Minutes of the Tetbury and District U3A Committee meeting held on 13th March 2024 at Shepherds Mead.

Present:

Bernadette Bell (Chair and Publicity), Martin Doidge (Vice Chair and Membership Secretary), Anne Cox (Speaker Secretary), David Smith (Webmaster and IT Support), Caroline Hose (Newsletter and Groups Co-ordinator) and Jill James (Business Secretary).

Also attending as a visitor: Alison Hesketh

1. Apologies:

Apologies were received from Alan Harris (Treasurer)

2. Review and approval of the 14th February 2024 draft meeting minutes:
   - The Treasurer was asked at the last meeting to follow up with Lloyds about the registered addresses for both bank accounts. In the Treasurer's absence the update on this has been postponed to the next meeting.
   - The Newsletter Secretary has arranged for the next issue of the Advertiser to contain a thank you to the Feoffees for their donation.
   - The Webmaster has inserted a link to Head Office online learning events on the website. He will add words to make it clear that our members will need to register in order to access this learning.
   - The Speaker Secretary confirmed that the April 2025 speaker from the Purton Canals and River Trust had agreed to deliver a talk that would be new to our membership.
   - The Speaker Secretary has agreed with David Walker that she would use her access to the Goods Shed Dutyman system to check on the duty manager for our monthly meetings, rather than telephone him to check.
   - The Speaker Secretary has added to a 2024 Speaker List, furnished by the Vice Chair, and sent it to all members. The Webmaster has posted this on the website.
   - The Charity Commission registration documentation has been submitted. The Business Secretary has received an automated confirmation of the submission, which indicated that this would take approximately eight weeks to process.
   - The Vice Chair has distributed information on the Cotswold Link Activity Day to members and has received some responses.

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

3. Updates from Committee Members:

MEMBERSHIP:

The Vice Chair has distributed a membership report to committee members. This showed that as at 29th February 2024 the membership stood at 348. Since that date an additional five members have joined and there has been one resignation. The membership therefore currently stands at 352.

The Chair and the Newsletter Secretary have separately been contacted by the daughter of a resident of Upton Mill about membership for her father who suffers from the early stages of dementia. The committee members felt that the initial position should be a “yes” but also discussed the implications of this including duty of care, possible requirements for DBS checks, insurance etc. The possibility of some group events taking place at Upton Mill to facilitate his engagement was also discussed. The Chair will contact the activities co-ordinator at Upton Mill for further information and contact National Office for advice **(Action BB)**. It was suggested that a new Rummikub group could be established, to take place at Upton Mill. The Chair will investigate a potential leader for this group (**Action BB).**

NEWSLETTER SECRETARY / GROUPS CO-ORDINATOR:

The newsletter now includes details of the online learning opportunities run by National Office. The member who had originally made this suggestion, has written to thank her.

A new member has suggested setting up a music group. The Chair will mention this at the next meeting to gauge interest **(Action BB).**

The Vice Chair has been approached by a potential member who expressed an interest in joining three specific groups, of which two were already full. He explained the position to her and she decided to join regardless. However, the website does not include information on the groups page about the number limits on certain groups and which ones are accepting new members. It was discussed whether this is misleading to potential members. It was decided that:

1. Groups Co-ordinator will contact group leaders to find out which groups were full **(Action CH),**
2. the Groups page on the website will be amended accordingly **(Action DS/CH)**
3. the membership page on the website will include a phrase to indicate that potential members may want to check the groups page to see which groups have vacancies **(Action DS/MD).**

The committee noted that more group leaders are needed to set up new groups. The Chair will mention this to the membership at the next meeting **(Action BB).**

WEBMASTER & IT SUPPORT:

There have been numerous adjustments to Beacon and the website to take account of the changes from the AGM. These have now been actioned.

There is a potential issue concerning back-ups of Beacon. The Beacon system as one entire system is backed up by National Office regularly. However, as this is done at whole-system level covering the entire UK it would not address the problems created by a possible corruption of strictly local data. The Webmaster has raised this as a concern with the national Beacon administration team, but has been told that this is not a priority. Consequently, he is now downloading the local system data as a spreadsheet monthly and storing this on our Google Drive. Whilst this could not be up-loaded back into Beacon in order to restore our local information, it could be used to provide the data needed for hand keying if necessary. The Vice Chair pointed out that this updated spreadsheet is also useful for other purposes as it can be interrogated and filtered in ways that the Beacon system cannot.

The process of emailing committee members uses a system of "alias" emails, which must be updated as posts change. Currently only Lawrence Moss has administration authority to do this. It has not caused any issues as Lawrence responds to requests for changes promptly. This does, however, represent a weakness in the system in that only one person has authority. In order to include a second authority, such as the Webmaster, Lawrence would need to change his status to "superuser," for which there would be a cost of approximately £1 K. The other alternative would be to disassociate from the entire system which would also carry significant cost. It was decided that the system should remain as it is currently, as the Webmaster would be able to disassociate from the system if required in the future.

SPEAKERS SECRETARY

The last speaker on "The Colours of Water" has received very positive feedback and has been thanked. The Speaker Secretary has sent out a reminder about the next meeting to members.

March's speaker was due to speak on travelling around Japan. However, this talk has already been given locally. In order to avoid replication therefore, the topic has been changed to "Remember to turn right at Land's End." This talk will cost £70 plus expenses.

There was a discussion about holding a summer event for Group Leaders, as has been done previously. It was decided to go ahead with this. The Groups Co-ordinator will contact the Bowles Club to ask whether they would be prepared to provide a venue again **(Action CH).** The committee will discuss the provision of a food for this at next month's meeting.

The Webmaster asked the Speaker Secretary to provide him with a short blurb and image for each of next year's speakers to be included on the website.

The Speaker Secretary was thanked by the committee for the way she handled the question-and-answer session after last month's speaker.

BUSINESS SECRETARY:

The Charity Commission application had been covered in the review of last month's minutes. There was nothing else to report

CHAIR AND PUBLICITY:

The publicity leaflets have been printed and are now available for distribution. The Chair will bring some to next week's meeting for members, and also organise distribution to numerous local organisations including the library, shops, Council offices, the hospital, churches, and parish notice boards etc. An invoice for his work has been submitted by Steve given to Alan. This was slightly less than expected as Steve used a voucher from the printers which reduced costs.

4. Christmas Meal:

The Chair has approached a number of venues regarding the Christmas Meal:

- The Great Tithe Barn - will not be available for functions at this time;
- Highgrove Orangery – menu not available as yet but we would in case have to commit to 80 attendees
- Hare and Hounds – there is a charge of £200 for the room in addition to the food and wine costs. Attendees would not be allowed to bring their own wine
- The Town Hall – this venue is not large enough as it could only hold 40 to 50 people. There are also access problems
- The Close Hotel – This would be unable to hold the required numbers
- The Snooty Fox – This is also too small
- The Goods Shed – initial contacts with the Goods Shed Team about this did not seem positive but it was agreed that the Chair would approach them again with a proposal for hiring this as a venue and buying in a buffet catering provision from Echo Foods **(Action BB).** U3A members would be available to help set up tables and clear away. It was discussed whether it would be a good idea to hold the event on Monday or Tuesday, our normal monthly meeting days, when it would not interfere with the café or Goods Shed programme.

5. <u>Monthly Meetings</u>:

    - Updating the list of speakers on the website: Lawrence Moss always removed details of a monthly talk when it had taken place, leaving just the future talks showing on the website. The details for the next talk are always shown on the home page of the website. This process was discussed and it was decided that the next monthly talk would be shown at the top of the page (as per the home page), then all of the 2024 talks in chronological order.
    - Future speakers: the Speaker Secretary said that it would be useful if the Cotswold Link provided details of successful speakers to be circulated within member U3As. She will contact Carmel Burton to discuss this **(Action AC).**
    - Sound Equipment: The performance of the sound equipment at last month's meeting was extremely poor. Lawrence Moss has been investigating replacements and has assured us that this issue will be resolved. The sound equipment belongs to the Goods Shed and the rental fee we pay for monthly meetings includes the provision of the sound equipment.
    - Donation to charity for last month's speaker: Last month's speaker has requested that his speaker fee be given to Water Aid as a donation. It was agreed that the Speaker Secretary would arrange for the speaker to be sent his fee, which he can then donate himself to Water Aid (with Gift Aid as appropriate) **(Action AC/AH).**

6. <u>Reciprocal Members</u>:

The Vice Chair has set up a new membership category in Beacon for reciprocal members. The committee discussed whether it was appropriate to commence this system from the new subscription year in August, or earlier. It was decided that it would be implemented from August, thus avoiding any procedural issues with the current year subscriptions and also to give time for the group leaders to be advised at their summer meeting.

The committee discussed how to publicise this opportunity to our members. It was decided that the Vice Chair should add a few sentences about the reciprocal arrangement to the new member welcome email with effect from August (Action MD).

Reciprocal members cannot attend monthly meetings under the reciprocal agreement and therefore invitations to meetings and monthly newsletters will not be distributed to them. It was decided that the practical processes around this would be discussed at the June committee meeting.

7. Visitor Fees:

Visitors to monthly meetings are currently charged £5 to attend. This is subsequently deducted from their membership fee should they choose to join. The committee discussed whether this was an appropriate fee given that full year membership costs £10. There were discussions whether the fee should be reduced or removed. It was decided that the £5 fee would be removed and replaced with a donation box. The Vice Chair will inform Pat **(Action MD).**

8. Fit for the Future:

The Chair has circulated information on the National Office proposal to amend the current governance system. It is proposed that the current Board will be halved in number and concentrate purely on any national organisation issues. A new council will be established with two members from each region which will concentrate on issues relating to branch U3As. One of the board members would sit on the council and feed back to the board as appropriate.

This proposal is currently being consulted upon and we will be asked for our comments and suggestions in due course. Branch U3As are being asked to inform their members about any agreed changes.

9. Cotswold Link – length of Service Term:

The committee discussed the constitution in regards to permitted length of service for committee members.

Up to the current time it was believed that the constitution showed that committee members must resign after a period of three years' service and could not serve again until a year had elapsed. The Vice Chair said that, in a conversation with National Office, it had been pointed out to him that this belief was incorrect. He was assured that committee members could continue to serve after the three-year point (up to a maximum of nine years) providing that they did not exceed three consecutive years in any specific officer role or as a non-specific member. He circulated the relevant section of the constitution which said:

- *7) The maximum total period of service as a Trustee is 9 years, whether continuous or not*
- *8) No-one may hold a specific officer position or be an ordinary (non-officer) Trustee for more than 3 years without an interval of at least one year between periods of service*

It was agreed that the Chair would discuss this Carmel Burton **(Action BB).**

10. Any Other Business:

There was no other business

11. Date of next meeting:

The next meeting will be on 12th April at 2pm

Minutes approved 12th April 2024

Proposed: Webmaster and IT Support

Seconded: Treasurer