

**Minutes of M&L U3A Meeting
Held at Maghull Baptist Church
Tuesday 11 February 2020 at 11.30am**

Present:	Dot Brannigan (Chair)	Tony Dodd (vice-Chair)	Linda Simms (secretary)
	Stuart Findlay (Treasurer)	Brenda McKenzie	Phil Davidson
	Ann Willox	John Chapman	Alan Carr
	Rhona Simon	Tony Kneebone	

1 **Apologies:** **Action**
Margaret Kendall, Frank Mercer

2 **Minutes of last meeting**
The minutes of the last meeting were signed by the Chair, no issues of accuracy having been raised. The minutes were accepted as a true copy.

3 **Actions and Matters arising from previous minutes**

August closure - letter sent to Groups concerned regarding the decision that we close for two weeks. To be discussed later in the meeting.

Membership costs – to be discussed under AOB.

Maghull Parish Hall – venue checks - to be discussed under Item 6 below.

£6 fee - we decided to leave as it was and review each year. This may need to be reviewed again – to be discussed under AOB.

Travel – We will meet with the interested parties next Tuesday 18 February 2020 to discuss the new travel legislation. We expect 15-20 attendees. TD will feedback at next Committee meeting.

Committee leads – establishing a Communication Team. This has been set up as a Whats App group for all parties involved, Joan Martin also needs to be added to this group. RS commented that she does not use Whats App. BMcK said she will share all information with RS on a weekly basis.

Future events - DB mentioned the event Sefton are holding on 21 May which we are involved in – to date she has no further details.

Monies held at home. SF updated the Committee on an email he had received from Head Office which states that it is OK to hold money at home for about 1 month. Also banks do not like to take cash and prefer cheques.

Ukulele groups – BMcK stated that we had £66 to return to 11 members = £6 each. So far nine members have received their monies back.

4 **Committee reports**

Membership - MK provided a written report to the Committee which briefly states: "Membership and Gift Aid forms issued to 25 groups. General membership will take place on four Tuesdays in March. 12 volunteers will assist with this process. Blank forms will be provided this year for members to take away and fill in. Assistance is available for any member who requires it. The current database will be deleted at the end of April and any members who have not renewed then will be required to re-join with a new number. To reduce costs no reminders will be issued this year.

Group Support – BMcK stated together with Margaret Ashton – we are in the process of meeting with our Group Leaders to see how things are going. We have spoken to 10 so far. One idea is that they involve other people in their groups to do some tasks. E.g., painting for pleasure – the leader resigned. Three others are taking up parts of that job. Looking at leaders who have left to see if we can get them involved again in different areas. One leader who used to be involved in Architecture for Fun has now moved to one of the leaders of Sunday Strollers. Another member who was involved in a lot of groups who has now become housebound. She likes board games, like Rummikubs and we have now set up a group via WhatsApp that will run from her home. We are putting her leadership skills to good use. Two previous walk leaders are discussing setting up a group to do short walks of about 1 mile.

BMcK emailed all Group Leaders to ask if there was anything they wished to raise at the Committee meeting. Out of 61 Group Leaders only four came back mainly with issues relating only to the summer closure. BMcK emailed these issues to the Committee prior to the meeting. Discussed below.

August Closure

The original decision taken by the Committee was we would close for 4 weeks in the summer. We then received a letter from six Group Leaders (GB, MB, MA, JJ, AR, PK) who were against the closure following which we decided to look at this topic again. We held an additional meeting in December and decided that we would close only for 2 weeks. The main focus being to give everybody a break, we have individuals who are here every week. TK/RS seemed to think that the closure focused around the refreshment ladies. DB stated this was not the case and the refreshment team could choose whether or not they wished to attend for any weeks we are open. DB had spoken to the refreshment ladies to state that the Committee had decided we would close in the Summer for 2 weeks and they had advised that they would like 3 weeks away. DB has asked that they let her know if they were taking their extra week before or after the agreed 2 weeks closure. Lil Boyle - Welfare Support was also concerned about the closure as she finds out most of her information at the coffee mornings when speaking to members. Following the December meeting DB wrote to each of the six who put that petition forward and received 3 responses.

In light of the issues raised by the above Group Leaders, we decided to revisit the decision we made in December as the Group Leaders who responded were still **not satisfied** with the decision.

DB quoted the concerns raised:

From Marj Atlay: I do have a point to raise. Just to say I was very disappointed by the Committee's decision to have a 2 week shut down in August. Reason being stated it was taking regards of peoples' welfare. Couldn't they have a rota system enabling everyone to get some time off when they need it. I spend something like £1,200 a month on average and over the past two weeks have paid in £1,142 to the Treasurer. I need all the time I can get to book seats, take money and pay bills I, along with other similar groups, are dealing with outside commercial outlets and they just need to be paid on time otherwise we would not get the service we require. I can also foresee an intrusion on my privacy with phone calls coming to me instead of being dealt with at a coffee morning. As this is going to affect all members, possibly with the loss of trips, could it

not go to the AGM for a members' vote.

From George Birchall:

I hope you take the attached as "constructive" I am in receipt of a letter handed to me by Dot re. Committee decision "2 week shutdown in August" this year. As last year, I see no need for this as it was never U3A policy until last year

Can I have written advice of the reasoning behind the Committee decision to declare a "2 week shutdown" ie who has requested it, why is it necessary and who benefits from it, the Group Leaders will get no benefit from the shutdown

If it is for the benefit of the ladies in the kitchen bear in mind that when we had to go to St George's whilst the central heating was being carried out at MBC we had no tea/coffee and we still functioned and I am not aware of any adverse comments re. "no tea/coffee"

I think decisions are being taken by Committee without having any prior discussion or seeking any comments from Group Leaders or members

It appears to me that Group Leaders no longer have any say in the running of M & L U3A but are dictated to by Committee decisions and have been advised that the only chance to voice their opinion or concern is on a one to one basis with Tony Dodd or BMcK.

I doubt if these discussions will be formally minuted and a course of action agreed.

From Maureen Birchall:

The only issues I have are the same as last year.

Why are we still having two weeks off in August? when no one who the decision will affect, has been in agreement.

SF stated that for the previous August (2019) when we opened the hall for the concerned groups, only one group leader attended and the amounts taken were negligible. He also stated that if we decide to stay open, the treasury team will not be present. BMcK stated that all members were advised of the reduced service and to pay monies in by the end of July. Majority of other groups finish at the end of July.

Suggestions from BMcK : we ask all the other Group Leaders who do not normally attend coffee mornings to pay by the end of July. It worked last year so no reason why it would not work again. This would help the treasury team. Last year we opened for 2 weeks and only Marj attended. What if we did the same this year so opened with reduced facilities.

DB discussed some suggestions to vote on:

- The decision has been made by the Committee to close for 2 weeks and that we should stick to that
- We will open and pay the rent for 1 hour only. Any Group Leader who attends has to set up own tables and clear up before they leave and any monies collected

they have to bank themselves. Everyone has a choice on whether to come in or not

- Open as normal

MA suggested we put it to the members at the next AGM to decide but if we do we tell them what we took last year and how many came in.

BMck stated we need to find a solution, it is impossible to make everybody happy.

PD - Referring to GB item, quite disappointed that he has made a statement and he is so far out of order by what he has written. Spoke to Lil this morning. We have 900+ members of which approx. 100 attend the coffee mornings, usually the same people each week which means 800 don't turn up. Are we to canvas every member and have a referendum? I am not prepared to do that and I don't think the Committee should either. The whole function of the committee is to make a decision on behalf of other members. DB – It remains unexplained why, when we had exactly the same issues raised last year and decided to remain open specifically for anyone who wanted to collect or pay in money, that only one group leader came in to collect and yet the same individuals are again raising concerns when they didn't come in last August.

As a Committee we do make these difficult decisions. The committee has made a reasonable decision to close and we are giving all members and leaders 6 months' notice before hand. Some of the Committee feel quite strongly that we should stick to the original decision to close for 2 weeks. DB – said 'this isn't going to go away and we need to deal with it now.' Some Committee members asked why we are closing at all. It was mentioned that over the past few years, members attending in August had dropped so the Committee decided that it would consider closing during August to give everyone, including those people who 'have' to be here every Tuesday to fulfil a responsibility, a break.

PROPOSAL

Following our previous discussions to close the coffee morning for two weeks in August 2020 - and after careful consideration we propose the following:

- We remain open
- We (The U3A) will meet the cost of hiring the Maghull Baptist Church (hall only) for 1 hour (10.00:11.00am) on each Tuesday 11 and 18 August 2020
- No facilities will be available
- All members and Group Leaders will be made aware in advance
- It is the personal choice of Group Leaders whether or not they come.
- Any Group Leaders who wish to use the hall will inform the Chair in advance.
- The expectation is that the Group Leaders concerned set up and clear away their own tables etc. and they must leave the hall as they found it.
- Any monies collected by the Group Leaders must be paid directly into our bank account.
- Those Group Leaders who submitted the petition relating to the closure, advise

the Chair.

- All individuals who carry out a role on Tuesdays e.g., set up and break down team, front desk, membership team, IT and any others, must be given an open choice about whether or not they attend on 11 and 18 August 2020.

VOTE – The Committee all agreed unanimously in favour of the above PROPOSAL. The vote was therefore carried.

In September we should add this as an item on the Agenda to discuss and review what happened in August.

Website issues

BMcK – with regards to PDs comments regarding input from each group to put on at least 2 items per year. BMcK has made a start on this.

Group Leaders meetings

GB had also raised an issue about resurrecting Group Leaders meetings and wanted it put to the Committee – BMcK stated we used to have these approx. 4 times per year after Committee meetings where we would read the Committee minutes but now the minutes are on the website and noticeboard for all to see. We have 70+ leaders – what would happen if they all turned up! Majority of Group Leaders are not interested in this type of discussion. BMcK stated we now have a desk for communicating with Group Leaders and she sends emails about issues. It has been proven to work and it works well. TD stated that GB makes reference that Group Leaders can only come back to BMcK or TD. TD stated that GB was confusing the issue as TD has no input into Group Leaders matters which are dealt with very effectively by BMcK. That particular reference related to the launch of the GL handbook, GB insisted on a GL meeting to discuss changes in the handbook. TD told him at that time that a meeting was unnecessary but if he held a meeting then TD would not be prepared to attend. GB now suggesting that if there is a problem, then there are only two avenues. BMcK said if any Group Leaders had an issue that she would be the first port of call and this is working well at the present time. We have discussed this before, (item 10.5 at the 12th November 2019 meeting) and the Committee had made the decision not to resurrect Group Leaders meetings.

Hire of Sanctuary by Group

BMcK discussed the issue raised by Maureen Birchall when her group had to pay for the use of the sanctuary between 11am – 1pm when the hall had been paid for by the U3A between 9am-11am during one of the close down dates in August 2019. The Committee stated that the hall was booked and paid for by the U3A from 9-11am for the use of anyone to collect or pay in money, the fact that only one leader turned up (Marj Atlay) is irrelevant. If any groups book different rooms in the MBC then they have to be paid for separately out of their own funds, this applies to all groups. DB will write to Maureen Birchall.

Netball England

The Walking Netball group decided to send two people on a host training course at a cost of £160 – the 16 members decided to contribute £10 each. They made the decision to manage their own finances.

Sunday Strollers

BMcK made us aware of a meal that the Sunday Strollers went on the previous month – 28 in total. Unfortunately one member (who left early) did not pay and the remaining members decided that they the extra. (50p each). One member was not happy with this decision and thought that the U3A should pay the extra. BMcK stated it was the group's decision to pay.

5 U3A day – June 2020

The date has been set as Wednesday 3 June but other U3As around the country are holding it on other days. It was decided that we would showcase our U3A on our usual coffee morning date of Tuesday 2 June 2020. TK and RS agreed to lead on this and look at various ideas. They will contact local dignitaries to invite them.

6 Health & Safety Awareness

TD stated he had received an email from Val Bridges regarding Maghull Parish Hall. Gas safety checks, PAT tests, Fire Extinguisher tests – all complete. However electrical tests failed, some minor failures. Repairs are being carried out this week and TD will revisit next week. Otherwise, no causes for concern. TD will report back to Committee in March.

Following on from our last meeting where the Committee decided to send letters out to the remaining 8 venues that need checks completing, it has since come to light that this is not practical and it is up to us go through the list of 20+ questions and carry out checks along with the manager of that venue and a Group Leader who is familiar with that venue. TD stated that this process has worked for the 3 venues that have now been completed.

Everyone was happy that this process is done on an individual basis instead of what was agreed at the previous meeting of sending out letters to each venue and requesting a reply within 14 days. FM Health & Safety lead is back in March. We will then identify the next venue whether it is the most frequently used or the oldest.

7 Any other business

- 7.1 Magazine Subscription / Capitation fees – carried forward to next meeting.
- 7.2 Bill's 90th birthday – 21 Feb 20. DB has spoken to Bill and invited him to the coffee morning next Tuesday 18 Feb. DB is arranging a gift, one small card has been passed around for all to sign, it was agreed to buy a larger card and pass it around for the remainder of people to sign next Tuesday before Bill arrives. We will arrange free tea and coffee.
- 7.3 Group Leaders report – discussed earlier in the meeting
- 7.4 Maghull in Bloom – George Baker, Vice Chair of MIB requested that they become an unincorporated member of U3A. They are probably looking to access our members and share information. They may want to advertise in our Year Book or on our website and newsletter. A lot of our members are already involved in MIB. DB wanted to ask if the

Committee were comfortable if we got some more information. The Committee agreed.

7.5 Coronavirus. TD highlighted this problem. We are an organisation that deals with an elderly population. We need to be aware of the situation and that if a pandemic occurs we may have to close.

8 **Date of next meeting**
Tuesday 10 March 2020 at 11.15 for 11.30am – venue MBC