

YORK U3A

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 10 February 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, Mo Sandland, 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.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2021 were approved as a correct record.

Rosemary had nothing further to report about the use of Alison's Outlook email address.

3. COVID-19 RISK MANAGEMENT

It was agreed that there was nothing to add at the moment and Rosemary reported that Lorrae had reorganised the web pages and updated the links to risk management information.

4. EQUIPMENT MANAGER RECRUITMENT

Paul reported that he had only received one call about the vacant position. The member who had contacted Paul had been concerned about the amount of commitment and expertise required and had subsequently decided not to pursue the vacancy further. Mike pointed out that although it was hoped the commitment to the position would be for at least a year, it could be vacated with as little as three weeks' notice. David suggested that in advertising positions on the committee we should make it clear that we expect committee members to take holidays and be away from York from time to time, and shared responsibility for some roles could always be considered. David agreed to mention the vacancy and that of Office Co-ordinator at the AGM if necessary.

ACTION: MS, DMB

5. AGM PLANNING

Mike and Lorrae reported that the AGM Notice had now been sent to all members with email addresses and hard copies for those members without email addresses would be sent out by the end of the week. Mike had prepared a draft script for the AGM meeting. Anna reported that she would set up a meeting with the two Lord Mayors and suggested that Ren might like to try the screen-sharing in preparation for delivering her report to the AGM. Anna would let those involved know when the trial would go ahead.

ACTION: AB, RB

6. COMMITTEE MEMBERS' REPORTS

Chairman

David reported that he had received a letter from TAT concerning the participation of the members in research programmes, particularly medical ones, saying that such enquiries should be forwarded to TAT to go before their ethics committee. A further letter had been received from them including an advertisement template for groups who may wish to advertise for new members. Sandra felt that, although we had lost about 300 members this year, we had in fact gained 39 new ones and she was sure numbers would pick up again when the lockdown was over. It was agreed that we did not need to advertise for new members at this juncture.

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

Anna and Peter reported that the talk programme was in hand although there was still a query about the June and July talks. Anna suggested trying the Friends Meeting House (FMH) facilities for a blended meeting and having a trial with two or three members during April. She had made provisional bookings of the FMH Meeting Room for June and July. A discussion followed on the possibility of the future use of blended meetings by Group Leaders. It was pointed out that although the necessary equipment for such meetings could be used in both the Meeting Room and Penn Room at FMH, if present social distancing rules were maintained, only the Meeting Room would be large enough for general use by any groups. In any case no more than two groups could offer blended meetings at any one time.

ACTION: AB

Secretary and Regional Representative

Mike had nothing further to report.

Treasurer: a report from Ren is appended together with a suggested representation letter.

Ren reported that she was still trying to obtain outstanding rental invoices. The Examiner was happy to sign off the accounts and she was discussing with Mike how to deal with the Representation letter. David agreed that he was happy to sign the letter and it was agreed that he should send the signed copy to Hunter Gee, retaining a copy for Ren's records. David and Mike were happy to sign the two CC16A and TAR forms prepared by Sheila but decided these could be sent off after the AGM.

Sandra enquired about Beacon fees and which set of membership numbers would be used. Ren confirmed that these would be current members as at 31 March 2021 and it was agreed that both membership and TAT fees could be sorted out in April.

Ren reported that Steve had agreed to take on the task of Gift Aid returns and said that Sandra, Steve and she planned to have a Zoom meeting to organise the administrative tasks.

Ren then discussed the complications of sensitively handling the seven separate bank accounts held by Group Leaders. It was agreed that the Trustees must have oversight of these

accounts and Ren suggested she should initially speak to the leaders involved. In the first instance, Rosemary agreed to provide Ren with telephone numbers of the seven leaders involved. Mike had contact details for the two bridge groups and Hilary had details from the Travel Group. Lorrae said that the relevant group accounts had always been sent to the auditor annually; Ren confirmed that this had occurred. Discussion followed on whether authorisation of expenditure over a certain limit should be required but it was decided that this should be discussed further at a later meeting.

ACTION: DMB, SM, SR, RB, RRT, MB

Newsletter Editor: a report from Nick is appended.

Nick reported that he had had a large number of contributions for the February Newsmail and had carried some items forward for use in the April edition. It was agreed that the February Newsmail was excellent and Rosemary said that she had suggested to Group Leaders that they should consider using this medium to promote their groups. Lorrae confirmed that use of the website remained disappointingly low and Sandra enquired whether or when paper copies of the Newsmail might recommence. It was agreed that it was a concern that some members did not have access to the internet but conversely it was felt that the paper consumption involved, combined with the amount of work in printing, enveloping and posting paper copies, was also a consideration. Lorrae suggested it might be an idea to offer internet café style access for members to access a computer once the office was up and running again, and it was agreed that this was a good idea which could be considered for the next u3a year. Communication with members was important and it would be interesting to know to which medium they turned for information. This question could be posed at the end of the next Newsmail or woven into the AGM. Nick said he would prefer to keep to the bi-monthly production of Newsmail for the time being and once Covid was under control and classes returned to normal this may be sufficient. It was agreed to make a decision later.

Groups Co-ordinator: a report from Rosemary is appended.

Rosemary had nothing to add to her report beyond noting that she was continuing to work to get the web pages up-to-date as there were no plans to have a brochure. The internet information could be updated regularly and it was felt that Covid had brought an opportunity to encourage members to use the internet. It was confirmed that Sandra would attend the next Group Leaders' meeting.

Membership Secretary: a report from Sandra is appended.

Sandra confirmed that she was still waiting for a reply to the ticket she had raised with Beacon about new member alerts.

It was unclear when the office would re-open and which volunteers would wish to return but Sandra would like to be in the office in July to deal with renewals. David suggested that a July restricted opening was a possibility which could be worked towards.

A discussion followed on the free Bridge for Beginners course being promoted by York Bridge Club and whether we should accede to the request from an external organisation that we should send out an email to all members to inform them about the course. Although the committee was generally supportive and thought the course would be of interest to members,

it did breach our agreed policy not to advertise other organisations' activities. After some discussion a vote was taken that showed a large majority of the committee not to be in favour of supporting this request.

Website Manager: a report from Lorrae is appended.

Lorrae had nothing to add to her report.

Travel

Hilary had nothing to report.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Steve raised two finance points, including one about reserves, which it was agreed he should raise with Ren and bring back to the next meeting.

ACTION: RB, SR

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 10 March 2021 at 10am.

Written Reports

Equipment Manager

No equipment is being used, so nothing to report on that front.

One person contacted me to say he might be interested in the Equipment Manager role and I spoke to him on the telephone. After that he said he was more inclined to accept the job, but he subsequently emailed me to say that he felt it would interfere too much with his ability to go away in his caravan.

I shall not be at the meeting on Wednesday.

Newsletter Editor's Report

Nothing to report at the moment.

Nick

Talks Secretaries

The Talks Secretaries have been finalising invitations for the rest of this academic year, ensuring that speakers are willing to use zoom and if not that there is a back-up plan (this applies to July when we might be in person anyway). They have also been exploring blended meetings for maybe June onwards, both in the CMC and in the FMH. The CMC does not currently have Wi-Fi in the Hall and it would require some further equipment to extend the wifi from the office in the chapel. , FMH does have wifi in the Meeting Room which theoretically accommodates 150 and could probably accommodate 40 with social distancing.

In either venue we would book members who cannot use zoom for an in-person lecture which would be simultaneously zoomed by a techi member (sitting at their own laptop in the lecture Room) to the majority of members , at home. This would require a free-standing microphone and camera which the Friends probably own – see letter below. Clearly we would have to try this out well in advance and if necessary buy a camera and mike on a small stand which can be plugged into the zoom laptop. Anna would like to try this out in FMH which has been holding blended Meetings for Worship since the summer. May I provisionally book June 12th June and 10th July?

Anna Baldwin and Peter Jarman

There are several technical and practical matters about having blended meetings. Without testing the Zoom possibilities in the Methodist Hall that is closed and inaccessible currently with all staff on furlough the only feasible place for a blended talk is Friargate. The split in audience between those attending a public meeting and those on Zoom will depend on the speaker and the subject. In any case I doubt whether it would justify booking the large space of the Methodist Hall. But we have paid £1000 for a large screen there, the audio system has been enhanced with our own equipment that was working to perfection there last March.

I consider that it may be premature to commit to blended meetings for June and July and Lorrae has indicated that she does not wish to be involved.

This is merely my opinion in current circumstances when we do not know when public meetings can again be held.

In Joy and Hope, Peter

Web/Communications

Things since the last committee meeting:

Communications - I've sent out three emails to all members, a request for newsmail copy, notification that newsmail was published, and the notices for the AGM (with a request for a rough idea of who will attend). As at 8th Feb there have been 48 members reply that they intend to be at the AGM.

Website - I have edited about 50 group pages with details from Rosemary, and been through all general pages to ensure they are up to date.

U3A Zoom Account - this is now being used by 6 GL's for long meetings, I've had two other enquiries but those GL's decided to stay with their free version. The U3A Pro account is paid

up until 9th Sep 2021. I've offered to zoom host the Saturday talks from February to May. From June onwards Peter and Anna have plans for blended meetings and arrangements can be made for the Pro account to be used by whoever will zoom host from then on, if needed.

Office - I'm still getting a few calls to the office landline and mobile. I've ordered envelopes and paper for home printing of AGM notices to non-email members, and I'm using the University for franking.

Treasurers Report

1. Numbers up to Monday 8th February are attached.
2. We have received a further £305 of subscription income with Sandra anticipating minimal additional receipts. We currently stand at £14.9k of total subscription income for the year compared to Sheila's plan estimate of £16.2k.
3. Overall this month our spend was £554 in total as it included payment of our Independent Examiners Fees of £336. With spend exceeding receipts by a marginal £249 our bank balance fell slightly to £82,945.
4. I have been in touch with the Friends to ask that they invoice the substantial rent that we now owe them and was promised invoices by yesterday which have not yet materialised. It has however recently been clarified that Beacon and TAT per capita fees payable will be based on member headcount as at 31 March 2021.
5. With our Independent Examiner confirming that he is happy with our numbers we would normally provide a Letter of Representation confirming that we have told them everything that they need to know re our operations that might affect the numbers / their conclusion. The required wording is attached and we need to designate a trustee to sign on our behalf and minute that please.
6. Again we would normally give Hunter Gee's a copy of the signed Accounts (CC16a) and Trustees Annual Report (TAR) forms for the period that we have prepared for submission to the Charity Commission. In these Covid times they have confirmed that a minute documenting approval of these documents by the committee / identifying designated signatory would be sufficient. Sheila has prepared the CC16a which has been circulated. I have emailed to ask her if she has also drafted the TAR.
7. Sandra has raised the issue of preparing and submitting our Gift Aid claim this year. Having spoken to both Sandra and Steve Russell we have agreed that we will have a Zoom discussion to understand the process and that Steve will then, very kindly, undertake work required.
8. Finally Rosemary has mentioned that she is proposing a Zoom session with Group Leaders. In advance of that I would like to better understand operation of Group Bank Accounts and overview of same and would welcome input from Committee.

Sheila has previously raised this as she was concerned that we did not have sufficient visibility of transactions through the 7 Bank Accounts that Groups hold. (UK Travel,

O/seas Travel, Tuesday Bridge, Thursday Bridge, Garden Group 1, Garden Group 2 and Exercise in Water). Per Sheila's numbers in the year to 31 July 20 Groups generated income of £140k and spend of £144k holding funds in their bank accounts of £11k. at year end.

Ren

U3A Finance Statement as at 8 February 2021

General Fund	2020/21		2019/20
	As at 8 Feb	Whole year plan	Last Year's total
		£	£
Receipts			
Subscriptions	14,912	16,200	29,595
Gift Aid		3,240	4,858
Groups room income	57	2,500	5,259
Saturday meetings		600	1,380
Other		0	1,966
Total	14,969	22,540	43,058
Payments			
Friargate rent		10,300	6,801
Rent for Garden room etc	60	600	1,242
Former HM room/rent support	1,307	3,000	2,802
Office costs	991	2,000	1,672
Postage & Franking Machine	831	3,000	4,270
Equipment		2,000	1,516
Newsletter		3,000	1,635
National magazine		1,800	1,930
Saturday meetings	175	1,500	2,141
Third Age Trust		6,000	6,279
Beacon fee		1,800	1,794
Independent examiner	336	350	330
Pay Pal Fees	247		
Other	3	200	265
Total	3,950	35,550	32,677
Net surplus / (Spend)	11,019	(13,010)	10,381
Balance carried forward	82,945	58,915	71,926

Nominal

Current Account

41,709.58 Bank Blce = Nominal

Scottish Widows

41,235.44 Per statement as at 1.4.20

82,945.02

Membership Secretary's Report – February 9, 2021

Membership

- 1,488 members, including 39 new members, 11 of these joined online.
- 781 members renewed or joined online and 707 members renewed or joined by mailing their payments to the office or paying by bank transfer.
- 138 members have resigned.
- 16 members are deceased.
- 200 members' memberships have lapsed.

Office Mail

There is very little mail at present and I'm collecting the mail about once a week.

Assistant Membership Secretary

Next week I'm having a Zoom meeting with Mo to give her a basic introduction to Beacon. If my May cruise is cancelled, which is very likely, Mo's in depth training can be later in the year when the office is open.

Procedure Manual

I continue to work on the Procedure Manual. Last year the first Renewals using Beacon took place over several months and we weren't issuing Groups Brochures or Saturday Talks Calendars. This year we should be back to our normal schedule with the Renewal Emails and forms being sent out at the end of July. It will be an entirely different process from last year. I have to define the new process and feel confident that it will work correctly.

New Members' Meeting

We had a successful meeting on January 27th which was attended by 6 committee members and 10 new members. One of the new members has volunteered to start a new group, Beginner's French, when we are able to meet face to face. Rosemary has her contact details.

Sandra Mason

Group Co-ordinator's report for Committee meeting 10th February 2021

Dear Colleagues

In the last month I have contacted each of the Group Leaders for the 77 classes we currently have listed on our web pages for 2020/21, whether they are currently meeting or not. I have agreed with them a comprehensive update of the details for those groups so that the web pages reflect how they are conducting their meetings now, or whether they are unable to meet.

I also requested details of which groups are accepting new members or are willing to put potential members on a waiting list, so that current searches on these pages will be productive.

All these changes have been amended on the website by Lorrae.

The next step will be to contact the Group Leaders who do not have a web presence currently (i.e. those that ran a group in 2019/20 but who will now need to promote their group in 20/21) and help them to set up pages for the groups operating now so that our new members can sign up for classes, and our members who have 'lost' their walking/swimming/bowling/etc etc classes can join something new immediately.

This will be followed up at the end of February with one of the regular Group Leaders' Meetings – sadly without the sociable lunch this time – to allow discussion and consideration of the way forward over the next few months.

The aim is to make the web pages the "go-to" place for information about York U3A and the classes and activities throughout the year. I propose that this will be a replacement for the hard copy Groups booklet that in the past has been the content of the enormous September mailing exercise, and the smaller leaflet mailings for Saturday Talks, holiday opportunities and ad hoc event promotions. There should be a concomitant reduction in our expenditure on mailing, printing and stationery.

That exercise will be replaced with real-time updates of group web pages so that information can be kept current as the management of the pandemic develops.

Our web pages will become the key to promoting the activities we are offering. Once each of the current groups has a live page I will be writing to and emailing members to draw their attention to the re-vamped pages, and also devising a procedure for those without internet to receive hard copy printouts or personalised advice about our social activities.

The Group Leaders have been very helpful in their responses so far, letting us know whether they have spaces for new members, re-thinking their entries, and sharing the new modes of teaching they are using. Some of the latter are very inventive and it has been enormously encouraging to see how many of the groups are continuing to stay in touch with each other and how they are helping their members without internet and email to take part in the group activities.

Rosemary Royds Tree
Groups Co-ordinator