

St Austell U3A Committee Meeting
Friday April 29th 2022 12.30pm
Venue: St Austell Arts Centre
Minutes

Present: Lucinda Davison, Jan Badger, Chris Scott, Jenny Skipp, Pauline Weir, Ann Smith, Pippa Boardman, Maryanne Thomas, Joan Hooper, Carol Folley

1. Apologies for Non-Attendance Apologies received from Chris Crane

2. Election of Chair for the Committee
Meeting LD was proposed and unanimously elected.

3. Approve the Minutes of the last Committee Meeting – JB & LD

Item 9 - Election by the Committee for PB to continue as Honorary President for another year. CS requested a change of wording to include “prior to approval by members at the AGM”. Note added to the minutes by JB, although CS had not attended the last Committee Meeting.

Note from JB – it is standard Committee procedure for the Committee to approve the election of an Honorary President prior to election by the members. The same protocol applies to any change to the Constitution or the adoption of a new Constitution. No change of wording was requested when the Committee approved the adoption of the new Constitution.

Item 10 – Committee Agreement to Appoint Barry Smeath to check our 2021/2022 Accounts. CS stated that he knew nothing about this.

Note from JB – The possible appointment of Barry S to check our accounts had been mentioned at the Committee Meeting on March 3rd (which CS signed off the minutes for at this meeting). **Item 9 - AGM Planning Update** states that JB handed out notes from the Committee’s AGM Planning Meeting and also notes from a Post AGM Planning Meeting held via Zoom with JB, LD and PB to all attending Committee members on 3rd March. The notes were handed out as there was not enough time for these to be compiled and emailed out before the Committee Meeting. The notes from the Zoom meeting state that Barry S had been suggested as a possible suitable person to check this year’s accounts. Copies of both sets of notes were attached to the minutes CS signed off.

PB, JS and JH are aware of Barry Smeath’s experience in checking accounts and PB had previously spoken to CS. CS stated that PB had not discussed the matter about the possibility of Barry S checking the 2021/2022 accounts.

CS stated that he had not had enough time to read the minutes from the last Committee Meeting.

Note from JB – the minutes were distributed five days prior to the Committee Meeting, a slightly shorter timeframe.

JB and LD signed off the minutes from the last Committee Meeting (25th March). CS co-signed the minutes from the 3rd March Committee Meeting as they were presented to CS to sign but they were signed without reviewing as there were 32 agenda items and time was of the essence on the day.

4. Approve the Minutes from the Interim Committee Meeting: Topic – Open Day – JB & LD The Minutes were approved and signed by JB and LD.

5. Matters Outstanding from previous Minutes (both 03/03/2022 and 25/03/2022)

25/03/22 - JB had spoken to Jonathan A about the hearing loop in the Theatre. Jonathan A said this had not been used in a long time and may have been painted over, he also added that hearing aid technology had moved on to incorporate the benefits than had previously been gained from the hearing loop.

03/03/2022 - CS to produce an up-to-date Asset Register. CS has spoken with Keith Y about the unauthorised purchase of the Italian Books and the issue has now been resolved with Keith Y accepting the £50.00 new group assistance offered. CS still to rectify the situation regarding new group leaders and new members not being aware of the PPC and Payment Procedures for running groups.

6. Financial Update – CS

CS thanked JS for her cover and support while he was on holiday and when he was ill and for sorting out all the mandate issues with Barclays Bank. JS said she would obtain detailed written information from Barclays to show who has what regarding the account.

CS provided the latest account details (see below) but added that there had been other payments since then. An extra £300.00 had been given in addition to the original grant for the laptops etc.; this covers the £300.00 the Committee had agreed as additional funding from our own funds for the purchase of the laptops. CS to thank CCF for the additional funds.

**St Austell u3a
Bank Balance as at
28/04/2022**

MAIN	£18,041.41	WINE	£339.04	THEATRE	£258.18
BUSINESS ME	£75.07	TAM	£2201.49		

7. Closure of the St Austell Branch of Barclays Bank – CS

CS had spoken with the St Austell Branch of Barclays who are due to close on June 24th. He had been advised of two options:

- (1) Pay into the nearest Barclays branch at either Truro or Wadebridge, the branches will accept both cheques and cash
- (2) Payment can also be made into our accounts by using the Post Office in St Austell. This service can be used for paying in cheques, but not cash. This service requires the use of a specific paying in envelope and a paying in slip.

CS informed the Committee that he had rejected the first option as both the Truro and Wadebridge branches of Barclays are around a 30 mile round trip, would necessitate car parking charges and take around 2.5 hours.

CS informed the Committee he proposed to adopt Option 2, had already received an order of 100 paying in envelopes and had ordered paying in books for the Theatre and Wine Accounts.

CS informed the Committee that he was also proposing to offer a supply of the paying in envelopes and slips to Group Leaders with the aim of speeding up payments of cheques as the Group Leaders can use St Austell Post Office rather than wait to hand the cheques to the Treasury Team.

CS to prepare an addendum for inclusion in the Best Practice Document for Facilitating Groups – this to be forwarded to **JB** (not MT as per his original document).

CS to also write to all Group Leaders to advise them of the new cheque payment procedure.

CS to write to all members advising them that due to changes brought about by the closure of Barclays in St Austell we can no longer accept cash.

CS original document attached to the minutes as only one copy provided at the meeting and therefore not available to all Committee Members.

8. Update on Tasks completed before our and National's Financial Year End on 31st March – JB/JS

JB and **JS** checked Beacon membership data on the morning of 31st March to ensure that we were only charged Capitation Charges and Beacon Usage Charges for current members.

9. Annual Return to National u3a – JB

JB informed the Committee that National u3a had produced a new on-line form for completion of the Annual Return. This form was not fit for purpose as it could only be completed if all fields were filled in, St Austell u3a like many other u3as do not have data for all the fields. Following numerous complaints the form was modified several times and **JB** was finally able to fill it in the night before this Committee Meeting. Our member count for National u3a's end of year invoicing purposes was 307 Individual Members and 13 Associate Members. **JB** to forward a .pdf copy of the Annual Return to **CS** and **JS**.

10. Non-Renewals Update + Reimbursement of Overpayments to Members – JB/JS

JB informed the Committee that there were 59 non-renewals this year (lower than the National u3a average of one third of membership) and that 50% of these were members without email addresses. **JB** had passed all the non-renewal membership cards to **JS**.

JB to pass the list of non-renewals to **LD** so that the Outreach Team can follow them up.

JB informed the Committee that 14 members had overpaid; these were all November/December new joiners and Associates. **JS** suggested reimbursing members using PPCs; this was unanimously approved by the Committee. **JB** to send list of Member overpayments to **JS**.

A contributing factor to the member overpayments was that the payment options on the Membership Form were confusing. This has been addressed in Item 12.

11. Membership Cards not yet collected (BACS) – JS

JS said that some Committee members are giving the cards to those individuals that they know.

12. Committee Approval for Latest Version of the Membership form which includes a change to the Payment Options – JB

JB had provided copies of the latest Membership form with the alterations to the methods of payments to provide clarification and hopefully avoid future overpayments. Going forward the Membership Form should only need to be updated once a year. The new version was approved and agreed by all.

13. Improving our Professional Image – The Way Forward – All

LD suggested this item be included on the Agenda for the next Committee meeting as **CC** was not present and he had originally raised the issue.

CS raised the issue of all setting up a review of all processes. **JB** said this item was not an agenda item and needed to be put on the Agenda for the next Committee Meeting. **CS** stated that the agreement was made when the AGM was scheduled for May 2022, however in the light of **CC** comments regarding our unprofessional image **CS** felt processes and procedures should be reviewed as a matter of urgency. **JB** refused to consider the request.

Note from JB – The Committee had previously agreed that the process review would be addressed after the AGM.

14. Approval by the Committee of the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 Year End Accounts –CS

CS brought along one hard copy of the 2020/2021 year end accounts and one hard copy of 2021/2022 accounts. None of the Committee Members had previously seen these as they had not been emailed to Committee Members or been available at previous Committee Meetings. The 2020/2021 accounts had not been approved by the Committee. The 2021/2022 accounts had not been approved by the Committee and the verifier of the 2021/2022 accounts (Eileen D) had also not been approved by the Committee and none of the Committee Members other than **CS** were aware that these accounts had been verified. **CS** stated that he considered his actions were prudent in the light of the delay of the AGM. **CS** wanted to be able to assure the committee (Trustees) that the accounts were correct and therefore the committee members could speak with authority should any member ask questions prior to the deferred AGM. Both sets of accounts were presented as a 'fait accompli' by **CS**. As noted in Agenda Item 15 below, **JB** had previously emailed **CS** to remind him that this was a Constitutional Breach and would need to be logged in the minutes as such.

CS had provided one hard copy set of notes for the Annual Accounts for the meeting; the notes are attached to the minutes as the Committee have not seen them.

Notes from JB on the Annual Account Notes – The Annual Account notes state that the new date for the AGM (October 6th) had been proposed by **JB**, this was not the case. **JB** had presented three different dates to the Committee, the criteria for selection of one of these dates being the date we would have the most likely chance of achieving a quorum of members attending the AGM, the Committee voted in favour of the October 6th date based on these criteria. The notes refer to Section 14 (iv) of the Constitution which **CS** had interpreted the intent as "is to allow the membership to object to the appointment of the examiner appointed by the Committee". *The correct interpretation of this clause is that the membership should be informed at the AGM and given the right to vote for the independent examiner who will be verifying the accounts for the following*

financial year. So at the October 6th AGM the membership will have the option for vote for the Committee approved independent examiner for 2022/2023. As we did not hold an AGM last year, the membership will not have had an opportunity to vote for any independent examiner we use for the 2021/2022 accounts, so therefore have a right to object to the appointment of any independent examiner used this year. The notes (dated 25th April 2022) state that **CS** considers it prudent to seek an independent examiner for the 2021/2022 accounts; at the time these notes were written **CS** had, without Committee approval, appointed Eileen D to verify the accounts and she had completed this task on the 22nd April 2022. The notes also state that **CS** discussed with **JB** in March, the appointment of either Dennis R or Ian B to verify the accounts and that **JB** had informed him that neither person wished to offer their services this year. **JB** did not have this discussion with **CS**, has never had any contact with Ian B and was not informed by **CS** he was proposing to seek the assistance of Eileen D to verify the accounts, the first time **JB** was aware of this was at today's meeting. This is disputed by **CS** as he did speak to **JB** on the 3 March. As there was clearly not enough time for the Committee to review the accounts sharing one hard copy of each set, **LD** informed the Committee that this item should be moved to the Agenda for the next Committee meeting.

JB requested that **CS** email both sets of accounts to all Committee Members so that they have plenty of time to review them before our next Committee Meeting.

Going forward it was suggested that **CS** provide copies of the accounts to the Committee on at least a quarterly basis, rather than on a two year basis as had occurred this time.

Note from JB – our previous Treasurer (Dennis R) had handed out copies of the financial spread sheets and copies of the Bank Statements at every Committee Meeting (usually monthly) which had ensured financial transparency and a made it much easier for Committee Members to check and approve the Annual Accounts. Although copies of accounts have never been requested by any committee member **CS** is happy to provide them. We have been functioning in a different forum since **CS** became treasure, Zoom until the autumn of 2021 when we had face to face meetings.

15. Confirmation that Barry Smeath is willing to check our 2021/2022 Accounts – CS

Note from JB – **JB** had notified **CS** by email 6 days before the Committee Meeting that this was an item on the Agenda. **CS** had replied by email that the item should be deleted from the Agenda as it was inappropriate as he had already had the accounts verified.

JB had replied that the Committee had formally approved Barry Smeath as the verifier for this year's accounts; that the accounts need to be approved by the Committee before they are verified and the verifier needs to be approved by the Committee so that all our financial transactions are transparent. The Committee had not had the opportunity to either approve the accounts or the verifier he had used and that this is a *Constitutional breach, therefore the item would remain on the Agenda and we would need to log the Constitutional breach in the minutes.*

CS said that he was not prepared to agree to this agenda item (so if there was a vote he would register a No vote) and wished for it to be noted in the Minutes. **CS** stated that he felt actions had been taken without his knowledge, in a somewhat underhand disrespectful and unprofessional manner. It would have been courtesy of the proposer

to have entered into discussion with the Treasurer rather than assume to speak on his behalf. He added that he only knew about this on the Sunday prior to this meeting and from the Minutes (please see note above). **JS** informed the Committee that she knew nothing about the account verification arrangements **CS** had made.

JB asked **JS** if she could contact Barry S to confirm he was willing to check our accounts. **JS** agreed to do this.

CS was exasperated that **JB** refused to agree to reconsidering a committee decision even when he stated that the partial facts had been put to the Committee.

JB stated a decision could not be overturned or reconsidered.

CS said as Treasurer he should be responsible for the lead in recommending the verifier. It would be common courtesy to have been consulted.

CS felt that his requests were being dismissed by **JB**

CS then stated that the Committee should expect his resignation later in the day.

LD the Chair (temporary) adjourned the meeting for approximately 10 minutes to speak to **CS** with committee members still present.

LD ask him to rethink his proposed resignation.

CS agreed to this and upon recommending the meeting, he stated he would review his position over the next 48hrs or so and let the committee know his decision

16. National u3a Interactive Map – Committee Approval for Purchase of Mobile Phone and SIM for Membership Secretary use – JB

JB informed the Committee that National u3a had added **AS's** private mobile number as a Membership Contact Number to the Interactive Map for locating your local u3a they had just launched which was now in public domain. **JB** had informed **AS** immediately and then contacted National u3a to get the private number removed as soon as possible, pointing out that this was a Privacy and Data Protection Breach as **AS** had only agreed for her private mobile number to be used for National u3a office contact purposes, not for it to be published in public domain. The private number has now been removed.

Going forward **JB** recommended that we purchase a basic mobile phone and SIM for the Membership Secretary's use; this is common practice amongst u3as. The purchase was agreed unanimously by the Committee. **CS** said that It now just a question of sourcing a basic phone and the best contract for purpose and suggested this task be passed to **CC** as he was more o fait with technical matters.

17. Update on Items Purchased with the CCF Grant– JB

JB informed the Committee that the two new laptops and the projector were now locked in the office cupboard. **JB** had met **CC** at the Arts Centre for the handover. **CC** had prepared both laptops, one for Membership and one for Administration as previously agreed. Both laptops connected straight away to the Internet, have logins and passwords, operating software and Beacon installed.

CS said that he needs to add these to the assets register. **JB** asked about the pop-up screens that were agreed as part of the Grant. **CS** replied that the screens are currently out of stock as are some of the ramps. Only 2 ramps had so far been delivered. **CS** said that before use, they need to ask for the surface outside to be graded.

18. Committee Approval for Purchase of Wireless Mouse to use with New Laptops – JB

LD said it would be necessary to emphasise the importance of keeping the mouse with the laptop when putting away as they can easily be mislaid. However, it was generally felt that this would not be too much of an issue. There was unanimous approval to purchase the mouse.

19. Arts Centre – Building Works and Maintenance Issues the Way Forward – JB

JB said that the planned maintenance work was on the outside of the building and then the grounds. There does not seem to be a plan to provide an accessible toilet which was something the Committee understood had already been agreed.

20. Protocol for use of Wheelchair Ramps & will they be for our sole use or will the Arts Centre be able to use them as well – CS

CS said that the ramps should not be left outside as they are not weatherproof. They are fully portable so, when needed for wheelchair access, they can be taken out by a member of the meet and greet team or the car parking team. They fold easily and can be stored safely. The storage needs to be discussed with Jonathan A. Health and safety issues were raised and the question of insurance/risk assessments. The ramps would be for sole use of the u3a and not the Theatre.

21. Obsolete Laptops (x4) and Printer – what do we do with them? – CS

CS said these items were deemed obsolete from discussions he has had with CC and are on the assets register valued at £1.00 each. The laptops need to have all the data wiped and can then be offered to schools or charities. CS to pass this task to CC

22. Emergency Contact Details on the Back of Membership Cards – JS

JS suggested printing a reminder on the back of each Membership card or a sticker for Emergency Contact Details. Group Leaders could remind members at their sessions. This suggestion was approved by the Committee.

23. PB – Beacon Access level – JB

JB said it would be useful for PB to continue to have “Chair” access level to Beacon. This was agreed unanimously and PB was thanked for her and David’s help printing all the Membership Cards. JB to contact Pietro A to let him know.

24. Calling last Orders and Time for Teas and Coffees on Speaker Meeting Days – LD

LD said there were a lot of stragglers finishing coffee, chatting and joining. She thought a warning bell would be useful. It was suggested that 2 bells might be better, one as a warning and the second as TIME. JB said it could be put in the next Newsletter which was agreed. CS requested that the Treasury team payments be included in the bell process.

25. Formal Committee Approval for changes to the TAM Bank Account – JS

JS informed the Committee that managing this account was complicated due to the type of account currently being used. She has opened a new account which will enable funds to be transferred easily to/from our other accounts. JS had previously sought approval from the other co-signatories on this account, CS, JB and CC and now needed formal approval from the Committee, this was unanimously agreed.

26. Events Team Sub-Committee Going Forward – JS

JS said that Sandy Capelin is standing down from leading the Sub-Committee and that Helen Neilson is taking over. She added that the Events Team need more members on their sub-committee. The Events Team have historically not wanted to be recognised as an Interest Group as they are 'open' to all members. **JB** said they would have more support if they were a formal Group, from both the Group Co-ordinator and the Committee. **MT** said she would approach Helen N to see if she would consider being the Group Leader. The Team have cancelled their August event as there is little support. **PB** asked if all members of the u3a could be automatically joined to the group, with an option to 'opt out'. **JB** has been the Events Team administration contact for the past three years and she was happy to continue doing this until things have settled down and the Team is ready to take over the administration. **PB** suggested that we acknowledge and thank Sandy and her husband Phil in the Newsletter. **JB** to action this.

27. Days/Dates for Committee Meetings Going Forward – LD

LD said that meetings were getting too lengthy, and Committee Members were finding this very tiring following a Coffee Morning or a Speaker Meeting. She suggested holding meetings on a separate day. Discussion was held on this as to whether the Committee was being productive over 12 meetings or would fewer be better. **PW** said we could call an extraordinary general meeting if necessary. **LD** suggested we have an annual plan of action, so we all know what is happening. **MT** suggested having more sub-committees to sort issues out to bring to the main meetings. This approach should speed things up. **JH** agreed that the meetings were becoming overlong, particularly the long Agenda for this meeting. She also suggested setting a maximum length of time. **PB** suggested having a 'holiday' in July/August and not to try to do everything at once. **JB** said we have done a huge amount in the last few months. It was suggested that this issue is discussed in more detail at the next Committee Meeting.

The date of the next Committee Meeting was agreed as Monday 13th June at 9.00am, the meeting to be held in the bar area at the Arts Centre.

28. Best Practice for Facilitating Groups Document Committee Approval – JB

JB had circulated the Best Practice document. The document was unanimously approved by the Committee members. **JB** asked for clarification about how the Group Codes were to be used so that this information could be added to the Best Practice Document. Clarification was provided by the Treasury Team.

29. 2nd Person to Learn how to run the Address File and do the Upload for the TAM Magazine – JB JB

said there needs to be back-up in place. It should be a member of the Committee because of potential Data Protection issues. There were no volunteers from the Committee members present. **JB** to ask **CC** if he would be willing to do this.

30. Groups Update – MT

MT said that most groups were up and running smoothly now. Health and Safety issues need to be discussed regarding Wild Swimming. **JB** said it would be helpful if the information on long walks came out earlier – **MT** said that the walks would always weather dependant. **CS** said to let him know

details of the Wild Swimming and Fishing etc. so he can set up the alpha codes for them. **JB** said there had been a room change for the Ukulele group as it was difficult to carry the equipment needed up the stairs. **JB** to notify **CC** so that the website can be changed.

31. COVID Update – JB

JB said there was nothing to report other than for Members to continue being cautious.

32. Any Other Business

JH asked about Committee Nominee forms for the AGM, these to be handed to **JB** at least 28 days prior to the AGM.

JH also said that Nolan W had spoken to her about an issue whilst car parking. One member was very offhand with him when he gave some instructions. **CS** said to take a registration number if anyone is rude.

JB asked for items for the Newsletter to be sent to her.

MT suggested setting up a small group to 'brainstorm' ideas for setting up sub-groups to take to the next meeting.

PB reported that the Arts Centre Trustees had approved the idea of the Acoustic Clouds for the Assembly rooms and she would discuss commissioning a survey with Jonathan A.

PB said there would be a picnic at Tregony Sports Club (the Petanque venue) again this summer. **JB** said it would be fine to let members know about this event

JS passed on compliments she had received about her Open Day report.

CS said that there needs to be another person to sit on the Treasury Team to be au fait with what is done and to understand the processes. This could go in the next Newsletter. **JB** to action

JB (Outreach related) suggested a calendar/spread sheet could be sent to members without email so that they were aware of what was going on. **JB** to email sample of a previous event/interest group spread sheet to **MT** for review. Jackie H has volunteered to be e-mail 'buddy' for those members living in Robert Elliot Court.

JB will call Frank W after his stay in hospital to see if he needed any help. **AS** and **JS** said they would also call.

JB said that the National u3a was holding its AGM on October 6th, 2022 which is the same day as our AGM.

LD asked the Committee what date best suited them for the next meeting. There was a consensus that a meeting after either the monthly meeting or coffee morning was not acceptable (we are volunteers and to spending almost a working day was not appropriate). **LD** suggested we choose a more suitable day. Various days were suggested and the frequency of the meetings. It was suggested a minimum interval of 6 weeks.

A Monday was the favoured date by the majority. **JB** said it would not be convenient as she leads the Heligan walk. **CS** stated he thought Wendy B and Elaine N ran the event and were the leaders. **JB** responded she wished to attend the walk. **LD** said if we start the meeting on 13th June at 9am, and finish at 11am there would be time to attend as a walk.

This date and time was agreed.

There being no other business, the meeting finished at 15.45 pm.