
Maghull & Lydiate U3A
Group Leaders Meeting
held at Maghull Baptist Church
on Tuesday 23rd July 2024

Present: Jane Jones [Bridge/Holidays], Maureen Birchall [Art Appreciation], Pat Kelly [Theatre], Ann Unsworth [Theatre], David Ward [French], Peter Duffy [German], Ann Raw & Doreen Bird [Garden Visits], Colin Bennett [Tech/comp], Phil Davidson [Tech/comp & Table games], Joan Martin [Card making], Chris Dalziel [Treasurer], Lynne Chappel [Committee], Irene Edwards [committee], Carol Westall [Membership], Rosney Leith [Family history & Glass workshop], David Russell Family history], Pete Martin [Digital photography], Marj Atlay (Day Trips) Evelyn Craig [Committee/Minute Secretary], Ken Moulton [Committee]; Neil Hawkes [Cribbage/Committee]; Elsie Bickerstaff [Playreading/Drama]; Ron Higham [Spanish conversation]; Chris Chua-Short [Bowls 4 Fun]; Sandy Parker [History], Maureen Birchall (Art Appreciation), George Dobie [Table Tennis], Debbie Reardon [Committee].

1. Apologies: Gail Aindow, Bob Morris, Tony Snape, Nigel Burrows, Hilary Loughlin, Brian Dickinson, Brenda Dickinson

2 Minutes of last Meeting

The minutes were proposed by Carol Westall and seconded by Doreen Bird.

Minutes were approved by all with a show of hands

3 Matters Arising

3 JJ confirmed that the new email addresses are now in use.

4.i Health and Safety – all risks assessments have been completed bar one because of problems with access which is being sorted.

4.ii PAT testing was booked but unfortunately because of bereavement was not completed so an alternative electrician is being sought.

5 Renewals worked well with nearly 100 members choosing to pay via online/PayPal. Hopefully this will increase next year. The Finance team has now set up a system whereby companies such as coach companies can be paid electronically.

4 Calendar Update

JJ had asked everyone to look at the website and in particular the calendar which is listed on the menu at the top of the page. The calendar been completely refurbished by NB. Once on the calendar, the first section shows the events of that particular day, which will change daily.

JJ took the Leaders on a tour of the new calendar explaining how they could find information for each month and each year.

Group Leaders are asked to place information concerning their group on the calendar and if possible, include details of any speakers, outing and holidays. JJ said the easiest way to keep the calendar up to date was for Leaders to send their information to is Bob Morris who has been appointed as our new Calendar secretary. His email address, calendar@mandlu3a.or.uk, can be found on the Calendar page. BM will be assisted by the other members of the Website Team if necessary.

5 Group Leaders Handbook

JJ explained that there has been one meeting of the subcommittee which is revising the Group Leaders Handbook. The proposal is to remove 75% of the content of the existing handbook as much of the information can be accessed easily on our Admin page. The handbook needs to concentrate on what all Group Leader needs in order to set up and maintain a group. This includes, how to set up a new group, organise a venue, keep records, plan meetings, in accordance with GDPR, safeguarding and inclusion, rules. The draft of the new handbook will go from the sub-committee to the main committee before being presented to GL.

6. Group Accounts/Finance

CD stated that all Group Leaders should keep records of their transactions – both income and expenditure plus current balance. In the past, record books were issued and checked on a regular basis and this is something that could well be necessary if there are concerns about an account or more likely if a Group Leader wished to check their transactions. CD is more than happy to look at Leaders' accounts if necessary. Some Leaders may prefer to keep records electronically which is fine. Our General and Social Accounts are checked and balanced every week against the bank statement. A monthly report which hopefully is helpful, is sent to all Leaders who are listed on our General Account.

Please remember that all cheques issued must have a corresponding receipt/invoice.

Sometimes there is a period of time between issuing the cheque and receiving the corresponding receipt but please make sure that these are passed on to CD either electronically or in hard copy

Regarding reserves – these vary depending on whether your group meets on a weekly basis or arranges trips etc. If paying rental, then it seems sensible to ensure that you have around two months rental in reserves and if this starts to build up then Leaders are urged to charge less in order to adjust the balance. For those arranging trips, they need to hold the monies to pay for transport or entrance fees and adjust future charges if necessary to ensure that balances are not excessive.

Remember that as a charity we are bound by Charity Commission rules and cannot under any circumstances use U3A funds to donate to a charity.

Please remember to let Rita Michell know if you are going to be paying in on any Tuesday as it helps the Treasure team to avoid queues and to know when it is safe to cash up.

JM asked that anyone who has a query about the hire of any premises to come to her before going to CD.

7 Any other business

JJ emphasised that the website is in the public domain and is designed to promote and inform anyone looking at it about Maghull u3a. Recently quite a few notices were posted that did not fulfil this criterion, giving prospective members a very unfavourable idea about our u3a. These posts were taken down quickly but we have no knowledge how many views they had received. JJ emphasised that this course of action was taken following advice from the Charity Commission and the Third Age Trust, and pointed out that the latter were surprised that people were able to post onto our website without any vetting process. As a result, the Committee, following an emergency meeting, decided that from now on, all items to be posted must be vetted by an administrator. The vetting officer is Jenny Challinor, but all the administrators will be available to help with the vetting process so that there will be a minimum delay in approving and publishing any posts.

PD stated that a post relating to a possible online Fraud was inaccurate. JM pointed out that that was the term used by the Halifax Society.

PD felt it was unfair that all Leaders who post on line were being subjected to this vetting system. Many group leaders agreed asking why, if it was only one Leader at fault, why were they all being put through a vetting process. CB thought that this was penalising everyone when it was only one person who had caused this problem but again JJ explained that the problem needed to be sorted without singling out anyone in particular.

JJ repeated that the Committee was following the TAT recommendation.

PD pointed out that Leaders were no longer had access to media causing problems for Group Leaders who use photos alongside their posts. JJ stated that this was an unforeseen side effect that would be addressed as soon as our Web Manager was available.

MA was concerned that awaiting approval could delay important posts being published JJ assured her that the vetting team would be diligent and easily reached by text for an 'emergency' post.

PD commented that although vetting was in force certain posts had already slipped through the net. He quoted one particular post which had in fact been approved by JJ.

PD also expressed concern that the 'leave to reply' box has been removed. JJ explained that she did not realise this and will sort this out with NB on his return

MA was concerned the loss of the 'leave a reply' system would cause her difficulties as the leave a reply box gave her an important line of communication and reduced her Tuesday morning workload. JJ assured her that this should not have been removed and that it would be re-instated as soon as possible.

PD stated that there should have been a consultation process rather than it being decided so quickly.

PM pointed out that the committee is appointed to act on behalf of everyone and it is up to them to make decisions such as these. If an individual has abused the platform, then it does fall to the committee to act.

JJ explained that nobody on the Committee wanted to target a particular person as this was likely to cause serious problems in the future.

CCS asked if this was to be reviewed in 6 months' time, JJ stated that all decisions are subject to review.

DR gave the group her opinion on the action taken as did NH.

A general discussion ensued where JJ stated that the decision made by the Committee had not been in haste and that the whole incident had pushed many of the Committee to consider their position on the Committee.

JJ then stated that if anyone had any further issues with the Committee this was their opportunity to put forward a proposal of no-confidence no such proposal was made.

The meeting closed at 12.15 and JJ thanked all for their attendance.