

# MINUTES OF THE GROUP LEADERS' MEETING

10 March 2022  
Village Hall, Countesthorpe

**Present:** Liz Lockwood-Jones, Carol Kenneth, Gill Brown, Janine Tibbles, Hilary Natzel, Janet Easey, Pat Quinn, Teresa Morgan, Allen Donkin, Maud Greasley, Diana Lee, Ian Paterson, Patsy Paterson, Alan Rooks, Pam Whitehead, Ursula Wild, David Wild, Mikki Wilde, Pauline Woodward, David Hetterley, and June Hawkins,

June opened the meeting with thanks to all those attending, and extended thanks to all the Group Leaders for their efforts throughout the pandemic and in restarting the activities.

## 1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from, Liz Stewart, Jill Clayton, Pat Hillyard, Barry Hillyard, Ruth Westley, Beryl Lishman

## 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

Copies had been circulated prior to the meeting. These were agreed as a true record of the November 2019 meeting. There were no matters arising.

## 3 Administrative Matters

- GL Handbooks to be available at the end of the meeting for newer GLs and anyone who missed out earlier. A signature is required to indicate willingness to comply with the Handbook contents.
- Equipment Request and Expense Claim forms were available, and their use was briefly outlined for the benefit of newer GLs. The Equipment Request cannot be used for routine 'consumable' items, and expenditure must be pre-approved by the Committee.
- A brief outline of how to access information on our website which is particularly relevant to the GL role was provided.
- Any problems or suggestions should be referred to June who will try to assist.

## 4 Membership Year

- June outlined the change to the membership year. Instead of running 1 April to 31 March, it will now run from 1 June to 31 May. This will take immediate effect, meaning that all current members will gain an extra two months' membership at no charge.
- The reason for the change was outlined. The former membership year began a month prior to the May AGM, meaning that any change in membership subscriptions had to be proposed and voted on 11 months before it could take effect. This had been causing some difficulties, and as we are able to make the alteration under our constitution, the Committee had decided to make the change.
- Further information will be provided at the AGM, together with an opportunity for questions.
- June asked that no renewals be paid before 1 June this year. Renewal procedure may change from the previous years, but more information would be given in due course. Cheques, cash and bank transfer are all acceptable. The U3A posting box facility in the Library will remain available for the convenience of members.

## **5 Financial Matters**

### **5a Group Funds**

- David Hetterley, our new Treasurer, was introduced to those present
- David explained that it had been decided that funds relating to any individual group held within the Groups Account would be capped at £250, with any surplus being transferred to the General Account.
- Funds attributable to the Pilates and Garden Appreciation groups had been transferred, as neither group was currently operating.
- Funds attributable to Line Dancing, Bridge and Carpet Bowls would be transferred.
- It was pointed out that as soon as monies are handed to the GL, they become the property of Countesthorpe u3a, and are still available to support groups as necessary whether the funds are in the Groups or General account.
- As a registered charity we are not allowed to build up surplus funds, nor are individuals allowed to hold funds in private accounts of any kind.
- GLs can alter the amount they charge to match their expenditure, or perhaps where group membership is very stable, offer an occasional free session.
- Surplus funds are not allowed to be used for a social event for the group, as this is not part of the defined purpose of the group. (There is nothing to stop a separate, private fund being built up and held by an individual for, say, a Christmas meal but it must be entirely outside the Countesthorpe u3a income/expenditure for the group.)
- David can always provide information as to the monetary standing of any group on request.

### **5b Group Accounting Summary Forms**

- Nil returns from groups which do not have any income or expenditure are required and may be returned at any time from now.
- Where income and expenditure does arise, the form should be completed to indicate the position at 31 March 2022, and then be returned to David as soon as possible thereafter, in order to allow time for completion of the accounts for the AGM
- Forms can be returned to: Mr D Hetterley, 4 Southfield Close, Countesthorpe, LE8 5UZ
- David confirmed that hire charges are currently £13/hr for the main village hall and £9 for the small lounge.
- Note that groups which operate a separate account (Travel, Outings, Theatre and History) are not required to complete the form, as their accounts are audited separately.

### **5c Bank Charges**

- David explained that HSBC have now introduced significant charges, payable on our two main accounts. This includes (for each account) £5/month + 40p for each cheque paid in + 40p for each £100 cash paid in + 40p for each cheque issued.
- Significant work has been undertaken to find alternative accounts, but even where charges are not currently being levied, they are to be introduced in the near future. It is likely that the accounts may be moved to the Co-Operative bank, subject to final decisions by the Committee
- David pointed out that general rises in energy and other costs will filter through to us in time, and may result in a small increase in membership subscriptions.
- Mikki asked whether minor expense claims could be settled out of Petty Cash, to avoid bank charges. This was agreed in principle.
- David cautioned GLs not to accept old £10 notes and old £1 coins – neither of which are now legal tender.

### **5d Website Costs**

- June explained that our website is 11 years old, and thus uses old coding which can cause difficulties.
- It was also explained that we needed to change the hosting arrangements, because the existing hosting arrangements were to be discontinued due to a career change by the business owner. This is in hand and due to be completed by the weekend.

- The existing website costs £150 pa for hosting + £15 for domain registration. Then, once a year, the 3 static pages are updated at a cost of a further £120-£150. June completes updating of the Homepage, Archive, What's On, and Groups pages on a routine basis.
- David explained that at some point we will need a full upgrade/new website. As a charity, we can only build up funds for a specific, ring-fenced purpose. Over the ensuing years we will attempt to do this, and hopefully may be able to access some grant funding to assist. It is our duty as trustees to plan for future requirements, within the confines of what is permissible under the Charities Commission rules.

## **6 News From the Groups**

- Each GL present offered an insight into the activities, level of attendance and any specific items of interest from their own group(s), which proved to be very interesting, informative and, at times, amusing! Thanks to all who reported back.
- These reports will appear in detail in the December 2022 Newsletter.
- GLs were reminded to inform June of changes to their group activities for inclusion in What's On and the website (by the first Tuesday of the month).
- Sincere thanks were extended to regular contributors!

## **7 AOB**

- There was no other business.
- June thanked all GLs for their efforts on behalf of the membership, and for attending the meeting.
- The meeting closed at 3.15 pm

## **8 Date and time of next meeting:**

Date subject to arrangement (likely October/November) – in small lounge, 2 and 3 pm.