

Minutes of meeting Monday 3rd June 2024 10. am

Assembly Room Downham Market Town Hall

Present: JC, FB, LE. LA. BG, SM, CD, SH, EC, SC, TM

Apologies JC and CC

Minutes of Previous Meeting

The chair welcomed the group and thanked FB for the Health and Safety documents obtained. An amendment to the last meetings minutes was requested as the report was given in SM's role as Membership Secretary rather than as Interim Vice Chair.

It was requested that actions needed should be highlighted in red for future minutes. SM has agreed to take over Beacon administration from TS. TS is to assist SM in the handover.

Action Needed

SM to liaise with TS for a schedule for the changeover

Matters Arising

The gift aid situation has been clarified and the group may continue to claim the tax allowance.

Reports

Chair JC-No report

Interim Vice Chair SM-No report

Treasurer-CD

The statement of accounts was circulated and no queries were raised.

The card reader for payments is now ready and was obtained for half price.

Action needed SM and SF to instruct the signing-in team on the use of the reader in time for the monthly meeting on June 10th.

CD has attended a Beacon financial course-there are new features including a pending column for unallocated monies and greater flexibility. Group budgets will now be able to carry forward any surplus funds instead of them going into the general fund as at present. It will also be possible to make refunds.

Action Needed

CD to advise Group Leaders of the change

The antivirus protection is due for payment but payment by a credit or debit card not straightforward. A direct debit payment arrangement was proposed and seconded,

Action Needed

CD to set up DD payment.

The CAF bank account is to be closed as the service was not satisfactory.

Action Needed

CD is dealing with this.

The Treasurer asked for permission to shred paperwork from the financial year 2016/17. This was agreed. A query was raised as to whether a digital copy of the paperwork should be kept. This was not felt to be necessary.

Action Needed

CD to destroy 2016/17 paperwork.

The Lime Tree printing issue has still not been resolved as no acknowledgement has been received to the correspondence sent disputing the charges, The Treasurer has investigated further and there was a technical problem at their end the day the mail was sent. Paper copies of this month's newsletters had also not been received as at the time of the meeting.

Action Needed

CD to resend correspondence JC to visit Lime Tree in person.

The treasurer requested budget vigilance in respect of the entertainment provided after each monthly meeting. The last event exceeded the expected budget due to the early arrival of the performer which incurred an extra cost of £37.00. The general view of the meeting was that payments over £150.00 should be the exception rather than the rule.

The hire of the hall for ongoing meetings needs to be extended to cover the rest of the year.

Action Needed

CD to rebook the meeting room and general hall from September to December as no meeting in August.

The treasurer is working on obtaining a debit card for the group.

The point was raised as to whether non-trustee committee members should be on the Beacon system. It was clarified that only trustees need to be on Beacon although the Charities Commission require details of all committee members. EC and SC agreed to become trustees and paperwork was completed at the meeting.

Business Secretary FB

FB has attended an informal meeting re forming a local cluster with nearby groups with a view to sharing resources, trips and so forth. This would also include consistency in associate member fees which at present vary. The Chair thanked FB for attending.

Action Needed

FB to continue liaison with external groups.

The need for a Health and Safety officer was raised -SC has agreed to take on this role.

Group Leaders need to be more involved with necessary admin such as group members lists for comparison with membership records, and incidents affecting Health and Safety. FB has sent out emails but the response is poor so far.

Action needed

SM is to speak personally to group leaders.

LA requested a further 14 new members packs. BG queried LA's role and the meet and welcome initiative was explained.

Action Needed

FB to provide the new packs to LA.

FB stressed that no personal emails should be included on group correspondence and that if needed a U3A email would be provided,

FB has publicity info and will pass it to BG. BG is in the process of designing a new publicity poster for the group.

There was a brief discussion regarding the plans for a PowerPoint Thank You display for previous committee members at the next meeting. Due to a lack of response, it was agreed that the Chair's newsletter entry would be used.

Membership Secretary SM

There were seven new members in May. The membership currently stands at 253. Unfortunately, Beacon does not provide a facility to give reasons for cancelling memberships. Could accessibility be an issue?

There is a rota in place for provision of refreshments for the monthly meetings.

There was a general discussion about attracting new members- the term University has now been discarded which may be helpful. FB has applied for the new guidance materials. All felt that better publicity was needed.

SC raised the point that we need to let younger people know they can join. CD queried whether the perception is that the group is for retired professionals whereas members from all walks of life are welcome. SC agreed that some people may view the group as elitist. TM felt we needed to stress the non-intellectual activities available.

LE queried where the screen for the monthly meeting speaker was in relation to the edge of the stage. This month's speaker has not requested a microphone but the mike used by the Chair for their address is available if necessary.

SH felt that the facilities should be more clearly highlighted for those not familiar with the Town Hall.

A further general discussion ensued regarding the entertainment at the monthly meeting in view of the Treasurer's earlier comments.

The sub-committee need to meet to plan Christmas activities. No date has been set yet.

New Members LA

LA welcomed new members at the last monthly meeting. There was a suggestion that a small welcoming gift such as a pen with U3A logo would be a nice gesture. The committee will be provided with U3A pins. TM mentioned the U3A now has a brands centre which may be helpful.

Action Needed

JC to order pins when the rebrand is completed.

LA/SH to obtain costings for pens with our group logo and order if acceptable.

LA to ask new members how they heard of the group.

Newsletter JC

JC has agreed to arrange paper copies of the newsletter for some members. Brief general discussion about reasons for non-receipt such as incorrect email addresses.

Minutes Secretary LE

Formally handed the role to EC.

Publicity BG

BG is currently drafting a new poster and will include links to the website. Group email links and a brief description of activities is needed to ensure any interested parties will get the necessary information. BG needs setting up on Beacon.

Action Needed

BG to email group leaders.

FB to arrange Beacon set up.

BG suggested that the Gardening group name was changed to Garden Visits as no active gardening takes place. The idea was approved in principle but the Chair stated that it would be correct to contact relevant group leaders for their input.

Action Needed

JC as chair to speak to group leaders.

SM proposed a U3A Downham Facebook page. TM agreed to facilitate this. The group agreed

Action needed

TM and SM to set up Facebook page and link to website.

BG queried if a membership drive was necessary as numbers are reasonably healthy but the group felt that more members were desirable to future-proof the organization.

AOB

LA stated that SG who attended last meeting is unwell but is willing to help once returned to health.

SC & EC need Beacon connections

Action needed

FB to arrange.

CD raised the issue of Fire Risk Assessments. SH queried if there was a plan in case of a fire. We need to ensure all attendees are accounted for.

JC has agreed to take the register at the muster point in the car park.

SC has agreed to be responsible for checking toilets. FB to check kitchen areas.

JC raised the issue of late arrivals who cannot gain access to the hall. It was suggested that the group providing refreshments ask a member to be available to sit by the door to facilitate late arrivals entry.

LE raised the point that the "signing in" ladies will need some help with the addition of the monthly raffle and new welcome packs to be distributed. FB has agreed to hand out the tickets at registration. The prize this month £10.00 supermarket voucher. JC is purchasing the voucher. LA will deal with new member packs.

Action Needed

JC to contact the ladies to explain the new incentive.

FB to make a poster promoting the raffle.

FB raised the point that it is essential new members receive a Data Protection policy. These should be in the new welcome packs.

There was a general discussion regarding setting up an urgent meeting with group leaders to improve communication with the committee to facilitate the membership and publicity drive. FB has agreed to host meeting which is proposed for 18 June 2024. EC and SC made apologies as they are away that week.

Action needed

JC to email group leaders to invite to the meeting.

FB suggested that groups could have a small display area highlighting their activities at the monthly meeting and also a dedicated new member's corner. Both suggestions were welcomed.

JC Has made apologies in advance for 1st July 2024 meeting.

FB Is to assist JC with online access issues.

John Cowin is unfortunately unwell at the moment. JC asked the group if a get-well card and gift should be sent- the group agreed but it was decided that this would be done after an update from Mrs Cowin.

The meeting was closed at 12.04

The next meeting will be on Monday 1st July at 10.00 am in the Town Hall Assembly Room.

Signed

Date