Minutes of the Tetbury and District U3A Committee meeting held on 8th May 2024 at Upton Mill care Home.

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).

1. Apologies:

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

2. Review and approval of the 12th April draft meeting minutes:
   - The Chair has contacted Highgrove again about the Christmas Meal menu. As yet the menu is not available but will be sent to the Chair as soon as possible.
   - The Business Secretary has sent Alison Hesketh a link to the Charity Commission's publication "The Essential Trustee".
   - Payment for the talk on "the Colour of Water" has now been made.
   - Another TAM statement has now been received by the Treasurer showing that payment has been made for the whole of the upcoming year.
   - The Treasurer has amended the format of the financial reports. These now have a second page which details income and expenditure in the social account.
   - The Business Secretary has checked the historic excel files given to her by Lawrence Moss and contacted the Webmaster with the results.
   - The issue regarding the upload of Gift Aid data has now been resolved and the Gift Aid claim has been submitted and paid.
   - The Chair has contacted Lawrence Moss to express our gratitude for resolving the issues with the sound system.
   - The Group Leader Co-ordinator has been in conversation with the Bowls Club regarding the Group Leaders event. A date of 10th July is proposed. Arrangements for refreshments will be discussed at the next committee meeting.
   - The playreading and storytelling event discussed at the April committee meeting will not now take place. Proposals for an arts group event are discussed as a separate agenda item below.
   - The publicity leaflets are now mostly distributed with a few remaining to be given to Holidays from Home.
   - The Business Secretary has distributed to committee members the National Office template Health and Safety policy. This is further discussed below.
   - Several U3A members have privately indicated that they will be volunteering at the St. Mary's Playgroup 18th May event.
   - The suggested "Buddy" system will be mentioned by the Chair at the next monthly meeting **(Action BB).** The Speaker Secretary mentioned a "Meet and Greet" system for new members that is in place in Cirencester U3A, and also a system for rotating the refreshments duties around the interest groups. This could be discussed at the Group Leaders Event to gauge support.

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

3. Budget 2024/25

The Vice Chair had previously circulated a Budget Summary Proposal for 2024/25 showing:

1. Where we expected to be this financial year (for the original financial year ended 31/3/24)
2. Where we would have ended this financial year (for the original financial year ended 31/3/24)
3. Where we expected to be this financial year (for the modified 15-month financial year 30/6/2024)
4. Where we are now forecasting to be at the end of this financial year (for the modified 15-month financial year 30/6/2024)
5. Where the proposed budget forecasts us to be at the end of next financial year (12 months to 30/6/2025)

The change in financial year end 2023/24 was originally put in place to reflect a more realistic picture of the end of year balances. The previous end of March year end resulted in accounts showing large carry forward balances as subscriptions had been collected but payment of the National Office capitation charge is not paid until April or May.

2023/24 has been a really good year with forecast balances being approximately £1,500 greater than expected. As a result, the forecast end of year balance is now £2,675 (The modified budget expected this to be £1,318). The current proposed 2024/25 budget shows a small in-year surplus resulting in an expected end of year balance, as at 30/6/25 of £2,918. It is possible that this end of year balance will be even higher if income is greater than expected, as has been the case in 2023/24.

- The Treasurer suggested that the 2024/25 proposed publicity budget should be increased to £200 to reflect greater than expected expenditure in the current year and also additional items such as posters for events.
- The National Office suggests that U3As should hold reserves of a minimum of three months of average expenditure. Our monthly expenditure averages £300 per month, so this would give a minimum reserve requirement of £900.
- The Webmaster said that the I.T. Budget should be increased to £300 to take account of the potential costs relating to I.T. hosting. There was a discussion regarding whether it would be better to move to the U3A standard website offer. The Webmaster will discuss this with the Webmasters from Cirencester and Malmesbury and report back to the committee **(Action DS**). There may be a different cost structure to this which would impact the 2024/25 budget.
- Alison Hesketh raised the issue of the Group Leaders event costs. It was agreed that the budget for this should be increased to £250 to take account of refreshment costs and the Bowls club donation for the venue.
- It was discussed that the committee will need to continue to monitor forecast end of year balances throughout 2024/25 and take mitigating measures if these are too high.
- In previous years some of the monthly talks were given by charity speakers. These were generally cheaper but also less well attended. The committee decided in the future, if funds allow, it would be better to reduce the number of charity speakers and replace these with non-charity speakers.

- The Speaker Secretary had been approached by a number of financial services companies which offered to make presentations to members on financial matters such as wills, power of attorney etc. The committee discussed whether it would be appropriate for this to be offered. It was decided that this was not appropriate as there might be an assumption by members that the U3A endorsed the services of these companies which may lead to difficulties in the future. The Webmaster said that he had attended a presentation on financial scams recently, which had been useful. It was agreed that if an appropriate organisation, such as Age Concern, were to offer such a presentation that this would be considered for inclusion in the monthly program.

4. Group Leaders Event

It was decided that, in the absence of the Group Leader Co-ordinator, this agenda item would be postponed until the next committee meeting.

5. The Membership Counter on the Website.

After some discussion, it was decided to remove the membership counter from the website, and replace it with a general statement on membership numbers in the "About Us" section. **(Action DS)**

6. Additional Events

The proposed evening event discussed in the April committee meeting will not be taking place. The Vice Chair suggested that there could instead be a daytime arts event in the autumn, which could showcase the arts interest groups including the music groups, singing for fun group, ukelele group and others. Both U3A members and the general public could be invited to attend on a drop-in basis. The event could be free, but with a possible charge for refreshments, subject to an agreement with the Goods Shed management. The group leaders could discuss their contributions at their summer event. Costs could include the booking of the Goods Shed and publicity.

7. Updates from Committee Members:

CHAIR AND PUBLICITY:

There were no new matters to report.

SPEAKERS SECRETARY:

The Speaker Secretary reported that she had organised a lunchtime meeting and ten out of the 17 Cotswold South speaker secretaries had been able to attend. They had agreed that it would be useful to construct a database of potential speakers for South Cotswold which they could all access. Marion Collighan of South Cotswold Link (SCL) later pointed out that South West Region already had a database and so SCL had decided a local one would be redundant. When investigated the list was mostly Devon speakers and was not user-friendly. It was a simple 97-line list with useful information but lacking other details that would be vital in a speakers database. The Speaker Secretary has offered to take over the administration of this regional list to make it more informative and user-friendly and is planning to attend the South West meeting in July with a proposal.

The speaker at our next monthly meeting is talking on the topic of The Windsor Chair and has requested payment by cheque on the day**. (Action AH)**

TREASURER:

The Treasurer explained the new format of the financial statements. He will meet with the auditors in July and make sure that they are happy with the format. The Treasurer pointed out that, on the social fund statement, income and expenditure of each type were shown in separate lines. Visits to historic houses for example, were each separately identified. Historic house visits all attempt to be cost neutral. The Webmaster, who is also one of the group leaders for this interest group highlights that there were still some difficulties in allocating income to the correct category as members sometimes used the previous reference details on their payments. There are also some difficulties in the allocation of cheque payments.

The Treasurer's term of office ends officially in June, but he indicated that he is happy to remain in post until the AGM when a new Treasurer can be appointed.

WEBMASTER & IT SUPPORT:

The Webmaster is continuing to update and refine the website on an ongoing basis. There was a discussion on whether the website should include the 2022 AGM presentation. The accounts for that year form part of the presentation. It was decided that the presentation itself would be removed from the website, and that the accounts would be added separately. **(Action DS).** The draft minutes of the 2023 AGM are now on the website, but clearly marked as draft.

There is an issue with the marking as "FULL" of both wine tasting groups. Both have a technical capacity of 12. Wine group A has 13 members and Wine group R has 12. However, some of the members of these groups spend long periods away from Tetbury and consequently meetings do not usually reach capacity. The marking as "FULL" therefore prevents new members from joining when they actually could be accommodated. The Chair will email Group Leaders **(action BB)** and the matter can be discussed further at the Group Leaders Event.

The Webmaster is investigating the systems used for website hosting. Lawrence Moss is considering handing over the management of the site. It is essential that the Webmaster has full access in any future arrangement.

ALISON HESKETH:

Alison is to write to Group Leaders in the next few days to introduce herself **(Action AH).**

The VICE-CHAIR AND MEMBERSHIP:

The Vice Chair had distributed a membership report prior to the meeting. There are currently 358 members with another three pending. These will not be processed until

June to allow them the maximum period of membership from their subscription but the people concerned have been told that they can attend monthly meeting and interest groups as usual before this.

8. Health and Safety Policy

The Business Secretary had distributed an electronic copy of the National Office template Health and Safety Policy to committee members prior to the meeting. She explained that the National Office document “Mandatory and Recommended Policies for u3as” indicated that a Health and Safety Policy is mandatory and that this means that it is a legal or regulatory requirement or a duty that trustees must comply with. Other information from National Office indicated that there is an insurance requirement for risk assessments to be produced in the event of a claim.

The Vice Chair said that step one of this process had taken place last year by the previous committee. In particular the need for risk assessments had been extensively discussed, balancing this against the issue of placing onerous demands on the group leaders whose venues change for each meeting.

The Vice Chair had worked to produce two generic risk assessments, one for home-based meetings and one for venue-based meetings. He suggested that these might meet the legal and insurance requirements for all but four of the special interest groups. These four groups had potential risks specific to their activities and would need to be individually worded. In the case of venues which had already produced their own risk assessments, the group leaders should make sure that these were obtained and reviewed.

Committee members agreed that this might potentially be a way forward and meet all regulatory requirements without placing undue additional responsibilities on the group leaders. Committee members were asked to carefully review the proposed generic risk assessments after the meeting and return their comments and suggestions to the Vice Chair**. (Action All Committee).**

It was agreed that after reviewing these comments and suggestions the Vice Chair should send the generic risk assessments to group leaders with an explanatory email for further discussion at the Group Leaders Event in July **(Action MD).**

It was agreed that subject to incorporation of the above, the template Health and Safety Policy was satisfactory.

9. Any Other Business:

No other business was raised.

10. Date of next meeting:

The next meeting will be on 14th June at 2pm at Upton Mill Care Home. Chair to confirm with Upton Mil **(Action BB).**

Minutes approved 14th June 2024

Proposed: Vice Chair

Seconded: Webmaster