



## **Buckingham & District U3A**

### **Minutes**

For the 230th Committee Meeting held on Monday 24th June in the Buckingham Community Centre.

Present: Paddy Collins(Treasurer), Steve Heywood(Groups Co-ordinator), Carolina Kenealy (Newsletter Editor),Derek Morgan(Webmaster), Roland Simpkins(Speaker Secretary), John White(Technical Co-ordinator), Robert Winks(acting for Secretary)

Apologies

Martin Paul, Lilia Bogle, Cliff Dammers, Lorna Joy(Membership Secretary)

In the absence of MP PC took the chair and opened the meeting with the agenda item submitted by DM

#### **Beacon system**

Detailed discussion took place on the concise report already circulated by DM of the meeting with Brian Lowes from Leighton Buzzard U3A Beacon Support. LJ who had attended the meeting too saw benefits in the system for membership. She was willing to speak to head office about the bar-coded membership cards or go back to Brian about the data storage issue. She had received an email from Janti Mistry about backing up the system. Moving onto Windows 10 had been challenging and we were currently on an older version of the Access database. The mail merge system for sending cards and welcome letters would be beneficial. One advantage of Beacon is that updates would be carried out by software specialists from a third party company which offers security for backing up data. At present LJ has set up the Gift Aid facility adequately but changes to this and the HMRC website can be time consuming.

200 groups currently use this system and it has the backing of the Third Age Trust.

DM assumed that data is stored in the Cloud but the back up is more robust and would avoid storing backups on the Treasurer's computer. The frequency of the backups, however, remained unclear. The Beacon email system which uses gmail for messages did not appear to have significant advantages over Roundcube. Nevertheless, each member can access the site and GCs can use the system to send messages.

RS argued strongly for investigating other systems and pointed out the additional cost of £1 per member over a 10 year period amounted to around £10,000. One could buy a licence for a system and configure it to suit the association's needs. Moreover, the uncertainty of data being stored in the Cloud is a bone of contention for members as with Roundcube.

DM confirmed that under the current system putting unwanted emails in the junk box instead of deleting them had reduced the amount of spam to 2 per week. Backup can be downloaded into a CSV file and stored locally.

The committee considered the point raised by Brian Lowes that the membership cards created by Beacon would assist registering the number of members at Open meetings. It was noted that the Fire service recommends a check for evacuation purposes but the committee considered that the single location of the main hall minimised the risk.

CK suggested taking a vote on adopting the system but PC summarised the discussion and undertook to write a paper for the next meeting for consideration by the committee.

**The Minutes of the meeting on 20 May were approved.**

### **Membership Secretary report**

He only other issue LJ wished to raise in addition to Beacon was the matter arising in the minutes of the May committee meeting concerning new members being charged the full £15 annual fee if joining late in the year. Part of the fee had to go to the Third Age Trust. Also some people did not want to receive the magazine whose cost is included in the fee. She distributed a current summary of membership status to all present.

### **Technical Coordinator report**

JW reported on the efficacy of the sound system. He stated that one can purchase a Bluetooth device for £24 which enables connection wirelessly to the system. The issue of the hearing loop was not yet resolved and he undertook to speak to Martin Try on the matter. He had come to the

Community centre to speak to the jive/Ceroc? group but the person responsible was not available. RS mentioned that the speaker giving the presentation on "Laughter" had brought his own system but it may not have been able to link in with the loop.

### **Matters arising**

PC confirmed that members would not be charged for attendance at the Summer Social on 24 July. The Ukulele group would provide music and play for about half an hour.

No further report on liaison with the University Medical School was forthcoming in the absence of Martin Paul.

Lilia Bogle would possibly attend the Third Age Trust AGM.

No date for the Workshop for Group coordinators was finalised.

Steve Heywood absent at the last meeting endorsed the suggestion by RS of Julian Lovelock (not Lovelace as recorded in the Minutes) He outlined his background and confirmed he was a highly accomplished speaker.

Discussion ensued about the emergency contact cards proposed at the Group Coordinator lunch in the light of the General Data protection Regulation (GDPR)

PC explained that the branch was obliged to show its duty of care in accordance with U3A guidelines and the cards would be distributed to every member by the GCs. He reconfirmed that members could be invited to a committee meeting.

### **Treasurer Report**

PC reported on a problem with Lloyds Bank where a cheque paid into a machine had been destroyed and there was no recourse; eventually this was resolved with an indemnity form following a bank reconciliation. He referred to a CAF bank account and added that Lloyds were tightening up on credit card use which might affect outings co-ordinators.

### **Group Co-ordinator report**

SH advised that the Antiques and Collectables group attendance had dwindled following a very enthusiastic start and the resignation of the GC. He was seeking a venue for the Spanish for Beginners group and a date for the initial meeting was set for 15 July at 2.30pm. CK suggested the White Hart where the Poetry Group meets in the dining room but this takes place in the morning. One possibility might be the Community Centre. PC confirmed that he would pay for a "Suenos" book and CDs for the group. Local History 1 group has a new coordinator and would meet in Maids Moreton village hall as before and a

second Ukulele group had been assembled. Names for the new French for Beginners group were still being gathered. A Greek for Beginners group had been mooted and a teacher with expertise in Modern Greek was being sought. Issues with the co-ordination of the Flower Arranging for Fun group were being resolved. DM made a plea for timely (or any) communication.

### **Speaker Secretary report**

RS confirmed that speakers were booked up to the year 2020.

### **Any other business**

The committee agreed that the U3A is not permitted to promote or publicise charities actively but discretion is advisable at Open meetings e.g. Air Ambulance would not be granted a table but Assistance Dogs would.

CK spoke highly of the new meeting room at Tesco as a venue for groups, holding up to 16 members. Delay at reception was to be expected. Tesco was keen to improve footfall and promote links with the community.

DM emphasised the number of people investigating the GC openings on the website Antiques and Collectables, 223 and 113 respectively! He also urged GCs again to provide current information on their groups' activities.

CK confirmed the 31 August deadline for the next newsletter and advised a new format for listing all the groups.

**The next committee meeting is to held in the main hall of the Buckingham Community Centre on Monday 22 July at 10am.**