

MINUTES OF THE GROUP LEADERS' MEETING

7 November 2019
Village Hall, Countesthorpe

Present: Jill Clayton, Allen Donkin, Janet Easey, Shirley Frost, Andy Grant, Val Grant, Margaret Greaney, Maud Greasley, Pat Hillyard, Barry Hillyard, Sheila Holmes, Diana Lee, Ian Paterson, Patsy Paterson, Alan Rooks, Ruth Westley, Pam Whitehead, Ursula Wild, David Wild, Mikki Wilde, Paula Wollaston, Pauline Woodward, Sue Wyllie, Jenny Mills and June Hawkins,

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Liz Lockwood-Jones, Isobel McDonald, Theresa Morgan, Liz Stewart and John Thacker

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

Copies were available from the website, and distributed as required. These were agreed as a true record of the March 2019 meeting. There were no matters arising.

3 Treasurer Items

- Sue gave a reminder about the essential use of the Group Accounting Summary Form which had been introduced a year ago. There were no reported difficulties in its use, and GLs are urged to keep this up to date and to refer to Sue for guidance if required.
- It was pointed out that some groups (eg walking) have no income or expenditure, but nil returns still need to be returned in order to complete the financial records now required.
- Monies collected purely for refreshments do not need to be included
- Groups operate in vastly differing ways, depending on their level and type of activity, but the form and process accommodates all. Some groups find it convenient to maintain a small cash float, which is perfectly acceptable.
- It was suggested that a small book be maintained in which to record weekly or monthly income amounts.
- GLs were reminded that as a charity, we do not aim to make any surplus, just to balance our operating costs.
- Income from all groups is deposited into a Countesthorpe U3A Groups Account, within which details of individual groups are recorded. June to provide Sue with an updated GL Contact List, so that Sue can send this out by email to all GLs.
- Where external, paid tutors are used, the income is ring-fenced. No subsidies are available from general funds, and it is important that the relevant GLs adjust fees or have free weeks in order to avoid building up substantial surpluses. Such groups are, however, required to keep one month's operating costs in hand. (See GL Handbook)
- The Brook Court scenario was explained. Since its inception, the lounge has been available for local groups and we currently use it for four groups plus committee meetings. Until a couple of years ago, we gave a donation to the Brook Court Community fund. However, we are now not allowed (Charity Commission rules) to donate to another charity. We have tried repeatedly to get EMH Homes who operate Brook Court to raise an invoice against which we could make a similar payment. This has proved unsuccessful, and so the 50p room charge is now questionable. The matter will be raised at the next U3A Committee meeting, and GLs will be informed of the outcome where it affects them.

- GLs were reminded to use the Group Equipment Form (last page of Handbook, or download from website) to request expenditure on any items required BEFORE spending any money!

4 Membership Matters

- Barry reported that we currently have 509 members, although not all have paid.
- A list of members last year who have failed to renew was circulated. GLs were asked to identify and remind any of their group members whose names appeared on this list.
- If a member is known to have moved away, or died, please advise Barry in order that the official membership records can be updated.
- This is not straightforward for open groups such as Holidays, etc, and the GL concerned is expected to check membership of attendees.
- It was mentioned that in a very few cases, people may have been turning up to groups who have never joined! An example was quoted about somebody who had been strongly resisting paying an associate membership fee to Countesthorpe, based on her membership of another U3A. It was explained that all U3As are separate charities, and operate under broadly the same rules but that some details may differ. Our rules state that all persons attending groups MUST be full or associate members of Countesthorpe U3A, in fairness to the remainder of our membership.
- GLs are asked to check that all participants are members by (a) asking to see current membership card, or (b) asking Barry to check, or (c) checking personally on the Beacon system
- With this latter in mind, a list was circulated for those GLs who would like access to the Beacon system to indicate this. Barry will then issue a user name and password.
- Data Protection issues were a concern of some GLs. It was explained that the new membership form covered this, as part of the Data Protection Policy introduced last October along with the revised GL Handbook. Copies had been distributed with the Handbook, or are available for download from our website (archive section). It is perfectly legal for GLs to have access to the membership list in order to check compliance with our requirements, as this is a legitimate reason for accessing the personal data held by the U3A and to which members have consented by signing the membership form at renewal or first joining.

5 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 2019 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!

6 AOB

- There was no other business.
- Jenny thanked all GLs for their efforts on behalf of the membership, and for attending the meeting.
- The meeting closed at 3.10 pm

7 Date and time of next meeting:

23 April 2020 – date subject to confirmation – in small lounge, between 2 and 3 pm.