

**Minutes of Tynedale u3a Committee Meeting  
held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at Hexham Golf Club**

**Present:** Wendy Dale, Colin Argent, Barrie Mellars, Kate Stephenson, Sally Hewitt, Ally Forster, Tim O'Brien, Margaret Earl and Ann Atkinson

No.		Action/ person
1	<p><b>Welcome and Apologies:</b> Apologies were received from Lesley Parsons. Wendy informed that it was Sally's last meeting and thanked her for all the work she had done in her role and in particular developing the use of Facebook and increasing membership. Ally was welcomed in her new role as Publicity Officer. Wendy informed Barrie that he needed to update his list of committee members as not everyone was receiving information.</p>	BM
2	<p><b>Minutes of meeting</b> held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023 were accepted as a true record.</p>	
3	<p><b>Matters Arising:</b> No matters arising</p>	
4	<p><b>Chair's Report: AGM</b> - Wendy informed that there would be publicity in the next newsletter about the AGM and the two motions put forward would be in this. Ally enquired why we were going ahead with a room at the community centre as thought there was not a lot of interest. Wendy informed that we are not doing what we are supposed to be doing in terms of accessibility e.g. one group meeting upstairs in Café Nero, groups not happy with the snug at the County Hotel. We cannot ensure that it will be full but can test it out. We can use it for committee meetings as well. Colin informed that the situation of groups changes all the time and more groups may use it when aware of it. Groups will not commit until it is up and running. When a room at the community centre becomes available,(we are top of the list), we will need to check it and ensure it meets our needs, seating 10 people. Ally asked whether in the motion we should provide a broad estimate of how much it will cost. It was not considered appropriate to put the cost in the motion and Wendy would inform in support of the motion that there was money in the budget to support it and that the cost will be monitored. Barrie suggested that it could be stated the maximum cost we expect it to be.</p> <p>Constitution motion – Wendy informed that the Third Age Trust had recently amended their constitution which stated that you could remove the role of the vice-chair, be on more than one u3a committee and that you can be on the committee for more than 6 years. It was felt that these were not appropriate for us and that we did not need to change our constitution.</p> <p>Wendy informed that we needed 54 attendees at the AGM to be quorate and that we need to be strong on publicity to ensure this. It was agreed that we need to send out the two motions with the newsletter. Concern was raised about double voting and the need to state that if coming to the AGM you do not need to complete the form. 27 people who receive a paper copy of the newsletter will need a pre-paid envelope. A return by date will also be essential. The AGM is on 5<sup>th</sup> March and will be followed by Barrie's presentation on the 40 years of Tynedale u3a.</p>	WD

	<p>Liz Thackray, Third Age Trust Chair is visiting the region between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024 and is keen to visit as many u3a's as possible. If we want a visit we need to inform the region by the 16<sup>th</sup> February and inform them of the group she could visit, date and time. There would be no guarantee that she would be able to come. Barrie suggested the Space Group, Colin would sort out a suitable group for her to visit.</p>	CA
5	<p><b>Business Secretary's Report:</b> Ann informed that she had sent Wendy a list of the information she held and felt that the minutes were the only information that needed archiving. Ann to send a copy to Barrie to consider. Kate informed that accounting records need to be archived too and it was felt appropriate to leave it to Kate's judgement what should be archived. Barrie felt that it was appropriate to look at archiving at the point when a committee member leaves. Ann informed that she is registered as a contact with the Charity Commission. From 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023 a new personal account is needed to access online services, previously it was shared charity login details. Kate informed that she had registered as a contact too so it was felt we were adequately covered. Ann had added Ally and Kate to the list of trustees. Ann has arranged for 17 copies of TAM to be sent to her for new members registered between mid-October and the end of December. John has sent her a list of members. The business responsible for the date transfer portal has gone into liquidation so new members are not on the system. Copies once they arrive could be given out at the monthly meeting or delivered by committee members.</p>	AA
6	<p><b>Treasurer's Report:</b> Kate informed that she had sent draft accounts to Mike Bewick who had a couple of queries. She has set them out in a slightly different format. Group balances will be sent to convenors. Any money coming in is owned by the u3a which is stated in the policy. Balances brought forward for the following year any spend needs to be agreed with groups and agreed by the committee. Kate asked if there was any group with a lot of money that was not being spent. It was stated that Family History had £70. It was stated that convenors should be informed that this cannot be used for social purposes. Groups may need to word spend differently e.g. meeting held with lunch. In terms of the ideas raised at the last meeting to reduce income a vote was taken by committee members and the following decisions were made:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep subscription at the current level of £14</li> <li>• Continue to claim Gift Aid.</li> <li>• Not to pay for group rooms for one year.</li> <li>• Take an office at the community centre for a year if agreed by membership</li> <li>• Not to ring-fence a sum of money e.g. £5000 that groups could bid for, for trips, events, equipment. It was felt that if money was available it should be available to everyone and that is should be publicised.</li> <li>• Provision of training or workshops to stimulate new groups to be left and considered by new group fixer. This was about retention and wondered whether we could do anymore. Getting people to be a convenor was difficult. Colin had offered mentors. There had been a handbook in the past and a regional handbook is in progress which Colin felt would put more people off as too detailed. Convenors need to do what the group needs to function.</li> <li>• No firm conclusion reached on inviting 1 or 2 high profile speakers and having an event at the Queens Hall and inviting other u3as in the region. It is difficult to get dates at the Queens Hall. The Mart is a better place to hold events as can take a lot of people and be set up theatre style. A sound system and equipment would be needed which would provide an opportunity to spend money. The Mart has an OHP, pull down screen and stage. The only issue is the sound which we can solve. Barrie to explore the scope for using the Mart for future meetings.</li> </ul>	BM

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not to hold a conference</li> </ul> <p>Barrie would like us to have a Garden Party this year. Kate had changed the wording on the policy. Kate is on the bank mandate alongside Colin, Wendy, Susan, Margaret, Lesley, John, Sally, Alicia and Barrie. Sally, Alicia, Colin, Wendy and Susan need to come off. Kate to speak to Barrie about it.</p>	KS
7	<p><b>Programme Secretary's Report:</b> Barrie informed that he had a number of apologies from the speaker who failed to turn up to the January meeting although Barrie had sent several reminders. The speaker has agreed to come at his own expense to talk in October 2024. Fortunately members had come to the rescue and provided a number of 10 minutes slots of entertainment for the 139 attendees. This had been received very positively by those attending who had an enjoyable time. Wendy had been the saviour of the day and thanked everyone for all their support. Attendees agreed that these things happen and it was coped with very well. New members found it friendly and a nice atmosphere. It was suggested that a 10 minute slot at the next AGM with members willing to talk on issues would be worth considering.</p> <p>Owen at the Abbey will ensure that fold up chairs are available for February's monthly meeting. New seats are being ordered and the limit is 135 in the Great Hall and 155 with two rooms</p> <p>Questionnaire – The latest draft questionnaire had not been sent out which had reduced the questions to twenty. The questionnaire was envisaged to be fun but it was not fun anymore. It was meant as a filler for the AGM and to collect information on membership and provide fun facts for the day. However in its current form the questionnaire was seen as being far too intrusive. It was agreed to drop the questionnaire. Tim suggested that we pool information gleaned from monthly meetings and use quotes on social media. Wendy indicated that this should be happening anyway and sent to the appropriate committee member.</p> <p>Barrie stated that all had been given an opportunity to comment on the history of the u3a which was an 18 page A4 document. He had been to Blakes at Haltwhistle recommended by Tim and Robsons at Hexham for printing costs. Blakes costs were cheaper and he felt confident they would do a good job. They would carry out the setting, produce an A5 booklet and a proof copy to check. It was suggested that we are all provided with an electronic copy to check. It was agreed to purchase 500 copies at a cost of £672 + vat. Barrie informed that at the AGM he would talk about who had helped in putting the history together, how we had carried it out and thank all the people who had contributed. Wendy informed that Cecilia, u3a regional chair would be attending the February meeting. Barrie informed that someone else would video the meeting and it continued to remain popular with 40-70 viewing the video each month.</p>	BM
8	<p><b>Membership Secretary's Report:</b> John informed that we keep getting new members and had a big rush in the autumn. There have been 140 new members in the whole year, 9 associate members, 27 resignations and 12 lapsed members. Colin had chased convenors to ensure all their attendees at groups were registered as members which had resulted in more members. There were not many attendees at the latest coffee morning and John has arranged a coffee morning for 10.30am on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February. Tim was asked to add this to the newsletter and Lesley to be informed to put it on the website.</p>	TB LP
9	<p><b>Publicity Officer's Report:</b> Sally was thanked for the work she had done. There are currently 221 Facebook members. Allie informed that in taking on the Publicity Officer's role the email address would be staying the same. Allie explained the value of purchasing Canva Pro, a graphic design tool. It enabled one graphic to be produced which could be resized easily for other purposes with the ability to produce and programme when information is sent out. It is efficient and good value at £99 a year and could enable it to be used by more than one. It was agreed that Canva Pro should be purchased. Ally will speak to Barrie about it.</p>	AF

	Wendy informed that she had been asked for u3a to be present at the Hexham Net Zero event in March on a stall. This was not the first time she had been asked and felt that it would be useful to show our support particularly as the Environment Group was an educative group with a focus on being better informed. After some discussion it was agreed that the Environment Group should make a decision on this.	WD
10	<b>Newsletter Editor's Report:</b> Tim explained that it had been agreed that photographs for publicity and the website should be stored in one place. Tim had looked at a number of storage options including Dropbox and Image Shack. Tim felt that Image Shack was more user friendly and cheaper than Dropbox. It was decided to purchase Image Shack at £4 per month and that 1 or 2 people should act as gatekeepers. We should also ensure that people have agreed to have their photograph taken before using them for publicity.	TB
11	<b>Group Liaison Secretary's Report:</b> Meeting rooms were discussed and that there were 2 or 3 groups in the offing. Colin stated that he would sort out the Convenors lunch and contact Karen at the Mart and aim for the second half of April. He will bring prices and possible dates to the next meeting. Colin has proposed to give up his role at the end of March. He had no feelings about a successor. A replacement for Colin was urgent. It was suggested publicising a list of group meetings including groups in the past to stimulate interest in setting up new groups, an enthusiast was needed as a group convenor.	CA
12	<b>Beacon Administrator and Website Manager's Report:</b> In her absence Lesley reported that Tynedale were the next group of u3a's to be offered migration to the new Siteworks web system. Lesley will be invited to a Zoom meeting where it will be explained. In relation to Beacon there will be a change to the recording of members details removing male/female as no bearing on membership.	LP
13	<b>Events Secretary's Report:</b> Margaret reported that she had fixed a date for the carpet bowls at the community centre, 23 <sup>rd</sup> February which required a £2 donation. If there was interest in a regular session support would be available to do this. 44 people had expressed an interest in the trip to behind the scenes at Wallington. 16-18 people had expressed an interest in the Egger trip so a date will be fixed. This will require two trips. Margaret had not contacted Newcastle City Walks yet. Jewitts would be used for trips to Barton Green in Lancashire and other longer trips e.g. Dumfries House. The extra event in an evening at the golf club with Ian Jackson attracted 51 attendees. Another event had been planned for the 30 <sup>th</sup> April at the Great Hall on cleaner rivers in the West Allen Valley. An invitation to all members will be in the newsletter. Wendy also mentioned an additional event with Ian Diggory which has yet to be organised	MW
14	<b>Regional and Third Age Trust:</b> Wendy informed about the Fit for the Future consultation that was being discussed at the regional meeting today. The region were also looking for places to hold their regional meeting, the Mart may be an appropriate place to consider. Ann stated that regional events needed to be publicised i.e. the regional celebration of music and regional quiz. There are individuals interested in the quiz but there is a need to get groups of four together and we may need to do more to coordinate this.	TB/AF
15	<b>A.O.B.:</b> The Community Centre would be approached for the committee meeting next month.	
16	<b>Date and time for next meeting:</b> Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2024 at 2pm.	

Meeting ended at 16:15

**Minutes Approved**

**Dated:**