

EMS VALLEY U3A - COMMITTEE MEETING

TUESDAY 18th June 2024 – MOUNTFORD 3 E.C.C.

Those present:

Tim Mathews (Chairman & Webmaster), Rod Lipscombe (Vice-chairman),
Dbee Robinson (Business Secretary), Karen Rodger (Beacon Administrator),
Ann Sims (Groups Coordinator), Hilary Street (Treasurer), Liz Rosoman (Minutes Secretary)

1 Apologies: Sue Kent and Margaret Melhuish

2 **Minutes and Matters arising:** The minutes had been read and were agreed.

3 Business Secretary's Report:

3.1 AGM Feedback - Fast and smooth with good entertainment

3.2 Post AGM - completed

- a Email sent to Trust with signed new Constitution. (Trust receipt - email 04.06.24)
- b Signed Constitution uploaded to Charity Commission (Upload receipt - ref 6010342)
- c Jane removed from Trustees and Charity Commission.
- d Minutes sent to Committee for approval and uploaded on website.
- e Question? Are we all ok with our signatures in public view? If No can use digital signatures/none. Answer - NO -> Dbee to create a Digitally signed page for the website.

3.3 Post AGM + Requirements

- a Prepare and send our Annual Return to the Trust (Await email prompt from Trust)
- b Complete Charity Commission Return with Treasurer within 10 months of the end of our financial year (= January & only possible after Treasurer accounts are audited).
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission>

3.4 Document list - Current list sent to all prior to meeting to ensure all aware of available documents (as stated at March meeting for change, reject or accept after AGM)

- a NOTE - Dbee to update list with approval dates, and other relevant information
- b Unsure if committee are able to view documents in Workspace. Therefore, all documents to be circulated at intervals for discussion at future meetings.

3.5 Policies on the Charity Commission website we confirm we: * have / do not have

- a Question / Incorrect / Agree (Note answers on Commission website are shown with =).
- b **Risk management = NO.** Question: should this be NA or is NO ok? Answer - NO is correct.
- c **Investment = NO.** Question: is this the reserves policy in creation with Hilary? (NOTE - In Constitution item 18.h requiring policy on reserves), or can be included in Financial Policy? Answer: Hilary to include this in finance document currently in creation: *ev_u3a_com_32 Financial Policy.*
- d **Safeguarding vulnerable beneficiaries = NO.** Incorrect, should be **YES** - *ev_u3a_com_22 Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.*
- e **Conflicting interests = NO.** Incorrect, should be **YES** - No extra doc reqd. See Constitution item 21. *ev u3a com 39 rev 1* Page 1 of 4
- f **Volunteer management = NO.** Correct

- g **Complaints handling = NO.** Incorrect, should be **YES**
ev_u3a_com_18 Complaint Procedure
- h **Paying staff = NO.** Correct.
- i **Internal charity financial controls policy and procedures = YES.** Question: where is this? Answer: In Hilary's finance document currently in creation:
ev_u3a_com_32 Financial Policy.
- j **Safeguarding policy and procedures = NO.** Incorrect, should be **YES.** *ev_u3a_com_22 Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.* NOTE - Document to be sent to committee for discussion.
- k **Financial reserves policy and procedures = YES.** Question: where is this? NOTE - In Constitution item 18.h requiring policy on reserves, or can be included in Financial Policy. Answer: Hilary to include this in finance document currently in creation:
ev_u3a_com_32 Financial Policy.
- l **Complaints policy and procedure. = NO.** Incorrect, should be **YES.**
ev_u3a_com_18 Complaint Procedure.
- m **Serious incident reporting policy and procedures = NO.** Incorrect, should be **YES.**
ev_u3a_com_21 Incident Report Form
- n **Internal risk management policy and procedures = YES.** Question: where is this? possibly Continuity plan. Can add venue risk, etc to plan. Answer - **YES** is correct - Continuity plan document will cover this.
- o **Trustee expenses policy and procedures = Not applicable.** Question: why NA? should it be NO and see constitution Part 1 - 4.a. Incorrect, should be **YES.** See constitution part 1 4a.
- p **Trustee conflicts of interest policy and procedures = Not applicable.** Incorrect, should be **YES** - see constitution item 21.
- q **Investing charity funds policy and procedures = YES.** Hilary to include this in finance document currently in creation: *ev_u3a_com_32 Financial Policy.*
- r **Campaigns & political activity policy & procedures = Not applicable.** (Correct)
- s **Bullying and harassment policy and procedures = NO.** Question: Do we need this? Answer: Dbee to check if not already in the safeguarding document. If not, check Trust website for doc. *ev u3a com 39 rev 1 Page 2 of 4.*
- t **Social media policy and procedures = Not applicable.** (Correct)
- u **Engaging external speakers at charity events policy and procedures = YES.** Question: where is this? Answer: Not found. Rod to create simple guidelines for this task. Dbee to enquire if speakers are covered under our insurance or Church's.
- v **Dbee to update all agreed current changes and update Finance policy & Speaker document, and Bullying document (if necessary) when completed.**

3.6 Agenda - AOB from Dbee

- a Risk assessment. I still believe we need to demystify and take the fear out of doing them. And dumbing down the risk assessments will make them pointless and useless should we ever need to use them. I know people are frightened of doing risk assessments in case they are brought to task for missing something or doing something wrong. Suggest this wording or similar:
Some of you may be required to do a risk assessment for a group you manage or an outing, etc. and whilst this may seem a chore or a worry, the Trust are just formalising the common sense that all of you already consider when managing groups or an

event, with a simple form.

Easy questions include are there enough chairs for those attending?

Are walkways clear? And if the answer is no, it prompts you to ask what you can do to fix the issue. So, it's really just about using common sense, which you would already be doing anyway. We just need to show that we are being careful to protect everyone and keep a record to prove we have considered any risks should the need ever occur. There is also a FAQ now available on the GL website created by the Trust and training is available.

- b We need to offer help and support to do them, not make the forms so basic or generic they are just seen as a worthless and pointless task. And if we offer support, who will do this and will it be added to their job description for future committee members in that role? In the end what we are hoping for are group leaders who want to do these risk assessments, understand why they do them and how important they are, not only to protect members but protect themselves as group leaders. It should also be known any GL not doing a risk assessment does so at their own risk and not the committee's. Lastly, we also need to use the right wording when we ask GLs to do them.
- c Current wording is *Group Leaders should complete and keep on file a Risk Assessment Form*. SHOULD = I believe this correctly implies the committee recommends they are done. MUST = Has to be done, however we cannot force the issue, or it could create a standoff. CAN = Implies only if they want to, which wrongly implies the committee are ok if they do not do them at all.

3.7 Contingency Planning: *ev u3a com 39 rev 1 Page 3 of 4: Dbee to update plan.* Hilary and Dbee would like to look at recruiting other committee members for succession planning. Tim would like a deputy for Webmaster. Dbee has offered to stand in as deputy if no one can be found or until another can step in.

4 **Treasurer's Report:**

4.1 BUDGET FOR 2024-25

A draft budget for 2024-25 is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. Any comments or amendments are welcome. It's likely that the accounts will break even, with a small surplus, unless something unexpected happens. The budget has been compiled with a fairly cautious approach and the surplus for the year could be higher than currently indicated. There is a question mark over our Gift Aid claim, in that u3a advice is that they haven't yet clarified with HMRC what the position is in relation to memberships that cover the cost of group activities. (Some u3as have a separate charge for group memberships). I would argue that all our expenditure is for the purpose of furthering the aims of the charity and it's not possible to break down an individual membership payment to specific benefits received. If an issue were to arise with a future claim, there would be sufficient reserves to fund any resulting deficit.

4.2 FINANCE POLICY

A draft finance policy, based on the *proforma* suggested by the u3a, will be available on the website. Policies on reserves and investments were approved by this Committee earlier in the year. The policy on reserves has been incorporated into the attached policy. There is no reference to investments in the u3a's *proforma* policy. The investment policy

should probably be reviewed more frequently than the overall finance policy, as circumstances change, so it could be helpful to keep it separate.

4.3 Changes to the original u3a *proforma* policy are shown in colour and bold, so that Committee members can see where changes have been made. Any comments on how this proforma has been adapted, or suggestions relating to the policy are welcome.

4.4 2023-24 FINANCIAL ACCOUNT

The accounting records for 2023-24 have been passed to Richard Galloway for inspection.

5 **Membership Report:**

5.1 506 members. Those members who did not reply to the many reminder attempts have now lapsed.

6 **Groups Report:**

6.1 The Singing For Fun Group has new leaders: Linda Long and Jill Ashburn are replacing Jill Francis.

6.2 The workshop offered to Group Leaders to help them recruit helpers will not run for the foreseeable future - it needed six participants to be viable and only two Group Leaders registered interest.

6.3 A new group "Watercolour Painting" has been proposed by Mark Parker and an email sent out requesting expressions of interest.

6.4 *Guide for Group Leaders* compiled by Ann was reviewed. In point 4 Webmaster was to be point of contact. The document was approved by the committee to be added to website.

6.5 Rod to send email requesting tea rota volunteers along with request for after tea entertainment offers.

7 **Website:** Nothing new to report.

8 **BEACON:** Nothing new to report.

9 **Monthly Meeting:**

9.1 The AGM went well with positive comments received regarding the swiftness of conducting the official business part and the quiz proved to be lively and popular.

9.2 Rod reported that there is one speaker slot remaining to fill for 2025

9.3 June speaker – Peter Smith – The Plight of the Bumblebee

9.4 Tea duty – Line Dancing

9.5 After tea – Abi speaking about scams and fraud

10 **10. AOB**

10.1 Risk Assessments – Karen emailed all the meeting venues and had responses from all but two, **Karen to chase these.**

10.2 Karen will forward risk assessments to Tim for adding to the website and the group leaders will be informed so they can be accessed.

10.3 Job descriptions on website, if anyone has changes, please send to Tim for updating.

10.4 Contingency planning document had been circulated to committee and was discussed, some backups agreed, Dbee to update. Bank signatories need adding, Hilary to chase bank. Webmaster/Treasurer/Business Secretary backups still needed.

10.5 Committee members to inform Tim of voting preference for u3a Chairman vote.

11 **Meeting closed at 1105**

12 **Next Meeting:** Tuesday 16 July 2024 (every 3rd Tuesday)

EMS VALLEY u3a BUDGET 2024-25

APPENDIX 1

	2023-24 Budget	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Budget	Change	Reason for change
	£	£	£	£	
Income					
Subscriptions	13,250	13,000	12,800	-450	£12,655 to date + cautious estimate of new members later in year
Gift Aid	1,690	2,531	2,500	810	Based on 420 members & last year's calculations
Interest		25	100	100	New accounts opened
Sales	0	0	0	0	
Donations		5		0	
Total	14,940	15,561	15,400		
Expenses					
Hall Rents	10,600	9,130	10,000	-600	Reduction in hall bookings by groups, but further price rises & new groups possible, (not many invoices received to date).
Speakers	1,000	785	1,000	0	
Office Expenses	50	0	50	0	
Member Subscription	2,120	2,080	2,100	-20	Current charge £2040, but provisional
Magazine	830	936	1,100	270	Current charge £1075, but provisional
Refreshments	200	215	300	100	
Sundries	120	42	50	-70	Based on 23-24
Beacon	540	534	550	10	Actual charge £535, but provisional
Zoom	160	0	0	-160	No longer purchased
U3A Day	150	0	150	0	Do we need this?
Total	15,770	13,722	15,300		
Net surplus / -deficit	-830	1,839	100		