

Aughton & Ormskirk University of the Third Age

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday 9 September 2008 in HQ at 9.30 a.m.

Chairman: Ted Morrell

Present: Beth Blamires, David Blanchflower, Beryl Campbell, Carole Gray, Ann Haskell, Chris Procter. Jim Robson, Bob Roscoe, Sue Watkinson, Alan Worthington. Ray Sim was in attendance.

Apologies: Stan Bryan, Chris Jones, Pat McKenzie, Norman Platt., Norman Williamson, Alex McMinn and Peter Sewell (Trustee)

Welcome – the Chairman welcomed Trustee Ray Sim to his first meeting and also Myra Campbell, who was interested in becoming Minutes Secretary.

1. Minutes of meeting held 12 August 2008 were approved without amendment.

2. Matters arising –

- a) Queen's Award – It was agreed that the crystal award should be offered to West Lancs District Council for display in the Chairman's Room, on the understanding that we could request its return whenever we need it. Some Digital Photography Group members are preparing a suitable photograph of the trophy for permanent display at HQ.
- b) Lancashire Energy Action Programme – survey forms are now being returned to Horizons meetings, Sue is collecting them. The "rewards" in the form of Power Down kits and low energy light bulbs have been delivered and will be distributed at Horizons over the next few weeks.
- c) Garage Storage Facility – to be carried forward
- d) Meeting of "large" U3As – deferred to Any Other Business
- e) Speaker Meetings – Carole Gray, Norman Platt, Jim Robson and Sue Watkinson had volunteered to take on the role of finding and booking speakers for monthly meetings. Agreed that we can pay limited expenses and that we should promote the November and December speakers as part of the 5th birthday celebrations. This led to discussions on the Susan Greenfield lecture. Alex is proposing to invite 6th form pupils (limit to 50 per school) and neighbouring U3As (limit to 10 each). Consideration may have to be given to issuing tickets as numbers must be controlled: parking will be difficult (perhaps the Police should be notified). The DVD will be available afterwards.

3. 5th Birthday Celebrations – The notes of the August meeting were considered. It was confirmed that the cost of display materials would be covered by the budget. The issue of tickets for the Friday evening "Show Time" was discussed and it was AGREED that a £3 ticket would cover the cost of supper only (including a glass of wine). All performers would be given a welcome glass of wine free of charge and be invited to buy a supper ticket. There was no room in the main hall for tables to be set out so the audience would not be encouraged to bring their own food and drink. Other issues – A rota for Membership, Help and Information tables was being prepared (Carole). Invitations would be issued for the Tuesday Open House morning to special guests and Executive members were asked to offer names of those who should be included. The information packs would contain three items, the "faces" leaflet, a membership form and some information about U3A activities. Ted advised that Alex would now not be present during the birthday celebrations. Margaret Kitchen had suggested that a paid advertisement in either or both the Advertiser and Champion might encourage extra feature cover for the celebrations. Publicity will consider this.

4. Structure of Executive and Committees – David Blanchflower had requested consideration of this item. The present system is that the Executive members are voted in at the AGM but Committees do not have any formal rules about membership or leadership, although each has a Terms of Reference, established in 2004. Chairmen of Committees have always been members of the Executive. AGREED that a more open and formal system should be considered with a nomination procedure and perhaps simple Standing Orders. Also AGREED that the Constitution must be followed. Jeff and David will prepare some ideas in time for the 2009 AGM

5. Trustee Report – The planned meeting on 17 October will approve the Accounts. Ted confirmed that, in the light of changes in Charity Law, Third Age Trust is preparing new model Constitutions for its members. He advised that the May 2008 Constitution is now formally accepted by the Charities Commissioners. Beth expressed her disquiet at remarks made to her following the August meeting.

6. Membership Report – Pat had reported 20 new members since last meeting, 13 renewals and 1 non-renewal. This means 1574 people have paid, leaving just 131 from whom we have not heard. The next number to be issued is 2219. The question of payment of subscriptions by Standing Order or Direct Debit will be considered at the October meeting. Jeff advised that the current membership numbers indicate that the target income for 2008-09 would be achieved.

7. Treasurer's Report – Alan gave a summary of balances held:

8. Committee Reports:

a) Finance – Minutes of the meeting held 8 September were tabled. The new paying in form had been sent out as an email attachment to Group Leaders and some questions had been asked. Confirmed that the Cash Books would no longer be used as there had been a change of regime. The approvals of Group Funding were noted and it was confirmed that these decisions are the responsibility of the Finance Committee. The suggested large screens had been priced at £2,500 and could form the basis of the Awards 4 All application. Beth volunteered to complete the forms to relieve Doreen McGiveron who had been so successful in past years. It was suggested that she might join the

Finance Committee, also that a request would be circulated to all Group Leaders seeking ideas for equipment or other services, suitably prioritised if necessary.

b) Social Committee – Minutes of the meeting held on 26 August had already been circulated. Tickets for the Christmas Lunch will be on sale from Thursday with tables offered for 8, 10 or 12. Group Leaders are invited to take a table for their members.

Welfare – Dorothy has held a meeting but was not aware of plans to discuss this item with her at the October Executive (Sue to advise). Jim passed over details of a new Bereavement Counselling Awareness Course starting in October at £90 per head.

Horizons – 136 diaries have been sold, out of a total of 250 (perhaps a flyer to all Group Leaders would help sales?) and some concern was expressed that the Welcome table was not always manned appropriately. AGREED that the Welcome and Information tables must be better amalgamated. Carole will deal with this.

Chairmanship of this Committee is still an issue. Stan Marsters (Chair Rota) is retiring from his role in December. Beth suggested taking Horizons around the District to other Village Halls and Jeff, confirming this, advised that Christ Church had now received Planning Consent for the new Church Hall which would mean the Scout HQ parking will be severely limited during the building work. AGREED that the Horizons experiment should be tried after Christmas.

c) Groups Support – minutes of the meeting held on 28 August had already been circulated. Jim had little to add but emphasised the positive nature of the “local” U3As meeting, a second gathering would be held on 1 November. It was suggested that “weak” Groups should read “small”. An exchange of members would be considered for all Groups provided attendees provided proof of membership of another, neighbouring U3A (up to date Membership Card). Confirmed that the attendance fee would go to the host U3A and that our own members MUST take priority. These arrangements were agreed in principle to make progress but individual Groups must be consulted.

d) Publicity – Congratulations on yet another readable Newsletter. Ted had been viewing websites of other, large U3As and recommended some ideas that we could incorporate. Our own Committee list is not up to date and must be amended. Suggested that a photo gallery of Executive could be included (Sue is planning a photo shoot for the 5th birthday exhibition.) Beth suggested that our Web Master might wish to update her skills on a specialist course and that the cost might be included in the Awards 4 All application. Publicity Committee was asked to discuss and make recommendations.

f) Travel – The Madrid Holiday has 42 participants. Bruges is booking well (New Year). Walking to Derwentwater in April 2009 is already full and three Gardening Holidays are now being advertised including one to Menton (France).

9. Special Projects

- a. **External Relations** – Ted reported that a grant of £7.5m had been offered for the Brookside Project with U3A playing a role in an office on the site. Beth asked whether there would be a cost involved in using the office and David urged that we do not employ anyone. Sue wondered whether other West Lancs U3As would be using the office and Ted suggested that Burscough might do so but the facility was essentially to serve Aughton and Ormskirk, not Upholland.
- b. **Sustainable Development** – the home energy survey forms are now being returned.
- c. **E-learning** - the change of name and purpose of the e-learning centre (to Computer Clinic) were noted. Suggested that, as e-learning is an activity that serves all Groups, a representative of this topic should be nominated to the Executive (or one existing member of Executive takes responsibility for reporting on e-learning issues). To be considered at a future meeting.
- d. **Cultural exchanges** – no longer required as a regular agenda item

10. Lancashire Link activities –

Jim reminded members of the meeting to be held in Bolton on 5 November. AGREED that the £12 fee will be paid by A&O U3A for up to ten Group Leaders plus a £5 travel allowance. It was noted that we have no formal policy or format for claiming expenses. The Finance Committee might consider this at a future meeting.

10. Third Age Trust – there were no current matters but Ted mentioned that a letter was to be sent to U3A Chairmen in the north-west seeking nominations for a Zone Trustee for when Alex retires after two years in office.

11. Any Other Business

- a. The advertised charge of £20 for ten Tai Chi lessons was queried. Sue to check.
- b. Ted will circulate his notes on the large U3As meeting.

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

Chairman

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 14 October in Scout & Guide HQ starting at 0930