

YORK U3A

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 10 JUNE 2020 via ZOOM

PRESENT: David Maughan Brown (Chairman), Mike Barnard (Secretary), Lorrae Atkins, Anna Baldwin, Hilary Davies, Brian Frodsham, Alison Holmes, Peter Jarman, Sandra Mason, Janis Oxtoby, John Powderley and Sheila Wilson.

1.WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

2.MINUTES OF THE MEETING

An email had been sent to all committee members since the last meeting suggesting that future minutes of meetings should be circulated and stored electronically. Members would be circulated with draft minutes and have five days in which to submit comments. After that time the minutes would be deemed to have been approved and signed and could be posted on the website. It was noted that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2020 had been approved by this method.

3.MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

David reported that Alison had sent out letters to the group leaders as requested and the new posts had been advertised.

4.CORONAVIRUS

It was agreed that the subject Coronavirus should be removed from the agenda as a standing item and the relevance of this item be discussed as it occurred in any reports.

5.BEACON

A report from the Membership Secretary is attached.

Sandra said that everything she wished to say was covered in her report and it was agreed that Beacon should also be removed as a standing item on the agenda. Mike Barnard wished to record his thanks and congratulations to everyone involved with transferring records to the Beacon system and the committee endorsed this expression of appreciation. Sandra commented that it would be interesting to see how the system worked with membership renewals.

6.OBITUARY

It was agreed that a policy was needed for obituaries and Sandra reminded the committee that the existing policy was not to include any obituaries.

AGREED: To reassert the existing arrangement and not include obituaries in the future.

7. COMMITTEE MEMBERS' REPORTS

Chairman

David reported that four people had expressed an interest in the post of Treasurer. One person had withdrawn and it had been agreed to appoint Brenda (Ren) Buss as Treasurer and Steve Russell as Assistant Treasurer. The precise role of the Assistant Treasurer would be defined by Ren in discussion with Steve. John had indicated his intention to resign as Newsletter Editor at the next AGM and the third applicant for the Treasurer role, Nick David, who was eminently well qualified to take over, had agreed to take on that role instead. David said that he would confirm whether Steve and Nick wished to become Trustees or be invited to committee meetings. The new appointees would normally take over in October but could do so earlier if that suited all parties.

David had received a request from a researcher at the University of Aveiro who was conducting research in Europe on the extent to which people over 50 use IT, particularly for accessing news, for us to enlist all our members in a survey.

AGREED: that members would not wish to take part in such a survey and that David should send a polite reply to the request indicating the committee's reluctance to involve our members.

ACTION: DMB (2 items)

Talks Secretaries: A report from Anna and Peter is appended.

Anna reported that there had been a good take up of members who wished to go on a list for Zoom talks and suggested that when details of individual talks were sent out there would be an even greater take up. The two alternatives for the Saturday morning talks were either using a standard Zoom meeting or a Webinar. Lorrae suggested that the group open a Zoom contract starting with 100 attendees and increase when necessary to 300, with a view to putting the talk on YouTube.

AGREED: that Lorrae should investigate the costs involved with the various options, including Webinar, and then arrange practice scenarios with David, Anna and others.

ACTION:LA

Peter said that the Talks programme would not be settled much before November but, as the information would probably not be circulated until January when the new courses programme would be ready, there was no urgency about this. Peter had received a new contract in relation to the hire of the hall from Chris at the Central Methodist Church giving details of dates which had been requested. There was some confusion about this contract as David had already recently signed an agreement but it was suggested that the latest contract probably contained updates relating to social distancing, safety regulations and notice period etc. David asked Peter to let the whole committee have a copy of the new contract and agreed that he would speak to Chris about the necessity of signing a further contract.

The Christmas concert was discussed at length and, although members agreed that the sound quality of music was never particularly good over Zoom, they thought that it might be a welcome social event if Fools Gold could broadcast their music from their own home.

AGREED: that Anna and Peter should consider booking the duo but they should first explore the cost and the possible cancellation charge if the concert could not go ahead.

ACTION: AB/PJ, DMB

Secretary and Regional Representative: a report from Mike is appended.

Mike proposed postponing action on CIO until the present accounts had been consolidated and this was unanimously AGREED. Mike asked about the system for collecting post from the office during the lockdown. Since the Friends had to be asked for someone to turn off the alarm when a visit was made to the office, it was suggested that Sheila should retrieve the post-box key on her next visit. She would give this to Sandra who would arrange for a duplicate key to be cut so the post could be retrieved without the necessity of entering the building. Sheila said generally there was very little post for anyone other than the Treasurer.

ACTION: SW/SM

Treasurer: a report from Sheila is appended.

Sheila said that she was assuming her forecast would not be too far adrift and was now working on a plan for next year. She recommended a membership fee of £10 for the next year. This reflected the reduced usage of some classes although many were carrying on in one form or another.

AGREED: A membership fee of £10 was approved, as it was felt this was a fair reflection of usage.

Sheila also reported that she was setting up a Paypal account for use with Beacon and was hoping many members would use it for their renewals. It is standard practice for U3As groups using Beacon to have a Paypal account, and use it successfully. She explained that Paypal operates with only one signature for payments, while our other accounts operate with two signatories. It is not however planned to make any payments via Paypal, it is only to be used for the receipt of membership subs. As well as being able to view the transaction records, as a further safeguard, the monthly statement from Paypal would be sent to the Membership Secretary, not the Treasurer, and any payments would be easily identified and traced. Mike pointed out that there was a slight risk in allowing one signature only for payments but Sheila felt the small amount of money in the account, together with the trust placed in the financial control systems and Treasurer and the fact that it was not the intention to use this account for any payments meant that she felt it was a safe account.

AGREED: The Committee resolved that the Paypal account should be set up.

Newsletter Editor

John was very pleased with the reception of the Newsmail and felt that more people than usual had probably read it on this occasion. He commented that it was a faster and cheaper method of production and suspected it might eventually herald the end of a hard copy.

Groups Co-ordinator

Alison reported that two people were interested in filling the vacancy created by her forthcoming departure and David, Lorrae and herself would be speaking them that afternoon. Alison suggested that it would be useful to have a sub-group to discuss ideas for the Groups booklet, when it might be published, when the courses should start (eg September or January), and said the Beacon system would be helpful in calculating how this should go forward.

AGREED: that the sub-group should be made up of Alison, Sheila, Sandra, Anna and Lorrae, with David being kept informed of developments. Anna was keen to connect the forward thinking with U3A Day on 1 October.

IT/AV Coordinator: a report from Paul is appended.

The whole committee wished to record their appreciation and gratitude for Paul's enormous effort in getting the problem with the telephone and internet sorted. The new user name and password were now available on the office noticeboard together with a new landline number.

Membership Secretary: a report from Sandra is appended. Sandra had nothing to add.

Website Manager: a report from Lorrae is appended.

Lorrae had nothing to add to her report. David commented on the interesting analysis of emails and Lorrae said she was pleasantly surprised by how many messages were opened promptly.

Travel: Hilary reported that the organisers of the visit to Kynren had not yet officially cancelled the occasion and it was not possible at the moment therefore to give details of any refunds or rebooking which might become available. The Italian trip had been cancelled and the refund system was now in operation. The group was looking forward to being able to organise more travel and trips.

Date of next meeting

8 July at 11am

Committee Written Reports

Secretary Report

York U3A Committee proposal - CIO Update

My recommendations below can be discussed at the June committee meeting.

Bank Accounts

As Sheila mentioned at our March meeting, converting to a CIO will require us to open all new bank accounts and close the old ones. I was hoping this legal requirement had changed but unfortunately it is still the case. Background information from Sheila follows.

“We have eight bank accounts, two central accounts controlled by the Treasurer, (i.e. a current account and a deposit account) plus another 6 operated by our groups. These were opened up many years ago, and group leaders are used to having autonomy in controlling them. For some time I have been concerned about groups having these separate accounts, as this is strongly discouraged by the Third Age Trust. It has traditionally seemed to be impractical to channel all income and expenditure through our central current account due to the volume of transactions, and the urgency of some cheques for example for the travel groups. With the recent use of online banking however there may be the opportunity to consolidate some of the group’s bank accounts into our main account, subject to the agreement of the relevant group leaders. I recommend a project is set up to consider this, and reduce the number of group accounts, where possible.”

I recommend we put the decision to convert to a CIO on hold until this consolidation project has been completed.

The Trust Model Constitution

I have read their model constitution. In my opinion it has a number of drawbacks. For example it requires the following.

- All trustees must retire at each AGM and those eligible elected again. Our constitution effectively allows a trustee to stay in post for 3 years before needing to be elected again.
- A trustee may only stay in a role for a maximum of 3 years. Our constitution says 6 years.
- Any change to the model constitution must be agreed by The Trust. Our constitution is silent on this requirement.
- The quorum for a General Meeting is a tenth of the membership, which is approximately 180 members. Our current constitution says 40.

In the event of the CIO conversion project not going ahead, I recommend we do not adopt this model constitution. Instead we could update our current constitution to clarify a few points.

Mike Barnard, Secretary May 2020

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY’S REPORT - JUNE 2020

- I added 149 groups to Beacon, taking the information from our website.
- Alison emailed the group leaders asking for their membership lists.

- When the lists are received Alison and Lorrae add the members to the groups. So far they have found five group members who hadn't renewed their membership for 2019-2020, one member didn't renew his membership for 2018-2019 either.
- I emailed personalized forms to these people and so far four have renewed their membership.
- Beacon is obviously a very useful tool for group leaders and we have to encourage them to use the system so that this will not occur in the future.
- I am going to ask Brian Joscelyne, who runs the Facebook and Snooker groups, to be the first group leader to use Beacon. I have set up his user name and password and will give him instructions on how to use the system.
- Group leaders will not be able to access the membership list. They will be able to see the groups list but will only be able to access and update their own groups. The group list will show members names and phone numbers but not their addresses.
- Group leaders will be able to email their group and may also download the group as a PDF or Excel file.
- Lorrae has taken over sending the mass emails and will report on the results.

Website

I've continued to update the Lockdown page with sites or information, in particular advice on advising how to check Track and Trace calls are genuine, and a note of the new Trust U3A. There is a very low rate of page hits during June. There are now 21 groups marked as being active in some way during lockdown (this was 13 at last meeting).

Comms - On 22nd May I sent the first Beacon email to all members as a test. This resulted in realising we cannot use ghost email addresses if we expect more than 100 replies within an hour. Also sixteen member emails were found that needed to be changed or updated.

Beacon gives a report of the delivery status of emails, from that I was able to see the number of emails viewed and how quickly that happened:

163 0	emails sent at 11 am on Friday 22nd May
16	bounced or not deliverable, now resolved
137 9	have definitely been opened as shown on Beacon by 11am Fri 28th, 7 days later
235	show as delivered not read on Beacon
	reasons for not showing as opened:
	* member may not have signed into their email
	* they may have seen the subject but not clicked to read

	* they may have read it but their email provider does not return the signal that it was opened
--	--

	How quickly do members look at their emails?
246	on the same day
then these figures show the amount opened in total over the following week	
892	within 24 hrs
1081	within 48 hrs
1177	within 72 hrs
1236	within 96 hrs
1309	within 120 hrs
1360	within 144 hrs
1379	by Fri 28th 11am, so 7 days later
	of the 235 only showing as delivered:
15	emailed a reply, so they must have opened
4	phoned to say they'd had it, so assume they had opened
1	mentioned on facebook they'd seen it
215	had not communicated with me at all

There have been two more emails to all members since the first test, and all is now running smoothly.

[Lorrae Atkins](#)

Website and Communications, York U3A

IT/AV

Further to the message I sent on 28 May (copied below), A BT Openreach engineer attended the office on Monday, June 1, and ensured that everything was properly connected and activated the fibre broadband. He also set up the router.

There is a new user name and password for the router which is posted on the office notice board.

I am sending my apologies for the committee meeting.

Paul Howarth
Technical Coordinator
York U3A

Dear All,

BT Openreach completed the necessary ducting from the cabinet outside the Magistrates' Court during the lock-down and this morning came to install the cabling. There is now a junction box just outside our office which has the capacity of 4 lines which should be sufficient for present needs, but there will be another distribution point at the entrance to the passageway with a capacity of 20 lines.

Whilst I was there to open the gate for the engineers, I saw Cath and from what we were told it appears that the Friends' telephone problems can now be easily solved with a connection to the new work.

A BT engineer is, so I am informed, coming out on Monday, presumably to check that everything is up and working satisfactorily. We have a new router (well, it's now 8 months old because it was sent out at the start of this process!) which will need setting up and before anyone uses Beacon on the office computer we shall need to install anti-virus software.

For the time being, I suggest we keep our existing Talk Talk (domestic) account so that all calls to our old number will still be put through to Lorrae's mobile.

It has been a long and frustrating journey to get to this point, but at last progress is being made.

Regards,

Paul Howarth
Technical Coordinator
York U3A

Treasurer

Copy of my Treasurer's report attached. There will be very little

further income and spend this year, other than our quarterly rent payment for the office due in July. So the figures will be close the forecast I circulated last month. I am busy finalising the set up of a Paypal account, as recommended by Beacon, for members to use if they renew on line. I will only be used for the receipt of subs, and their transfer to our bank account, and not for payments. Please be aware, that this account operates with just one authorised signatory, while our normal standard is two. However at the end of each month a statement of transactions will be sent to our membership secretary, so any anomalous payments would quickly become apparent. I am updating our financial procedures, and will incorporate the use of Paypal.

Sheila

U3A Finance Statement as at 7 June 2020

General Fund	2019/20			2018/19
	As at 7 June	Whole year plan		Last Year's total
		£		£
<i>Receipts</i>				
Subscriptions	29,583	31,500		31,038
Gift Aid	4,858	5,300		5,215
Groups room income	5,259	7,800		7,682
Saturday meetings	1,380	1,800		1,802
Other	1,564	1,235		498
Total	42,644	47,635		46,235
<i>Payments</i>				
Friargate rent	5,116	6,900		6,687
Rent for Garden room etc	1,242	1,900		1,737
Former HM room support	2,973	3,800		
Office costs	1,475	3,600		3,135
Postage	4,484	5,200		4,209
Equipment	1,505	3,000		2,439
Newsletter	1,635	5,400		5,277
National magazine	1,930	1,950		1,886
Saturday meetings	2,141	2,700		2,523
Third Age Trust	6,279	6,300		6,286
Beacon fee	1,794			
Independent examiner	330	350		324
Other	837	2,500		2,298
Total	31,741	43,600		36,801
Net surplus	10,903	4,035		9,434

Balance carried forward	72,447	65,579		61,544

<i>Receipts- bank interest</i>	41	35		31
<i>Payments</i>				
50% rent for outside venues	2,464	2,208		5,807
One off expenditure	627	627		232
HM Lecture		250		245
Total	3,091	3,085		6,284
Net Spend	3,050	3,050		6,253
Balance carried forward	0	0		3,050

U3A Talks report June 2020

- We have secured agreement from the Sept, Oct and Nov speakers to deliver their talks via Zoom. We are working on the 2021 list and will have this in place by the end of June.
- We have made a distribution list for the Talks which has 21 names so far plus the Committee. I expect at least another 12 to join in September and for this group to build up during the autumn.
- I suggest we give the lectures as Webinars which does not allow the audience to speak. Questions have to be written on screen and sent in. The screen can show the speaker (plus his powerpoint) and the chairman and they will be able to see the questions on screen and hopefully in time for the Chair to sift and amalgamate them. The whole talk can then be put on youtube though I don't know how. Everyone concerned will be at home.
- We are hoping that Fools Gold will give us a Xmas concert but Monica Field does not want to commit the choir to any arrangements yet.

Groups Co-ordinator Report May 2020

The main activities this month have been collecting group membership data from Group Leaders and responding to enquiries about a replacement Groups Co-ordinator.

Under 30 groups have yet to provide information. I have sent a reminder which has produced a few more. Thanks to Lorrae for inputting most of the names, a mammoth task. Thanks to Sandra for following up on the non-members who have slipped through the net. I suggest it might be a good idea to use the preferred name rather than given name when we have identified discrepancies, but this has not been discussed.

I have had two expressions of interest for the role of Groups Co-ordinator, one from an existing office volunteer and the other from someone who is active in Filey U3A, belongs to York U3A as well, but is moving to York shortly. We hope to do Zoom interviews on Wednesday afternoon.

I have been thinking about the Groups Booklet for the future and would like the Committee to think around these issues too. I have been asked questions about the booklet by several group leaders already.

Normally groups do not meet in August and begin their year again in September with a new booklet and signing of participants. As we are extending membership uninterrupted till January what does this mean for the running of courses and hence the booklet?

1. Should things just run over and we prepare a new booklet for January?
2. Should we prepare a new booklet for September and effectively start the new year then, taking into account all the groups that are running Zoom, email meetings etc?
3. Do we expect movement of membership between groups in September or in January, or not at all till September 2021?
4. Do we abandon the idea of a booklet for 2020/21 and just have the information on the web?
5. Do we anticipate new members in August as usual, or in January or not till September 2021?
6. The national U3A Day has been postponed to 1 October 2020, if we want to participate in that, how does it affect our recruitment timings and hence preparation of a new set of information about what we have to offer?

I do not have any recommendation at this stage.

Alison Holmes

Groups Co-ordinator

8/6/2020

Report for U3A Committee from the Travel group

There is very little to report at this time.

We are still waiting for the organisers of Kynren to confirm or cancel our proposed trip in August. If we cancel, we shall lose a large deposit but will get a refund if they cancel. The Italian trip in September has been cancelled with refunds on their way. It is hoped to rebook this trip next year.

Hilary Davies

6th June 2020