

WITNEY u3a

Minutes of Committee Meeting

Date of Meeting: 3rd October 2023

Time of Meeting: 10.00 am

Place of Meeting: Bethany Room, Methodist Church

Present: Susie [REDACTED] (Chair), Adrian [REDACTED], Roger [REDACTED], Doreen [REDACTED],
Corinna [REDACTED], John [REDACTED], Marian [REDACTED]

Distribution: All committee members and Pam Jones

1. Apologies

Terry [REDACTED] (Business Treasurer), Judith [REDACTED] (Social Treasurer), Mike [REDACTED],
Lynda [REDACTED] (Business Secretary)

2. Minutes of Last Meeting (accuracy)

Although it had been submitted prior to the meeting, JP's report for September was missing and not acknowledged. SW to amend the minutes accordingly.

3. Minutes of the last meeting (matters arising not on the agenda)

- It was confirmed that new members' meetings are now only signposted to new and potential members and not to current members.
- SW had looked at recent emails and confirmed that Chris Tancock was still available for first aid courses. MH to investigate his availability for CRP/first aid courses going forward

4. Chair's Report

- Attendance numbers for September meetings are not available. The volunteer who took over from Nicky seems to have disappeared, so that role is not currently being filled. This means that sign-in sheets have not been provided and other responsibilities not undertaken. SW to confirm that the volunteer has changed her mind about helping at speaker meetings.
- Following discussion about the increase in fees/removal of the early bird offer, it was agreed that we need a special meeting, with TMcC and JH present, to further explore and agree the way forward. Meeting to take place before committee meeting on 7 November. 31 October suggested as possible date. SW to consult and confirm date with members.
- The idea of a 'blue'skies thinking' away day was considered. AdelN pointed out that future strategies had been looked at during the Pathfinder meetings in 2021/22. JP forwarded a summary document that Roger had circulated to the committee in July. SW to ask CMcK for other relevant Pathfinder papers and to prepare a summary

document if one is not available. An Away Day in New Year could be based on this document.

- Although we now have two Facebook pages, one public and one for members only, our use of social media is limited. Even so, it was agreed that we should look at the guidance recently issued by the government and determine how we should respond. SW to look at the document and summarise the main issues for the next committee meeting.

5. Business Secretary's Report

- LG confirmed that RW is willing to undertake the printing of the speaker programme again this year.
- Further to the last meeting LG and AdelN had met on zoom to discuss member retention. In LG's absence, AdelN had agreed to report back on the main points:
 - a. Retention is primarily about communication, communication, communication. Recruitment is mainly by word of mouth, so is influenced by satisfaction of current members. JP pointed out that we have 76 lapsed members as of end of September, but we have gained 74 new members since 1 April.
 - b. Cost of membership is not the main driver
 - c. Some members feel that Witney u3a is becoming too corporate, eg through the issuing of guidelines, however LG and AdelN agree that structure is necessary.
 - d. There needs to be two-way communication between the committee and members. People need to feel valued. Group leader forums are helping, but we need to facilitate members to feel more listened to as well.
 - e. LG and AdelN proposed that volunteers from the committee offer to attend group meetings to invite questions from group members for 10-15 minutes at the beginning. DK asked how we get to individual members without muddling it up with the group structure? Attendance at the beginning of the meeting would also delay its start, which would be difficult if members were paying for the hire of the room or leader (eg Tai Chi and Spanish beginners).
 - f. It was agreed that we should delay this suggestion until we see how the Group Leader forums are going and whether attendance at those increases. In the meantime, it was agreed to establish coffee meetings for current members to meet committee members at 2.00 pm in the Methodist Church on the last working day of the month, meaning that the first such meeting would take place on 30 November. It was further agreed that such meetings could be coordinated via the committee WhatsApp group. A rota could be established for committee member attendance so that no-one has to attend every time unless they wish to.
 - g. It was also agreed to regularly ask simple 'Let us know' questions in the newsletter and at speaker meetings to test member satisfaction eg. What do you like about Witney u3a; what could be improved ; what needs to change?

- h. Information about the new current member coffee meetings will be distributed by email and at speaker meetings with a printed letter to non-email users distributed with the newsletter.
- i. DK agreed to speak to Mary Willis about availability of the Methodist church on that date. Communication with members will begin once confirmation is received.

6. Treasurer's Report

- It was noted that TMcC had submitted his report prior to the meeting.

7. Member Retention and Recruitment

- This was discussed under item 5, Business Secretary's report.

8. Recruitment to the Committee

- It was confirmed that RC and CW will be standing down.
- JP has another year to go, but is in discussion with a current member about sharing the role. JP was clear in his view that anyone becoming membership secretary should also be a member of the committee. SW will explain this to the person concerned and discuss how it might be achieved.
- DK is standing down, and given the complexity and breadth of her role, will meet with SW to discuss recruiting a replacement and the preparation of a detailed job description prior to the next meeting.

9. Storing Records on the Cloud

- RC had raised this matter in his report. It was agreed that we need to check the Charity Commission's requirements re. what is stored and for how long. HMRC requires membership records to be kept for 7 years to facilitate Gift Aid monitoring.
- It was agreed that RC would email Ian McG to ask what he had ascertained about Charity Commission requirements and that JP would look through Ian's previous committee reports.
- It was further agreed that IT representative will be responsible for storing documents on the cloud and that the Business Secretary and Treasurer will ensure that the relevant documents are sent to them.

10. Group Coordinator's Report

- DK's report had been circulated prior to the meeting. DK confirmed that Bridge Group 2 will be funding the repair of the bridge tables – mainly because no-one else is taking responsibility.
- In response to members' requests DK also suggested that we give all members a lanyard with a plastic wallet to wear at meetings, with a label showing their names. She estimates that the cost will be in the region of £134, which the committee agreed to pay. JP agreed to look at the possibility of printing labels from Beacon.

11. Other Reports

- **JP's Membership reports** had been circulated prior to the meeting. He requested that Beacon be put on the Agenda for discussion at the next Committee Meeting.
- The **Programme Secretary** confirmed that she is in discussion with someone willing to take over her role. Information about forthcoming speakers has been sent to the relevant people with more to follow for November speakers.
- The **Publicity Officer** had submitted his report.
- **MC** had circulated his **AV and Newsletter reports** prior to the meeting.
- **RC** had circulated his **IT and website reports** prior to the meeting. He confirmed that at present, there was no need for an additional laptop.

12. Date of next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 7 November 2023.