

u3a SHEFFIELD

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EC) MEETING HELD AT THE SHOWROOM ON THURSDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2021 AT 10.30 AM

Present Philip Long (Chair-PL); Les Baker (LB); Elaine Burtoft (EB); Clare Chiba (CC); Anna Harvey (AH); Camilla Jordan (CJ); Jonathan Powell-Wiffen (JPW)

In Attendance Michael Clift (MJC - Minutes)

	Item	Key Points, Decisions and Actions	Owner
1.	Welcome and Apologies	<p>a) Apologies were accepted from Philippa Bartlett (PB) and Mo Cave (MC).</p> <p>b) Frequency of EC meetings – PL referred to an email from MC, in which she asked if EC meetings should be held more frequently than two monthly, given the current level of work. In discussion, Members AGREED they were not keen on having formal monthly meetings but felt that Drop Ins provided opportunities for informal discussions between EC Members, which could then feed into and take the pressure off formal EC meetings. Also, Drop Ins ensured that EC Members were accessible to the general membership and new members (the primary purpose of Drop Ins). PL confirmed he would reply to MC emphasising that formal, minuted EC meetings could be scheduled to follow Drop Ins. Action:</p>	PL
2.	Minutes	<p>a) Members AGREED that the minutes for the previous EC meeting, on 2 September 2021, be approved and signed, subject to a point of clarification under Governance Issues (Item 6).</p> <p>b) Clearing minutes – Members AGREED they were happy with the current presentation of the minutes; draft minutes would be circulated to all EC Members for comments focussed on ensuring clarity and an accurate record; and papers supporting meetings would not be automatically available to the wider membership, as they did not form part of the minutes. Once approved, the minutes would be posted on the u3a Sheffield website each time and made available to all members. Action:</p>	PL AH/EB
3.	Matters Arising	<p>a) Update on the Treasurer's action points:</p> <p>- Subscription levels were being monitored and the level was currently a little below last year. LB confirmed he would circulate figures to EC Members so they could see the trend. Action:</p>	LB

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LB did meet with the Independent Examiner, as covered in the Treasurer's report for this meeting. - A meeting was planned for early December to finalise the arrangements for collecting 2021 financial data from groups. - Strategic Risk Assessment would be undertaken early in 2022. LB said he needed three or four people to focus on the task. Action: <p>b) Potential student prize – PL said this would need to be carried forward.</p> <p>c) Use of u3a Sheffield logo – PL said this may be acceptable on a case-by-case basis, as long it was not used for commercial gain.</p>	LB
4 (i)	Chair's Report	<p>a) Overall – PL referred to his report for this meeting. He stressed the importance of focussing on external representation and shared learning, which would be a key part of his future reports. LB explained his involvement in the Public Involvement in Research Group (PIRG) and said he would promote the potential value of involving u3a members in future projects.</p> <p>b) YAHR workshop on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy - PL said he had offered his own views, in addition to sharing u3a Sheffield's policy, which had been agreed by the EC as a whole.</p> <p>c) u3a Swindon – PL said it was interesting that TAT had referred u3a Swindon to Sheffield to discuss governance. He said they currently charged £35 per year for membership, including venue costs, but this appeared unsustainable. PL confirmed he had explained Sheffield's model to them in broad terms.</p> <p>d) Internal – PL reported on a meeting with a previous u3a Sheffield Chair, at his request, and said he hoped this would settle the situation for the time being, so everyone could focus on the future.</p>	
4 (ii)	Treasurer's Report	<p>a) Financial statements – LB referred to his report and the associated financial reports. He confirmed the reserves were healthy and future subscription levels should be on the agenda for the March EC meeting. Future Agenda Item:</p> <p>b) Co-op credit card – LB updated Members on applying for the card and said there was a further form for them to sign. He reminded Members that the need for a credit card was to avoid Members having to use</p>	AH for March EC

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		their own accounts, particularly when making on line purchases. A resolution was signed by all EC Members to support the application.	
4 (iii)	Web Co-ordinator's Report	a) Nothing significant was reported.	
4 (iv)	Links Editor's Report	<p>a) Open Groups Supplements (OGS) – Members considered Brian Cave's request to reinstate the two OGS and, if an editor could not be found, his offer to take on the role. Members AGREED that now <i>Links</i> was published on-line, apart from printed copies for new members and those without internet access, the cost of printing additional editions was prohibitive. CJ provided cost details from the email she had circulated prior to this meeting. EC Members felt a more realistic option for ensuring members knew about travel trips was to revise future <i>Links</i> publication dates, following the December edition already in production, to: April, July, October 2022 and January 2023. If this was effective then it would continue. However, Members also AGREED that if this arrangement did not meet the needs of the travel groups, then the impact of the increased cost involved in printing additional editions of <i>Links</i>, would need to be put to all members at an AGM. This would be necessary because the additional cost could only be met by a significant increase in the membership fee. In the context of this discussion, LB agreed to look at the purchase of PDF editing software, as previously agreed by the EC. Action:</p> <p>b) December Links - CJ said this would be a little shorter than the October edition and she would circulate the proof copy to EC Members, when available. Action:</p>	<p>LB</p> <p>CJ</p>
4 (v)	IT Report	a) Updating – CJ said the system had been updated in relation to Financial Advisers and the introduction of the new financial reporting form for certain groups. She confirmed the form had been tested and would require further testing to ensure it worked effectively. LB mentioned the last Drop, which had provided good feedback on the form and was an excellent example of how Drop Ins could be used to bring the EC together with members.	
4 (vi)	General	a) IT skills - PL referred to the report from Fran Rodway, who was unable to attend this meeting. He asked	

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	Co-ordinator's Report	<p>whether Group Co-ordinators were expected to have basic IT skills. CC said it was practical to accept the skills each Co-ordinator had and not place any additional burdens on them. She added that it was likely someone in each group had at least basic IT skills. This was supported by CJ.</p> <p>b) Consistency of guidance for Group Co-ordinators – CJ confirmed the hard copy guidance and that on the website were the same, apart from some presentational differences for the latter.</p> <p>c) Role of General Co-ordinator – PL said he was concerned about the loading on this role, given the range of responsibilities. In response to a point raised by LB, CJ explained how groups were now organised by Financial Adviser and that Fran Rodway had not been keen on the previous arrangement. So, groups were now organised on a functional basis, although this left an issue around groups without significant finances. PL asked about the best way to communicate with groups, using the Local Heritage List shared learning project as an example of something groups should have the opportunity to be involved in. CJ said that if an appropriate email was provided, she CC or EB could send it to all or relevant groups.</p> <p>d) Representation of groups on the EC – LB said someone needed to represent groups on the EC. PL said this was part of governance and succession planning. And he hoped that more volunteers might come forward as the general situation continued to open up. However, CJ pointed out there had been no response to the recent advert for a Deputy Group Co-ordinator. LB suggested advertising more widely than the existing membership to try and attract people about to retire. CC confirmed that 37 new members had joined in October and such increases held out the promise of finding volunteers in future.</p> <p>e) Risk Assessments (RA) – LB raised the issue of how the EC wanted Group Co-ordinators to confirm they were following the EC's recommendations on undertaking RAs, particularly keeping attendance records for 2 years. In discussion, one Member questioned the need to keep attendance records for 2 years, rather than a matter of weeks. She explained some of the practical problems in producing and retaining such lists and questioned whether it would be feasible to do so for the Friday lectures in the Showroom, involving large numbers of people. LB explained the importance of attendance records for potential insurance claims and how the insurance cover was structured. He read out a suggested text aimed at Group Co-ordinators and involving the use of a tick box to confirm EC recommendations were being followed. The Member who questioned this approach, said she recognised that groups which received funding from members did require a record to account for the funding but that for smaller groups such record keeping would be an added</p>	

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		burden. And, as a Group Co-ordinator, she explained why she would find it difficult to use the proposed tick box. LB stressed the importance of the EC saying groups should keep attendance records and undertake RAs. The Member pointed out that the Group Co-ordinators briefing notes did include a recommendation to undertake RAs. LB agreed this seemed reasonable and he would review the relevant statement but it might be necessary for the EC to return to this issue in the future. Action:	LB
4 (vii)	Membership Report	a) CC said this had been covered under the previous Item.	
4 (viii)	Secretary's Report	a) Nothing significant was reported.	
5.	Risk Assessments (RA) - Governance	a) Members AGREED they would cover this and the next Item at a separate meeting. Action:	AH
6.	u3a Sheffield Strategy	a) See previous Item.	
7.	Lease review and options	a) PL reported there had been no progress on this, as the room they had hoped to use at the Showroom was no longer available. So, Drop Ins were being held at the United Reform Church and Room 50 used as required.	
8.	Capitation	a) A Member asked if the capitation fee would be increasing. LB said he would undertake an exercise next Spring to review all costings, including any increases. A Member suggested it might reduce costs if the TAT magazine was produced on line.	
9.	Resumption of meetings	a) Additional EC meeting - AH confirmed she would find a date for the extra EC meeting, to consider governance and strategy. Action: (NOTE: Date subsequently agreed as the morning of 30 November).	AH

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		<p>EB added that the next new members meeting would be on 24 November.</p> <p>b) <u>New Year meal for volunteers</u> – Members AGREED this should go ahead and was an important way of thanking volunteers. Previously the meal had followed the January EC meeting. AH to arrange. Action:</p> <p>c) <u>Non-responding groups</u> – PL referred to a report produced by MC, which indicated 20 groups had closed down. He confirmed this would be circulated to EC Members (Action:) and asked about what action should be taken in respect of groups which did not respond to requests for information. CJ said there was a regular exercise each February to check the membership and this would identify active and non-active groups. She stressed this did involve considerable effort to ensure all known groups provided a response.</p>	<p>AH</p> <p>PL</p>
10.	Any Other Business	<p>a) <u>u3a Sheffield Environmental Policy</u> – PL said a member had contacted him to ask if u3a Sheffield had an environmental policy and questioned whether u3a should be promoting holidays travelling by air. PL confirmed the member would be happy to contribute to developing a policy. EC Members AGREED it was a good idea.</p> <p>b) <u>Friday lectures</u> – In response to a concern raised by CJ, PL confirmed he did have some speakers lined up for future lectures and would pass on relevant information. Members acknowledged there were issues around who organised the Friday lectures in future, now that PL had taken on the role of Chair. But so far volunteers had not been found.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PL thanked everyone for attending and contributing to the meeting</p>	
11.	Date of Next Meeting	<p style="text-align: center;">Confirmed as 4 January 2022 at 10.30 pm (Room 50)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Plus an additional meeting on 30 November 2021 (Showroom Cinema)</p>	

Signed as a true record by the Chair.....

Date.....