

Network Zoom meeting 31st July 2020

APOLOGIES

Peter Lloyd	Swansea
Janet	Ebbw Vale

ATTENDEES

Derek Shottin	Chepstow	(hosting)
Sue Shannon-Jones	Swansea	(Acting Chair Person)
Michael Young	Cardiff	(Treasurer)
Denise Jones	Bridgend	(Secretary)
Chris Winner		Wales Trustee
Hilary Lipscombe	Gilwern	
Beryl Keating	Garth Olwg	
Mary Allen	Cardiff	
Valerie Stowell	Abergavenny	
Sharon Corbett	Pontyclun	
Gwen Axford	Crickhowell	
Martin Sanders	Sully	
Mike Faraday	Usk	
Tony Baines	Cardiff	
Wendy Floyd	Tonyrefail	
Tricia Dodd	Monmouth	
Hugh Hutton	Chepstow	
Wendy Gruffyd	Sully	
Kate Thomas	Crickhowell	

Cherry Lewis

Monmouth (for not all the meeting, tech problems)

The meeting started at 10.30am prompt after directions on putting names to facts and agreement to the recording of the meeting.

Sue Shannon Jones welcomed Chris Winner as Wales Trustee and asked her to give us all a look at the guidance received from National Office relating to the Coming out of Lockdown, which she personally had not received. Gwen Axford asked if that was the newsletter that came out yesterday and Chris said that the news was spread via newsletter and on the National website. She also explained the issues relating to the groups in England who are under different government rules from those groups in Scotland, Northern Island and Wales. The Welsh Assembly rules may differ from those issued by the National Office and it was therefore accepted by the National Office that there were issues with border groups and that they should go with the strictest version, the same with North Wales. Chris said that there were of course hotspots and we should react differently because of them.

Tricia Dodd said that it was not clear about meeting outside. Need guidance about outside and inside meetings. Chris Winner said that we need to keep to the numbers allowed outside and take into account the environment it is in. She confirmed that we need to be aware of our own locations.

Derek Shottin said that the advice given by TAT was poor, therefore unclear, and that there was no leadership, especially in relation to the Public Liability Insurance and that other outdoor groups like the Ramblers and cycling groups have restarted and we were lagging behind. Sue Shannon Jones said the Swansea had been contacted by some venues with regard to the cleaning rules, social distancing, etc. How small groups can be indoors if socially distant.

Chris Winner said that obviously as Wales is different, she needs our suggestions to go forward to National Office (who are not IN the office at the moment so difficult to get results) covering all our issues, the answers to which could be useful to others.

Tricia Dodd said it needs to be a quick answer.

Chris Winner said that she needed info input, i.e. cycling and rambling already started. We need to be proactive. We need to show TAT the "Welsh" aspects.

Denise Jones said that perhaps the more important question was in relation to the insurance as the bottom line would be what the insurance broker would confirm that we are actually covered for in all corners of the country and that it could be different for each. Chris said that the legal team might need to be involved to force an answer because at the moment we have one policy that covers all, whereas if we have different things going on in different parts of the country because of localised government the insurance company was not likely to agree to 4 separate policies. The answer to this question might force National Office to be more specific.

Gwen Axford said that she had just “opened” the email with the guidance for the Welsh groups and the fact that for taking part in a meeting, there should be no more than 30 attendees. Outdoor meetings are being organised by other bodies who have done their risk assessments and there is clear guidance from National Parks.

Derek Shottin shared the document that had been produced by National Office and pointed out clause 3.2 and its strict rules. This is now on the national website. There was a discussion over TAT guidelines and how we needed to do risk assessments for whatever group you are running and for whatever venue you are using.

Cherry Lewis said that she was part of a walking group (not U3A) where their insurers had said there was no problem and they could proceed.

A discussion then ensued in relation to the problem of risk assessments and the fact that this would without doubt, slow down every possible activity.

Tricia Dodds asked for Chris Winner’s email address and she gave it for those to contact her with questions for National Office. = chris.winner@u3a.org.uk .

There was talk about the proposed second wave. We all agreed that it was a wait and see issue.

Val Stowell brought up the very valid point that the government guidelines were changing on a daily basis and there was probably no way that National Office could keep up with the changes. Chris said she would hope that if we follow government guidelines we would be covered by insurance.

Tony Baines said that Cardiff had had a committee meeting and they had agreed that their group ought to take responsibility for their own risk assessments with all the complexities that come with it.

He said that the last guidelines were on the 10th July and they should look to the government and the the WCVA (volunteering association) were asking for community centres to be open. There was a need to do risk assessments and have controls in place with the venues, all existing contracts need to be rewritten and resigned and Sue said it will end up that both sides will do risk assessments. Chris said that she is hoping to put together some guidance for consultation as this needs addressing. Tony said we need it to cover open meetings like AGMs etc.

Tricia Dodd said that it would take until mid to the end of next week to get the information circulated and Chris said that she would share the responses she got and hopefully other regions will do the same and we can share info.

Derek Shottin said that it should be earlier, especially in relation to the walking and cycling groups and better by Monday.

Cherry Lewis confirmed that she was not talking about a u3a walking group.

Hilary Lipscombe informed us that her u3a had held their AGM on zoom with an executive meeting, chair was appointed, accounts agreed, and the results put on the website and an email sent to members. All decisions of that committee are to be ratified at the next full meeting. Chris said that

there was AGM guidance online. An AGM needs to be held within 15 weeks from the date of the missed AGM.

Wendy Floyd said that Sully walking group, having taken advice from Cowbridge u3a, have planned to start walking again. It was felt by most attendees that this should not happen without authority of the committee who need to sort out risk assessments etc.

Martin Sanders said that one of his outdoor meeting has been running for the last 5 weeks, They took the charity and local government guidance and advice and did a risk assessment. There was no cross contamination.

Chris Winner said that we would need to check with the legal department, together with the insurance issue.

Valerie Stowell said that she ran a lunch/chat group and the members are itching to meet at a local venue but assumed that they would be using the restaurant's own insurance?? It was said that if a member tripped over another member's handbag there was the legal rule of "causation" and that the venue would need a risk assessment.

Denise Jones said that there was always the possibility of getting our members to sign a Disclaimer, perhaps this could be checked with insurance. Chris thought this was a possibility. .

Derek Shottin said this advice was poor (Denise hadn't said it was "advice", just an option) saying that we didn't want old people signing disclaimers. If insurance not in force, don't meet as a group. Chris said that she would check the legal issue. Denise said that the bottom line would be what the insurers were willing to cover.

Hugh Hutton said that disclaimers would not cover other members of the public in any event, not unless everyone in the building signed it.

Sue Shannon-Jones said that there was a Risk Assessment checklist on the TAT website and we should give our convenors a copy of it.

Chris Winner said that there should be a Risk Assessment for ALL activities. She said all committees should agree.

Hilary Lipscombe said that we should have a blanket statement that Welsh U3As will also be covered by U3A insurance if we do what the Welsh Assembly says. We need to cope with changes. Chris said it might be possible but we would need to know what TAT said.

Tricia Dodds said that we want more clarification.

Sue Shannon-Jones said that we should send our concerns to Chris Winner by Monday.

Denise said that the Insurer may want to be in conflict with any government protocol as if it came to 4 different insurance policies for England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, it was likely not a possibility for the insurance company. They would want to have a blanket policy, ie one!

Role of Chairman

Sue Shannon-Jones asked if anyone would like to take on the Chairman's role. No-one volunteered so Sue said that she would continue as Acting Chairman until the next AGM. She asked if members could canvass their U3As for volunteers.

Denise Jones suggested that we hold all our network meetings via zoom apart from the AGM annually. Sue said that this would make it easier for any incoming Chairmen. Sue said that there was always a lot of energy at the meetings where we have held breakout sessions and it would be great to build on that. Denise said that we would need to await the hall/venue situation and do risk assessments before we can hold workshops or study days that are not online.

Valerie Stowell said that would be great because travelling is difficult and Fridays are difficult for her.

Chris Winner said that TAT are looking for a way to hold workshops via zoom in the future.

Tony said that Cardiff wanted to suggest (as for the future of the network):

A: Circumstances are different for each U3A, their needs are different in terms of conventional ways of co-ordination

B: Look again at what the purposes of the network and what added value the network would be

Eg. For it to tackle major issues

Eg. Whatever best practice is, should be for all, and not necessary to meet on a quarterly time table.

Sue Shannon-Jones said that the breakouts were very popular at the last couple of network meetings and it was felt that these could keep on rolling.

Valerie Stowell said that perhaps we could hold more meetings like this perhaps monthly, especially at the moment with things changing all the time.

Chris Winner said that what she finds useful is that other U3As share best practice. She has no direct contact with U3A groups, and can only contact them through their networks, she is not allowed to keep lists so without the network she could not disseminate her news etc.

Sue Shannon-Jones said she felt that it was important for network contacts to keep in touch and that there should be one for each group and their names, if changed, should be updated annually.

Michael Young said that the designated (rather than generic) address with each U3A for handing on to the next network incumbent was the best way and it was very easy to set up a gmail account and hand the password over on change of holder.

Martin Sanders said that the only drawback to this was that if you replied to anyone using this designated account, the response showed your own personal email account.

Mike Faraday said that he is a secretary for other groups, and ensures that at least one other member of the committee he is on have the password so that if anything happens to him, others can access the thread of any email conversations etc. He suggests network?@gmail.com and advised that it might be better not to use the word “secretary” as there is a search engine which searches for this to send spam.

Derek Shottin said that Chepstow have their own domain at a cost of about £35pm for about 50 addresses but they only use 15 addresses, this way they return from the “network” address. If anyone is interested in knowing more about this, Derek offered to help them.

Sue Shannon-Jones reported that the National AGM would be on the 16th September and that there was going to be a proposal from TAT for an increase to the affiliation fees from £3.50 to £4.00 from April 2022. There was also one U3A which apparently wants it raised to £4.50. Each U3A needs to go through the proposals and rationales online. It has been £3.50 for 10 ears. Sue suggested that the groups might want to send a representative to the AGM to vote as this will of course have an impact on the membership fees.

Any Other Business

Chris Winner said that she had a couple of points:

1. CEAT external affairs – looking for a media ambassador for each region– liaison between local press and TV
2. Research network. Peter Cox – doing a new High Street survey, the effects of Covid on our High Street. This would then become a network resource. Info out, if members willing to participate, contact Peter Cox . It will be about 2 hours work and need to compare now with later and needs of couple of people from each U3A.

Sue said that this would be quite urgent, because they want to know what the position is “now” and then they can compare with what it is later on. A snapshot.

Tony asked why is this a U3A project. He is personally a research volunteer for Cardiff and the Vale Citizens Advice and knows how the research system works. He wanted to know what the U3A connection/coverage would be.

Chris Winner said this was slightly different, about how a U3A operate and shared less projects, they need an archive of information.

3. Trust was undergoing upgrade to website. A Process of identifying how and what our members want from a learning provision – to be called a Learning Hub and subject advisers were asked for assistance. Survey to Members – survey your members, talks online, speakers, activities.
4. Wales Conference is postponed until May 12th 2021 with a change of topics. It was far too expensive to try to keep it this year with only 30 people allowed in. The castle project has gone into TAM, photos in newsletters etc. There is no shared learning project in force at the moment. Hilary Lipscombe confirmed they did have a school learning technology project which they hope to restart. Chris asked for ideas for next year’s theme.

Sue Shannon-Jones asked if anyone had any ideas for a Shared Learning Project.

Chris Winner said that the quilt that a lot of U3As had contributed to was finished and perhaps a digital book could be put in hand.

Chris also suggested that a group make a block (from material, wood, ceramics etc) and submit it to National Office (via a photo), they can then be made into a digital book. This was being called a Creative Covid Collaboration.

Derek Shottin said that he would like to get back to Network business and that Valerie Stowell had suggested that we meet more often as there was a lot going on and we need to share best practice and perhaps we should meet monthly online from now on. There was a vote on this where practically everyone agreed that a monthly meeting via zoom would be the way forward for the moment at least. Chepstow agreed that they could host the meeting again.

Sue Shannon-Jones asked everyone to email Denise with anything they wanted put on the agenda for the next meeting. Denise suggested that perhaps we can share our views on how to hold an AGM during lockdown and what others have done, should do etc.

Hilary Lipscombe said that she was standing in for Rhianon, their network person but that she realised the network had helped over the last 2 years or so and she had seen benefits so she would want to know what added value would the network provide, going forward.

Tony Baines said the evidence shows it is a 2 way process.

There was a short discussion over the date and time of the next meeting when it was agreed that it would be held by zoom on Thursday 3rd September at 10 for 10.30am.

The meeting ended at 12.18pm.