee is standing down at the AGM in October and there is no replacement for her at the moment.

A meeting of the members of SADN to discuss the future was held 14/07/23 and a vote was taken to wind up the Network although at the time of the Committee meeting we had confirmation of this. There should be a surplus of funds and we should receive a share. **Action BO**

6. Treasurer's Report - previously circulated.

TL reported that he had budgeted for a £5000 deficit for 2023 but looking to be nearer £3000. Holding

accounts are accurate but the date was incorrect - should read 1st Jan. 2023.

Reserves held by some groups are not being reduced quickly enough - Film Group still has too much. Leader had been misinformed that she could not have free sessions to lower reserves, but she will be told she can. Bridge group still has too much but Theatre and Travel groups have reduced reserves. TL reported that the member handling the finances for the Painting and Drawing Group had died, the Group leader had someone filling the role on a temporary basis whilst a permanent solution was found.

TL reported that the use of personal credit cards by Group Leaders was now becoming more acceptable to the TAT. TL will produce new financial proposals for our u3a at the October meeting based upon updated TAT financial guidelines for u3as issued in 2022. **Action TL**

BO said that a new independent examiner will be needed for the next financial year as our current examiner will retire after many years of service after completing the 2023 examination. It was agreed that an advert be placed in the next Su3an so the appointment can be made at the next AGM. The Examiner does not have to be a u3a member, but if they are they cannot be a Trustee member or a relative of a Trustee. **Action TL**

The reserves policy was discussed - TAT states that a u3a should have a minimum of 6 months reserves. Sudbury currently holds a 12 month reserve. TL reported that we have enough in reserve to keep current subscription level at £12 for next 2 to 3 years. Increased interest rates have added to our reserves. TAT position is not to reduce subscriptions but to maintain levels until reserves are eaten into.

If we reduced to 6 months subscription could be maintained at £12. Some in favour of keeping 12 months, IM stated that as a large u3a 6 months would be sufficient.

All present voted in favour of reducing to 6 months reserves.

7. Secretary's Report - nothing to report.

8. Speaker's Secretary's report - CB reported that she will meet with AT and 2 others in September to draw up next year's programme. She proposed booking the 'Bluebell girl' for the Christmas meeting. Following the meeting in September the role will transfer to AT, CB will still support.

Action CB/AT

9. Group Co-ordinator's report - previously circulated.

JL reported that 3 new groups have launched. A group leader had raised a query as they felt that the proposed presentation to their group by one of its members on climate change is inaccurate and political, and asked if it should go ahead. Committee discussed this - group members do not have to attend, and those that do can question the presentation.

It was agreed that this should be allowed to go ahead. JL to advise group leader **Action JL**

A group leader had objected to a piece in the July Su3aN and also their group entry on the website. BC had taken text from a poster the group had previously written. BO felt Group Leader's permission was not required in this instance. He also said there were some errors in the website text of other groups in that information was out of date. BC said he finds errors and asks Group Leaders to submit up to date content but gets no response. RT said ongoing action required to keep site up to date and correct. IM reported that finding documents was not always easy. BC said we use the standard template from u3a so we are limited in what we can change. BH said things may change when switch to Word Press. BO suggested a sub committee should be formed to look at accuracy of content, the need for more regular updating and finding any faults with links. IM, BC, BH and JL agreed to form sub committee. **Action IM,BC,BH,JL**

IM added that a Calligraphy group is forming. About 18 people still interested, leader has to be confirmed the intended group will meet on a Wednesday afternoon, probably at the Stephenson Centre. **Action IM**

10. Membership Secretary's report - Not a lot to report. There were a couple of minor issues - Beacon addresses had not been displaying properly. IM was aware and had fixed this. Su3an link did

not work for some but PDF attachment is also sent. We currently have 861 members.

11. Webmaster's report - BH reported that u3a was still proposing modernisation. Issues with link to Su3an still exists - works for some but not others. TL said MacBooks have problems as cannot get free Adobe software. IM said some Microsoft browsers also having issues.

12. Publicity report - previously circulated. BC also proposed to include a 'featured group' in Su3an when short of content. **Action BC**

13. Beacon Administrator's report - IM reported that membership renewal went smoothly. 25 names have been removed from the list of TAM recipients. He has emailed users to ask for comments on how they are finding the system, and has proposed Zoom training for certain roles. It is up to individuals to respond to that.

Issue of changing the coordinator title back to group leaders has been dealt with.

BO commented that emails are sent bcc and headings are not displayed, so not always sure if everyone has received the messages. IM suggested using Gmail for individual emails. RT commented that Beacon does not allow additions to a group list unless done by a member of that group.

14. Proposed modernisation of u3a constitution - TAT has sent out a model constitution they would like all u3as to adopt and asked for comments. Do we need to follow that model? IM felt this should not be dictated by central office.

We should decide which Officers we need and how long each term of office should be. Do we need to change anything as any changes to our constitution need to be approved by the Charity Commission. BO felt 3 years in an Officer role was sufficient, the role of Treasurer is essential whilst it could be more flexible he felt status quo should be maintained. We added a clause 17.7.a.& b to our current constitution in 2022 to allow us to extend the period of officers if nobody comes forward to take over after 3 years.

It was agreed that we respond to the document that we are not in favour of change to our constitution. Document also proposed that members should be allowed to serve on more than one u3a committee it was agreed that we were not in favor of this.

BO to send response.

Action BO

15. Holiday approvals – Berlin 8/15.9.24 and Manchester 15/19.4.24 previously circulated . Approved and signed.

16. AOB

1. RT commented some policies on website would be due for review in October. **Action BO**


2. East of England Newsletter - BO said this comes out monthly and he will circulate to all our members. One person has responded to say 'Thanks'. It needs to be forwarded promptly as some of the Zoom events included are early in the month. RT commented that it was a confused newsletter and not very clear who some of the content was aimed at. **Action BO**

3. IM said Agenda had been sent out without Chair's approval initially. Has to go to the Chair first.

4. Terry and Derek are to be added to the Committee list on Beacon, and added as Trustees to the Charity Commission. **Action IM/TL**

Meeting closed 12.10.

Date and time of next meeting th ~~10am~~ October 2023 at 10am Christopher Centre

Signed: 

Date: 10/10/23