

## Aughton & Ormskirk U3A

Minutes of Executive Committee meeting held on Tuesday 11 December 2007 in Scout & Guide HQ, Aughton

**Chairman:** Ted Morrell

**Present:** Beryl Campbell, Carole Gray, Dorothy Harrison, Chris Procter, Jeff Roberts, Jim Robson, Susan Watkinson, Norman Williamson, Alan Worthington, Alex McMinn **Apologies:** Pat McKenzie, Norman Platt and Bob Roscoe

Before the meeting began, Ted outlined his vision of U3A over the next two years. He is anxious to retain a friendly, inclusive organisation, where we all understand our individual contributions also more learning and attention to welfare, perhaps a second Horizons at another venue, plans for the 5<sup>th</sup> birthday with a team approach, listening to members but not being unduly influenced by odd grumbles, sorting out small problems with Groups but without undue control.

- 1) Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2007 were agreed as a correct record. **The January meeting date was agreed as 8 January (not 15<sup>th</sup> as suggested).** Alex offered apologies.
- 2) Matters arising from the Minutes
  - a) Cultural Exchanges – Sue explained that the meeting had been called by Geoff Maitland who had invited Beth Blamires to lead the Group. Carole and Norman would represent the Executive Committee and a representative of the Travel Committee was requested. Further discussion deferred to January meeting.
  - b) 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday – Working party currently comprises, Ted, Jim (GSC) Chris (SC), Sue (PC), with representatives requested from Finance, Drama and Music
  - c) Carols by the Choir on 20 December – Carols will be sung at Horizons in HQ with free coffee. (Photo please)
  - d) Payment of Tutors – A short discussion on the ten paid tutors currently used by Groups included comments on tax, national insurance and professional indemnity. A new issue is advice that all cheque signatories must be Trustees (non-Trustees sign on the three special Group accounts – Theatre, Phil and Dining). Further discussion and a decision were deferred to January.
- 3) Question raised by Maghull U3A – "Will Maghull U3A members who attend A&O U3A classes/groups have to join A&O U3A and pay the full fee?" The precedent had been set with a holiday activity last year when it was agreed that A&O members did not have to join Maghull to take part in a holiday. It was agreed that specific small groups could benefit from joint ventures but that every one must be discussed and accepted by the individual Group Leader. Jeff suggested that the higher Capitation Fee might make a difference. Agreed that the matter should be reviewed in September 2008.
- 4) Trustees Report – No minutes were yet available of the meeting held on 27 November but Alex reported that the Trust Deed was still under consideration and the CVs were almost complete; the Chairmanship was undecided. He requested that we inform National Office, for insurance purposes, that we have a separate Trust Board.  
Membership Report – Jeff reported that since the last meeting there have been 13 new members and 2 renewals. Paid members total 1632 and the next number to be issued is 2021.
- 6) Treasurer's Report – Jeff presented the monthly statements and answered questions. He is predicting a loss of ca. £6,400 for 08-09. The Finance Committee recommendation of increasing subs from 1 April was approved but the rate increased to £12.50, proposed by Alan, seconded by Jim and unanimously agreed. The National Subscription would be increased at the AGM in September. A 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter cheque of £900 had been received from Discovery Travel but no-one knew whether this included Art Tours and Gardening Holidays and visits. Alex requested that the Travel Committee reconsider their decision to re-allocate commission to those who travel and not as a benefit to U3A. Norman responded that it had been a unanimous decision and that there was less support for general holidays with Cornwall now cancelled and Austria under threat. Madrid would not pay any commission as it was not a Discovery holiday. He advised that for 2009 there would be only two European holidays, because the UK was well served by Groups. Jeff explained that U3A as a Charity was entitled to gross interest on accounts and he was talking with the bank about a "Top Up" account to maximise interest. He has a serious concern that Groups have not yet adopted a "corporate identity" and make decisions to spend money without understanding the effect on the Balance Sheet. Beryl suggested re-visiting the Aims & Guiding Principles and making all Group Leaders aware of them.
- 7) Committee Reports
  - i) **Social** – Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November had been circulated:
    - (a) Events – Christmas Lunch – The raffle will be used to cover the costs of the venue. Thanks to Ted and Doreen for organising the event. A presentation will be made to Geoff Maitland. 22 February confirmed for the Barn Dance in the Civic Hall, Ormskirk. A French evening and/or the cruise on the Royal Iris will be held in June. The Year Planner is now available upstairs and at Horizons.
    - (b) Welfare issues – Dorothy needs extra help to get the home-bound activity started. This generated discussions about needing more help generally. Agreed that a leaflet on "Situations Vacant" should be produced, a welcome letter sent to new members explaining that we are a DIY organisation and a letter included with the renewal invitation in March explaining that we need more help.



(c) Horizons – It was agreed that a Duty Manager rota should be produced for all matters including notices. Names to Ted who will prepare the rota.

- ii) **Groups Support** – Minutes of the meeting held 15 November were considered, and a short CV of the new members given. Quarterly meetings would be held for new and existing Group Leaders to try to encourage corporate identity. Alex mentioned that the U3A National Directory of Learning was due.
- iii) **Publicity** – No meeting had been held but Alan reported that the newsletter distribution had gone well and the magazine had been well received. Postage of 800+ had cost £343. Use of the website is increasing. Jim complimented the Editors on another excellent publication.
- iv) **Travel** – No minutes were yet available for the meeting of 10 December but Norman reported verbally. He recommended the formation of a Travel Group, separate from the Travel Committee, to cater for those members (perhaps between 3 – 20 in number) who wished to buy commercial holidays; it could be run on the Theatre visit model. The aim would be to encourage people with similar interests to make their own arrangements and to offer a range of prices. It was noted that Discovery Travel is used to dealing with small groups and less active people. There was general agreement that a meeting should be held at the end of March, advertised in the next Newsletter.
- v) **Premises** – No meeting.
- vi) **Finance** – A grant of £4,050 has been received from WLDC, ring-fenced for a Risograph and desk-top computers to replace the lap tops to promote E-learning. The money must not be used for general expenses. Jim asked about the £2.50 per head contributions from WLDC (Housing Department) and Jeff advised that forms are still coming in. Following the rejection of an application for funding by the Gardening group, Alex pointed out that Committees generally have an enabling or facilitating role on the "Yes, but" philosophy with the Executive offering control when and if necessary. Agreed that it is important to re-define the role and responsibility of the Committees, starting with the enabling principle.
- vii) **Special Projects** – Alex McMinn
  - (a) External Relations – Alex reported that Burscough needs help in getting started; that local authority grants are available for specific projects; that the PCT wants to work with U3As (see item on staving off dementia in the newsletter). He drew attention to a paper he had written for National Office on External Relations and another about "Gateways" – a government strategy for an ageing population. He requested volunteers to attend a special meeting of the West Lancs Partnership Board for Older People on 27 February – Dorothy and Ted will attend with Alex and Pat Roberts.
  - (b) Sustainable Development – The National Leaflet had created much interest. The U3A Wood at Gorse Hill Nature Reserve now has 27 trees and a number of hedging plants.
  - (c) E-Learning – Launch date is 15 January. Software such as "Mind Fit" ; a possible research programme on Exercising the Mind and the Over 60s and programmes to enhance hearing/vision were all discussed.
  - (d) Market Towns Survey – A&O U3A will earn £300 for analysing questionnaires from Burscough in a recent WLDC survey.

8) Third Age Trust and related items – Information about Groups and courses is available and will be disseminated to Group Leaders as appropriate.

9) Any Other Business –

- a) Sue requested a representative from U3A on the Aughton Village Hall Management Committee as bookings were increasing. Doreen McGiveron is already helping with grant applications and it was agreed that if she is willing, then she could be the representative.
- b) Ted suggested an article for the next newsletter "The satisfaction of leading a group".

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 12.20

Chairman  
8 January 2007

Next meeting Tuesday 8 January 2008