Washington Village U3A Committee, The Stella

10.00am – 20th June 2024

Attending: Derek Ginsberg (Chair), Carolyn Baxter, Lyn Bossons, Helen Edwards, John Edwards, Sandra Graham, Catherine Hambley, Maggie Hope, Tania LeMarinel, Ian McIntosh, Julie Stevens

24.77 Welcome
The Chair welcomed Committee members to the meeting.

24.78 Apologies
P Palmer

24.79 Acceptance of the minutes of the meeting of 16th May 2024, with minor wording corrections, was proposed by Lyn Bossons and approved by all.

24.80- Matters Arising from the minutes not elsewhere on the agenda:

24.45 Environment Update
The Environment Group now has a group on WhatsApp as membership has reduced. They have had speakers; incorporated new methods into our meetings such as using our own cups; have had visits to recycling sites; distributed leaflets and recycled biscuit wrappers. Ideas for further progress could include speaking to schoolchildren, also surveying the u3a membership for their ideas/concerns in respect of recycling, possibly as a u3a project. Online surveys might also be possible.
Ongoing: Helen to investigate a possible environmental survey

24.54 Group Co-ordinator's Report
Our pickleball groups have been approached about taking part in a demonstration at the York festival.
Resolved: Sandra to contact group leaders to discuss and if participating what travel arrangements are to be made. One of the group leaders, John, has contacted the subject advisor.

Some of the new members have expressed an interest in the strolling group but with Chris continuing to be indisposed the future is unclear.
Resolved: Sandra to contact Chris to ascertain her intentions.

24.56 PR Update

Concern has been expressed about the content and impact of the Boom Radio adverts which are running for three months. Local PR advisors have not been consulted.

The PR strategy was accepted with minor amendments.

The draft membership survey was discussed and it was agreed that it would be of benefit to know if members attended only the monthly meeting or meeting and groups or groups only.

Resolved within the minutes: Tania to update survey.

24.66 Membership Secretary's Report

Five new members, I rejoined and several resignations since last meeting, bringing the total to 273 including 29 members who have still not renewed. Noted that members have two months grace period to renew which would end on 3rd June. Should all 29 lapse that would reduce membership by 10%.

Resolved: Julie to contact group leaders to inform of lapsed members

24.68 Group Co-ordinator's Report

Tai Chi group will have Ian McIntosh and Joan Ball as new group leaders from June. There is a proposed increase of fees from £40 to £45 for the tutor.

Approved by all: Fee increase agreed

24.75 AGM and Committee

Very positive feedback was received from AGM which went smoothly. The u3a song is to be posted on Facebook. The Register of elected committee members each year is noted, with officers: Derek and Lyn in unchanged roles and Tania as new Vice Chair. John Edwards is appointed as Business Secretary and Ian McIntosh also appointed to the committee. Noted that John and Ian are to be swapped into formal emails as soon as access is possible. Marilyn has resigned; however, Pauline is still liaison secretary and remains co-opted onto the committee until another volunteer to take that role is found. All other roles are appointed without change.

Secretary's Note: Proposals proposed by Helen, seconded by Sandra and approved by all.

Resolved: Pauline's role is agreed, pending ratification by full committee

Resolved: Lyn, Derek and John to meet to discuss the business secretary role.

Resolved: Lyn to update committee membership.

24.76 AOB

(a) The photographic group have requested a new three metre HDMI cable. This is approved unanimously, pending ratification by the full committee, with costing to be forwarded to Lyn for ordering.

Secretary's Note: Approvals proposed by Derek, seconded by Maggie and approved by all.

24.81 Membership Secretary's Report

18 members had resigned between April and May; 22 had lapsed and not responded, therefore have been removed from membership and 6 new members joined in May, making a total of 254 membership.

24.82 Speaker Secretary's Report

- Shindig Choir has been confirmed for 4th July at a cost of £85. Several seats may be required but most singers will prefer to stand. A hand-held microphone is preferred and they will commence as soon as refreshments have been served;
- Dennis Fox is booked for August on the topic of the Battle of Britain in the North East;
- Groundworks will give a talk on recycling in September;
- Melodic Travel will be performed by Pat Hodgson in October;
- Dave Dean will talk on the hidden North East in November and
- Ken Tong will perform at the Christmas party.

Derek proposed Lyn seconded the motion to purchase a new head microphone, this was agreed by all.

Action: Lyn to purchase new microphone

24.83 Group Co-ordinator's Report

New groups include: Grins, Gigs and Giggles and a Bridge group.

The utube video promotion on the Fashion Group which emphasises the participatory nature of the u3a, rather than passive participation is believed to be a useful tool to demonstrate u3a activities at one of the monthly meetings.

Action: Lyn to investigate the possibility of showing the utube video

24.84 Treasurer's Report

The Report was noted. Two enhancements to Beacon finance were discussed:

- Pending transactions can be used where individual transactions such as a speaker who doesn't cash their cheque for months, or a late banked cheque which can be pending so it wont need recalculating until resolved. This was the preferred option which was selected.
- The other option is to roll the transactions over until the next year however as this will only permit one previous year therefore the balance would appear nonsensical so was rejected.

The annual return submitted earlier this year was unfortunately based on total membership and included associate members as full members, therefore we were overcharged by six members. John has now amended and resubmitted the return which has clarified the situation and which should be resolved shortly.

24.85 PR Update

The report was received and noted that all our leaflets and posters are now showing the old website address which will be out of date within three months. It is agreed that the existing leaflets be distributed now, and new, updated leaflets be costed. The banner was also out of date but as it is used infrequently, there is less urgency to update it now.

Tania and Helen with the assistance of six of seven volunteers, are co-ordinating the compilation of a library of u3a photographs so that publicity material could display our members' photos rather than those from u3a library stock.
The members sample survey questionnaire could be reduced by one box, making it four rather than five columns in order to elicit a more thoughtful response from members and in addition could be linked to the wider benefits of the national u3a by adding an additional box to assess the awareness of the national u3a. The survey will be a link within an email rather than embedded in order to make analysis clearer.
Action: Tania to cost updated leaflets
Action: Tania to reduce the columns from five to four and add a box to assess national u3a awareness.

24.86 Business Secretary's Report
John has met with various committee members to gain role clarity. He now has full portal access and has completed and submitted the amended membership return. He has been communicating with various members in respect of group and Third Age Trust activities and has applied for a small grant from the Washington Community Development Trust. This received full agreement from the committee in respect of an additional book for the Uke Group and await news of the outcome which in view of the Uke Group free community activities he is quite hopeful of success. He notes that special school students have taken up the uke and anticipates that our Uke group will be able to produce and donate to them a small book of Christmas music. There was general discussion of the vote for the new Chair of the Third Age Trust and as the membership had been informed in meetings and by email of the Third Age Trust and the Fit for the Future proposal with no response, the committee voted in favour of Allan Walmsley.
Action: John to inform the Third Age Trust of our vote

24.87 Regional and Network Update
The Regional AGM had taken place and noted that many issues were common across the u3a, such as reducing membership and Fit for the Future.
The Network update noted that Cestria have a new Chair and Houghton and Wessington are due to change Chairs. Wessington did not attend but their concerns in respect of reducing membership were noted. Houghton, like ourselves, are financially comfortable and have decided not to charge fees for their members for this year but will not accept new members for monthly meetings, although they are permitting new members to attend other u3a activities.

24.88 Members Liaison Report
Two cards have been sent out this month.

24.89 IT/Website Update
- Reports were noted. A proposal to move to Google Workspace for Non Profits with its many advantages were discussed and noted that it worked very well with the Scout movement and was particularly useful when transitioning between roles and committee members. Helen proposed, Maggie seconded and acceptance unanimously agreed by the committee.

- Helen held a training session on the new website for five persons yesterday and has provided a guidance book and offered individual support for those group leaders who are unable to attend group sessions but still wish training. Helen, with Tania and six or seven volunteers are currently working on the photographic media library and have set up a What's App group to smooth communications.

24.90 Environment

- Helen noted that the local council are currently discussing their recycling provision as the reduction in paper waste is having an impact on current recycling.

24.91 Christmas Meeting

Ken Tong is booked for the December Christmas meeting. The committee agreed that a buffet, similar to last year remains the most effective way to provide refreshment. Sheila who provided last year's buffet; Hideaway Café and Maureen Graham all suggested for buffet provision.

Action: Tania to cost a buffet for 120

24.92 Any other business

We have received an email from a member asking if Washington Village u3A were going to be involved with the appointment of the proposed new Washington Town Board. It was unanimously agreed that this had political implications and not part of our role.

Action: Derek to reply to member concerned.