Washington Village U3A Committee, The Stella

10.00am – 15th August 2024

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

24.109 Welcome
The Chair welcomed Committee members to the meeting.

24.110 Apologies
Carolyn Baxter

24.111 Minutes of the meeting of 18th July were considered and with minor typos corrected, acceptance was proposed by Lyn Bossons, seconded by Sandra Graham and approved by all.

24.112 Matters arising

24.98 Helen outlined the two options for email, data storage and management. After discussion it was agreed that we would adopt the second approach. That is: maintain our current system of independent google accounts *role*.wvu3a@gmail.com. However, we need to tighten up our management of these for better control and for succession management.
As required Helen will provide support and training, particularly in the use of google drive.
Resolved: Helen to send information to committee members about the management process and what individual account holders need to do.
Resolved: John will set up a new Business Secretary account.

24.100 The unused memory stick has not been returned by Chris Scorer. It was agreed that it could be used by the photography group to collect sample photos at their next meeting for website and u3a monthly meeting purposes.
The assets register has been updated with the new microphone added. Lyn has passed management of the asset register to John.
Resolved: John to review spreadsheet of committee membership to see who

needs to stand down next year.
Action: Helen to email Chris to request the memory stick be passed to Catherine for return to committee

24.101 Tania noted that an email sent from TAT on 17th July had (deep within it) a request for membership secretaries to return data on the impact of Boom radio campaign on recruitment. She has forwarded this to Julie to action.
Resolved: Julie to send the required data (for the last 3 months) to TAT.
Resolved within PR Report: Tania to send TAT feedback on their PR and communications operations.

24.107 The member's survey has been emailed out and 38 paper copies given out at July monthly meeting. 58 responses have come in: the responses are largely positive with some members suggesting new groups/activities.
Resolved: Tania to hand out survey paper copies at August's meeting to get more responses filled in on the day.
Resolved: Tania to summarise the survey findings for August's committee meeting.
Resolved: Tania will promote a different interest group each month on social media.

Ticket prices for the Christmas party need to be decided by September and tickets printed and available for selling at the Novembers meeting.
Resolved: Tania to follow-up with Hideaway Cafe.
Resolved: Lyn to consider the price of individual tickets.

24.108 Members of our Pickleball group are going to demonstrate the sport at the National Festival in York on Friday 19th July, and also give taster sessions to interested attendees – all taster sessions have been booked up.
Resolved: Tania to post a "good luck" message on Facebook.
Resolved: Derek to send "good luck" message via email.

24.113 IT/ Website update including Facebook
(a) Committee Google accounts have largely been changed to show the recovery email address as the IT manager and to provide passwords to her. It is anticipated this will be resolved at the end of August committee meeting.
(b) Website usage data are similar from last month to this month.
(c) Media Library for website and PR remains an ongoing project. A meeting is scheduled for next week to review photos and videos to see what is working and what may require improvements, also to plan the next steps.

24.114 Environmental Update

(a) Digital devices recycle/reuse scheme. The council's special digital devices scheme which is running until October was noted. Announcements have been placed on the Environment Bulletin and Latest News on the website and on Facebook.

(b) Raising Environment Awareness

For example this could be September's Seed Gathering Season by the Tree Council or Oxfam's Secondhand September or October's International Walk to School month or World Vegetarian day. Suggestions include promote monthly at meetings and a possibility of collecting digital devices for recycling at September/October meetings.

Action: Helen to send out an email informing members

24.115 Treasurer's Report

The Report was noted. Noted that guitar and harmonica groups have now had their accrued balances transferred to the Uke Group and guitar, harmonica and Spanish groups are deleted from the report as they do not contribute financially. Also noted that a laptop to speaker adapter has been purchased for meeting use.

24.116 PR Update.

(a) Members Survey closed on Thursday 1st August with 79 responses which is 31.5% of membership. An overall majority of approximately 90%+ believe the u3a is working well, is a friendly and welcoming organisation; with a good range of activities on offer; the range of speakers; the work of the Committee and the Stella as a venue. The full results are to be placed on the website. As several examples of new groups of interest were given, the membership is to be emailed to evaluate interest. Bite size groups, which could potentially run for several weeks prior to their establishment were also considered to assess their viability. Negative feedback of the committee is to be mentioned at the meeting. Password protection of committee minutes, a recent innovation, is to be removed with the aim of greater transparency, and as always, members are encouraged to attend committee meetings to observe the work of the committee. The committee search for alternative accommodation to the Stella in Spring 2024 is to be more clearly articulated to the membership. One of the outcomes of the survey was a suggestion that a sheet to enable members to make suggestions about potential future speakers/subjects at monthly meetings is to be made available from the September meeting.

Action: Sandra to email the membership with key points indicating examples of new groups to evaluate interest and to explore potential for bite-size meetings prior to approval

Action: Tania to prepare notes to be read out by Derek at meeting then to be circulated by email.

Action: Catherine to create a 'suggestion box' for the September meeting.

Action: Derek to provide a short overview of committee meeting and regional/national u3a activity to the next meeting.
Action: Helen to remove password protection from committee minutes
Action: Helen to make the survey outcomes available on the web after September meeting.
Action: Carolyn to make suggestions sheets for future speakers/topics available from September meeting.

(b) The four persons who gave their names are to be contacted to determine their areas of interest. As more social activities were requested the possibility of a social secretary role might be possible?
Action: Derek to contact the four members who gave their names as willing volunteers to determine their area(s) of interest.

(c) Tania has contacted Sunderland Links for Life service and registered WVu3a as a member.

(d) Lyn has been contacted by Harraton and District Community Centre (HDCC) in respect of a table at their local publicity event on Saturday 12th October Noon-4pm. Their invitation is to be accepted with at least Tania volunteering to service the table with WVu3a display information.
Action: Lyn, Sandra and Derk to organise display materials as Tania will do some preparation but will be on holiday in September.

24.117 Business Secretary Report
A spreadsheet of end dates of the committee membership is in preparation.
Geoff Craggs would like to start PAT testing at the beginning of the September meeting.
A team of four volunteers will be running for the Great North Run on 8th September to raise money for TAT. John has forwarded an email to ask the membership to line the route and give out leaflets to promote the u3a. A Fit for the Future update video has arrived and has been circulated to the committee via WhatsApp. Fit for the Future is a dynamic situation constantly fluctuating so is to be monitored before the final vote.

24.118 Speaker Secretary's Report.
Nothing to report.

24.119 Group Coordinator's Report
The format of the group display board is to be revamped and the committee will be emailed with ideas. Houghton Le Spring kurling group has closed and their equipment has been donated to us. Funding for the new Uke Group book may be the recipient of a funding grant which is being pursued. Its submission will be tailored to a £500 grant.

24.120 Membership Secretary's Report.
Two new members now bring our total membership to 256.

24.121 Members Liaison Report.
No cards were sent out last month. Although a number of members have had covid, no serious illness has been reported.

24.122 Regional & Network Update
Houghton Le Spring, Wearside and Cestria have all new Chairs. Derek hopes to meet them in September. The Holy Trinity Church inauguration of their new minister on 9th September has included an invitation to Derek and all local Chairs, to attend. On 22nd October there is a Regional dinner to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Northumbria Region. Two persons may attend. Cost is subsidised by the Northumbria Regional Committee to £18 per person. Tania has volunteered to attend from the committee, an invitation is to be forwarded to the membership for the remaining seat.
Action: Derek to send email to membership offering a place at the Regional dinner for interested members

24.123 Christmas Meeting
Hideaway Cafe price of £6.95 per person for individual meal with mince pie is accepted with the committee subsidising the cost for 140 members at £4 per ticket. Tania will design the ticket and send it out to the committee for approval.
Action: Tania to design and circulate ticket for approval.

24.124 December Committee Meeting
The Christmas committee meeting will take place on Thursday 19th December. The decision was made to meet to discuss business over lunch 11.30-1.30pm
Action: Ian to investigate Christmas lunch costs in the Village.

24.125 Any other business
(a) Inappropriate postings on Facebook were discussed
Action: Derek to write to explain the removal of comments.

(b) Northumbria u3a region are calling for further quiz teams. The committee by WhatsApp discussion agreed to subsidise any teams from WVu3a at a cost of £10 per team.

(c) It is reported by the group leader that Tai Chi is becoming unsustainable as attendances have dropped. It is agreed that an email advising that if attendance does not improve it may be necessary to dismiss the tutor, should be forwarded to Tai Chi members.

Action: Ian McIntosh to forward email to Tai Chi members

(d) It is reported that the Laing Art Gallery lecture with paintings was very interesting and highly recommended.