**MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**held at 9.30am on Thursday 12 January 2023 at Marchings, Linden Chase, Sevenoaks**

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|  |  | **Action** |
| **2750** | **Present:** Ken Brown (Chairman); Beryl Mansell (Vice Chair) until 10.30am; David Lowe (Treasurer); Sue Christy (Group Development) until 11.45am; David Taylor (Communications); Helen Wood (Secretary) until 11.45am. |  |
| **2751** | **Apologies for absence:** Joyce Allen (Social Committee)  JA had emailed her apologies to HW for the meeting today and stated she could no longer serve on the Social Committee due to her husband’s health. KB will write to Joyce. | **KB** |
| **2752** | **Chairman’s Introduction**  KB welcomed Helen as Secretary and ratified Sue’s move to Group Development.  SC confirmed changes were reported to charities commissioners, fit and proper person documentation for HMRC and advising u3a. Approval of new laptop purchases already done. |  |
| **2753** | **Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 November 2022**  These had been agreed by email. |  |
| **2754** | **Actions and Matters Arising**   * Charity Commission – Annual reporting completed by SC * HMRC – DL processed Gift Aid claim. DL has registered KB and HW as alternative contacts and both should have access to the system. KB to check. * Membership report – clarification of process. This is sent to DT by Jenny Ruffles. DT approves and forwards it on to EC. | **SC**  **DL/KB**  **JR/DT** |
| **2755** | **Vice Chair’s Report**  BM had no further comments on her report as submitted.  BM had met with Mike Silitoe re Allotments at Shoreham  BM had circulated PP presentation that could potentially be used to encourage volunteers to EC etc. EC agreed that with a few changes this could be run within open group meetings eg Science, Computing. However due to the continued use of Zoom at the open monthly meeting the agreed solution is to run the presentation immediately afterwards as people in the hall queued for tea. This allowed simultaneous transmission on Zoom for those at home. | **EC/GOs** |
| **2756** | **Strategic Planning Objectives**  Strategy Sub group - KB, SC, DT and RR met on 12th December to look at Strategy but identified immediate need is Regeneration and will be targeting these areas first.  Strategy Objectives Progress - KB identified areas of progress/actions identified in the circulated Sevenoaks u3a- Planning Objectives and Tasks (POT).  Welcoming new members –   * New members meetings are being held twice a year * New members table instigated at the monthly meeting to “Meet the Chairman etc”. Display of activities available.   Publicity and Social Media groups -  BM questioned the value of social media for u3a - Rob White had set up a Facebook page for European Affairs group a few years ago and only 3 members joined it. DT noted this was at the time Facebook was getting bad press for allowing a significant personal data breech.  SC stated 5O% of 65-year-olds use Facebook even if it is mainly with family and friends so Sevenoaks u3a should be looking to social media for publicity to an age profile it needs to recruit. Sheerness u3a have had some success in using Facebook for members forums.  Our group needs to find someone for this media role with Facebook expertise particularly with regard to data security and firewalls to reassure members it is a safe platform.  Rest of objectives -  KB explained he saw this is as a working document to be reviewed and updated regularly initially after each EC meeting. KB will circulate the updated version of SPOC before every EC meeting, but this will be reviewed and may be revised to before alternate meetings.  EC and supporting teams -Structure and membership  Bob Ruffles has agreed to head up a Working Party linking Strategy to Regeneration of Sevenoaks u3a. BM agreed to be involved, Bob plans to also involve younger members to think radically and “out of the box”. He does not wish to sit on the EC as a Trustee as he is already acting in seven areas.  BM had indicated that she would be happy to continue for two more years as VC.  DT has served for 6 years and has given notice he wants to retire from EC although happy to support Su3a by continuing with some of his responsibilities.  Joyce Allen is not currently able to fulfil her role of Social Secretary EC. Should the Treasurer of the Social Committee be a Trustee in view of their financial turnover? The Charity Commissioners recommend those responsible for high levels of spend should be accountable as Trustees. As a Trustee Joyce has effectively provided this accountability.  DL reminded us we needed five trustees including Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. If BM is prepared to continue the group remains compliant.  SC stated that the more modern approach was to have a flatter management structure. More trustees would be welcome to share the work but with more specific roles than just an additional vice chair. We should be asking younger members two to five years after joining; similarly for Regeneration Working Group.  Membership Secretary is normally on the EC to provide regular reports but no difficulties with current arrangement with Jenny Ruffles not attending EC in person.  KB described a model of working parties and subcommittees meeting between EC meetings and reporting back. EC meetings should remain at current frequency.  Roles and Responsibilities for members of EC and supporting teams  In order to establish perceived current responsibilities of the EC and the non-executive group area leaders KB requested EC members review their own job descriptions (JDs), update as appropriate and send to HW. KB will contact the other leaders with the same request related to their Terms of Reference (ToR). KB noted he will ask Pam for more detail. Response required within one month, ie by 12th February.  Discussion about possible reallocation of responsibilities for DT’s replacement provided suggestions to join the Comms team to manage Beacon (non-EC role). Bob Ruffles is Comms secretary.  KB emphasised there is a real need to set out roles and responsibilities at all levels to enable informed conversations when trying to attract help. Once set up, the members skills and interests database will be the other key component and should be a priority. DT is currently looking at using Wordpress to replace Sevenoaks existing database partly in line with national proposals for Beacon. A local version is available free of charge via Ionos. He needs to determine best version for our needs. HW noted she used Wordpress previously with a small work related charity. | **KB**  **KB**  **KB/RR**  **All EC and HW and KB** |
| **2757** | **Newsletter**  SC showed us proposed draft articles for the February newsletter describing the structure of Sevenoaks u3a and the roles of Group development and the Social Committee. Other roles to be covered in subsequent newsletters.  Publication has been put back to the last week of the month. Therefore the date by which articles must be received has been put back to the 20th. SC has proposed some content. | **KB/DT** |
| **2758** | **30th Anniversary Celebrations in March 2024**  KB started the discussion with suggesting a celebratory event is held in March 2024. Whilst the 20th anniversary was celebrated by events throughout the year there are very few of the original founder members still active and the meeting was in agreement that a single celebration was more appropriate for the 30th.  General consensus for an open meeting taking our usual monthly booking of the Bat and Ball main hall with a good invited speaker (BM suggested inviting Imogen Corrigan would be ideal). This could be followed by buffet style refreshments. Options of cakes and bubbly, BBQ, even a hog roast put forward for consideration. June preferred to March to follow on from the AGM, giving option of using the garden area.  DT said the Art team are planning an exhibition of paintings crafts and photographs for May Bank holiday 2023 in conjunction with the Photographic group. Items could be displayed again as part of the event.  Creating some sort of memorabilia such as a calendar was also suggested.  Hiring the small hall as well to facilitate the display particularly in case of rain and extending the length of booking should both be considered in good time. | **EC/KB** |
| **2759** | **Communications**  David T’s report was noted.  Newsletter publication date confirmed above  Leaflet -DT showed us the A4 folded leaflet prepared for SC. All agreed this looked good and is a very useful aid for existing and potential members. Bob has plastic stands for these to promote the groups at open meetings and also other events and in other locations.  Publicity is currently with Communications but we do need a Publicity team.  SC confirmed Sevenoaks u3a Handbook is the responsibility of Group Development which led to discussion about membership cards and how these should be distributed to members on receipt of their subscriptions. It was agreed that these should be sent out with the handbook by a joint mailing in October. DL suggested the membership card could be part of the handbook to save costs.  SC raised concerns about deferring sending the Handbook containing information on groups to members until after they had resumed so a flier listing groups and vacancies will be included with the September newsletter.  SC requires information not just on vacancies but also membership of all the groups. DT can provide this via Beacon. However, this is seen as an opportunity to get group leaders to update records held on Beacon as well as any vacancies. SC will ask GOs to provide a list of members with their most up to date contact information ie names and email addresses (or alternative means of contact). Experience shows there is reluctance for GOs to provide this due to GDPR concerns. Some reassurance in the request that gathering this data is legitimate may help. SC also needs to know where open group members are members of Knole or Malling u3as and not Sevenoaks. Gathering Next of kin or similar for emergency contact purposes would also be helpful but nowhere in Beacon to store this but should be able to incorporate something in the “Skills and Interests” database. May need to leave this responsibility with GOs at present. It still needs to be decided which Data fields should be included in the “Skills and Interests” Database. The Regeneration Working Party will discuss. | **SC**  **SC/DT**  **Regen/**  **KB** |
| **2760** | **Group Development**  Sue’s report was noted.  New Groups - Sue advised that five new members had expressed interest in a not quite beginners’ French group. We have a member with skills to lead this. Sharon is setting it up and will contact all new members first to give them priority before it is opened up to the rest of the membership.  New members will also be asked about supporting a group for quizzes also suggested  SC has contacted u3a about their suggested approach to running language groups with no specialists as members.  Publicity – DT brought printed copies of SC’s proposed A4 poster to meeting. There were four versions of headline and Sue envisaged different photos in each one. We would start with one style. Order of wording at the bottom of the poster needs to be reversed to fit geometry of background.  These posters can be displayed on various noticeboards in Sevenoaks and the surrounding villages. Su3a has a laminator for posters destined for unprotected outdoor locations. May need Parish Council permission for village noticeboards. DT asked how many were needed. (Bob Ruffles and DT have since produced lists of Parish Councils.)  Publicity Team SC commented that a new Publicity team is ideally needed to distribute posters etc.  Open meeting to attract new members is usually held at the end of September when Bat and Ball Centre is not available. SC looking at possible venues such as main hall at Otford Village Hall. DT suggested Churchill Suite at Sevenoaks Bowling Centre and if the meeting could be held on a Friday afternoon the rest of the centre would be empty allowing access to the bar area as well. Otford church also has a larger hall but parking is more difficult. It was noted Friday 29th will be a fifth Friday and unlikely to have regular monthly bookings anywhere. | **SC**  **DT**  **SC** |
| **2761** | **Membership and Recruitment report (from Jenny Ruffles)**  Jenny Ruffles Report was noted  Application form had been revised to include extra page asking about interests and skills.  Currently 809 members and 81 groups. KB noted that this was a ratio of 9.99. u3a considered a ratio of more than 12 as concerning but c 10 was satisfactory. |  |
| **2762** | **Finance**  DL reported funds currently stand at c £21K  Invoices awaited: the Treasurer is still awaiting the invoice for £350 from Knockholt Art Club for the display stands and also bank details for the organisation (NB not the Taylors).  DL read out the Computer Group Treasurer Charles Hebert’s letter and will circulate it to EC members in lieu of a report. DL will respond confirming that a) the last three months ie October, November and December hall hire costs for the computer group were met from Su3a General Funds (Apple Group monies) so the Computer group does not need to repay this. b) the group has cash funds of £198 in reserve which should be used to cover the next three months. Should the group look to meet in a different hall if they cannot meet their costs? SC supported the use of EC general funds to subsidize a group that provided such essential advice to older people.  DL also stated that the Gift Aid claim form for Su3a has been sent claiming approx. £2100. | **DT**  **DL** |
| **2763** | **Meetings and Talks**  No report received from Barbara as no changes.  Monthly meeting speakers have been booked through until early 2024 as previous report. |  |
| **2764** | **Social Committee**  Joyce reported the only forthcoming event was the Winter Lunch in February.  The committee was meeting on Jan 9th 2023 and it would be her last at present. |  |
| **2765** | **Computer Group.**  No report available from Mike Davis. (subsequently received and circulated)  Financing hire of hall discussed under Treasurers report. | **DL** |
| **2766** | **Science Open Group**  Bob Ruffles report was noted. |  |
| **2767** | **TSG**  Bob Ruffles report was noted. |  |
| **2768** | **Any Other Business**  Those remaining thought that 9:30am would be a better starting time for future EC meetings (KB, DT, DL). Please let Helen know if any of those who had left (SC, BM, HW) are unhappy with that new start time. | **SC/BM** |
| **2769** | **Date of next meeting** Thursday, 2nd March 2023 at 10.00 at Marchings, Linden Chase. |  |

**Distribution**: Ken Brown, Beryl Mansell, David Lowe, David Taylor, Helen Wood, Sue Christy