

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday 14 October 2008 in HQ at 9.30 a.m.

Chairman: Ted Morrell

Present: Beth Blamires, David Blanchflower, Stan Bryan, Beryl Campbell, Carole Gray, Ann Haskell, Chris Jones, Chris Procter. Pat McKenzie Jim Robson, Bob Roscoe, Sue Watkinson, Norman Williamson Alan Worthington. Alex McMinn was in attendance.

Apologies: Norman Platt and Peter Sewell (Trustee)

1. Minutes of meeting held 9 September 2008 were approved without amendment.

2. Matters arising –

- a) Garage Storage Facility – resume enquiries with WLDC (Alex)
- b) Susan Greenfield Lecture (5 December) – all travel arrangements and accommodation are now booked. Agreed that ticket admission will ensure that all members who wished to hear the talk could do so. A front page headline in the newsletter (published end November) would advise of this. Also discussed but not agreed: should invitations be issues to PCT, Doctors, Schools? Cancel Horizons due to potential car parking problems?
- c) Tai Chi – the price had been reduced to the usual rate.
- d) Large U3As meeting – Ted had circulated a note listing points raised at the recent meeting. Discussion followed, in particular: Ann referred Eric Morris to Peterborough U3A, which is using a secure members' website; A Chairman's Tea Party for new members, held quarterly, might be a good idea (Ted, Jeff and Jim to discuss and agree).
- e) Speakers for 2009 – Carole, Jeff, Jim and Sue would meet shortly to discuss the future of speaker meetings and report back to Executive Committee. It was accepted that Horizons will continue without the distraction of the monthly Speaker but that the quality of the speakers must be maintained.
- f) Minutes Folder – a notice will be placed downstairs alerting members to the minutes folder in the office at HQ.

5th Birthday Celebrations – The notes of the September meeting were considered. Ted requested support from all members of the Executive, particularly during set up on Sunday and Monday morning. Ann had made many phone calls to Group Leaders and had identified at least 16 who claimed not to have had the emailed letter from Sue several weeks ago. 50 Groups had agreed to offer a display, 4 had said "no" and 7 were still considering it. Jim agreed to remind neighbouring U3As that information was needed. A discussion ensued about communication with Group Leaders and the most effective way in which we can pass information usefully and get a response. Invitations had now been issued to 80 people but only 31 had responded, no-one of sufficient standing to attract the media. Two paid advertisements would be placed on 22/23 October in the Ormskirk Advertiser and The Champion, the cost within the £200 limit. Ted is preparing a single page welcome and introduction letter. There will be eight teams in the U3A Challenge, the preliminary rounds will be drawn at Horizons on Thursday. Badges are needed for all members of Executive (Sue).

Rebuilding Christ Church Old School – The demolition is planned to start the Tuesday after Easter although some had suggested starting in the school summer holidays. The loss of parking places will be the main issue for U3A. Various options were considered: Park and Ride, summer closure, other venues (Aughton Institute, Comrades Club, Beaufort Hotel at Burscough, New Church Hall in Ormskirk, Emmanuel Church Hall in Ormskirk, St. Anne's Club in Ormskirk). This item will be carried forward to next Agenda.

Short Courses – the need for a more academic approach to learning in U3A – Ted introduced the topic and was supported by Alex. AGREED that we must revisit our original commitment to the Third Age Trust. The White Paper on the DIUS consultation "Informal Adult Learning" will be published on 17 October offering the U3A model as one to be considered. The discussion widened to include changes to Horizons and the absence of Group Leaders; possibilities of working with Edge Hill and other universities that surround us; the poor support for our more academic groups. Finally AGREED that this topic needs more time for debate and that it should be considered at a separate meeting (November).

Trustee Report – The meeting to be held this Friday will sign off the 2007-08 accounts and the Constitution will be considered. Minutes will be provided for the Executive.

Membership Report – Pat reported 21 new members since last meeting and 2 renewals. This means 1596 people have paid and the next number to be issued is 2243. The question of payment of subscriptions by Standing Order or Direct Debit was considered briefly. Direct Debits are not appropriate because an outside agency is involved and fees are charged; Standing Orders put the onus on members to change details and the record keeping is complex. AGREED that this will not be pursued. The application for £2.50 (from WLDC) for every member over 60 and living in West Lancashire is being managed this year by Pat. Leaders are being invited to get signatures

Treasurer's Report – Chris gave a summary of:

Current Account - £10,130.96;

Deposit Account £15,587.99 with Restricted Funds totalling £5,275.70;

Groups Accounts £3,898.67

AGREED that a separate account be set up for the Restricted Funds

Chris also reported that the cost of the independent examination of the accounts was £2,350 but that the interpretation of the accounts may be in error. It was felt that other large U3As may not be declaring such income and expenditure.

Committee Reports:

a. Travel – a meeting had been held 13 October but minutes were not yet available. However, there were no major decisions but a question would be raised at the December Executive. 38 had now booked for Bruges but only 2 for the Dutch Bulb fields. As there were already 12 planned Group holidays in 2009 it had been decided that just one Travel Committee holiday would be arranged in September.

b. Finance – No meeting had been held. Beth reminded the Executive that she is collecting ideas for capital items to support Group activities ahead of a new application to Awards 4 All. Pat suggested a microphone and headsets to be made available for Groups out on guided trips. Alex is developing SKYPE links with telephone contacts for two members: if this is successful then an application for more hand-sets will be included.

c. Social –

(I) 42 tickets have been sold for the Christmas Lunch but several Groups are now selling among their members.

(II) Welfare issues – Dorothy Harrison was unable to attend this morning but perhaps in December?

(III) Horizons – Lily Bunner has now taken full charge of the coffee rota

d. Groups Support – Minutes of the meeting held 13 October had been circulated. 3 November was the next meeting of the local U3As, 5th November a Lancashire Link Group Leaders' event in Bolton (6 people already willing to attend); all emails to Group Leaders will in future be followed up with personal contact.

e. Publicity – a meeting had been held on 10 October but minutes were not yet available. 5th birthday publicity had been produced and distributed; there was now a birthday pop-up on the web site; traffic is increasing on the website; some larger U3As have brighter websites than ours – suggest we all check.

9. Special Projects

- a. **External Relations** – Alex reported on meetings with Government Office North West and Lancashire County Council regarding the new Government Paper on the Third Sector. There is a suggestion that redundant public buildings should be offered firstly to the Third Sector (Schools, Hospitals). In the Brookside Project submission there are 18 references to U3A. He had led a discussion at the TAT AGM in Swansea on the three facets of U3A.
- b. **Sustainable Development** Alex requested that an item be included in the next Newsletter seeking a leader for this project. Sue mentioned the WLDC Tree Offer for private householders. An application will be made on behalf of U3A for 10 trees to be planted in the U3A Wood at Gorse Hill.
- c. **E-learning** – Alex mentioned the links with home-bound members and the SKYPE project.

Lancashire Link activities –

Jim had had little success in finding suitable accommodation at Edge Hill for the Healthy Ageing Conference in 2009 but was now exploring the Royal Clifton Hotel in Southport. The West Lancs Investment Centre in Skelmersdale was suggested, also Skelmersdale College. There is high U3A membership in the south-west Lancashire area so it is important to hold the conference in our district.

Third Age Trust –

- a. Sue reported on the two Resolutions from the TAT AGM
 - i) We urge the Trust to encourage members of neighbouring groups to develop working links where it is to their mutual benefit.
 - ii) That the annual capitation fee paid by member U3As to the Third Age Trust for each of their paid up members, based on the highest numbers recorded in the previous 12 months, be increased to £3.50 effective the payment due on the 1 April 2010 and subsequent years.

In relation to the first, our U3A has already made overtures to certain Groups with low numbers but have ensured that our own members have priority.

Regarding the second, we budgeted for this increase from 2008 so our income will be well ahead. This will reduce the anticipated loss and cover hire of alternative premises during the re-building work.
- b. Model Constitution – this should be available early in 2009
- c. Copyright Licence – this has been received
- d. Data Protection – we are covered by the terms of the Data Protection Act if we hold membership details only for our own purposes and if we share it with TAT. Advised that we put a note to this effect on the next renewal and Membership Application Forms to reassure our members (Pat).
- e. Market Towns Initiative – an invitation had been received inviting attendance at the next stage of this initiative – the formation of an Ormskirk Community Partnership. Beth was attending in another capacity and Sue agreed to go also.

Any Other Business

- a. Jeff reported contact with Steve Sylvester of LCC and a request to allow a speaker on volunteering. AGREED that enquiries should be made and a report back to the Executive and in the newsletter.
- b. Alex advised that the TAT AGM 2009 would be held in Edinburgh and urged consideration of a new Regional representative, elected from the north-west region to sit on the National Council
- c. Photograph of Queen's Award – Sue showed a photograph of the crystal award, taken by Eric Rowley of the Digital Photography Group. Alex will write to WLDC asking that it be housed in the Chairman's room.
- f. The meeting of the Working Party to discuss Speakers for 2009 will meet on 20 October.

There was no further business and the meeting ended at 1200 noon

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 11 November in Scout & Guide HQ starting at 0930