

Network Zoom meeting 7th October 2020

1. AGREEMENT FOR RECORDING OF THE MEETING

All those attending before the start of the meeting agreed for the meeting to be recorded.

2. APOLOGIES

Janice Andrews Ebbw Vale

3. ATTENDEES

Derek Shottin	Chepstow	(hosting)
Sue Shannon-Jones	Swansea	(Acting Chair Person)
Michael Young	Cardiff	(Treasurer)
Denise Jones	Bridgend	(Secretary)
Beryl Keating	Garth Olwg	
Mary Allen	Cardiff	
Valerie Stowell	Abergavenny	
Sharon Corbett	Pontyclun	
Martin Sanders	Sully	
Mike Faraday	Usk	
Tony Baines	Cardiff	
Mary Ross	Monmouth	
Hugh Hutton	Chepstow	
Kate Thomas	Crickhowell	
Rhiannon Williams	Gilwern	
Derek Pope	Abergavenny	
Peter Lloyd	Swansea	
Dave Davies	Torfaen	
Carinwen (Crin) Morgan	Garth Olwg	
Nicky Lee	Chepstow	

Dave Harris

Gilwern

Chris Winner

Wales Trustee

Ian McCannah

National Office (joined us at 2.45)

Susan Sear

Neath (joined us around 3.15pm)

The meeting started promptly at 10.30am after directions on putting names to faces.

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved with no alterations so those already circulated will stand.

5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Sue Shannon-Jones said she had nothing really to discuss since the last meeting.

6. SECRETARY'S REPORT

Denise Jones said she had nothing really to report apart from receiving and circulating the updated Covid 19 for Wales report updated to 20th September 2020 and assumed it was on the website. Sue Shannon-Jones said that this had been removed from the website because there was confusion as it indicated that we could meet on a charitable status. She said that we need to abide by Welsh Assembly rules and for those areas in local lockdown, even more stringently. David Davies confirmed that Torfaen was also under local lockdown, and Beryl Keating said that RCT was too. Derek Shottin said Monmouth was not under local lockdown and that these covid welsh guidelines were not clear and Dave Davies said that they were back to the rule of 6. Derek Shottin said that he was appalled that they were not aware that the advice had been withdrawn and said that Chepstow would have to make major changes if this was in fact the case. Tony Baines said that **what was referred to in those documents was** charitable "services" and they didn't appear to mean the u3a, and Martin Sanders said that this was for limited purposes to run the business of the u3a and Tony Baines agreed that it was probably only applicable to committee meetings. Sue Shannon-Jones said this only referred to meeting indoors and it was again down for interpretation. Peter Lloyd said our learning was outside of the intention and we should be in line with welsh assembly guidelines. Derek Shottin said that he hoped Ian would clarify. Kate Thompson said that they were in the Powys area and her committee is approving each group before starting, only outdoors. They were going to have a hybrid meeting which had to be cancelled. Even though the halls needed the business they could not open as they were. Her interpretation was that there could be charitable meetings if your group was not in a local lockdown area and indoors and wanted this question to be put to Ian McCannah. Rhianon Williams said that said on the 21st September it showed that there is an exception to the rule of 6 on covid secure premises. The u3a had altered their guidance, did this come from legal dept of the u3a or the government, because the welsh government allows outside i.e. when it is the right thing to do. Her understanding was that provided that you were not on local lockdown, then you could run inside up to 6 and outside up to 30. We need clear parameters from the trust and agree although it may not be legal advice, it is not good to encourage groups of more than 6. Ian McCannah had already joined the meeting during this discussion and was surprised that

we did not know the guidance had been withdrawn . Sam Mauger is the only person who advises the UK u3a otherwise it would be too confusing. It was obviously an added complication with Wales having a different agenda to the English. Ian McCannah said that he would ask Sam to clarify the position. David Harris asked if there is any concrete advice. Ian McCannah confirmed it had to be a local decision. Derek Shottin said that we have not been given good enough advice, Chepstow had relied on it and Ian McCannah was brushing it off, saying we need to take Welsh government advice and that this was a U turn and he was personally appalled. Ian McCannah said Sam Mauger will take all local government restrictions in hand and give advice. Our insurance was limited to government policy. Rhianon Williams said that the interest groups they thought could meet because they fell within the charitable exemption, do they fall within the charitable exemption for interest groups or just for “running” our u3a groups? Ian McCannah said charitable exemption could have allowed us more than 6 but they had received much member feedback against this advice because of the age demographic of our members and the advice was therefore withdrawn. Hugh Hutton said that the guidance given on the 14th September was for England and Wales, there was a charitable exemption, and on the 21st September, England withdrew but Wales stayed the same. He said we all owe a duty of care for our members to feel safe, our committees need to encourage precautions.

Ian McCannah was then formally welcomed to the meeting at 2.54 to give his talk.

He asked if anyone had tuned into the National AGM which he said was a challenge and a deep learning curve. It was ok but they had a common debate on the increase of membership subscriptions from £3.50 to £4 which was to come into force in April 2022. There was a lot of interest and an amendment to a resolution delaying it to 2023, and increasing by £1. This took up a lot of time, had to adhere to legal procedures. It was a 70/30 pass. Had 700 attendees, 400 normally. They will probably do a hybrid one in the future. One of the issues was to rebrand the movement with a new logo to try and freshen up the image. He said that he started a development 3 years ago and asked members for future ideas. Dealing with the “university” issue, felt to be a barrier, we legally still need to use it but, we are all empowered to decide for our own groups if we want to.

As to the logo, they felt it was a bit outdated , lasted for over 20 years , been **reviewed** in **consultation** with members, originally with a **UK** focus group **programme**, not well received. Therefore member driven. There was criticism about the cost, 100k for consultancy fees. Tony **Baines** said that he **had volunteered to be a** focus group member and was told he had to speak in his own personal capacity, not his u3a group, why ? Ian McCannah said he had no idea but assumed they were only collating personal views. He carried on to say In order to bring it together an outside agency was used to do image. 16k cost which was less than 1% of the annual income. Need the technology in place, for digital imaging etc.

Development plan: 3 years old. Basically now in implementation stage, may have recommendations, broken down by (a) name (dealt with) (b) image (dealt with) and (c) upgrade of the national website which currently is tortuous to navigate and due early next year to complete and (d) more learning materials, digital possibly, to help subject advisors and interest groups, so building on learning hubs.

The future of the movement is polarised at the moment, some groups are active using technology, isolation issues, inactivity. Reserved issues, lockdown means lower member numbers expected.

Ideas required when able to restart. Plan a relaunch, start preparing for the end of lockdowns. There will sadly be 50/60 year olds without employment. He has prepared a report, available via a link in May newsletter. Or if you don't get it you can get it direct from Ian by emailing him on ian.mccannah@u3a.org.uk.

Beacon: next stage was due out in April, been delayed because we need volunteers to assist. Tech issues now resolved. A year to roll out, virtually maybe. Urge everyone to go on. It will assist secretaries, treasurers and group leaders and may help a u3a to get more volunteers onto the committee.

TAM hit hard because of a lack of advertising by travel companies and had to reduce the page lengths. Online maybe, continual discussion when the same price to pay for it. It's now bio-degradable.

The Trading Company is now up and running. Beacon and TAM not provided for and so cannot be traded as a charitable service so we created a trading company 18 months ago. We have been asked to see if we can use it for getting discounts at retail outlets. A company called Parliament Hall is dealing with this and may launch on the last Thurs or Fri of November, around Black Friday. Keep an eye on the newsletter for further information.

(At this point Susan Sear of Neath joined in the session)

Tony Baines asked if the report Ian referred to above, was the 6 page one he had seen from beginning to end? Ian said he had got it down from 100 pages. Ian said that most national office committees now have 50% non trustee members and 4 are even chaired by non trustee members. They have now got more experience and a massive injection into the trust and of course, all volunteers. Tony asked Ian what he would like us as u3a committees to do with his 6 page report?

Ian said we should plan to relaunch. A 10 year survey says the average age of our current members is between 72 to 74 so we rapidly need new members. Covid gives us an opportunity. We have traditionally relied on word of mouth and not given enough focus on promoting. We need to make contact with other communities and promote locally, in libraries, religious places etc, look at technology, hybrid, focusing on younger members, the unemployed. Group leaders are having problems with using halls and personal homes, so perhaps have an open day, you can get a grant from National Office of £100.00/£200.00. Sue Shannon-Jones said that the traditional interest groups such as creative writing were now becoming less popular, need different interest groups. Peter Lloyd said that Swansea members who had rejoined were more or less the same number as last year.

Ian then acknowledged Chris Winner saying Chris Winner was on the team of the Trust and a huge support to him over the last couple of years. They had set up "Trust u3a" for those who could not find a local group (so a virtual u3a) which now has 47 interest groups with nearly 500 members. The cost was 7.50 to public or 4.00 if you are already a member (at least for 2020).

He then talked about interest groups, citing languages and talking about the geographical boundaries, which have been eroded. There is no barrier. Like French groups coming together, joining with other groups locally or even on the continent, there were 12 Spanish "costas" and hybrid groups. Although we can't lose face to face meetings, these groups are helpful to expand

horizons. Dave Davies asked how to fund across groups? Ian McCannah said if your members wanted to link then it was ok. Dave Davies asked Ian McCannah to confirm that only one group would need to be paid and their members could join other groups if the committees agreed. Sue Shannon-Jones said that she and Denise Jones of Bridgend were trying to sort out some sort of reciprocal arrangement but it was difficult as Swansea charged £10 pa and groups paid for their own venues and Bridgend charged £36 with venue fees included. The biggest problem was the insurance. Ian McCannah said that it didn't matter because as long as they were a u3a member of one group, the insurance covered them. The insurance company would not care what group they were in. The insurers insure the membership. It should make no difference for anyone's financial model. If people of two or more groups want to come together, they can decide how to organise it. Sue Shannon-Jones said how refreshing it was to hear that it was that simple, no Memorandums of Understanding and Ian McCannah confirmed the u3a was a self help ethos. All it needs is for the 2 committees to agree to everything. Sue Shannon-Jones said that Denise Jones paid her membership to Bridgend and because she was also a convenor of a group in Swansea, she had had to pay to become a full member of Swansea too. Ian McCannah said that if Swansea and Gower wanted to form an interest group together there was no barrier, apart from the Treasurers!! Some insist of them having to pay both groups. National Office are happy for you to get around this, just have an agreement between your groups, like making someone an associate member. Denise Jones said that we had been talking about the possibility of forming cluster interest groups for the last couple of years for the South Wales Network and been trying to work out how to do it and asked Ian McCannah to confirm that really all we needed to do was to "make a deal" as long as all the committees agree, and even if they were not next door to each other. Ian McCannah confirmed. The Treasurer of the groups acknowledge what subs are going to be agreed, like an associate membership for [whatever] less £3.50 but it needs the willing commitment of both groups. Derek Shottin said that Chepstow and Caldicot have reciprocal arrangements (with associate memberships- pay £3.50 less), but no actual agreements, as do they and Monmouth and it works fine. Sue Shannon-Jones asked Derek how they know that the person is actually a member of another group and Derek said that they take it on trust. Dave Davies said that if they had a membership card confirming membership then that would be sufficient and Derek Shottin said that of course if both groups were on Beacon this would be sufficient proof too and a good solution. Dave Davies said he liked the Chepstow approach of trust, who would want to scam! Sue Shannon-Jones said that Swansea had done a trawl of members who were paid up and those attending groups and found quite a high percentage not paid up but attending. Mary Allen said that she was a Cardiff member but joined a Pontyclun ukulele group and paid their membership less £3.50.

Peter Lloyd wondered if it would invalidate the insurance for the "main" members of group if an outside "member" turned out not to be one. Chris Winner said it would need to be accepted that the outside person "caused" that accident or a lapsed member and then it was "likely to" invalidate the insurance. Derek Shottin said that he had attended an underwriter talk some time ago when this question arose and the underwriter had said "probably" not invalidate but of course it has never been "tested" in court.

Dave Davies asked for confirmation that you could merge interest groups informally. Ian McCannah said yes. He was asked if there needed to be any finance arrangements. Was it possible for two committee groups to agree that its ok? Without paying anything at all. Ian McCannah confirmed and said years ago he was involved in a London group who had a "good neighbour" policy which

was, sadly, eventually broken down by over enthusiastic Treasurers. Chris Winner said in North Wales they have a german group, reciprocated with Wrexham . Dave Davies asked about confirmation of the insurance issue, ie. in Denise Jones' previous example of if she wished to join a group Torfaen were running, there would be no insurance issues as long as she was a paid up member. Ian McCannah confirmed. Kate Thompson said that (a) a membership card shows you are paid up, so could show to neighbouring group or (b) use Beacon. Chepstow said used Beacon for 3 or 4 years now and Derek Shottin offered Kate Thompson's group a presentation. Dave Davies said that Chepstow was a large group and his group only had about 120 members and they were not sure it was worth it. Denise Jones said that her group, Bridgend only had 130 members but they were planning to join but had said they would go on when stage 2 was brought out but they had recently been asked to join stage 1 and have an easy transition over to stage 2 next year, it would be quicker in the long run. Nicky Lee said that she could run Beacon and admitted that she was a "techno donkey". Derek Shottin said that if you have your members listed on a spreadsheet then it was easy for them to import into Beacon and they would never look back after being on it. Sue Shannon-Jones said she was impressed by it and even though her group used Apricot which they had used for a long time, in time they may switch over to Beacon. Denise Jones said that in the "new order" of things and in the hope to get younger people into the groups, then it made sense for more groups to be on Beacon or something like it as younger members would appreciate and expect no less. Dave Davies and Ian McCannah agreed that this was a good point. Peter Lloyd said there was a lack of the Welsh language. Ian McCannah said he had received a forewarning about this topic and said he would put it forward. Chris Winner said she had Welsh logos to show us and would share her screen. Ian McCannah then said that he had another meeting in 5 mins with new trustees and had to leave the meeting at 4.03. Kate Thompson also had to leave at the same time.

Chris Winner then talked about the new logo and said it had gone to the board and put up the options on a shared screen for the choices for use in Wales and showed them in blue and white. The strapline "Learn laugh Live" was not copyrighted and the new logo has it in welsh or just the word "Cymru" and asked for opinions. Sue Shannon-Jones said that she liked the new logo and Chris Winner said that we would be able to customise it "within guidelines" which will be posted on the website in due course. Nicky Lee said that if you went for the welsh only logo, it might alienate a huge amount of people who don't speak Welsh so they have used both and showed us a screenprint of their logo for Chepstow which they have already downloaded as they appear to be subscribed to the group working on this. Chris Winner said you can use Welsh and English either/or both. The logo would be made available and downloadable from the website soon and we will be told HOW we can use it. They are looking for consistency across the country –it's all a matter of "image". Mary Allen said that when the Eistedfodd was held in Cardiff the **leaflets used were bilingual and that the Welsh version was P30 (Prifysgol y Ddydedd Oes) and asked if that logo had been dropped, The word "University" was used in both English and Welsh.** Chris Winner agreed that the English and Welsh translation of "University" would also have to be removed. Mary Allen added that she thought the less Welsh (and possibly confusing) words the better. Denise Jones said that she preferred just the word "Cymru" because it was common knowledge, even in England, and many parts of the world, that this was the meaning for Wales, one word was easier to remember and looked neater. Sue Shannon-Jones said that she had previously spoken to Ian McCannah about translating the site and other materials for other ethnic groups as it might be easier to encourage them to join and although Ian McCannah had agreed and said this was a possibility, they could not afford to pay someone for

the translations. Chris Winner said that it would now go into production and she would then broach this with North, Mid and West Wales and when all happy would go forward so if anyone has anything to add, you need feedback to her. Peter Lloyd said that he would go back to his committee as some of them were Welsh speaking and had more to say on the subject!

7. TREASURER'S REPORT

Michael Young said that there was nothing to report since the last meeting.

8. UPDATE on current guidelines etc

Sue Shannon-Jones asked if any needed any AGM help, restarting etc. Denise said her group had held their AGM on zoom and just about hit a quorum. Dave Davies said there was nothing in their constitution about a quorum. He has been doing research, has a meeting in November and their AGM not due until February and he will still have 3 months leeway so will keep us updated. Tony Baines at Cardiff went back to our earlier discussion on starting indoor groups, saying that Cardiff had decided they would use the downtime to get best practice risk assessment/practical/legal checklist, for their convenors but it had been pointed out that they need to be careful because there are online templates at TAT and insurance problems if they are not used so do not divert far from them. Sue Shannon-Jones and Chris Winner said all of this goes via lawyers. Sharon Corbett said that she was using the TAT risk assessment for her walking group and since local lockdown they have been doing smaller walks and asking all the group to do a personal assessment. Tony Baines said that in his opinion the outdoor risk assessment by TAT was the best, but needed Health & Safety and track and trace elements too. Dave Davies said that they had had a committee meeting where he provided information from our network meeting and they decided not to proceed at the moment and then local lockdown came but they are having a lot of success with zoom meetings and were planning to extend them, to help and maybe train their convenors. Denise Jones told of her walking group's leader taking his group out yesterday without getting committee approval. He had used the Ramblers Association risk assessment, had walkers text him to say covid free and had done a recce of the walk last week. Denise had told only found out about it on attending a zoom coffee morning session yesterday when her Chairman said that the walking group had restarted and he had been asked to put information on our website and had done so. She had contacted the walking group convenor (in her capacity as group co-ordinator) to remind him that all groups had to have committee approval before restarting (as she had circulated to all group convenors a couple of months past) and had to be provided with risk assessments, track and trace info etc. She asked what others are doing. Sharon Corbett said that her group use Beacon for the track and trace element as of course only group members can participate and they need to book the walk via Beacon. Sue Shannon-Jones said that they used a n events system to register attendees and agreed that the committee need to be informed and approve groups. Derek Shottin agreed and said members should sign to say they approved the risk assessment and their personal assessment. Sue Shannon-Jones said that of course the convenor must hold the track and trace details for at least 3 weeks.

Denise Jones said that at their AGM (just quorate) they decided to provide their members with a "free" year because most of their subs went on paying for venues. Dave Davies said that their group was thinking about waiving the fee for a year. Derek Shottin said that was entirely down to each u3a and the £3.50 fee would have to be paid by the group to TAT in any event. Tony Baines said that he

just wondered if perhaps National Office could reduce their subscription to each group (in view of overall reduced activity levels) but this was felt to be unlikely as they still have to pay staff etc. Chris Winner said there was a danger of losing some groups. Martin Sanders said normally they set fees at an AGM, any decision for waiving fees would need to be an AGM or EGM? Chris Winner said yes, depending upon your constitution. Dave Davies said they had done by committee decision as they took the view that as it was a reduction not an increase an AGM or EGM was not necessary. Chris Winner agreed that a reduction was not such an issue.

Sue Shannon-Jones asked if anyone had anything to say about internet banking. Denise Jones said that after Hilary had told her there was information on the website, she had tried to find it but not succeeded and asked if anyone else had, no offers. Sue Shannon-Jones asked for ideas for further zoom meetings. Denise Jones said that we had previously said that we might invite convenors, treasurers, chairmen etc and have breakout type sessions. Susan Sear of Neath said that most of her members weren't even on the internet, let alone zoom. Dave Davies said that as rules and covid related issues were emerging on a practically daily basis, he felt that we should continue to talk like we have been on a monthly basis, even if it only lasts 10 minutes. He also said that it would be great to keep track of each other. Denise Jones agreed and said those out of lockdown who may be able to restart their groups earlier might be able to give us useful information from their experiences. All agreed.

9. EMAIL CONTACT LIST UPDATE

Dave Davies said he did not receive the attachment about generic email so Denise said would resend. Rhiannon Williams said she didn't get them either and neither did Derek Pope. Sue Shannon-Jones said that we need to keep contacts up to date. Derek Shottin said better to put the generic email instructions on the website. Sue Shannon-Jones asked Denise Jones to send her the up to date contact list which she is using to circulate.

10. RESEARCH REQUESTS

Sue Shannon-Jones again said that each network area has a regional ambassador who has a checklist for the accepted criteria if anyone gets any requests. If outside of this checklist, it goes to the ethics committee. There is a checklist on the website. If anyone gets a request, please forward to her. They have received a lot of requests these past few months and some were not suitable.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Everyone agreed that a monthly meeting was best for the moment so it was agreed that the next meeting would be held on the 4th November 2020 at 2.30pm.

The meeting ended at 5pm.

