

St Austell U3A
Finance Meeting
Thursday 8 February 2024 at 9.30
Venue: Chris Scott's house

Present: Lucinda Davison, Chris Scott, Maryanne Thomas, Richard Ash, Chris Crane, Jenny Skipp, Joan Hooper, Chris Timmins, Carol Folley

1. Welcome and Apologies for Non-Attendance

LD welcomed everyone to the meeting. **MT** informed the Committee that unforeseen circumstances were making it extremely difficult for her to fulfil her commitment to the Committee. Therefore, she felt she had no choice but to resign immediately. **LD** understood the reasons behind the resignation and thanked **MT** who then left the meeting. There were no other apologies for absence.

2. Update from CS/LD re meeting with Simon Messenger including room rental agreement.

CS and **LD** reported back from their meeting with **SM**. It is apparent that Cornwall Council wants to raise the current hire agreement considerably despite the facilities not being fully accessible to all. It is important to note that our u3a does not rent the facilities at the Arts Centre only hires at an hourly rate. However, our u3a is the major source of income for the facilities. **CS** and **LD** are prepared to meet for further discussions in March. We also need to know what the Trustees require in any new arrangements.

Although we have new groups starting, **CS** suggested that we cut down on our hourly usage by reducing the preparation time needed by some groups, such as coffee time, use of the theatre etc. Currently, we use the facilities for 100 hours per month and 500 hours per annum for the use of the office and storage room. These arrangements include the use of the kitchen. **CS** added that we need to use the facilities for 38 weeks per annum to receive a discount on the hire rate. He also asked whether it would be appropriate to raise our group meeting cost to £2 per member. He said that we also need to analyse our data to see what our upper limit would be and that any changes must work for our u3a.

3. Discussion around Finance Documentation.

CS provided up to date details on the balance sheet:

Main	£21,812.10
Plus	£400.00 cheque awaiting process.
ME	£32.13
Social	£2931.89
Theatre	£613.13
Wine	£1419.89

He added that he had spend a considerable amount of time sorting SUMUP which was not agreeing and was about £30 out. He would set up both machines at the next meeting to see which one was causing the problem.

Re HMRC and Gift Aid. **CS** said that HMRC works on the Financial Year whereas our u3a works on the Calendar year. This creates issues with setting the date for the AGM in October and having accounts verified etc and members notified.

a) The format used to present finances to u3a members.

CS provided Committee members with copies of spreadsheets and diagrams to illustrate how monies paid into the Main Account were moved to the other accounts shown above. The spreadsheets were described and briefly discussed.

b) Understanding the contents in the spreadsheet including what items are included in the headings, eg sundries, frequency of payments etc.

See spreadsheet and diagrams in a) above.

c) How does money move through the u3a accounts?

Movement is illustrated – see a) above. **RA** said that members need to appreciate that the balance sheet is fluid and can change day to day. **JH** agreed and added that many members just do not understand spreadsheets.

d) Apart from the Treasurer, who has access to the accounts and which ones they have access to.

Not discussed,

4. Best Practice Document – Finance.

Not discussed. To be holdover.

5. Any other business.

JH reported that she had contacted Age UK and had exchanged emails with their Transport Manager, Ann Lewis. She had explained why help from them was sought ie provision of free transport for those U3A members who had difficulty finding/paying for transport to U3A Coffee mornings. **AL** informed **JH** that the minibus that would be used was electric and could accommodate 4 people plus 1 wheelchair user. **JH** supplied dates and times of Coffee/Speaker meetings and Coffee mornings and explained that as a Charity, we would not be able to pay any monies for the service offered. **AL** said that there was a shortage of drivers for the mini-bus and that might be a problem. However, she said that she would see what she could do. **JH** has not heard from her since.

CF reported that on two occasions since the provision of a key box at the main door, she has been locked in and not been able to exit the building from that door. The group signing out before had, apparently, not checked the book to see if any other groups were still in the building. Fortunately, exit was possible via the double doors to the theatre. Although no harm was done on these occasions, concern was raised that should there need to be an emergency evacuation and the alternative route was not available there could be serious consequences. **SM** would be informed of this.

JS suggested sending out an email/letter to new members who have not yet received their Membership Cards so that they can show it to the Group Leader/s as proof of Membership. She also suggested sending emails/letters to remind some members that their membership would lapse shortly.

CS said that he has a current list of **our** u3a's assets and belongings **not** the Arts Centre's. **CT** said that some members feel that we should help the community, in that other groups could

borrow our equipment. However, **CS** said that we can only help another Charity if it has the same aims as the u3a, eg educational. He added that other groups do use our equipment without permission which creates issues around liability should anyone be hurt. **LD** asked how we can 'police' this issue.

CS added that no one should benefit financially from being a member of the u3a. No monies collected from members should be paid into a personal account. The u3a is responsible if this happens. If the monies collected are for, eg a coach trip, they should be paid by BACS into the Main Account and the Treasurer will settle the relevant account. All agreed that financial transactions should be transparent. However, the u3a may accept donations if offered.

CS added that he needs 7 days' notice to pay an account, for example, for theatre tickets. He said that a late request was not acceptable as he may not see the request in time to meet a deadline. **CT** suggested 10 days' notice should be given. **JS** said that any request must provide full details of how the payment should be made, eg by BACS, credit card etc. **CS** had asked for additional help with the Treasurer's role, which had been itemised in the Newsletter, but to date no such offers had been received. He added that our u3a would need a new Treasurer in the near future. **RA** offered to help with paperwork and filing etc, which was accepted. **LD** said that the role of Treasurer is the only role that we must have to operate. **CC** said he would put together a suggested email for the Committee to check/agree before sending out to members.

Meeting ended at approx. 12 noon.