

## YORK u3a

### MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 10 March 2021 via ZOOM

PRESENT: David Maughan Brown (Chairman), Mike Barnard (Secretary), Lorrae Atkins, Anna Baldwin, Ren Buss, Nick David, Hilary Davies, Peter Jarman, Sandra Mason, Janis Oxtoby, Rosemary Royds Tree and Steve Russell.

#### **1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

David Maughan Brown welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Paul Howarth and Mo Sandland.

#### **2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2021 were approved as a correct record.

David reported that the advertising of the beginners' classes at York Bridge Club had been satisfactorily resolved and the link added to the external information section of the group's website.

#### **3. COVID-19 RISK MANAGEMENT**

It was agreed that there would be nothing further to add on this subject until after the next meeting on 14 April 2021.

#### **4. EQUIPMENT MANAGER RECRUITMENT**

The committee agreed to David's suggestion that the committee set up a standing Appointments Sub-Committee, consisting of the Chair, the Deputy Chair and one other member, to speak to prospective new members before they join the committee. In this connection it was agreed that David, Lorrae and Anna would have a chat with the applicant for the Equipment Manager post, before Saturday's AGM.

ACTION: DMB

#### **5. AGM PLANNING**

David clarified that the formal Annual Report, prepared by Ren and Sheila, had already been sent to the independent examiners and that he would be delivering a 'Chairman's Report' rather than an 'Annual Report' at the AGM on Saturday 13 March. It was noted that the Annual Report would need to be sent to the independent examiners again after the AGM and should then be sent on to the Charity Commission.

David, Lorrae and Mike agreed to look at Ren's notes for the AGM and David also agreed to promote the forthcoming Talks Secretary vacancy. David thanked Mike for his detailed work on the planning for the AGM.

ACTION: RB, DMB

## **6. COMMITTEE MEMBERS' REPORTS**

### **Chairman**

David reported that he had been contacted by York Community Learning Partnership about adding a u3a representative to their organisation. It was agreed this was a good idea and Anna agreed to join the group.

**Talks Secretaries:** a report from Anna and Peter is appended

A discussion on the honorarium offered to speakers took place. It was agreed that it was difficult to quantify exactly how much this should be, having regard to travel and other expenses incurred by each speaker and whether they were representing a charitable organisation. It was agreed that a relatively flexible and discretionary sum of up to £75, which may include travel, should be offered in future.

Anna reported that there would be no blended meetings before September at the earliest and that the talks should be held in the Central Methodist Church from September onwards if the regulations in force at that time would allow it. Blended meetings could be discussed as an add-on at a later date.

Anna agreed to give Nick amended details of the Talks Secretary vacancy for the April Newsmail.

**ACTION:** AB

### **Secretary and Regional Representative**

Mike had nothing further to report.

**Treasurer:** a report from Ren is appended

Ren reported a projected £5,000 deficit for the year to 31 July 2021 which would mean a balance of circa £67,000 at bank provided group activities did not reactivate significantly faster than expected. In view of this balance, and the committee's confirmation of their previous decision to continue to subsidise external interest group activities in the same way as had been done with the Henry Mills legacy, it was agreed that the membership fee from 1 August 2021 should be £15.

Ren mentioned that she still had no copy of the lease agreement with FMH and agreed to continue trying to pursue this.

She had now identified eight bank accounts belonging to groups and said she had received statements for all but two sets of bank statements but these had been requested. She had made fruitful connections with the group leaders concerned and several of their bank accounts were already held at Santander. Having spoken to Santander she had now confirmed that the bank account structure she had previously suggested (of grouped bank accounts visible on line with authorisation approval limits) was possible and was proposing

that Santander be the bank of choice for our u3a going forward. Unfortunately, Santander were not opening new accounts at the moment and therefore the main York U3A operating account would have to remain with Co-operative bank for the time being.

Mike and Rosemary were suggested as appropriate additional authorised signatories once the new operational account was established together with Steve Russell. There was no intent to change current Co-Op signatories at this time given the need to continue using the account. Current active signatories are David, Loraee, Sandra and Ren but there are some old signatories in place that need to be removed.

All the signatories on the Scottish Widows account were out-of-date and needed to be removed. It was agreed that David, Lorrae, Sandra, and Ren should be the new signatories with two signatures are required to authorise any instruction. There was no online functionality with Scottish Widows but this did not cause a problem as the account was rarely used.

Ren suggested that once the subscription renewal instructions were drafted the committee should assist in review of wording to ensure that they were as clear as possible and so minimise future issues and work.

**ACTION:** RB

### **Newsletter Editor**

Nick reported that he was collating items for the April edition of the Newsmail and open for further entries until 17 March or so. He said that photographs were always welcome as they provided colour and broke up the articles. Anna agreed to speak to Carrie Bell of the Haxby Group about running a photographic competition in the June Newsmail. Nick said that he was happy to receive further entries from groups although he may become oversubscribed as he already had several carried-over articles he had been unable to include in the last edition.

**ACTION:** AB

**Groups' Co-ordinator:** a report from Rosemary is appended

Rosemary reported that 109 members do not have email addresses and she was still considering how to deliver the Group information in hard copy format to those members. This would require combining information held on Beacon and on the webpages and, with Lorrae's help, she would be working on this in the next few days.

Peter felt that there should be some encouragement of possible new groups and, although this was usually mentioned at group leader meetings and new member meetings, it was agreed that a note for the April Newsmail, possibly giving examples of suggested groups, would be helpful.

**ACTION:** RRT

**Membership Secretary:** a report from Sandra is appended

It was agreed that it was not possible to advertise Bedern Hall's request for volunteers. Sandra said she would apologise and say that we had a large number of such requests and were sorry not to be able to help.

### **Website Manager**

Lorrae reported that it had been a routine month updating and editing the group's information and she had nothing to report.

### **Travel**

Hilary had nothing to report but hoped the travel sub-committee could have a face-to-face meeting to organise future plans after everyone had had their second Covid vaccination.

Ren and Hilary agreed to come up with a formal proposal for a coach subsidy.

ACTION: RB, HD

## **7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

It was agreed that we should ask TAT for advice on how legitimate it would be if Group Leaders to want to insist that members should have been vaccinated before participating in group activities, including planned coach trips. It was accepted that the government would probably make a decision on 'vaccination passports' or certificates in the next few weeks and that might help to clarify the situation although ethical issues would still remain for u3as to consider.

ACTION: DMB

[Subsequent to the meeting it has been decided that David is the appropriate person to contact TAT rather than the person given this action at the meeting.]

## **8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 14 April 2021 at 10am

## **Written Reports**

### **Treasurers Report for 10 March 2021**

1. Numbers up to Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> March are attached. You will see I have included two extra columns to show movement since last time we met/ reviewed position.
2. We have received a further £40 of subscription income and currently stand at £15k for the year compared to plan estimate of £16.2k.
3. Overall this month our spend was £3.5k as we received and paid the Friends the invoiced Lease cost for the Meeting House Rooms for the six months Oct 20 to Mar 21. The

invoices omitted the agreed RPI uplift but will be adjusted. I am still trying to obtain a copy of the final signed lease agreement with the Friends which Sheila previously tried to obtain – we have an unsigned and undated supposedly “final” document to work from.

4. With spend significantly exceeding receipts our bank balances fell to £79,508 but are still substantial and more than adequate for anticipated spend.
5. Beacon and TAT per capita fees payable will be based on member headcount as at 31 March 2021 and will reduce bank balances in April together with a further rent payment being due at that time.

Projecting forward I have estimated that we will be showing circa a net £5k deficit for the year to 31 July assuming that the majority of groups do not reactivate until September. This differs from Sheila’s plan of £13k deficit primarily because of levels of activity achieved during the year being so much lower because of Covid and consequently significantly lower costs particularly re rent / hire cost subsidies.

The projection suggests we will hold bank balances of circa £67k at 31 July.

6. I would therefore like to ensure that the committee are in agreement that we confirm the subscription to be charged for 2021/22 be reinstated at £17 and that the previous policy of subsidising room/premises hire costs to 50% of the total be continued.
7. Concern was raised previously re the visibility of transactions processed through the supposedly 7 bank accounts operated by certain Groups.

I have now contacted all the relevant Groups/Treasurers and so far received copy bank statements covering the period August 2019 to date for 5 of 7 confirmed accounts. I am intending to contact every Group where Sheila indicated funds were being held at 31 July 2019 to confirm current position and ensure no unidentified bank accounts lurk.

It is clear that with Covid and cessation of Group activities minimal movement through Bank accounts has occurred in the 20/21 year for which we are now accountable.

8. It appears most practical to set up our new main bank account with Santander as most of the existing small activity group accounts are held with them.

I have already discussed the type of “Group” structure I would hope to achieve with online visibility of these smaller group operated accounts and authorisation of payments over specified value made from them being required by myself or a main committee member.

9. With regard to our new main U3A account I would propose that we mirror the existing Co-Op structure with two authorised members being required to effect a payment. Authorised signatories proposed are myself, Loraee Atkins, Sandra Mason, Steven Russell and possibly Mike Barnard?

As Sandra has identified we need to move on this one as quickly as Covid permits because with current cumbersome Co-Op deposit processes we would much prefer to have the new account operating in time for subscription renewal.

10. Current signatories for both Scottish Widows and Co-Op bank account have been established and we are in position to move forward in updating mandates.

With the Co-Op account there are redundant signatories but there is no point in removing them as we will be closing the account once activity levels have fallen (and after subscriptions have been received for this year)

With the Scottish Widows account I will look at getting online access. Proposal for authorised signatories, for what is a paper based account at the moment, is as above with two signatories required to operate this account. No intention at this time to close the account as don't want to be holding more than the £85k limit in one account.

11. Sandra, myself and Steve Russell have "met" and reviewed the Gift Aid records and process. Thanks to Sandra who has put a lot of effort into ensuring Beacon will be able to provide the info we need for Steve to make our claim this April.

There are two issues going forward :

As already mentioned we need to get a new bank account in place pre subscription renewal so that we can move away from using the Co-Op with attendant admin hassle.

With the move to PayPal it is even more important that we try and encourage each individual member to renew themselves in order to optimise Gift aid claims within permitted tax rules. The challenge is devising clear enough instructions and possibly insisting that both Husband and wife pay their dues separately so that we can ensure we can validly claim gift aid where due.

It will be helpful to have input / comments on clarity once instructions are drafted.

Ren

**U3A Finance Statement as at 7 March 2021**

General Fund	2020/21		2019/20	Mvmt 8 Feb to 7 Mar	As at 8 Feb
	As at 7 Mar	Whole year plan	Last Year's total		
		£	£		
<b>Receipts</b>					
Subscriptions	14,952	16,200	29,595	40	14,912
Gift Aid		3,240	4,858	0	
Groups room income	57	2,500	5,259	0	57
Saturday meetings		600	1,380	0	
Other		0	1,966	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,009</b>	<b>22,540</b>	<b>43,058</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>14,969</b>
<b>Payments</b>				0	
Friargate rent	3,370	10,300	6,801	3,370	

Rent for Garden room etc	60	600	1,242	0	60
Former HM room/rent support	1,307	3,000	2,802	0	1,307
Office costs	1,022	2,000	1,672	31	991
Postage & Franking Machine	831	3,000	4,270	0	831
Equipment		2,000	1,516	0	
Newsletter		3,000	1,635	0	
National magazine		1,800	1,930	0	
Saturday meetings	250	1,500	2,141	75	175
Third Age Trust		6,000	6,279	0	
Beacon fee		1,800	1,794	0	
Independent examiner	336	350	330	0	336
Pay Pal Fees	248			1	247
Other	3	200	265	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,427</b>	<b>35,550</b>	<b>32,677</b>	<b>3,477</b>	<b>3,950</b>
<b>Net surplus / (Spend)</b>	<b>7,582</b>	<b>(13,010)</b>	<b>10,381</b>	<b>(3,437)</b>	<b>11,019</b>
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<b>79,508</b>	<b>58,915</b>	<b>71,926</b>		<b>82,945</b>

	Nominal		Nominal
Current Account	38,272.08	Bank Blce less rec = Nominal	41,709.58
Scottish Widows	41,235.44	Per statement as at 1.4.20	41,235.44
	<u>79,507.52</u>		<u>82,945.02</u>
			-3,437.50

## Membership Secretary's Report – March 9, 2021

### Membership

- 1,495 members, including 41 new members, 13 of these joined online.
- 785 members renewed or joined online and 710 members renewed or joined by mailing their payments to the office or paying by bank transfer.
- 140 members have resigned.
- 16 members are deceased.
- 193 members' memberships have lapsed.

### Assistant Membership Secretary

I had a successful Zoom meeting with Mo. There were three renewals so I was able to show her the renewal process. Mo said that she will be comfortable meeting with me in the office when it's allowed. It will be much easier to explain the system when we're face to face.

### Procedure Manual

I'm continuing to work on the Procedure Manual. I will send Mo one section at a time so that she is not overwhelmed. Renewal preparation will take place in July and this is the first section which I have sent to her.

### **Beacon**

- The reply to my ticket regarding members joining online was that the system is working correctly. I had to become creative and I came up with a way of finding these new members.
- The system has been crashing frequently and many U3As have raised tickets for this.

Sandra Mason

### **Report from Talks Secretaries March 2021**

- a) *[Item appearing in next Newsmail]*
- b) We have decided to return to in-person meetings only from September as the restrictions are only being lifted at the end of June. We will plan on being in CMC with a laptop in the chapel (linked to a mike and camera in the Hall) providing zoom access and recording.
- c) For the rest of this year Lorrae will send the News Communication and Zoom link to all members (the current way of doing it is becoming unmanageable due to its popularity)
- d) The remaining lectures for this year are as follows

April 10: Jane Grenville: revising Pevesner's Survey of North Yorkshire's historic architecture

May 8: Joanna de Groot: From Iran to Persia and back again

June 12: Helen Walsh on the Pottery collection in the Art Gallery

July 10: Tony Waltham: The Geology of the Yorkshire Dales

Anna and Peter

### **Group Co-ordinator's report for Committee meeting 10th March 2021**

Dear Colleagues

I am working through the last few Groups who have not yet created a web presence, or that seem to have stopped meeting altogether to see if they will be able to continue in 2021/22. A small number do not wish to promote their groups at present but the majority (106) are listed on our web pages now and their details are now also mirrored in the Beacon record. A number of those groups will spring to life as soon as we are able to meet again in person



and outdoors, and in the meantime our members can see and sign up for classes and activities in the coming weeks and months.

In the next week or so I will be emailing all the members to draw their attention to the re-vamped pages, as well as working on the procedure for those without internet to receive hard copy printouts or personalised advice about our social activities.

A well-attended meeting of Group Leaders was held by Zoom on 24<sup>th</sup> February and it was wonderful to see everyone together again. The session was recorded and a copy of the recording sent out to all GLs to pick up those who could not attend or had had to leave the group early. Many of the group leaders mentioned how eager they were to begin meeting in person again, and we acknowledged that new venues were likely to be needed for socially-distanced numbers of participants. A concern was raised about meeting in some of the rooms in FMH that have poor airflows, given the recent research that shows the prevalence of the airborne spread of the virus indoors.

I have updated the paper-based listing of alternative venues across York that was previously held in the U3A Office for reference, and have posted it to the Group Leader web pages, along with a listing from York Explore that is already online and has live links to locations and information that are sure to be helpful in scoping potential new places to get together.