

MINUTES OF THE GROUP LEADERS' MEETING

19 April 2018

Small Lounge, Village Hall, Countesthorpe

Present: Ursula Wild, Sheila Baldwin, Shirley Frost, Maud Greasley, Pauline Woodward, Janet Easey, Mikki Wilde, Andy and Val Grant, Pat Hillyard, Barry Hillyard, David Wild, Sheila Holmes, Jill Clayton, Theresa Morgan and June Hawkins,

1 Apologies for Absence

Diana Lee, Ian and Patsy Paterson, Ruth Westley, Liz Lockwood-Jones, Sue Wyllie, Allen Donkin and John Armstrong

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Copies were distributed.

3 Matters Arising

- (6) Jill Clayton explained the difficulty of avoiding outings on Wednesdays and Thursdays as had been requested. November outing is on a Monday.
- (8) Barry reported that the Classical Music group is now established

4 New Group Leaders' Handbook

- Copies were distributed
- June outlined and explained the reasons for the key changes – relating to the handling of money and use of external tutors.

5 Individual Group Finances

- Nothing to report, although the Treasurer reports back to individual group leaders as appropriate.
- The need to hand over cash received on a regular basis was stressed, to avoid groups appearing to be non-viable

6 Membership

- David noted that membership renewals will again be taken after the AGM at the May meeting.
- If Group Leaders are willing to convey renewals from members who attend groups and not the main meeting, this is helpful, but not a requirement.
- A stamped, addressed envelope is helpful, for sending the membership and programme cards to members not renewing in person.
- A follow-up of non-renewing members will be issued at the October Group Leaders' meeting
- Group Leaders were reminded of the need to check that people in their groups were actually members, especially where outings/holidays are concerned.

- A question was raised about refunding money paid for group meetings where there was a genuine reason for doing this. It was explained that the Group Leader has the authority to decide in individual circumstances, provided that any refund would not make the group financially unsound.

7 News From the Groups

- **Creative Writing** continues to thrive with a steady attendance of about a dozen people. Lots of interesting discussion (and laughter) follows the reading aloud of members' written contributions. Occasionally there are workshop activities in addition to the usual routine of reading the pieces of work. The group is currently working on the fifth miscellany, which will be titled "Pot Pourri" and will be issued free of charge to all members during the summer.
- **Travel** group put on a successful combined planning and social evening in October at the Cornerstone. The recent holiday to Weymouth had proved very successful, and 42 people will shortly be going on a four-night break to Bembridge on the Isle of Wight. In October a short cruise, which is a new initiative, will call at Amsterdam, Antwerp and Hamburg. Day outings planned will see members visiting Windsor Castle and the Savill Gardens in July, the Eglantine Vineyard in August, Kedleston Hall in Derbyshire in September followed by the ever-popular Christmas at Chatsworth in November (which was fully booked the first month it was advertised.)
- **Craft Circle** is a new group which is being established by a relatively new member, Teresa Morgan. It will offer a range of crafts following demonstrations and examples from Teresa. The meetings will be on consecutive Mondays and Tuesdays, twice a month between 10 am and noon at Teresa's home, for the nominal fee of £1 plus the cost of any materials used. Initial interest appears to be on scrapbooking and photo albums with lots of ideas to get members' interest.
- **Allotment Gardening** has been taken over by Val and Andy Grant, and they are keen to recruit a few helpers. They are currently keeping it simple by growing potatoes, beans, parsnips, carrots and some herbs but hope to become more adventurous as they learn.
- **SWANS** has a new leader in Pauline Woodward who has taken over from Liz Lockwood-Jones. From a total membership list of about 40 people, each walk attracts anything between 12 and 20 people. A list of Spring and Summer walks has been published, and includes city, countryside and canal strolls all planned with the likely weather in mind. June was thanked for her assistance in updating the membership list and programme.
- **Line Dancing** is another new group, being led jointly by Tricia Cornforth and Maud Greasley, and takes place every Friday in the Village Hall. The caller, Doug, is excellent and very patient. Everyone has a lot of fun and, whilst exhausting, it is also good for keeping the brain exercised! Currently around 25-30 people attend and this success has enabled the fee to be reduced to just £3 per session, or £20 for 8 sessions if paid in advance. There are plans for a more social event to be held in an evening in the future.
- **Scrabble**. A regular attendance of 10-14 keeps this group prospering. As well as the usual Scrabble, a vertical variety called Upwords is also available. Rummikubs, a simple number tile game loosely based on the card game of rummy, provides further variety.
- **CHEWS** group is still going well, but with a diminished membership. We meet four times a month at various places – our homes and the coffee shop to discuss eating (of course) and wider world topical issues. Success is achieved through our own, individually chosen, efforts.
- **Garden Appreciation** this year has included a talk at Palmer's on pruning shrubs, a guided walk around Leicester's Botanic Garden, a day out in Derbyshire where Hopton Hall's snowdrops were whitely drifting under the woodland's bare tree canopy. My absence today is due to our outing at Evenly Wood in Northamptonshire, probably looking at the scillas' blue 'stream' by the woodland path (or having tea and cake in the café!). The outing to Ryton Organic Garden in May has had to be cancelled due to lack of support. There are visits to members' own gardens, three of which are in Glen Parva, planned for later in the season.

- **Birdwatching** meetings attract a steady 12 – 16 people, though there are many more names on the list. There was a visit to Slimbridge in January, followed by Brandon Marsh in February, though the severe weather caused the Middleton Hall outing planned for March to be cancelled. John Barrett gave an excellent talk on ‘My Life Birdwatching’ in April, and there are outings planned to Croft Hill and Brandon Marsh.
- **Guitar** remains static with up to 9 members attending weekly. The group plays a variety of music styles and also sings on occasion. Members have their own music and guitars.
- **Computers** is not really a formal group, but a facility to assist members with any IT difficulties. It is offered on the first Monday of the month, on demand. Barry has had to convince one enquirer that he does not repair laptops!
- **Handbells** reported that 8-9 is the average attendance and so new members are now being sought as 9 are needed to operate. There is no need to be able to read music, but must be able to count! The group meets weekly on Wednesdays in the Methodist Church between 2 and 4 pm. Music and bells are provided, as are refreshments/
- **Beginners’ Photography** has not run for some time but may be offered later in the year.
- **Nordic Walking** continues with only 2 regulars with occasional additional walkers.
- **Carpet Bowls** continues to thrive with 16-18 regular players throughout the winter, though this tends to reduce over the summer as outdoor bowling takes over. A replacement carpet has been purchased.
- **Discussion** continues with its habit of not reaching any conclusion, although the discussion along the way is interesting and far-reaching (ie it may stray a little from the prescribed topic!) Recent topics have included “Should Children be Allowed to Choose Their Gender?”, “Should the NHS Always be Free at the Point of Delivery?”, and “Donald Trump”. Whilst most meetings are in members’ homes, the Christmas meeting was held at Mulberry Court when the group discussed Hot News, and again in March to discuss “Should ISIS Fighters be Allowed to Return to the UK?”.
- **Literature** finds 10-12 people meeting to discuss a wide variety of books. Sometimes non-attenders also submit a critique of the chosen book, including one member at the age of 95! We read a wide range of books from novels to biographies, and books enjoyed in childhood. Mostly we read the same book, but occasionally when reading to a particular genre or author, members will have read different books. Our discussions are always lively and often diverge onto side issues. A short summary appears on the website each month.
- **Solo Sunday Lunch** continues to meet at Ullesthorpe Court with between 15 and 25 people attending each month for a pleasant and chatty meal. Some minor difficulties over the increased cost of a post-lunch coffee had been ironed out and Sheila negotiated a price of £1 for a ‘serve yourself’ offering from the set-out cups and jugs. This suited everyone.
- **Theatre** group has been making more use of local theatres, notably the Hinckley Concordia and the Market Harborough theatre. The local groups are excellent performers and this makes for a reasonably priced but enjoyable evening out. Recent performances have included The Great Gatsby, Mack and Mabel, Gasping and Ghost Train. After our visit to Anything Goes in May the group will take a summer break, resuming in the autumn with a visit to Curve to see Matthew Bourne’s production of Swan Lake, featuring the male swans. This had proved extremely successful when seen some years ago.
- **History** continues with its mix of talks in the winter months, and trips out in the rest of the year. Peter Little’s series on the Anglo Saxons concluded in January and was followed by an excellent talk from John Martin on the Geological History of Bradgate. Early trips this year have included the Imperial War Museum at Duxford, and Derby. Forthcoming events include Cromford Mill, the Piece Hall in Halifax and Middleton Hall (combined with Garden Appreciation and Birdwatching). Arrangements for the three-night stay in Llangollen are well advanced.
- **Pilates** continues to thrive under the new instructor, Debbie Cooper. Costs are held at £5 per session or £20 in advance for 5 sessions – which need not be consecutive weeks. Chairs can be used as an alternative to floor exercises. When Debbie is away, Ursula takes the class with the aid of photographs and explanations of the various exercises.

- **Cryptic Crosswords** members continue to improve slowly, though prefer to concentrate on the puzzles by specific compilers. A few new members have joined the group, but they are very good at the cryptic crosswords – certainly not beginners! The group now meets at Ursula's home – though this now means no cakes!

8 Any Other Business

- Ursula thanked all the Group Leaders for their efforts and advised that she and Sheila Baldwin are both standing down at the AGM, so there will be a new Groups Co-ordinator.
- There was no further business.

The meeting closed at 4.10 pm

9 Date and time of next meeting:

Thursday, 11 October 2018 (2.30 – 3.30 pm) in the Small Lounge.