Balsall Common U3A

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at 3.30pm on Monday 27th January 2014 at the Village Hall, Station Road

Present: Mary Dawson (MD), in the chair, Geoff Kennedy (GK), Peter Calver (PC), Sandra Heard (SH), Alan Buckland (AB), and Richard Davis (RD).

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Martin Richards.

2. Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 28th October 2013

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising

(i) National Conference

GK said that as a result of complaints by the U3A to the conference organisers about the standard of catering, a rebate had been received. Our share of it was £20 and a cheque had been received from national office.

One matter of interest was that a memory course had been designed, specifically for the U3A and which could be delivered by U3A members. They had obtained the two booklets involved, which detailed the course and provided the information for the course leaders. It was designed to run over four weeks, with each session covering 1.5 hours; the maximum on the course was twelve and members had to commit to attending every session. Both he and MD felt that it would be beneficial to members to run a course in Balsall Common. MD said that the presenter should, in her view, be a professional with experience in the area, preferably a psychologist. MR said that Jan Bayliss would be an appropriate member to look at the course and he suggested that it be run past her for her views. It was agreed that MD would speak to Jan as the first stage at looking at whether we could run the course in Balsall Common.

(ii) Memory Course

AB said that he had discussed the course with Jan Bayliss, who considered it to be interesting but had raised several issues. He had discussed them with Sylvia Dillon who had designed the course. Jan had asked whether the documents could be issued session by session and did the distinction need to be maintained between the three facilitators and course members. Sylvia's view was that the documents needed to be given out all at once and the distinction needed to be maintained. She said that the course was not competitive and that members tended not to read ahead; she also emphasised that the four sessions had to be run in consecutive weeks and members had to commit to attending all four. AB had asked about courses that had been run but had been told that data protection prevented any information on them being shared. She may produce a list of those U3As running the course, but it was clear that she expected the course to be run as intended and in a disciplined way..

AB said that the packs were £10-£15 each and should not be copied because of copyright. It was suggested that the course could be run late afternoon or evening to ensure attendance. The committee considered that the course was worth organising and AB agreed to look into it further.

(iii) West Midlands Regional Trustee

GK confirmed that David Cooper of Evesham U3A had been elected as West Midlands Regional Trustee.

(iv) Replacement of Equipment

The Film Group had bought a new laptop at an approximate cost of £400. It had improved the quality of the film being shown and allowed the existing Bretford to be used successfully for the sound. AB asked whether the cost should be met wholly by the Film Group (which currently had insufficient funds) or from the U3A No 1 account. The committee agreed that the U3A as a whole should pay, with a contribution from the Film group. This meant that, although the laptop would be primarily used by them, it would be available to other groups where appropriate.

(v) Hall Rota

It was noted that MR had produced the checklist for the committee member overseeing the setting up and clearing process for core meetings. It appeared to be working satisfactorily.

4. Correspondence

GK said that most of the correspondence recently received from the national office had been put on the website. These included information about summer schools in 2014 and a U3A event at the Royal Institution. They had also sent a leaflet on links with the RHS for garden visits, which he had given to PC. In addition, the request for the group's Annual Return had been received and the information duly submitted.

5. Reports

(i) Treasurer

AB said that the accounts remained healthy, with the No1 and No 2 accounts having approximately £5k £2k respectively. There were some payments that would need to be made but this would not change the overall position. MD said that she intended to announce the committee's decision on subscriptions for 2014/15 to the February core meeting, although the information was available in the committee minutes. It was noted that two new members had joined, bringing the total to 211 and there had been a number of visitors at the core meeting (two further members joined in the following few days, bringing the total to 213).

AB said that the hall hiring system appeared to operating well. The monthly raffle at the core meeting was showing a slight profit. It was noted that a significant number of members had left the meeting at the break, which limited the usefulness of the announcements. The committee noted that at one time or another all options for the refreshment break had been tried and no ideal solution found. It was agreed that announcements would be made at the beginning of future core meetings, before the speaker. GK said that clearing the hall had been an issue when the meeting finished with refreshments and the committee would need to monitor the position.

(ii) Secretary

Nothing to report.

(iii) Speakers Secretary

SH said that she was putting together the programme for 2014/15 and it was progressing well. She had information from other U3As. She would be providing PC with information for the entry in the Bugle. AB said that the speakers at recent meetings had been of very good quality, which had justified the decision to meet higher fees. SH said that in looking at other U3A sites, the wide variety of groups was noticeable and she felt that more groups could operate in Balsall Common. GK said that the main problem was finding enthusiasts prepared to co-ordinate new activities. MD said that she would raise it at the February core meeting and action to encourage the formation of new groups should be taken up by the new committee following the AGM. MD said that she was still pursuing the possible swimming group, but finding a venue that offered reasonable times was proving difficult. It was noted that no co-ordinator had come forward for the Jazz group.

(iv) Publicity Officer

PC said that the deadline for copy for the Bugle was 7th February; it was likely that he would provide a general flyer.

6. Arrangements for AGM on Monday 28th April 2014

GK said that this was the last committee meeting before the AGM on 28th April. In line with previous practice and with the constitution, he would issue notice of the meeting and the agenda. Before then, however, he would circulate, via PC, a nomination form for the three officer posts and for committee members. He was unaware of how many existing committee members would present themselves for re-election, but it was important to find members willing to join the committee and he asked those present to see if they could interest members in standing.

RD said that he had been appointed Assistant Treasurer so that he could take over from Peter Westlake when his term of office expired, but he had been unable to do so. A new assistant treasurer would, therefore, also be a helpful addition.

7. Other Business

(i) Village Hall – Electrical Sockets

SH said that when speakers used the screen, which was nearly always, it was necessary for the electrical lead from the equipment being used to be trailed across the floor to the electrical sockets in the wall. This was dangerous. She suggested that the Village Hall committee be asked to install two sockets in the wall opposite the screen, which would obviate the problem. It was agreed that GK would write to JT on the issue and would include that we would be prepared to make a contribution to the cost.

8. Date of next Meeting

Monday, 28th April 2014, following the AGM.