

## Aughton & Ormskirk U3A

Minutes of Committee meeting held on Tuesday 11 September 2007 in St Michael Church Hall, Aughton

**Chairman:** Geoff Maitland

**Present:** Carole Gray, Dorothy Harrison, Ted Morrell, Norman Platt, Chris Procter, Jim Robson, Bob Roscoe, Susan Watkinson, Norman Williamson, Alan Worthington.

Alex McMinn was in attendance (Chairman of Trustees)

**Apologies:** Beryl Campbell, Pat McKenzie, Jeff Roberts would arrive about 11 am

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 August 2007 were amended as follows:-

- a) Norman Platt proposed that members present should be included as well as apologies – AGREED
- b) Norman Platt also proposed that item 9(a) should be amended to read - after "Liverpool with Brian King" – "As some strong differences of opinion were voiced, the Chairman proposed a vote be taken. It was proposed by Ted Morrell, and seconded by Alan Worthington that the costs of the visit up to £500 be met by U3A. The result was 6 votes in favour, 5 votes against and the motion was carried." The amendment and the Minutes were then AGREED. The Chairman requested that in future all amendments to the Minutes be notified in advance.

2. Matters arising from the Minutes

- a) Re-organisation of room layout at Horizons – Most Group Leaders had now been advised of the plans to revise the room layout and this would be implemented on 13 September.
- b) 5<sup>th</sup> birthday plans – Alex explained that he wanted to include a musical item provided by a Lancashire County Council funded orchestra to develop relationships and demonstrate the quality of their music; he had thoughts of a marquee or another larger venue, other churches, hotels or the Floral Hall were suggested but there was a feeling that the event(s) should be held within West Lancashire. Item to be reviewed each meeting.
- c) Archiving – Margaret Wiechers was willing to place items on the website in a suitable format.
- d) CVs for new Trustees – item to be carried forward to next agenda again
- e) Co-operation with Maghull U3A. A reciprocal relationship has been put in place for offering spare places on days out, theatre and concert visits and holidays. Dual membership will not be demanded.

3. Twinning visit by Macerata U3A – deferred until later in the Agenda so that the Treasurer could be present.

4. Speaker Meetings – feedback on new timings and arrangements – Ted advised that 400 members had attended the September meeting, perhaps the largest attendance yet. He viewed this as an indication that speaker meetings should be continued and believed that the 1000 start had worked well. A DVD was available for anyone who had not been able to attend. Chris Procter reported that the coffee team had been overwhelmed by the numbers and was concerned that HQ had been over full and thus a Health & Safety risk. Parking, queuing outside HQ, the length of the morning for helpers, confusion for new members and an unwillingness by some of the coffee team to do another speaker meeting were all discussed. Booking for a new season of theatre trips had added to the congestion. Suggestions for change included not serving coffee at speaker meetings, providing a second coffee station in the church or Old School, using Ormskirk School for a quarterly meeting or changing to another day. Finally, it was AGREED that all the comments should be taken on board but that the October and November meetings be held as planned with a full review. The Chairman congratulated everyone involved in the morning and accepted that any change should be advertised in the early December newsletter for implementation in January 2008.

*Jeff Roberts arrived before consideration of the next item.*

5. Trustees Report – Alex reported that the Charities Commission has raised questions about the new Constitution and he has asked Ray Sim to look over the wording that is in question. A meeting to approve the accounts for year ended 31 March 2007 is needed and it was agreed that the Trustees of today are empowered to sign them off as the new Constitution was presented to the membership after the year end in May 2007. A meeting will be arranged as soon as possible.

6. Membership Report – In Pat's absence, the Treasurer reported that there are now 1536 paid members, the next number is 1926 and there were 58 new members in August (5 Thursdays). Ted reported that only 17 U3As in the UK have more than 1000 members and the average is 208. As it seems likely that the 2000<sup>th</sup> member will be enrolled in November it was AGREED that this number should be celebrated. Publicity Committee will agree the format.

3. Twinning visit by Macerata U3A – Jim presented a short report on a very successful visit plus an income and expenditure account showing that net expenditure was £36.78 compared with the budget of £500. He thanked everyone who had been involved and the time and trouble they had taken.. Alex suggested that another name should be given to the exchange as "twinning" has a poor image. The discussion covered a brief history of the



approach by Macerata and our response; why we wanted to make the link and whether we should extend to other countries. Alex was concerned that a Lancashire Local Grant had been used and suggested that all grant applications should go through the Finance Committee. Sue accepted full responsibility for the approach to County Councillor Richard Shepherd and promised that the application would be dealt with correctly. AGREED that lessons must be learned from the visit; that we must be cautious with spending and sell the financial implications of exchanges as a benefit. Jim, Sue and Alex agreed to write a paper on the topic for consideration at a future meeting.

7. **Treasurer's Report** – Jeff presented the usual monthly statements and a full analysis of Groups income and expenditure. Many Groups showed deficits, with a net projected loss of around £250 (much lower than feared). Jeff explained that part of each subscription is allocated to Group Support. He had recalculated the notional cost of HQ at £4.50 per room, per hour and had set income against this cost although Group Leaders were not yet aware of this charge. It was pointed out that while Groups cover the cost of external tutors they should contribute just 50p per head per meeting to room hire. Discussion included the cost of duplicating (hidden in the stationery item), the difficulty of calculating costs with uncertain numbers attending courses and Groups and the differences in hours used at HQ (Pilates – one hour, Card Making – three hours). Sue suggested that charges should reflect the time a Group used HQ or other venue rather than have a blanket rate. The Finance Committee will discuss Group contributions and/or increases in annual subscriptions at their next meeting and the item will be discussed at the October Committee meeting. The decision must be relayed to the Group Leaders at their Annual Meeting arranged for 26 October. Thanks were expressed to Jeff for the detailed presentation.

8. **Sub Committee Reports**

- a) **Finance** – Minutes of the meeting held 29 August and the Addendum dated 6 September were considered. Bob and Jeff reported that a refurbished photocopier was available for around £1,000. Possible grants are tied up in wider applications. Ted suggested that we should not automatically look to grant aid but Alex was convinced that U3A should continue to bid for funding to support our age group where money is available. Jeff said that there is some spare capacity in the equipment budget.
- b) **Social** – there were no formal minutes but Chris reported verbally.
- (i) Events – 96 people have bought tickets for the Race Night and 31 tables are already booked for the Christmas Lunch.
- (ii) Welfare issues – Dorothy was concerned to find ways of involving the less able and housebound and is developing a small group of helpers to visit or transport people to meetings, this could extend to hospital visits. *Carole and Dorothy left before the next item.*
- (iii) Horizons – already covered in previous items.
- c) **Groups Support** – Jim tabled a response to the Addendum to the Finance Committee minutes and asked whether the Finance Committee needed time to consider his proposal. Jeff invited a representative of the Groups Support Committee to attend the next Finance Committee but accepted Jim's suggestion that the Finance Committee deal with all Group budgets (implications for Handbook, which is otherwise complete). The Group Leaders' Annual Meeting is arranged for 1000 on Friday 26 October followed by lunch. Sunday Club – Pat Pope has agreed to take over the organisation of this monthly event. Following an incident at a Group meeting when an ambulance had been called it was agreed urgent that the post code of HQ be advertised widely. Ted has already bought a resuscitator. E-learning – Alex has arranged a meeting this Friday so that the project can continue in the absence of Suzanne Thompson, who is still very ill. *Ted left before the next item.*
- d) **Publicity** – no meeting had been held but Alan reported on the costs of the newsletter. 1158 newsletter had been distributed with 405 collected and 753 posted. Printing cost £1,320 for 16 pages, postage was 40p and each envelope cost 7p. It was AGREED that this newsletter should be submitted for the national competition. The deadline for material for the December newsletter is 1 November: the Group Leaders' meeting presents a good opportunity to remind leaders about this. *Alan left before the next item*
- e) **External Relations and Sustainable Development** – Alex agreed to place minutes of external meetings in a ring binder in the upstairs office. The Chairman reminded members of the question asked at the AGM regarding the views of members. Alex responded that he is often required to make a judgement at a meeting, without time to refer back to other members. A meeting of the Sustainable Development Group had been arranged for 16 October and Third Age Trust has taken up the ideas developed by A & O (copies were tabled).
- f) **Travel** – No meeting held
- g) **Premises** – no meeting had been held. Jeff explained that the visit to St Anne's Social Club had been impromptu following a request by a member of their committee.

9. **Third Age Trust and external items – no items**

10. **Committee structure for 2008-09** – The Chairman requested preliminary consideration of the plans from May 2008. He was particularly concerned about the position of Treasurer. He suggested a review of all Sub Committees and asked each one to review what is going well and what is not, to be considered as an Agenda item