
Maghull & Lydiate U3A
Group Leaders and Committee Meeting
held at Maghull Baptist Church
on Tuesday 31 May 2022 at 11:20pm

Present: 21 members attended
18 Groups were represented
4 Committee members not including JJ and AC

Apologies: Blair Allwood, Brian Dickinson, Brenda McKenzie, Margaret Kendall
Ken Moulton, Anne Blundell, Geoff Heaps

The Meeting started a little bit late for which JJ apologised saying it is not always the easiest thing to ask the coffee drinkers to move out so that we've got time to set up.

JJ began the meeting by explaining why we were there and how this was an unresolved issue which had reared its head originally in February. She explained that the proposal had been put forward by the then committee to close in August for a certain amount of time but inadvertently this had been shown as closing for five weeks on the website.

This had caused problems for certain leaders and it had resulted in an unfortunate event which had resulted in members of the then committee resigning. The question of an August closure had not been resolved so this meeting was being held so the views of both the committee and the group leaders could be heard.

The discussion was opened as to whether or not we should close this coming August. Jeannette O'Neill wanted to know whether or not any decision that is made at this meeting and ratified by the committee in June would mean that other groups would have to close in August for example painting for pleasure usually carries on right through.

JJ explained that we were only referencing the Tuesday coffee morning and all group leaders could carry on running their groups as they have always done. Having looked back through our history JJ noted we had only closed for a two week period in 2019. This was not a traditional closure and the reason given for this closure was that the ladies, who served tea in the coffee room, had requested a break - they needed a holiday.

JJ stated that there was never anything to stop them having a holiday we would simply not have had tea or coffee that day but that the committee made the decision to close for two weeks. The question that faced us now was - did we want to carry on with this.

The discussion was opened to the floor. The general consensus appeared to suggest that in the main people did want to keep the u3a open.

Norman Salford asked why we had to close at all in August.

Marje Atlay explained the problem with collections of money and how it would affect her day trips if she was not able to collect money weekly.

Another issue was requesting cheques as she works with coach hire firms, entrance fees and meals. She pointed out that it would mean that everyone who was organising a day trip in September would have to ensure that they collected the cheques necessary in July, something it isn't always possible to do as last minute changes in numbers have an effect on the price.

A question was asked was there a financial reason why we would be requesting this closure. Joan Martin replied that the current cost is £38 per two hour session to have a coffee morning, something our u3a could easily afford, even though coffee mornings no longer bring us any income other than a few pounds made on the book table.

A question concerning the number of people who attend in August was raised. Phil D pointed out that when we had partly closed and only a few members had turned up. It was pointed out by MA that few had come as they all thought we were closed completely. JJ said that any decision made today once ratified would be sent out to all members so there could be no ambiguity about our status. Phil said it would be helpful if more help for furniture set up and removal could be found as numbers had decreased.

Rita Machell representing the Treasury team explained that the Treasury team were very willing to be there each Tuesday in August and that different members could come in different days if necessary. She envisaged there was no problem with them being available to collect monies and more importantly to write out cheques for the group leaders who needed them. She said it would also be great help if the back of cheques that were being paid in could be used to say what cheque was for e.g. trip type etc.

Several ideas were floated, but when David Ward suggested that we should stay open as the majority of people had indicated they wished to stay open, but perhaps what we could do would be to close on the Tuesday following the August bank holiday. This would give everybody a long weekend and would mean that we would restart on the 6th of September

This idea went down very well with most members of the meeting and JJ proposed that we accept that we would be staying open for the whole of August apart from the Tuesday following the bank holiday Monday which would mean we would be closed on the 30th. A vote was taken with 24 in favour only one voting against the proposal.

The proposal that we close only on the last Tuesday in August will now be ratified at the Committee meeting in June.

It was agreed that we would keep a close eye on the numbers attending in August in comparison to current attendance. This information could have a direct bearing on future choices.

Phil Davidson had mentioned something about the way the other U3As only meet on once a month basis and as we had little time today, we agreed that we would have a look at this in

the future. He quoted that of the 12 u3as in our locality 10 of them only met once a month; only Aughton Ormskirk and ourselves met every single week. JJ pointed out that the larger the U3A the more difficult it is to get everyone together for one meeting. The paying in of money would be very difficult if done only once a month.

PD wanted to know why other u3as could do it and not us. Mention was made that it can take sometimes three weeks to sell the places on a trip and only meeting up once a month would cause great difficulty because trips could only be booked once the leader was sure how many people were going to attend.

JJ mentioned that whilst we are obviously aware of what goes on with all the other u3as we should be planning how we can best serve the members of our group and perhaps we should not be too influenced by what others do.

Phil Davidson went on to discuss the manner of paying saying if everybody paid in by bank transfer or direct debit they would not be the need to meet as often as we do.

JJ pointed out that whilst in the future it may well be that everybody will pay everything by either direct debit or bank transfer, currently a great many members prefer to pay in cash or by cheque; it is still something that appeals to many people above a certain age.

We should always make certain that everybody has a fair chance to go on outings, to join theatre groups and to go to galleries and if necessary, they should be allowed to pay by cash.

Discussion was then held as to the methods of paying monies that are available currently and Phil Davidson pointed out that with renewals we had actually got a card reader which had expedited the paying of the subscriptions for this year. JJ thought that the card reader had broken down and was not aware that a replacement had been bought Rita Machell said that indeed a replacement had been got but nobody seems to know the cost of that.

Nigel Burrows pointed out that we do have to move with the times and that the Committee need to discuss banking methods going forward and meeting with group leaders to discuss the way forward.

Time was not in our favour and it was deemed that this was a conversation that may need a fuller discussion possibly in September or October. Currently we will be following the same pattern as we have been.

The meeting closed at 12:09