

JJ opened the meeting and thanked all the Group Leaders who had taken the time to attend.

1. Register - Ann Unsworth & Sue Quinn (Theatre), Marj Atlay (Day Trips), Alan Carr (Ramblers/Day Riders), George Dobie (Table Tennis), Colin Gore (Badminton1), Pete Martin (Digital Cameras), Gail Aindow (Walking Netball), Brenda McKenzie (Friday and Sunday Strollers, Nordic Walking, Badminton2), Ann Blundell (Stramblers), David Ward (French), Colin Bennett (Computers, Technology/Science), Ros Leith (Family History & Glass), David Russell (Family History), Maureen Birchall & Jan Martin (Art Appreciation), Maureen Collier (Creative Crafts), Joan Martin (Card Making), Irene Edwards Nigel Burrows Carol Westall (Committee)

2. Apologies - Brian and Brenda Dickinson, Margaret Kendall, Ron Higham

3. Updates – TSB issues JJ was able to tell the GLs that our problems with the TSB have been resolved. Both General and Social Accounts now have nine signatories which will mean there will no longer be a delay in giving out cheques on A Tuesday.

#### 4. Membership

- Current numbers- JJ stated that we currently have 683 members on roll
- New members appearing in groups - JJ said that during the past ten months we have received 115 new members. Of these only 45 have taken up a place within one or more of the groups. The others have opted to join day trips etc. As our groups are experiencing problems with numbers and the rising cost of premises it is perhaps a little worrying that this has happened. JJ suggested that we look at how we can attract new members into the groups. BMCK stated that many of the physical groups were actually full – Bowls, Sunday Walkers for example. A note had been placed on the website saying that the groups were closed to new members. MA felt that this was a very negative statement and it was later agreed informally that we may change the wording to indicate that a waiting list is in place for some of the groups. JJ had prepared an advert that she hoped GLs would take to their groups, to Drs Surgeries, to cafes etc in the hope we can continue to introduce new members to the u3a. Quite a few GLs took copies away with them.
- Membership renewals procedure March 2023 – JJ had brought copies of the renewals form which GLs could take to their groups. These forms should be given out to members who cannot print their own.. Committee members will collect form from the groups that meet weekly. BMCK stated that she was concerned that the system might cause delays leading to long queues. She said that in previous years the membership cards had all been filled in prior to payment. JJ pointed this would not be happening this year and that as we would be having five desks manned by two members giving us the opportunity to deal with ten members each time we might find that delays would be kept to a minimum. Also, assistance with form completion would be available in the foyer. Normally forms would not be needed but this year we are requesting an emergency contact for each member; something we have not done before.

#### 5. Communication

- Result of meeting with those members who are not online - Approximately 13 people turned up for this meeting. Some 75 invitations were sent out, 10 by phone and the rest by knocking

on doors. Not many responses were received beforehand and on the day it was a disappointing turn out.

Two ladies did give us their email address but the conversation was very one sided. JJ had hoped we could set up Buddy Systems and following the example of other members to encourage people to meet in small friendly groups. The group had little to say or offer. AB explained that she felt that it was up to her to make the effort to find out what was going on. AB said she had built up a friendship with the GLs by attending on Tuesdays as often as she could.

- Improved communication with members – GLs are asked to ensure that any event taking place in the u3a e.g. the AGM, Carol Concert etc is announced at their meetings.  
PD stated that the History for Fun Group announcement for the February meeting had not been placed on the website. JJ stated that it had indeed been posted on the website and CW confirmed she had read it online. JJ also pointed out that individual invitations to the talk had been sent out to all HFF member using Beacon.
- JJ quoted the experience of a possible new member who was interested in Spanish but who had assumed the Spanish class was no longer active as there was no up to date info/articles on the web under Groups. JJ had put the prospective member in touch with Ron Higham and Blair Atwood so they could give better guidance. PM said he had experienced difficulties each time he had tried to post new info on the site. PD said instructions for the management of posts was available online.

#### 6. Recruitment into the u3a and into groups

- Introduction of new group into the Maghull area - possible effect on our numbers - A new group called 'Coming Together' has start in Maghull. IE went to its inaugural meeting and gave a report back to the Committee. IE reported that the meeting had only 10 in attendance and seemed to be lacking in structure. Julie McKay was in charge and had many plans for the group including a Quiz on the next Thursday. IE felt that the group was no danger to our organisation. Other members of the u3a also attended and agreed with IE.
- Looking forward – we are approaching our 17<sup>th</sup> birthday – how are we doing? We have not made much inroad into the numbers lost during and after the pandemic.
- Possible use of FaceBook as a means of advertising our group. A&O have a FaceBook page could we do the same? GLs to enquire if we have any keen FB users who might be willing to monitor a private page? JJ is to meet with the Aughton & Ormskirk Face Book overseer to see if we can utilise this. Reports of events before and after (reviews) could be posted on FB. This would mean we would need someone willing to monitor any postings.

#### 7. Groups – we need to look for deputies within each group; someone to share the load and possibly carry the baton now and again. Looking at our current groups we can see that many of the GLs are the original members that set up the group as far back as 2006. Being a GL is not the easiest of tasks and dropping numbers and rising costs can put a strain on any leader. Many GLs have an assistant but often the assistants are not willing to step into the role should the original GL decide to call time on their service. We need to ensure we encourage members to take on the role of deputies so that they can continue the group should it become necessary.

## 8. AOB

1. Group Leaders contact – CB wanted to know when GLs could get together and catch up with the problems, ideas etc that each group has. JJ pointed out that this is exactly what these meetings are all about. We need to hear each other, share each other's experience and any solutions leaders might have come up with. All the leaders who were unable to attend this meeting missed that opportunity. Let's hope they make the next one.
2. Website postings – JJ brought up an email sent to our email address. In it a lady mentioned she had been checking up n our Spanish classes and had looked under Groups. She had used the click here for latest news to find neither group had posted anything ages. This led her to think the groups were defunct. I sent an email explaining that not all groups post online but that all currently running groups can be found on the Groups Update link and on the Calendar.  
CB commented that there were two copies of the membership form online. JJ pointed out that the one listed as Membership 2023/24 was for new members who might want to print the sheet out at home. The new and renewal forms are also available for GLs under the Admin heading. JJ thought new members were unlikely to visit this part of the site but that access to both forms was necessary for GLs.
3. Calendar usage – We need to list venues on the calendar and extra information such as topics and speakers when available. Group Leaders should liaise with Pat Snape the Calendar co-ordinator.

Meeting ended at 12:15