

TRING U3A COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes

Wednesday 3 June 2020

Time: 19.15hrs Virtual - WhyPay

1. Those Present

Rob Jones (Chairman), Jill Collinge (Vice Chair) & Paul Simmons (Treasurer)

Committee Members: Jennie Scott, June Courtney and Mike Perry (*who joined the meeting late at 07.45p.m*)

Non Committee Members: Liz Murray (Newsletter Coordinator), Sue Williams (Speaker Secretary),

John Cameron, (Membership Secretary) and Barry Salmon, (Group Coordinator)

Joy Petticrew (Secretary)

2. Apologies for absence:

David Griffiths

3. Minutes of last Meeting held on 6 May 2020

The Minutes were approved and digitally signed by Jill.

4. Matter arising from the Minutes

10 (c) Communication with the Town Clerk re National U3A Day

See Agenda 10 d

5. Treasurer's report (PS)

(a) Bank balances as per Bank Statements received in May 2020

	Brought forward	Income	Expenditure	Carried forward
Main account	22952.06	110.00	75.00	22987.06

(b) Represented by

Cash	0
NW1	12654.48
CAF	10332.58
Total	22987.06

Paul noted at the meeting that there was nothing happening in the bank accounts, and therefore the balance remained healthy. If members choose not to renew their membership in the autumn this year, then the situation may change. The Committee will take the decision in September as to whether we should extend the 2020 membership into 2021 as members have not received much benefit from the annual membership fee so far in 2020.

(c) Beacon Software (Finance)

Paul has been reviewing the Beacon System and seen that he needs to set up certain financial categories before starting to use it. Therefore he emailed the Committee on 26 May asking them to give their opinion on the financial category headings that he should use when setting up the Finance system on Beacon.

Currently we use the following:

INCOME

Subscriptions
Interest received
Member
payments
Social activities
Gift Aid
Other

EXPENDITURE

Administrative
costs
Newsletters
Third Age Trust
capitation and
magazine fees
Hall hire and
other group
meetings
expenses
Social activities
costs
Speakers and
other monthly
meetings costs
Other

At the meeting it was agreed that Paul will continue to use the current categories, as shown above, when setting up the Beacon Software.

6. Membership Secretary's report (JC)**(a) Membership stats and 2nd Isolation Newsletter circulation**

Isolation Newsletters sent by email to all members with an email address (10/5/20)	474
Actual Isolation Newsletter emails sent (allowing for people with the same email address)	437
Newsletters remaining to be delivered	66
Newsletters posted	66
Current Membership	546
New members who have joined so far in 2020	25
Queries logged in 2020	110

We were informed of one member who had unfortunately died recently.

The number of hard copy Newsletters had gone down slightly as Joy had received some email addresses from some of the Singing for Fun group who had previously not provided us with an email address, but they wanted to join the Zoom virtual sessions. The invoice that John recently sent to Paul for printing the Newsletters at home was around £35, whereas Almars had charged around £70 previously. John has kindly agreed to continue to print the Newsletter at home, but will attach a note when sending out this time,

asking people to provide us with their email address if in fact they have one, then they can be more involved with the groups that are currently running virtually, and hopefully the virtual monthly meeting later in the year. **Action: John**

(b) Members joined since last Committee Meeting

None.

(c) Beacon Software (Membership) update

John is currently adding group member's details on to Beacon and asked Barry if he would have a look at the software at some point. **Action: Barry**

7. Group Co-ordinator's report (BS)

Since the last meeting Barry has spoken to 30 of the Group Leaders rather than emailing them, to find out how their groups are staying connected currently. Some are running very well using Zoom and other virtual platforms, whereas some of them need to provide more structure to their group sessions. He has now emailed them all and asked them to make sure they maintain contact with their respective members. The S & T Group Leader is now going to look at Zoom. Many of the Group Leaders thanked Barry for getting in touch with them personally. He was also very pleased to see some good contact from Group Leaders in the June Newsletter, which is about to be published. We think it quite likely that some members may desert us when we are able to re open our group meetings and monthly meetings physically as some members have told the Group Leaders that they are fearful of returning to their groups in the external venues. As a Committee we will have to deal with that when the time comes.

Linda Downey had told Barry that she was going to stand down as Group Leader for the History group at the end of 2020, but has now decided to stay on another year, which is wonderful news. Her Art group meets in the Emma Rothschild complex and she is wondering, given the age group of her members whether they will want to facilitate this group when we are ready to return. **Action Joy will contact the Booking Secretary.**

The Nora Grace Hall has recently been in touch saying that they are taking provisional bookings to resume classes from w/c 4 July, subject to Government Guidelines. We have requested a copy of their Risk Assessment Form, but to date no commitment has been made towards the return of our groups that take place there.

Joy will now write to all the Booking Secretaries of all the venues that we use for our groups and ask them what their risk assessment procedures are. **Action: Joy**

We have never made it mandatory for our Group Leaders to carry out Risk Assessments for their respective groups in the venues that they use. Liz and Rose Rouse have Risk Assessment forms that they use for their walking groups, as they take place outside. Once our classes are allowed to resume in person, we will enforce this rule, the Committee will approve them and a copy will be kept on file by either Barry or Joy.

Action: Barry & Joy

8. Speaker Secretary's report (SW)

The July and August speakers have been cancelled and we hope that we can rebook them later in 2021/2022. Sue had recently heard from a group who had done a presentation for us during the World War One anniversary. They were very keen to offer us a presentation using whichever virtual platform we preferred.

(a) Could we consider a different way of delivering our Monthly meetings, normally held in Victoria Hall. e.g. Zoom or YouTube

Jill had asked for this item to be discussed at the meeting, trying to think outside the box, moving forward as it seems very unlikely that we will be unable to meet in Victoria Hall for our Monthly meetings for some considerable time. Jill knows of somebody with experience of recording their Church Service on YouTube

which is very successful and people can choose to watch it when ever they wish. Joy has recently experienced a singing challenge on Zoom with 99 people taking part, which was very successful, but Zoom etiquette needs to be explained before such a session commences. Various ways of the speaker being able to answer the members' questions were considered at the meeting.

Jill and Sue will get together and see if they can develop this idea further.

Action: Jill & Sue

In the meantime, Liz will add a paragraph to the June Newsletter asking members if they would like to attend a virtual monthly meeting either by Zoom video conference or recorded on YouTube. Members will be asked to email Joy or phone her, if they are interested.

Action: Liz & Joy

9. Secretary's Report (JBP)

None.

10. Any other business

(a) Do we want to trial a Committee Meeting by Zoom or continue with WhyPay?

It was agreed that we will continue with WhyPay. If it is decided in the future that we need longer than one hour for our meetings, Joy will set up two consecutive telephone conference meetings and we will all need to redial in after the first hour. WhyPay advise their account holders, that some telephone providers who provide free calls in the evenings only do so for up to one hour; therefore to avoid any WhyPay user incurring charges from their personal telephone providers this is the suggestion that they make.

(b) Progress with the 3rd Edition of the Quarantine Newsletter

Liz had recently circulated a draft copy of the 3rd edition of the Quarantine Newsletter (June) and the Committee thanked her for all of her hard work, she has done an excellent job as usual.

She will now make a couple of changes regarding Agenda items 8(a) and 10 (d).

Usually we have a July/August Newsletter but Liz is very happy to do one for each month, providing she receives enough content from both members, Group Leaders and Committee Members.

(c) Request from Tony Hughes, National U3A working group on Supporting Growth, on the re building of the U3A after the lockdown ends. *The response agreed by the Committee below was sent to him on 20/05/20*

"Thank you for your correspondence and please find below some thoughts from Tring U3A.

We are fortunate to live in a town that has a fairly large and affluent demographic of "older people "which assists our cause. There is a good community spirit in the town generally. We have around 500 members currently with quite a few coming from a wider catchment area.

Tring U3A has a wide range of activities that at least two thirds of our members take part in which is vital to success. We don't judge groups by the numbers who attend, rather it depends on our Group Leaders, leadership and expertise plus a sound, proactive Committee structure that meets monthly.

Our ethos is that it is important to have fun as well as education. We hold regular coffee mornings which are a great way to integrate new members and make them feel welcome. We also hold Group Leaders meetings during the year to aid communication and promote engagement.

Our monthly talks are of a good calibre and a magnet for over 120 members per month. Our Christmas Social drew in around 200 members in December, always popular.

We push communication and we encourage members to suggest input into our monthly newsletter by supplying information or maybe a quiz or poem. This has been a particular success much appreciated by our members in this period of lockdown.

Our annual membership fees are reasonable, currently £10 and reviewed yearly. We can spend money for the benefit of all members when we can.

We are looking to raise our profile still further and are discussing ideas/ possible events for our National U3A Day in October. We have a good, workable structure with excellent members who are invaluable with their vast knowledge and experience.

We do hope that this is of use to you and we are all looking forward to an end to these challenging times and getting back to our meetings and activities”.

The Committee noted that apart from an email acknowledgment we have not heard back from Tony Hughes to date.

(d) National U3A Day, Thursday 1st October 2020

- Any suggestions received from members? **No.**
- **Develop June and Robs’ ideas and response from the Town Clerk** (see below)
- **Liz - memorial bench and maintenance costs etc.**, (see below)

During the period between Committee meetings the Committee discussed Liz’s suggestion of a memorial bench to be erected in Tring. Below are the email responses from our Committee:

Paul

“There may be members out there who will claim we should not be spending their money that way. Also I believe Dacorum have a policy on things like benches and memorials. I think we might be responsible for ongoing repairs and maintenance. Not sure about liability. I really hope this is surmountable because it is a great idea and a good way of promoting Tring U3A.”

Rob

“A good idea that will take us into the future. As a committee we are responsible for spending money to benefit members and a bench would do just that; they can sit on it. I also think that £500 out of existing funds would be doable without holding out the cap to members for more, that said, Paul/Joy do we know if there are any U3A Trust grants that we could apply for; I seem to have it in my mind there is ? Dacorum's 'memorial bench' policy is they specify type of bench and we are responsible for maintenance. I know that there are benches made from recycled material that are pretty indestructible. Suggest we sound out the idea with the council and discuss at next meeting

Barry

“I like this idea, however members have paid a subscription to be long to Tring U3A. This will be an exceptional expenditure, not a run of the mill cost normally found in the balance sheet, therefore members will expect to be consulted on proposed town gift which they have contributed too. It does not benefit our members or our groups other than promoting our U3A and is a nice gesture. I agree some may use it. No doubt some of you may disagree with me, which is perfectly acceptable”

Responses from Michael Curry, Tring Town Clerk (emails May 2020)

- *“Happy for you to hold a publicity event on Church Square on the 1st October – I will need to see a copy of the U3A’s public liability insurance prior to the event. Power is available and there is vehicular access by removing the locked bollards. This is for loading and unloading only, not parking*
- *Litter pick - Dacorum are happy to provide equipment. Dawn Slade, the Deputy Clerk, can provide*

details of who to contact

- *Tree planting – this, although very worthy, can be problematic. Given you will want it in a public place, you need to get permission – either from me or DBC (I have the contact) – and it can cause us a bit of grief over creating a precedent. That said, Councils are keen to encourage tree planting. I have a possible site in mind. Unfortunately one has to accept that damage is possible.*
- *Memorial benches - the following are the bare-bones of the project:
Cost - £500-600 excluding VAT plus installation (£150-200 - it needs to be secure) and brass plaque (£?) Location - same considerations as planting trees*

On going Maintenance of a bench

So it is not cheap and there are obstacles to overcome, but that's not impossible e.g. the Council (or Dacorum) might be willing to 'adopt' the bench as part of their on-going maintenance programme. If you are not put off by the cost, I can get the Town Warden to look at existing benches to see if any need replacing or you can let me know if you have any locations in mind".

Its going to cost approximately £1,000 to erect a bench, which would be funded from Tring U3A funds. The Committee felt that we should advise our members what we are proposing to do; therefore a statement as follows will be inserted in to the June Newsletter:

"To celebrate National U3A Day on 1st October the Committee have discussed the possibility of providing a bench to be placed somewhere in Tring for use by the people of Tring and, of course Tring U3A members, as well as to publicise the organization. The bench would be funded from Tring U3A funds. We would appreciate the views of Tring U3A members on this proposal and whether you would support this suggestion. Please send any comments for or against to Joy etc., "

Action: Liz

Joy will follow up with the Town Clerk, Michael Curry on the bench idea and ask him to check with the Town Warden about benches that may need to be replaced around the town. We are aware of two, one by the churchyard in Western Road and one by the exit of Pound Meadow, opposite the Robin Hood Pub. We will ask him to investigate if the Council (or Dacorum) might be willing to 'adopt' our bench as part of their on-going maintenance programme. Then at our next meeting in July, hopefully we will have received some feedback from our members and can either take the project further or rethink if necessary.

Action: Joy

- **U3A Head Office - National U3A Day - Grant £100**

It was agreed that we will apply for the £100 grant, now that we have the application form.

Action: Paul & Joy

e) Photography Group

Mike informed the meeting that his group intended to resume physically at the Temperance Hall w/c 7 September but meet outside at a local public venue, like College Lake Reservoir, if it is open by then on 4th July. He had recently had a conversation with the booking Secretary of the Temperance Hall about returning in September. He wanted to know if the Tring U3A Public Liability Insurance would cover an outdoor meeting. The U3A Trust had recently issued a Risk Assessment Form for outdoor activities which Mike (along with any other group intending to re-start) would need to complete and submit to Joy for our records and Committee approval.

However, current Government advice is as follows: *You can spend time outdoors, including private gardens and other outdoor spaces, in groups of up to six people from different households, following social distancing guidelines.* Therefore currently the Photography group of approximately 15 - 18 people cannot meet yet outside.

Paul explained that the property custodians of the various venues that we use in and around Tring should make sure their premises are safe as their liability insurers may become involved in the event of

an incident. Risk assessments should be carried out by them for each group that uses their facilities and we should request a copy of the assessment to ensure we are satisfied. If we do not make sure that this is done and Tring U3A is found to be negligent, then our U3A Liability Insurers will not be happy. As noted at Agenda 7, we will make it mandatory for Group Leaders to complete and submit to either Barry or Joy their own Risk Assessment for approval before their group can resume physically in their venue and/or complete the outdoor risk assessment form if that is their intention.

(f) U3A Day October 1st - Litter Picking and Display Stand in church square etc.,

These two ideas had been discussed briefly at our last meeting, but not so far at this one. June was keen to progress the ideas possibly considering Tring U3A running both events as well as undertaking the Bench project. Those who have been on the Committee for some time are aware of how much time and effort is required to organise a display of our U3A groups' achievements (particularly outside and the equipment we would need to obtain) and although it is an excellent idea to promote Tring U3A, we do not want to take on too much for one event that is only 4 months away. Due to the time constraints of the telephone conference meeting, Barry undertook to have a conversation with June and then report back to the Committee at the next meeting (or beforehand by email).

Actions: Barry & June

11. Date of the next meeting: Wednesday 8th July at 07.15pm. WhyPay telephone conference, Jill will Chair.

Minutes approved at Committee Meeting 8 July 2020, signed by Deputy Chair, below.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the initials 'G S' followed by the name 'Collinge' in a cursive script.