

**Christchurch u3a Committee Meeting**  
**MINUTES**  
**Tuesday 14 March 2023**  
**Somerford ARC, Christchurch**

**Present:** John Bell (JB) (Chair) Sue Fillery (SF), John Fairbairn (JF), Kathleen Smith (KS), Eileen Lancaster (EL), Jackie Sherman (JS), Elaine Trayler (ET), Jill Smith Buckland (JSB) (Janice Miller (JM),

**Apologies:** Paula Watton (PW), Ron Watson (RW) Sarah Howell-Davies (SHD) Judy Hall (JH), Helen Heatley (HH)

<p><b>Minutes of meeting on 14 February 2023</b> were approved.</p>	
<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Following the meeting held on 14 February discussion took place by email as to whether full payment of the annual subscription fee for Group Leaders should be implemented in August 2023 or introduced over 2 years with 50% payable in August 2023 and the full amount payable in August 2024. A vote was held on this matter with 6 in favour of the subscription fee being paid in full in August 2023.</li> <li>2. Vintage Brass will hold a Special General Meeting on 17 April to discuss the proposed changes to the agreement between Christchurch u3a and Vintage Brass. JB will let the committee know VB's decision and will keep them informed of any further discussions with VB. The VB committee's recommendation to its members will be to operate independently from u3a. It is likely that the training band will also decide to leave u3a although some may remain u3a members. The support issues which will need to be reviewed if VB decide to leave u3a are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the VB website</li> <li>• advertising through u3a portals and</li> <li>• use of the u3a logo.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Only 1 response has been received in reply to an email to members asking for volunteers.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Agreed</b></p>
<p><b>Committee Appointments</b></p> <p>JB announced Jill Smith-Buckland's change of role from Assistant membership Secretary to Assistant Programme Co-ordinator.</p>	

<p><b>Chairman's Report</b></p> <p>Further to the budget review at February's meeting JB reiterated that costs are exceeding income. The fundamental issues are venue costs and membership numbers. It was thought that it would not be possible to make any changes for the current financial year and although the changes agreed at the February meeting would help to reduce costs they would not make a significant difference to the year 23/24. There are reserves to cover the projected overspends. However the challenge is how to increase membership numbers and reduce venue costs so that the books balance by the year 24/25.</p> <p>The Swindon u3a business model where the subscription fee is low but members pay for additional costs where applicable may be a possibility. The Swindon model is considered more equitable for groups not requiring a venue or where meetings are held in members' homes and therefore are not subsidising expensive sports venues. It was agreed that members would need to be consulted if there is a proposed change to our business model. JB said he would contact Swindon u3a to discuss the issues of venue costs/membership/fairness.</p> <p>Jackie Sherman proposed setting up a sub-committee to look at ways of increasing membership numbers. It was agreed the sub-committee would look at reasons why people join u3a, how they can be encouraged to join and ways of making membership more attractive.</p>	<p><b>JB</b></p> <p><b>JS Agreed</b></p>
<p><b>Treasurer's Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KS reported that the 3 bank accounts are now opened and all transactions can be made on-line. KS is considering a sub-account for the Singers Group.</li> <li>• The cancellation fee for the franking machine, which has only been used once in the current year, is the same cost as continuing with the franking machine until the contract expires in September 2024.</li> <li>• KS is currently working on a venue costs analysis comparing group numbers against venue costs which will provide information as to where costs can be reduced and whether the Swindon model is the way forward. Another possibility would be for members to pay an additional £1 for each group attended on top of the annual subscription fee. SF reminded the committee that at the AGM in November 2021 the overall view of the members attending</li> </ul>	

<p>the AGM was that the current system works well and did not need to be changed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JB thanked KS for the huge amount of work she had carried out in updating the banking system.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Secretary's Report</b> SF proposed the committee should welcome new committee members by holding a meeting or coffee morning at which a new member is introduced to the committee members and individual roles and trustee responsibilities are explained.</p>	<b>Agreed</b>
<p><b>Committee Members' Reports.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Publicity</u> PW's reported Bournemouth u3a had declined the offer to share a stall at the Shake and Stir. On behalf of PW KS produced the schedule of dates for the u3a Christchurch market stall <u>and</u> asked for volunteers to help on the stall or in the office to sign up new members on the relevant dates.</li> <li>2. <u>Venues</u> JH reported the closing of the New Church Hall had been delayed and it may still be available for hire from September.</li> <li>3. <u>Programme Co-ordinator</u> HH has met with JSB who in her role as Assistant Programme Co-ordinator will help with data collection and putting the programme together. JSB will take over as Programme Co-ordinator at the next AGM. HH's report noted it was important that before the end of March Group Leaders should be informed they will be required to pay the annual membership subscription fee from August 2023. JB said he would send an email to the Group Leaders in the next couple of day. HH's report confirmed Druitt Hall has been booked for 4 and 11 July from 9-11.30 am for the programme launch. The new term dates are on the website.</li> </ol>	<b>JB</b>
<p><b><u>Review of Reserves Policy</u></b> JB presented a Reserves Policy for the management of financial reserves for the next two financial years. The policy will be reviewed annually prior to the AGM.</p>	<b>JB</b>
<p><b><u>Review of Chair's Challenges</u></b> JB presented the following 5 Chair's Challenges for the next 18 months:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To balance the budget by 2024/2025.</li> <li>2. Increase membership to 1100 by 2024/2025.</li> <li>3. Reduce costs, especially venue costs. Any ideas for new venues should be given to JH.</li> </ol>	

<p>4. To build a more robust forecasting model for planning future financial performance.</p> <p>5. To continue to add value for members by increasing the range of activities whilst not incurring higher costs.</p>	<b>Agreed</b>
<p><b><u>Discuss way ahead and key activities for next few months</u></b></p> <p>It was agreed members need to be encouraged to be more proactive and there should be more activities with low cost venues. As most u3a groups meet during the week it was suggested that there might be an interest in weekend groups with activities such as meeting for Sunday lunch/Saturday quiz nights. The possibility for partners of full members becoming associate members to enable them to join the travel and theatre groups was considered.</p>	
<p><b>A.O.B.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It was suggested that members might be interested in creating a Book of Memories by writing 500 words on personal recollections on their lives/interesting experiences.</li> <li>2. JF said that Christchurch Priory is undertaking 5 major projects including a new welcome building providing more rooms for community use and suggested u3a help with publicity for the project. Priory House continues to be available for hire.</li> <li>3. Members should be informed that groups would not meet on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May the Coronation Bank Holiday.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b> 9 May 2023 at 14.00 IT room, Somerford ARC, 20 Southey Road, Christchurch BH23 3 EH</p>	