



BUCKINGHAM & DISTRICT U3A

MINUTES

**For the 254th Committee Meeting held at 10:00 am Monday 20th December 2021
online via Zoom**

Present: Lilia Bogle (Chairperson); Howard Mordue (Vice-Chair), Derek Morgan (Webmaster), Roland Simpkins (Speaker Secretary), Dorothy Morgan (Secretary), Janti Mistry (Adviser)

1. **Welcome:** The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting, and was informed that apologies had been received from the Membership Secretary and from the Treasurer.
2. **Apologies:** See above.
3. **Absences:** As above, and Group Liaison Officer not currently in post.
4. **Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 22nd November 2021:** These were approved subject to one minor amendment.
5. **Matters Arising:** None.
6. **Chairperson's Report:**
Arrangements for the new members coffee mornings are in progress with Ginny Booth. She is hoping to move away, but has 2 people interested in taking over from her who will be kept informed.
A New Members Welcome pack has been downloaded from the TAT Brand Centre, HM will check this, and look into getting printed copies. **Action HM**

The dates agreed are Monday 7th February and Monday 14th February 2022. It was decided that it might be better to hold these on Zoom rather than face to face, in view of the latest virus information and likelihood of more restrictions in the New Year. One or two GCs would be invited to attend, along with Committee members. RS would arrange Zoom - links for these. **Action RS/DMM**

JM would help with the list of new members for the coffee morning as it has been difficult to obtain that information so far. These would be asked to express an interest in attending one of the sessions, once we know what details Ginny has received so far. **Action JM/GB**

With regard to the Membership laptop issues things have moved on since then, and an update in technology is being considered. The Simple Membership system would allow

several people access to the system, rather than just one, and would be accessible from the website. We needed to have something more reliable, and it was recommended we should seek a demonstration of the Simple system in January to move forward from there. The Committee agreed with this recommendation.

RS commented that it was important to be able to download and work with the data, and this point was noted. Treasurer had sent a message saying he wished to be sure Gift Aid was available, and this facility is mentioned in the list of features, along with potential for GCs to manage their own groups and the GLO to access group information. It was confirmed that all those involved would be able to give their input in due course.

Action DJM/DMM

JM had been asked to attend in order to give an outline of the existing system, as he was involved in the original database development process. It was agreed he should attend meetings as an adviser until things settle down, as there are outstanding issues around the data and it was important to ensure the existing system kept running. It was agreed he would also be asked for help and support in moving to the new system and exploring how it would work.

Group Liaison Officer vacancy has not yet been filled. However, at the end of the AGM two volunteers came forward and LB has met them for a discussion on how they might fill the requirements of the role. AS was not very keen on using Social Media, and AN was more pro-active in this area. AS later came to the conclusion he wasn't suitable because he was not keen in promoting the use of this media (currently we are trying to promote Facebook). AN is interested but would prefer to be the shadow. LB felt he would be an asset, and has asked him to reconsider. It is a key role and needs someone dynamic to move it forward. He seems to be appropriate for the post.

Some concern had been expressed about groups breaking up and being in need of support. There are examples of groups with about 30 people but nobody coming forward to take over. The GLO needs to be aware of these difficulties.

DJM said about 6 had failed, mostly longer running groups with members not engaged as much as previously. LB felt groups needed to start with everyone involved in running it, as part of the self-help ethos of U3A. It may be possible to have a lead assisted by 2 or 3 others.

- 7. Treasurer's Report:** The Treasurer was unable to attend due to another commitment. He had sent a question about whether Gift Aid was available on the Simple system. DJM confirmed this was on the list of available features.
- 8. Membership Secretary's report:** The Membership Secretary was unable to attend due to having other commitments. She had submitted an outline of the laptop issues for the Committee, although matters had moved on since then.
- 9. Speaker Secretary's Report:** A speaker had been arranged for the 26th January assuming it was in the hall. However, the Committee decided that it should be held on Zoom due to Covid problems. HM felt things may be a little uncertain in January, and felt it

would be safer to send notice that it was now to be held on Zoom. RS was not sure on speaker availability but would look into possibilities. He would cancel the current speaker who did not do Zoom talks, and asked that the fees be covered in any event as this was the second time of cancellation. The Committee felt that was reasonable in the circumstances and that RS should ask the Treasurer to settle the fees. **Action RS**

- 10. Webmaster's Report:** DJM felt that the solutions proposed by AA were not appropriate because we now had a working laptop, since Dell had replaced the SSD and installed a new copy of Windows 10. He had checked it thoroughly and reinstalled Office 2019, the database files were available on the backup and were also reinstalled, and it looks to be functioning as required. He was accessing the meeting from that laptop. He felt it had taken rather a long time to get to this stage, that we had all tried hard to support AA, and it could have been resolved much sooner.

With regard to Simple Membership, he reported that a couple of alternatives had been explored previously. One was the official Beacon from TAT, but that had been ruled out, particularly as TAT have recently written off about £80K in development costs paid to a commercial developer, who had failed to deliver the required updates.

The Simple system has been recommended by several local U3As who have been using it for some time. The development team is in Milton Keynes and there is local support available. They are happy to give a demonstration in the New Year via Zoom.

It is a modular system where there is choice in what we implement, and will need some website modifications. We may need to update from a shared to a private server, email addresses could be moved but he wouldn't bother with transferring the inboxes, as the current system has limited uptake. In the new system GCs could manage their own group data if they wished.

He would like JM to attend the demonstration to bring up relevant points in comparing both the systems.

It would take at least 3 months to get up and running but should be manageable after we are over the bulk of renewals.

LB had reservations on data being held on personal PCs; DMM said that under GDPR that was permitted, so long as it was held behind a safe and secure password protected log-in. LB felt the new system should keep data safe and allow the Committee to access, for example to email all members which in the current system is not directly possible.

JM reported that he had sent out Membership cards in December and accessed the coffee morning information on new members. He mentioned there had been 2 meetings with AA at his home for around 3 ½ hours to resolve discrepancies in the database, which were between the total current members and cards to be issued. There were also problems caused by there being no fees charged for last year's membership.

Their last meeting was on 16th November when he made sure it was all working, and it was left that cards would be issued by AA. He didn't hear any more until GCs were messaging saying there was a problem with the laptop, and he offered more technical help at that

stage, which was not taken up.

There are a total of 625 current members, and 250 lapsed. He suggests the lapsed members should be contacted to say we have resumed activities, and asked if they wish to re-join. There are around 24 payments to be processed and entered into the database, and people need to be informed we have their payment – this would usually be confirmed by issuing a membership card.

LB had been approached by other members asking if there are problems, whether the database is down, and if we needed help. They have been told the system is broken which is beginning to cause anxiety among members. LB is concerned as to what information is being passed to members.

LB added that we need to move on, and looking at other systems would avoid any issues with just one person being responsible for the data, and ensure no further problems with laptop crashes causing uncertainty as to what was happening with the data, and loss of confidence in the system. **Action: DJM/DMM**

- 11. Any Other Business:** HM was thanked by LB for his efforts in providing a table for the Community Fair in the Community Centre, which had proved very successful. LB had attended to set up the table with the banner and leaflets.

She felt that quite a few people were not aware of what the U3A was, and that we should make efforts to raise awareness and attract younger people to join. She had to leave before the Christmas Parade started at 11.45, but by then had been joined by some local members who were able to man the table until the close.

HM felt we should keep the profile going, he had attended after the Parade and thought it was a good event from the publicity viewpoint. He felt that people go to groups but often don't really understand the wider meaning of the U3A. There is a Celebrate Buckingham event in the summer which we should make efforts to attend. **Action HM**

Meeting was closed at 11.20 a.m.

Next meeting to be held on Monday 24th January 2022 online via Zoom.

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