

South West Hampshire u3a Network

Notes of the meeting held on  
Monday 27th March 2023  
10:00-12:00

Crosfield Hall, Romsey, SO51 8GL  
Host u3a: Romsey Archway

**Present:**

Ann Beeching	Joint Network Coordinator	Eastleigh District
Joy Lyon	Joint Network Coordinator	Totton South
Susie Berry	SE Region Trustee	Ridgeway
Elise Sargent	Public Relations & Press Office	TAT
Hilvary Robinson	SE Region Support Team	Lymington

u3as Present

Romsey Archway, Monks Brook, Chandler's Ford, Fordingbridge & District, New Milton, Winchester, New Forest Waterside, Totton South, Botley&Hedge End

**Apologies:**

Sue Southwell	SE Region Support Team	Monks Brook
Sally Ingledew		SERN

u3as Southampton, Totton, Milford on Sea, Lyndhurst

**1. Introduction.** Welcome from Joy. Tea and coffee was available on arrival. Everyone was asked to sign-in and provide their contact details, with their email addresses if possible and AGM month per u3a.

1.1 It was proposed that x2 u3as share hosting of each network meetings to the end of the year, suggested dates: July, September and November (tbc).

**Action: all u3as to review and confirm host and note taker for 2023 at next meeting (App1)**

1.2 Ann welcomed Elise Sargent and Susie Berry.

**2. Attendance and Apologies.** As listed above.

**3. Notes from 30<sup>th</sup> January: Actions and Matters Arising**

3.1 The notes of the previous meeting were discussed. On page 1 Kim Candler's name had been amended. Under 5.3 generic email addresses had not been requested by Joan but as discussed last time, it was noted that generic email addresses were preferable to personal named email addresses.

3.2 Under 2.3 and 8.1 date of the September meeting – due to a clash with the Summer School this date will be 18<sup>th</sup> instead of the 4<sup>th</sup>.

3.3 Due to clashes with u3a committee meetings, further decision was needed on the pattern of network meetings and whether or not to have a fixed day and week for future meetings and to avoid any confusion, possibly to alternate morning or afternoon in future.

**Action: Meeting dates on agenda for next time. (Joy)**

#### 4. Elise Sargent –TAT Public Relations and Press Officer

Elise gave a presentation entitled Introduction to Press and PR and gave an interesting account of her career in journalism and promoting the u3a since being appointed to publicise the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. She works with Liz Drury, Head of Communications and part of her role is to improve the public perception of the u3a. As part of a small team she also works on social media, the u3a national newsletter and various PR activities eg the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Quilt currently in Witney in Oxford, other local stories such as the Big Lunch.

Elise gave very helpful tips on writing press releases. These should be made compelling and people-focused, e.g. the recent Maths for Grandparents, Winchester u3a project. Keep them to around 350 words and use high res 1 megabyte photographs looking to camera.

National newspapers are targeted; eg 300 clicks about walking cricket Barnsley u3a and resultant national coverage in the Guardian and TV and Radio coverage, recently on the One Show.

Publications such as the Civil Service retirement magazine and lifestyle magazines are targeted with articles about the u3a.

Get to know your local media, use twitter or Instagram/Facebook page to invite. Include a high resolution picture looking at the camera. Email radio tv stations to fill slots. Copy in the news desk.

A database called Vuelio listing every media group in the world can be accessed by contact with Elise.

Contact MPs, Mayors, local Councillors – they all use social media and will publicise to local community through their pages.

**Case studies – examples of recent stories in the media were highlighted including life transformations, eg Meet Geoffrey: Do Something Brilliant Today: u3a UK**  
available on u3a You Tube at  
<https://youtu.be/dQSpcAn5o9s><https://youtu.be/dQSpcAn5o9s>

Consider having a budget for leaflets and Facebook posts in your catchment area to attract younger membership profile.

Finding our voice – the potential for influencing on issues that matter to u3a members was put forward e.g. the cost of living, older people returning to work. Suggestion that a bank of trained members be recruited to talk to the media on their personal views but still linking with u3a involvement. This would be non-political and media training would be given.

To summarise Elise recommended that PR advisers can be contacted for advice or by direct contact with her:

[Elise.sargent@u3a.org.uk](mailto:Elise.sargent@u3a.org.uk) or [communications@ua.org.uk](mailto:communications@ua.org.uk)

Post meeting note: Finance News Extras can be signed up for through the same email or is available at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/advice/mailings>

Joy commented on efforts needed to attract a younger age group which include statements such as '*able to attend meetings during weekdays*'. Ideas welcomed on how to promote more active events, adventures abseiling, kayaking etc.

Dave wanted to see more work being done to get the message across that the u3a is not a university and to promote the message about our learning and social mix recognising that the branding cannot be changed.

Legacy donations are being made to the u3a.

Elise was thanked by everyone for her presentation and this would be circulated electronically following the meeting. Comments made would be taken up with the PR team.

## **5. Any Questions from circulated Reports from Regional Trustee and Network Meetings.**

- 5.1 **NCVO Banking Project.** Bridget asked for clarification as to why this paper had been sent out. However the ongoing difficulties being experienced by charities in setting up bank accounts were discussed. Botley still trying to get a bank account but hoped to be opening an account with Lloyds Hedge End as a club and not a charity. New Milton has Lloyds account. Southampton was currently helping Botley. Eastleigh, Chandlers Ford and Monk's Brook are all with Eastleigh Lloyds. Susie explained that NCVO may come back to answer specific problems and provide additional support in getting things changed. The National Office Finance Committee were actively investigating as a solution has got to be found.

Joy responded that this presentation was circulated to members following a Network Link meeting.

- 5.2 **Digital strategy.** Joy queried when the Beacon update and WordPress was due to go live. Susie responded that she was due to attend a Board tomorrow afternoon and this would be fed back. There had been slow development in Beacon 2 and the changeover will be gradual. The website replacement gradual migration was being trialled, there would be a changeover and she urged not to delay in developing the network website. Joy was concerned about the upskilling of group co-ordinators with Beacon and WordPress. Bridget reported she had taken on Website pages for 8 groups with workshops planned for group leaders unable to do this themselves.

New Forest Waterside – 10% of membership don't have email. Use of paper versions of newsletters at monthly meetings for non-email users.

- 5.3 **Survey Response.** Susie commented on the results of a survey sent out regarding the conference this summer – 65% had voted against. Please respond to surveys in future; feedback is needed as there had been a poor response.

**Action: All please respond to survey request.**

## **6. Peer Group sessions – Ann Beeching**

Ann was pleased to report that the session held with the Secretarys' group had gone well, however there had only been 7 respondents including a newly recruited secretary (Grania, New Milton). Another Secretary Peer Group meeting is planned around July. It has been difficult to agree dates and times for the Chair and Vice-Chair Peer Group meeting, therefore Ann decided on 28th April at 10am on Zoom. Responses still awaited. It was decided that a Treasurer's Peer Group should be arranged sometime in May or June.

**Action: Treasurers – next session being planned for May/June tbc (Ann).**

## **7. Joint Network activities –Christine Rowland**

In Christine's absence this item would be taken forward to future meeting. Ann commented that Eastleigh table tennis group were happy to join.

**Action – all to ask group co-ordinators if they were interested in competitions.**

## 8. Beacon and Website – Joy Lyon and Joan Miller

- 8.1 Joy said that SW Hants Network now has a Beacon account and proposed to add the names on the register taken at the start of the meeting. She asked for clarification on what people wanted to be able to do on Beacon; to view who are members, use emails to contact whole group, view and change details of their own u3a contact person/s. The AGM date requested due to changes of contact details likely to be generated. Susie commented on receiving blanket emails through Beacon and suggested stating at the top who are the intended recipients. Joan raised the issue of security when sharing email details.
- 8.2 Joy proposed to give all members user access to Beacon for the SW Hants Network, to be followed up by an email containing a strong password which then has to be changed by the user. Dave called for a vote and this was unanimously agreed.

**Action: Joy to email members of the network and all contacts in each u3a so please let her know if anyone should be taken off.**

- 8.3 **Website.** Joan commented that this has now been set up and new photos were still needed. She had tried to include items on the events page, TAT training and other resources. Everyone needed to use it and provide feedback. Contact details were hidden. Ann reported that possible new members had been directed to the Eastleigh u3a website from South Central Network.  
<https://u3asites.org.uk/swhampshirenetwork/home>

## 9. Succession Planning

This is an ongoing item regarding a succession plan for Joy and Ann as network co-ordinators. Both need to step down and emphasised it is an enjoyable admin role with the opportunity to attend broader south-east region and national network meetings.

**Action – all to take back to committees for any interest.**

## 10. Hamble Valley Assets

Joy reported that a couple of the donated Items still remained available.

- 10.1 The A3 printer was still in her garage and could stay with network but was a storage issue. **Action: Susie and Joy to discuss.**
- 10.2 Double sided display board – available.
- 10.3 Banners – pull up type 7ft high – photographs are not good quality and request for photos not great response.

**Action – photos of any indoor or outdoor activities please for the banner as soon as possible. The u3a not being named but permissions needed of any persons in the photos. Banner could be displayed at next meeting (All to Joy).**

## 11. ‘Your Spot’ – Any Topic you would like to raise for discussion/clarification

- 11.1 **Beacon.** Joan requested comments on experiences in use of Beacon for Finance and Members portal. Finance newsletter email communications go out quarterly or monthly to the Treasurer. Dave commented it had been found to be safe and straightforward by the Treasurer and more user friendly than other commercial software. Easier to transition with new treasurers. Nick Hammond at Warsash was a u3a mentor on Beacon for Finance and could advise. There was some resistance from treasurers as it does not do accruals. New Beacon will cover.
- 11.2 **Emails not using Beacon.** Vernon asked for alternatives to Beacon. Phil commented on using u3aWeb as a database. This could also help during transition of the website

knowledgeable person. Rob, New Forest Waterside were successfully sending emails to membership in batches of 50 through a Gmail account.

- 11.3 **Archives and storage of data.** In response to a query from Vernon, Susie advised that Gift Aid requires data to be held for six years or otherwise you can delete. Digital records were being archived at the National Office but this was this was a long-term project – following a fire, flood and Covid!
- 11.4 **Retention of paper copies, minutes.** Susie suggested scanning AGM records.
- 11.5 **Cloud Storage.** Dave commented that Romsey Archway was exploring cloud filing and would be happy to share information at a later date.  
**Action: Dave to give an update on cloud filing at a later date.**

## 12. Any Other Business.

- 12.1 **Summer School – Chichester – 4-7 September this year.** 11 courses. Mahjong course. List of people following Skills Day by Totton South to contact Hilvary. Contact subject advisers invaluable. Evening entertainment. See the Summer School website: <https://u3asites.org.uk/southeastu3aforum/events>
- 12.2 **First Aid for Mental Health at Calmore Community Centre – 11<sup>th</sup> April** – see website for further details: <https://www.cfirst.org.uk/training-events/training/1074/>
- 12.3 **Zoom meeting 20<sup>th</sup> April SE Regional Gathering** - am to lunch – Regional gathering on progress with restructure of TAT Board. Liz Thackeray may come. Email to all by the end of week and on SE Region website.
- 12.4 **“Their Finest Hour” Heritage Lottery-funded nationwide campaign** – details had been circulated by email. More collection days to be announced. Huge amount to contribute. From Military history and other groups. Ongoing project being coordinated by Ally Edwards, u3a Evesham and District with Oxford University.
- 12.5 **Hadrian’s Wall – 10<sup>th</sup> May** – walk the wall, details on the website.
13. **Next meeting (Face to Face): Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023 2-4pm**  
Host – Lyminster u3a. Venue: Crosfield Hall, Romsey, SO51 8GL

Close of meeting 12:00.

## Appendix 1

Potential Meeting Hosts and Scribes  
Red indicates Draft Proposals – confirmation required

Date 2023		Potential u3a pairs	
Jan 30 <sup>th</sup>	Zoom	Monks Brook	
March 27 <sup>th</sup>	F2F	Romsey Archway	
May 15 <sup>th</sup>	F2F	Lyminster	
July 10 <sup>th</sup>	Z	Eastleigh	
September 25 <sup>th</sup>	F2F	New Milton	Winchester
November 20 <sup>th</sup>	Z	Botley, Hedge End	Southampton