

Aughton & Ormskirk University of the Third Age

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday 11 November 2008 in HQ at 9.30 a.m.

Chairman: Ted Morrell

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

Apologies: Stan Bryan, Jeff Roberts, Jim Robson, Alan Worthington

1. Minutes of meeting held 14 October 2008 having been amended by changing the word "planned" to "hoped" in item about the re-building of Christ Church School, were approved as a correct record.

2. Matters arising –

- a) Susan Greenfield Lecture – as interest is likely to be high it was agreed that stewards are needed both inside the church (from 1000) and in the car park. Bob agreed to help. No tickets would be issued but a note on the front page of the newsletter would remind members to arrive early. Alex will chair the meeting. Noted that the church needs to be heated overnight; that notices will be given in HQ before the talk starts at 1030; that a microphone will be needed for questions. There is no progress on screening into HQ. The "Mind Gym" will start in February. It was also noted that Bebles Road and Colinmander Gardens will be closed for re-surfacing for two weeks, starting on Wednesday.
- b) Re-building Christ Church School – no further information
- c) Lancashire County Council – speaker on volunteering – deferred until Jeff is present
- d) Market Towns Initiative – Beth and Sue had attended the inaugural meeting of the Ormskirk Community Partnership, which was formed out of the MTI. A constitution is being prepared and a decision awaited on whether or not to include Aughton in the initiative. Beth will invite Martin Trengove from CVS to tell us about developments and the possible formation of a U3A in Skelmersdale.
- e) De-brief following 5th birthday celebrations – The general consensus was that the week had been a great success with 28 new members in the week and a further 17 by the following Thursday. Help from other agencies had been offered, both PCT and LCC had visited. There was some concern that information had not fed down through Group Leaders to members; that there are many single-interest members; that information is not getting to the "detached" premises used for many activities. (Ann and Sue are preparing a "Lessons Learned" paper, which will be circulated firstly to the 5th Birthday Committee and then to the Executive.)

3. New Groups and short courses (emphasising the academic side of U3A learning) – Ted introduced the topic and gave a short introduction. He believes that our main priority is to continue in good health as a U3A and then to maintain the growth in numbers of members and quality and balance of our operations. Alex is concerned that we are viewed as a Social Club for Older People and emphasised the need to remember the U3A principles of learning as a paramount aim, also for research and enquiry. Carole said that we must involve beginners at the same time satisfying longer serving members. A welcoming group is of vital importance (and most Groups actually write this in the newsletter), as is the independence of the Groups but there is a duty (on Groups Support and Executive) to review and support Group Leaders, without interference. David offered some ideas from the recent Lancashire Link meeting in Bolton (Antiques & Collectibles, "Words" and Meditation), Beth explained that a new short course in Creative Writing had now been set up, Alex proposed a course in Classical Studies and Ted one in Maths. New leaders would be needed and there is currently a series of changes in existing groups (Local History, Digital Photography, Table Tennis).

Shared Learning was discussed and the failure of the topic proposed in the summer. Beth emphasised that ideas must come out of the membership and be supported by outside agencies (Libraries, Museums, etc.): David thinks that the name is off-putting

A survey of members or groups of new members might produce some more ideas (verbal seemed to be the preferred method), perhaps at the Chairman's tea party for new members (yet to be arranged).

4. Treasurer's Report – Chris gave a summary of the accounts, balances held are:

Current Account -	£9,230.51 (General account)
Deposit Account -	£19,815
Bond -	£5,000
Groups Accounts	£1,808

Permission was given for Chris to attend a Trustee meeting to explain the interpretation of the Charities Act, namely that annual accounts with income between £100,000 - £250,000 need not be audited by a professional auditor. It was proposed by Beth, seconded by Bob and AGREED unanimously that Chris should go to the next Trustee meeting to seek permission to ask a suitably qualified person to undertake the examination of the accounts.

The second account to hold Restricted Funds was APPROVED.

A request for an additional signature in the name of Alan Worthington was also APPROVED.

With regard to Groups accounts, no balances had been brought down from 2007-08, resulting in apparent over/under spends in this financial year. AGREED that if any anomalies continue that Groups Support should first make enquiries, then the issue should be taken to Finance for clearance or further discussion.

Alex requested that some thought be given to paying in monies to the Treasurer as large amounts of small coin had to be counted and banked each week.

5. 2009 Speaker Meetings – A short meeting had been held to consider the preliminary thoughts from the sub-group and Carole presented the suggestions. However, after a discussion and a proposal from Alex, it was AGREED that three further meetings should be arranged for 5 February, 5 March and 2 April, in CHRIST CHURCH, with the notices given in HQ at 1030 and the speaker starting at 1100. (This to allow more time in HQ and to encourage Group Leaders and helpers to attend the Speaker Meetings.)

6. HORIZONS – The room layout and attendance of Group Leaders was discussed again but without resolution. Wendy Wilkinson will be retiring as leader of the Welcome Rota and it was suggested that Welcome and Information should be combined. Some difficulties had been experienced with Welcomers and their friends clustering round the Welcome table and deterring new-comers. Stan Marsters is retiring at the end of December as leader of the Chair Rota and Jim Robson has volunteered to take over Stan's role to ensure smooth running of Horizons. Thanks were recorded to both Wendy and Stan for their endeavours over the last two to three years. Norman W pointed out that one potential problem with organisation of Horizons is that Groups Support deal with Information and Social deal with Welcome. The possible merger of the two functions will be discussed in the new year.

7. Trustee Report – Minutes are not yet available. Changes to the Constitution is dependent upon recent changes in Charities Law and the Third Age Trust Model.

8. Membership Report – Pat reported 60 new members since last meeting and 3 renewals. This means 1659 people have paid and the next number to be issued is 2300. The WLDC forms to claim £2.50 per West Lancs Member over 60 are coming in but are not yet complete.

9. Committee Reports:

a. Travel - – Norman W's paper was received. Alan Worthington (as Groups administrator) had advised that there would be no problem with monies being paid in and out of U3A Funds for Travel activities. The Committee had been disappointed at the response to general holidays (with the exception of Madrid in September) but 11 other Group holidays were available in 2008. The decision had been taken to reduce to a maximum of New Year, Spring and late summer holidays for 2008-09. A discussion ensued: Carole pointed out that holidays NOT organised by Discovery Travel involved a great deal of extra work for the organiser; Alex mentioned joining forces with neighbouring U3As; the benefits of using Discovery Travel (car parking, booking at Horizons) were mentioned by several members. Eventually it was AGREED that the Travel Committee should obtain BEST VALUE for members and that the position be reviewed again in 2010. It was noted that the Holiday Group had been set up for individual members to research holidays for themselves and small groups of friends, perhaps to destinations that were not likely to warrant an exclusive holiday booking.

b. Finance – Beth advised that the Funding application will be considered by the next Finance Committee meeting.

c. Social - 236 tickets have now been sold for the Christmas Lunch and two coaches have been booked with two pick-up points each.

d. Groups Support and Publicity – nothing further to report

10. Special Projects

- a. Cultural Exchanges – Beth reported that she was following up an introduction with Lyons UTA.
- b. Mind Fit – Sylvia Duggan, a member of A&O would be leading the programme.
- c. Skype telephones (without PC) could be funded from the Research Fund at around £200 each. Internet connections in the homes involved would be needed. Jack Brettle is assisting with this project.

11. Lancashire Link activities –

The recent meeting held in Bolton had been attended by several A&O representatives but had been badly organised. There would be a meeting on 22 January in Fulwood where the main item would be discussion on an office for the North West Region.

12. Third Age Trust –

The Performing Rights Licence is due for renewal – AGREED

More diaries are available if needed (probably not)

Sources for Autumn 2008 contains an article by our Digital Photography Group. The next issue will be devoted to Sustainable Development – Alex has submitted an article.

Lancashire College – Sue has received a request from Upholland U3A for involvement in a meeting to discuss the Adult & Community Education Programme, delivered via Lancashire College. No-one had any knowledge of this.

13. Any Other Business

Sue was asked to include David, Beth and Ann in the list of Executive members on the website and newsletter. There was no further business and the meeting ended at 1205

Chairman

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 9 December in Scout & Guide HQ starting at 0930