Minutes of the Tetbury and District U3A Committee meeting held on 12th April 2024 at Cutwell.

Present:

Bernadette Bell (Chair and Publicity), Martin Doidge (Vice Chair and Membership Secretary), Anne Cox (Speaker Secretary), David Smith (Webmaster and IT Support), Alan Harris (Treasurer), Alison Hesketh and Jill James (Business Secretary).

Also attending as a visitor: Christine Lees

1. Apologies:

Apologies were received from Caroline Hose (Newsletter and Groups Co-ordinator).

2. Review and approval of the 13th March draft meeting minutes:
   - The Groups Co-ordinator has spoken to the daughter of the Upton Mill resident who is interested in joining the U3A. The daughter will complete the application process and will arrange with Upton Mill for any necessary transport or care. Any carer attending him will not be required to pay. Barbara Howarth may be interested in leading a Rummikub group at Upton Mill.
   - The potential new music group was mentioned at the last meeting and the Groups Co-ordinator has received some expressions of interest and will co-ordinate the process **(Action CH).**
   - The Webmaster has indicated on the website which groups are currently full. (This is further discussed below in the Webmaster's update Agenda Item 8).
   - The Chair has booked Highgrove as a venue for the Christmas Meal. The date will be either the 5th or the 12th of December. The booking is for 70 to 80 attendees. The Highgrove team will come back to us with a final date and information on menus. The Chair will then approach two members who have indicated that they would be willing to co-ordinate the necessary arrangements **(Action BB).**
   - The Speaker Secretary has contacted the other Speaker Secretaries through Cotswold Link. Ten of the sixteen have responded and it has been agreed that they will meet for lunch to collaborate on recommended speakers. The Speaker Secretary will liaise with the Treasurer on any necessary arrangements for this **(Action AC/AH).**
   - The Webmaster has ensured that the website includes details of the 2025 talks. Details of the next talk are shown both on the Home Page and at the top of the page containing details of the monthly meetings. He has also inserted a link allowing the list to be printed.
   - The Chair has contacted the Cirencester and Malmesbury branches regarding reciprocal memberships. Cirencester branch expressed an interest but Malmesbury branch did not. It was agreed that this would be discussed further at the June committee meeting so that arrangements could be in place for the start of the new year.
   - The Vice Chair has checked whether our insurance is still valid if potential members did not pay to attend a trial monthly meeting. It has been confirmed that this would not impact our insurance.

The draft minutes were approved (Proposed: Webmaster, Seconded: Treasurer)

3. Co-option of Alison Hesketh

Alison confirmed that she agreed to become a committee member. Her co-option was proposed by the Speaker Secretary and seconded by the Webmaster. In the following vote the co-option was unanimously approved.

Alison was given an induction pack and the Business Secretary said that she would email her with a link to the Charity Commission's publication "The Essential Trustee" **(Action JJ).**

4. Financial Questions

- Payment for the Water Talk: The Treasurer had attempted to make a direct donation to Water Aid as requested the by the speaker who gave a talk on the "Colour of Water." This was not initially possible because a credit card was needed. He has telephoned the charity and been given their bank details for direct transfer. The Speaker Secretary will contact the speaker to let him know that the payment will be made **(Action AC).**
- TAM Statements: The Treasurer explained that two statements had been received for the Third Age Matters magazine. The first statement showed a calculation comparing the actual number of copies provided against the amount already invoiced. The result of the calculation was that a credit was owing to the Tetbury branch of £12.24 and a credit note had been issued. The second statement covered the full year showing invoices and payments together with the £12.24 credit note.
- Budget for 2024/25: The Speaker Secretary will ensure that the Treasurer is provided with a full list of expected speaker fees for the next year **(Action AC).** These fees are generally around £70 per speaker, although sometimes there are additional transport costs. Any speakers who are charging substantially higher fees will be considered by the committee. The Vice Chair pointed out that the budget process generally starts with the production of a membership forecast, which determines the income for the budget. This forecast has already been produced. The Treasurer, Chair and Vice Chair will bring a proposed budget for consideration to the next meeting **(Action AH/BB/MD).** Initial thoughts are that the ending balance will be about £2,000 and, if so, the committee will need to consider whether this is above the level that the branch should be holding. The Webmaster pointed out that the committee should also consider whether any liability provisions should be held, for example for the substantial costs that may be required if our current website arrangements change.
- Diminishing returns from the membership fee: The Vice Chair explained that members who join in June or July receive 14 or 13 months of membership respectively for their fee. However, members who join in April or May receive only 4 or 3 months respectively for the same amount paid. The National Office charge is based on membership numbers as at 31st March. This system highlights some inconsistencies and it was agreed that the committee would make a new proposal, to be presented to members at the AGM. Initial thoughts were that the membership fee could be reduced to £5 for the first year, for all new members joining on 1st April or later. The Speaker Secretary asked whether any potential new members have ever said that they could not afford the £10 annual fee. No committee members were aware of this having happened. The Speaker Secretary offered to speak to the

Social Prescribing contact at the Surgery to see if the NHS might be prepared to fund the fee in cases of hardship **(Action AC).**
The Chair asked the Treasurer to amend the layout of the financial statements presented to the committee by adding three lines at the bottom the statement. The lines would show i) Social account income, ii) Social account expenditure and iii) Social account balance. This would ensure that the committee review would include all funds under the control of the branch which is a requirement of the Charity Commission **(Action AH).**
The Webmaster asked whether historical files to support the accounts were available as it would be good practice to store these in the archive google drive. The Business Secretary will check the files given to her by Lawrence Moss **(Action JJ)** and the Treasurer will provide the Webmaster with the historic excel files for storage **(Action AH).**
The Treasurer told the committee that there is approximately £500 owing to the branch for Gift Aid but he has been unable to submit the Gift Aid claim as the file would not upload successfully. This will require further work to resolve **(Action AH/MD).**
The Branch has been given a donation of £100 from the Goods Shed as thanks to the play-reading group for their help with an event. It was agreed that group leaders would be asked at their summer event how this would best be utilised.
It was noted that Lawrence Moss has managed to resolve that sound-system issues for the Goods Shed. The committee thanked Lawrence for his work on this issue. The Chair will write to Lawrence expressing our gratitude **(Action BB).**

5. Group Leaders Event

The Groups Co-ordinator has contacted the Bowls Club who have agreed in principle to providing the venue for an event in July. This will need to be approved at their next committee meeting. They will be in contact shortly to confirm. The event will be discussed further at our May meeting.

6. Fit for the Future

The Chair has completed a short survey from National Office on our views regarding Fit for the Future. The previous Chair, Carmel Burton, now attends the Cotswold Link meetings where this has been discussed. Carmel will make sure that we are kept informed. The Chair is planning to attend the next Cotswold Link meeting too.

7. Playreading and Storytelling Event

The group leader of one of the playreading groups would like to arrange a play-reading and storytelling event in the Goods Shed in the autumn. He would like this to be a U3A event and would need help putting up posters etc. He also suggested that the ukulele group might be happy to perform during the break.

The committee discussed arrangements for the event and potential issues if this was presented as a U3A event including the insurance and financial implications. It was decided that it would be better if this was presented and publicised as a Goods Shed event to avoid potential complications. The Chair will speak to the group leader to explain this decision **(Action BB).**

8. Updates from Committee Members:

CHAIR AND PUBLICITY:

The Chair commented that the monthly newsletters are particularly good and thanked Caroline for her hard work. The publicity leaflets have mostly been distributed although there are still some left for distribution. Holidays from Home have agreed to include the leaflet in their goody bags. The Chemist Cohens has agreed to hold some leaflets. The Chair will bring some of the remaining leaflets to the next monthly meeting and remind members to pick one up **(Action BB).**

SPEAKERS SECRETARY

The last speaker, Chris O'Grady was well received although the talk did overrun. In future the Speaker Secretary will indicate to speakers when their time allocation is ending **(Action AC**). The reminder for the next meeting has been sent out. Michelle Eccles will speak about the Longfield charity and will bring a collection box for donations. The Speaker Secretary had checked the Dutyman system and seen that no-one had been allocated to set up. She approached David Walker, who confirmed that he would be responsible for setting up whenever there was no-one specifically allocated.

The Webmaster talked about an excellent talk he had attended at the Police Museum. The talk, given by the archivist of the Gloucestershire Police Archive, covered the history of local policing with a particular emphasis on Tetbury. It was suggested that this may be a good talk for a future monthly meeting.

VICE-CHAIR AND MEMBERSHIP:

The Vice Chair has distributed a membership report to committee members. This showed that as at 31st March 2024 the membership stood at 356. Since that date there have been contacts from a further three potential members of whom two have already paid.

The membership counter on the home page of the website may be of limited utility and requires regular updating. Committee members will view the counter on the website and discuss whether it should be continued at the next meeting. **(Action Whole Committee).**

Upton Mill have offered their room for group meetings. This would be limited to approximately 10 to 12 participants due to space restrictions. The organisation is keen to have the community connection. There is a bistro facility if needed. The Chair will have further discussions with her connections at Upton Mill about this **(Action BB).**

BUSINESS SECRETARY:

The previous day the Business Secretary had attended a Zoom meeting with other Cotswold Link Business Secretaries. The topic of the discussion was Policies. In preparation for the meeting the Business Secretary reviewed the policies section of the website and found that the mandatory policies were overdue for review and that the mandatory Health and Safety policy did not appear on the website. The Business Secretary will distribute the recommended Health and Safety Policy from the National Office to be reviewed at the next committee meeting as part of a rolling programme of policy review and approval (Action JJ).

TREASURER:

All financial items discussed above.

WEBMASTER & IT SUPPORT:

The Webmaster has completed many adjustments to the website as a result of regular changes. He received a list from the Groups Co-ordinator of the groups that are currently full and has annotated these on the Groups page as “FULL.” The Vice Chair asked if this could be amended to “Currently Full” to clarify that the position might change. The Webmaster explained that this would add complexity to an already very wordy page. There were discussions on whether it would be better to change the wording at the top of the page. The Speaker Secretary suggested that this could be shown in a text box to highlight it. It was discussed whether the page would be clearer if it contained simply a list of groups with a hyperlink on each taking you to the relevant information for that group. The Webmaster will review this further **(Action DS).**

9. Any Other Business:

Email addresses: The Speaker Secretary asked whether there was a way not to show her personal email address when she responds to enquiries coming through the website. The Vice Chair explained that this can be achieved by having a separate email address just for U3A business which the Webmaster could use for the alias system.

Tetbury Expo Day: The Chair has been asked whether the branch would like to take part in the Tetbury Expo Day at Dolphins Hall on14th September 2024. This would be an opportunity to showcase the U3A. It was agreed that we would like to participate as the event had been well attended last year.

St Mary’s Playgroup: St. Mary’s are holding a playgroup event on the 18th May at St. Mary’s Hall and asked if our members would be prepared to help. It was discussed whether this was appropriate U3A business and whether it would contravene our Privacy Policy or GDPR to use members’ email addresses to publicise this. It was decided instead to ask members whether they would be interested in joining a Volunteering Group which could then be set up on Beacon. Members of this group could be emailed with any volunteering opportunities.

Our visitor, Christine, suggested that it might be useful to establish a” Grandfather” or “buddy” system to help new members who have just moved to the area to settle in and get to know new friends.

10. Date of next meeting:

The next meeting will be on 8th May at 2pm at Upton Mill Care Home. Chair to approach Upton Mill and confirm **(Action BB).**

Minutes approved 8th May 2024

Proposed: Treasurer

Seconded: Alison Heskith