Minutes of the Tetbury and District U3A Committee meeting held on 14th June 2024

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), and Jill James (Business Secretary).

1. Apologies:

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

2. Review and approval of the 8th May draft meeting minutes:

- The Chair reported that there is still a substantial number of publicity documents available for distribution.
- Discussion of the proposed Buddy System will be postponed until the next meeting. The suggestion that special interest groups may wish to take responsibility for the refreshments table at monthly meetings, on a rotating rota, will be discussed at the Group Leaders event
- The Speaker Secretary was asked to include a presentation on fraud awareness in the 2026 speaker schedule. A presentation on this topic had been given some time ago by a particularly good speaker. It was suggested that, if this speaker is still available, they might be able to give us an updated talk on the same topic. The Speaker Secretary will contact Anita Stride to obtain contact details **(Action AC).**
- The membership counter has now been removed from the website.
- Discussion of the possible daytime arts event will be postponed until future meetings.
- The Webmaster has loaded the draft minutes of the 2023 AGM onto the website. These are clearly labelled as DRAFT
- The Chair has been invited to a wine-tasting picnic event and will discuss with the Group Leader whether the group should be labelled as FULL on the website **(Action:BB**).
- The Chair has contacted the Royal Oak to request a risk assessment. They will send one to her shortly.
- The Goods Shed have provided the Chair with their risk assessment.

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

3. Group Leaders Event

The Groups Co-ordinator had confirmed by email that she had invited Group Leaders and asked for responses by 21st June. By 13th June she had received 21 responses to confirm attendance. Eleven of these wished to also play bowls. Three people have apologised as they are unable to make the event. Outstanding responses will be chased after the 21st June.

The Speaker Secretary updated the committee on the arrangements:

- The committee can arrive from 9AM.
- Guests are invited to attend from 10.30AM
- The Groups Co-ordinator will arrange for guests to be offered drinks and lemon drizzle cake
- There will then be a bowls taster session.
- At 12PM the bar will open and will be manned by Keith from the Bowls Club
- Food will be provided including:
  1. Salads, tarts, strawberries, and cream to be arranged by the Webmaster and his wife.
  2. The Speaker Secretary and the Groups Co-ordinator will shop for a ploughman's' lunch consisting of ham (with a falafel vegan/vegetarian option), butter, baguettes, wholemeal and oat breads, pickles, mixed green salad, and coleslaw.
  3. The bar will be open for beers, wines, ciders, soft drinks, and tea/coffee.

- The first drink for attendees will be paid for by the U3A
- The cost is expected to be in the region of £10 per head.
- A £50 donation will be given to the Bowls Club for providing the venue. A cheque to cover this and the bar bill will be required on the day **(Action AH).**
- The Bowls Club will provide cutlery and crockery, but committee members are requested to lend tablecloths and tea towels.

4. Budget 2024/25

The Vice Chair had circulated a proposed budget incorporating the suggestions made at the last committee meeting. This was discussed and approved by the committee (Proposed: Business Secretary, Seconded: Chair).

5. The Health and Safety Policy

At the last committee meeting, committee members had been asked to consider the two generic risk assessments produced by the Vice Chair, and make any suggestions for improvement. This was done and suggestions were incorporated. Committee members approved the generic risk assessments.

There was a discussion whether Groups Leaders should be asked to customise the risk assessments to make them appropriate for their group. The committee was keen to reduce the administrative burden on Group Leaders. It was decided, however, that this contribution by Group Leaders was an essential part of the process which would help to ensure the full awareness of health and safety requirements by group leaders and their members. The Vice Chair will distribute these prior to the Group Leaders event together with and explanatory email. Group Leaders will be free to raise any suggestions or concerns at the Group Leaders event. Final risk assessment copies will be kept by the Groups Co-ordinator **(Action CH)** and also stored on the google drive **(Action DS).**

The French Group is temporarily holding one of its sessions at Steepleton. The Vice Chair has approached Steepleton to ask about the possibility of providing a venue for some of our special interest groups. The Steepleton team asked for our Public Liability Insurance and risk assessment details before considering this. The committee felt that it is important that Group Leaders are made aware that the existence of a risk assessment for each group might be a requirement of venue providers.

The committee discussed whether dogs should be allowed at monthly meetings given the risk to members that they might represent. The Goods Shed policies do not allow dogs to their talks. It was considered that, given the demographic of our membership, it is likely that some members may suffer from vision and mobility issues. The presence of dogs could represent a trip hazard and a distraction, particularly on the stairs leading down from the seating area. The Chair was asked to contact the member concerned and explain this decision to them **(Action BB).**

6. Website

Ongoing maintenance and updates are continuing. The Webmaster has been chasing any Group Leaders who are not keeping their section on the Groups page up-to-date. He has suggested to them that where appropriate they move to a more generic description of meeting dates and times, which do not require updating. Some groups include specific information for each meeting, such as the Book Club including the name of the book which will be discussed.

Lawrence Moss is divesting his involvement in several community websites, including ours. He currently has a personal account with “Sitegrounds” where he hosts these websites and this is where our website sits. He is currently setting up a single account for the U3A and will move the website over it. The Webmaster has asked Lawrence to set this up in the name of the U3A, instead of any one personal name. This will ease continuity and will mean that other individuals can access it if necessary. The cost implications of this move amount to approximately £168 over the summer.

The Webmaster had been asked to consider the website design, and advise the committee whether any changes would be useful. He has referred to the websites of several neighbouring U3As including Cirencester, Malmesbury and Stroud. He felt that Stroud’s website had a particularly good, clean, and user-friendly design. Information on groups can be sorted by faculty/meeting day/alphabetic. This website uses a package called “Siteworks” which is a U3A offering. The Webmaster contacted Stroud’s Webmaster, Richard Bedford, who was very positive about their “Sitework” experience. The “Sitework” structure is fixed and does not offer the facility for a members-only area. However, this is not currently required. The Webmaster would need to familiarise himself with the new system and transferring information from the old website would require a substantial amount of hand-keying, which could be a winter project. If Tetbury U3A adopts this system the cost would be approximately £50 per annum. It was agreed that moving to the “Siteworks” system would be a good move forward. The Webmaster will write to all members asking if anyone with relevant experience would like to help with the migration. He will also review the videos on the U3A national website to see if there any that offer relevant training **(Action DS).** The Chair will contact Lawrence Moss to explain the decision that has been made **(Action BB).**

7. Committee Membership

Alison Heskith has decided to leave the committee. We need to consider the number of committee members, particularly in light of the end of term departure of the Treasurer and the loss of the Business Secretary. The Vice Chair said that whilst all committee members are useful, the committee should particularly encourage potential members with appropriate skills to fill the posts available. Candidates should be aware that basic I.T. skills, such as the ability to compose and send emails, and construct standard Word documents are an inherent part of the roles. Committee job descriptions should be updated as required.

The Webmaster said that Maggie Smith might be happy to join the committee next year and would probably be glad to take on the Membership Secretary role if this was needed.

The Speaker Secretary suggested that the Business Secretary role could be split into two, a Minutes Secretary and a Business Secretary. This has been done in previous years, and might encourage people with minute-taking skills to apply.

8. Affiliate Memberships

The Vice Chair had distributed a proposed Affiliate Member's Application Form and Affiliate Membership Communication Strategy relating to members joining through the reciprocal arrangements with other Cotswold Link U3As. These were agreed by the committee. There was a discussion about the most appropriate name for these members. It was decided that they would be called "Link" members, referring to the Cotswold Link reciprocal arrangement.

A separate issue was raised about whether a new membership category was also required for members who were also full members of other U3As, and paid the capitation fee through the other U3A. Some U3As offer reduced rates for these members to take account of the fact that capitation is not paid for them. It was decided that this is not currently an issue and can be addressed when the need arises.

9. Updates from Committee Members:

CHAIR AND PUBLICITY:

There is nothing further to report

WEBMASTER & IT SUPPORT:

Everything had been covered in the Website agenda item.

SPEAKERS SECRETARY:

The Speakers Secretary updated the committee with progress on the Speaker Database. She has been regularly discussing this with Malcolm who had responsibility for the current database, and together they are putting forward a proposal for a joint South Western database. This would include a page for each group, which would only hold the relevant information, such as contact details, topics etc., for each recommended speaker. Each U3A would take responsibility for inputting the information for their own page. They propose to create a survey on SurveyMonkey to gauge support and suggestions for the new database.

There was a discussion whether the database should be secure behind a log-in. It was decided that this is a question for discussion as part of the wider consultation.

TREASURER:

The Treasurer had distributed an updated financial report to members before the meeting. There was nothing further to report.

The VICE-CHAIR AND MEMBERSHIP:

A new zoom meeting has been set up for Cotswold Link Membership Secretaries. The Vice Chair will use this to discuss the reciprocal arrangements and the processes for Link members.

BUSINESS SECRETARY

Nothing further to report.

10. Any Other Business:

1. The Chair updated the committee on the election of a Chair for the Third Age Trust. We have been informed that there are three candidates for this role. An email that the Chair has received includes links to a brief bio for each candidate. Tetbury U3A will have a vote in the election. The Chair will send out to committee members the information she has received so that this can be discussed further **(action BB).**
2. The Boules Group has now had to leave the Red Bull at Malmesbury and has moved to the Potting Shed at Crudwell. This move has required the purchase of new equipment which has cost the group members approximately £100. The question was raised as to whether there should be a procedure for applying for a grant from the general funds to cover this type of one-off expenditure. This was discussed by the committee, and concerns were raised that it would contradict the established rule of each group being self-sustaining. It was decided that committee members should take some time to consider this further and it will be discussed again at a later date **(Action all committee).**

11. Date of next meeting:

The next meeting will be on 31st July at 2pm at Upton Mill Care Home. Chair to confirm with Upton Mil **(Action BB).**

Minutes approved 31st July 2024

Proposed: Vice Chair

Seconded: Webmaster