

u3a Committee Meeting 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023

**Minutes of Basingstoke – Old Basing u3a**

**5<sup>th</sup> October – Kempshott Village Hall**

Attendees: Paul Dodge (PD), Rod Marshall(RM), Nick Gosby(NG), Chris Vickers(CV), Colin MacDonald(CMD), Elaine Budd(EB) (minute taker) Alastair\_Sim (AS), David Noble(DN)

Apologises: Christine Rowley (CR), Tony Summers (TS), Janice Vaughan (JV)

CV attended for part of the meeting.

**Minutes**

The September 2023 minutes were approved with no changes.

**Matters arising:**

To ensure compliance with both GDPR and other legal requirements the Beacon database has been reviewed for necessary changes. EB has already removed medical/personal information we should not hold. The Committee voted on further changes:

- A unanimous vote for all resigned or deceased to be deleted asap.
- A unanimous vote that all suspended members be deleted, and the category be deleted
- Agreement all lapsed members before 2022 should be deleted. Going forward if people want to go into a lapsed state, they need to give written informed consent for us to keep their details for 12 months. If they do not renew for 12 months, they will automatically be deleted.
- It is the role of the membership secretary to update the data going forward.

**Action: Oct23/01** EB to make changes to bring the database up to date, update the decision register on lapsed members and update role description for Membership Secretary.

**PR**

In CR's absence PD gave the update. The Festival Place event was successful. The expectation is 12 new people will join. CR did a fabulous job arranging it but it was tiring although some GL's did support, it would have been nicer to have more. The work done partners will have an ongoing benefit as they have agreed to continue to advertise us.

PD outlined that our publicity would reduce because of CR stepping into the background due to family health issues. She will continue to do the NewsEdit and PD has had very positive feedback about its content. Her temporary stepping back is manageable given the membership growth and the great work she has done so far.

Feedback from Members via RM is that they would like a reminder for the monthly meeting. The Committee agreed that it should go out a few days before and AS would be responsible with RM as back up in his absence.

A reminder was given to the Committee that for the website; CMD does not write content, he posts content sent to him.

u3a Committee Meeting 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023

RM congratulated CMD on the recent improvements to the website and we have received positive feedback from Members.

We continue to get items in the neighbour magazines which Madelene and CR work together to achieve.

#### **Current membership numbers**

New member numbers as provided by CV:

August + 106

September + 39

October + 2

Total additional members: 147

Current total: 950 still to renew 83

Commented [PD1]: 850

#### **Non-member policy**

The Committee had read the policy outlining that new groups must have group leaders that are members of the u3a. If for health and safety or legal reasons we can hire external tutors who will work with the GL's. In principle the Committee voted positively for the policy but RM making changes in line with policy document style. **Action Jul23/07:** RM to turn the current document into a policy document following the current format. EB will then send out for a formal vote via mail. *Post meeting comment from Elaine, RM should put forward who should own the policy PD suggests Group facilitator.*

A decision was made that for any group, if the external tutor incurs additional costs, then NG and TS will bring the business case to the Committee for a vote. To be added to decision log.

#### **New Groups**

- Tai chi we have negotiated a high discount from the Basingstoke Tai Chi club. In financial terms it will be run like the trips. People will be able to have a taster session and will need to sign up and pay for the rest of that season's sessions which will be £40.
- NG informed the Committee that strategic games and two computer groups will start up this October. Italian is struggling because we don't have a GL, but we have somebody that offered to help. The Committee congratulated NG on the positive work he has done in such as short space of time.

#### **Group info**

RM told the Committee that Graham Bowes, a deputy group leader, has had a heart attack. It was agreed that EB would write to Graham on behalf of the u3a. **Action Oct23/02:** EB to write to Graham.

A new PA system is being investigated and NG reported that he has seen some equipment in our cupboard in Christ Church. RM to investigate the PA system to see if this can be used and is portable. We need it for the gardening club, the computer clubs, quiz, new members group and

u3a Committee Meeting 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023

potentially more. It was suggested that storage will need to be more accessible. **Action Oct23/03:** RM to review the system and let EB know so if necessary, another one can be ordered asap.

CV left the meeting and apologised for having to cut short his tenure as Group Facilitator due to health reasons. Various members of the meeting congratulated him on all the positive work he has done and the Chair said that the meet and greet were outstanding. NG thanked him for all of his help getting him up to speed. The Committee wished him well in the future. He will remain a valued number of the u3a.

#### **Committee Roles available**

##### **Membership secretary:**

- JV is going on holiday so no more renewals will take place. 2 potential candidates have spoken to JV and she has given feedback to Paul on both. PD is meeting them on the day of the meeting and the following day.
- It was agreed that due to time issues, PD will send out overview of the two candidates with his recommendation and a vote will take place online **ACTION Sept23/01:** PD to send out information to Committee and responses should be sent asap.
- EB reminded that if Bev gets the role, we will need to get a replacement for monthly meetings.
- A discussion took place on the Sum Up machine. There was a unanimous vote to get a second payment machine which can be used for Tai Chi, for membership renewal activity and for potential other premium groups. TS will have decision on what type of machine. **Action Oct23/04:** TS to let NG know what machine is required and how it can be obtained.

##### **Group Facilitator:**

- The role has been advertised, however there are no positive responses. Paul to send out chaser and bring it up at monthly meeting.

##### **Other**

- We have had two people that want to join the committee but don't want a particular role, one of them is not even a member. The view is that people should be u3a members first and be group members, and then a committee member.
- EB stated we have more activities/roles than we have committee members so all committee members should have a role.
- Nick has suggested an additional role to manage assets where they are and the village hall insurance.
- PD said that we also need a Beacon Administrator
- PD said that if we look at all these things for next year, each of the 15 committee members will need a defined role.
- EB suggested we need to urgently consider what we can use the co-opted members for and to advertise soon.

##### **IT Update**

u3a Committee Meeting 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023

There was a discussion on Beacon following PD attending an online workshop on Beacon for chairs. The total funds collected for Beacon from all u3a groups in the UK is £257k per year. Each u3a contributes £1 per member.

CMD updated the committee on the amount of work that needs to be done.

- **Beacon:** there is a lot of things in our database that need tidying up.
- Our email issues on blocked accounts have been cleared. However ongoing mails issues are caused by users.
- Gift aid – 38% of our members do not give gift aid. Many members do not know if they are or are not giving gift aid – a lost opportunity.
- Joining groups online – members currently cannot do this, but there are reservations about people joining and GL's finding they have lots of new members.
- Age range – we are trying to find the age range of our members and only 14% of the members have this information. This may be as there is no way that existing members can add this in. Can this information be correlated against the new joiners?
- Membership Secretary role – CMD was astounded by the scale of what is required for 1000 people. The Committee agreed this is not sustainable.

To address the above problems, CMD wants to open up the use of the membership portal. This would allow online joining and renewal. PD said that JV has a lot of issues with the quality of what people provide, for example, paying the wrong amount or paying twice. Because of the way the portal works, it would reduce the number of mistakes, potentially increase gift aid and reduce the amount of work for the Membership Secretary. CMD confirmed that Members could ask to join groups via the portal but GL's would still have total control.

CMD said we need a full communications, training and information which is a serious education programme for our membership and needs to be done by renewal next year. 66% of our members renew by bacs so this should be our target for using the membership portal. will reduce the membership secretary work in September/October by 2/3rds.

The downside is that the only way to pay is via a Paypal account and the u3a will be charged 84p per transaction. This should be factored into the membership cost when it is decided each year. The u3a would have to open up a Paypal account. The transaction is processed by Paypal but the member still pays via cheque, bank transfer or debit card.

It was agreed that we would need a subcommittee to run a structured roll out project for the membership portal to GLs first, then PD asked the Committee to think about how this would be achieved ready for the November meeting with a view of starting off the process in November and kick off the work in January. **Action Oct23/05:** All Committee members to consider being part of the sub committee or leading it. Or come up with ideas for alternative sub committee leads.

CMD has asked that all Committee Members send out mails with the hashtag MemNo on their emails.

The new Group Facilitator should ask the group leaders to do the same. **Action Oct23/06** Group Facilitator to inform Group Leaders.

RM then gave feedback on another u3a that has followed this process

u3a Committee Meeting 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023

- Paypal put them off
- The members needed a lot of hand holding

However, even if a small percentage of our Members join or renew online, this would reduce the overhead on the Membership Secretary.

- **Website development**

CMD – has not had a lot of time to make changes. What is there is out of date and content is lacking. For example, excursions could look so much better. Plan of action is:

1. Maintain what we have.
2. Prepare a new website using SiteWorks, a new program being developed by central u3a. This would allow the role of Web manager to decrease dramatically and those with little IT knowledge can populate the site. This will be supported by the SiteWorks team for technical support. The Trust is still developing the new program, so the roll out may be in 2024 or 2025.
3. In the interim, CMD has been allocated some development money to acquire the new domain Basingstokeu3a.org.uk to start to work on other developments including a filing system. manage the filing system. The aim is to allow GL's to load material for their pages directly onto the server to manage content appearing on the website. This is WIP to check feasibility.
4. The current website has the newsletter in page turn forum, but it is on a different website and it is questionable if this should continue.
5. With this new domain, we could have forwarding email facilities, then we can start having generic email and as people change jobs it would facilitate continuity. There are many other uses such as group leaders.

#### **AOB**

The Committee voted for a Christmas lunch which will be self-funded. **Action Oct23/07:** EB to send out dates for Christmas lunch and menu from restaurant suggested by CR.

In November the Committee will discuss further meeting length and frequency, from initial conversations it was agreed that meetings that are shorter and start and finish on time are required and that monthly meetings would be ok if shorter. Updates from Committee members would not be required each month, therefore not increasing admin workload.

Current items for November agenda 2<sup>nd</sup> November at Christ Church, Chineham

- Role descriptions:
  - Tasks not adopted by a current role holder.
  - A matrix of tasks by owner
  - What can we stop doing to decrease workload?
- Communications and education project for the automated renewal system in Beacon

