

9 Discussion – “Support for Research in our u3as”.

Patsy put this subject forward for discussion as she gave an overview of research and projects at Wokingham, Reading and Woodley u3as. Wokingham have a Research sub-committee which has monitored and supported several research projects including a collaborative project with Reading and Woodley u3as. This research about Woodley has been published as a book. Pam Hares, the co-ordinator of this Research sub-committee, is now standing down.

A shared learning and support panel can help members within Interest groups by providing mentors, it can also spread the word about any research taking place such as the High Street Project.

Patsy asked how other u3as support research within their membership, how do we advertise research, support members and bring together the research?

i/ Thame and District has a Group that works together with Thame Museum helping with exhibitions and researching exhibits.

ii/ Reading has a Town Study group that chooses to research 3 towns which they then visit.

iii/ Chinnor has an Art History group whose members give regular presentations. The u3a is also in contact with village residents who are involved in researching different aspects of the history of Chinnor.

iv/ Goring suggested members become involved with research activities outside u3a.

v/ Wokingham is considering setting up a panel of mentors with specific research skills.

vi/ Inviting members to give short presentations eg 15 minutes is less daunting and spreads the load. An overview rather than in-depth content can be used as the format for short presentations.

vii/ Help can be offered with technology such as Powerpoint Presentations and/or using photos and pictures, how to refine a google search. People need help in a variety of ways.

viii/ Some members may have contacts with centres of learning such as universities. Jane Sellwood has contact with Reading University which is keen to involve the community in research.

ix/ Bruce Collins (Bracknell Forest) has documented the lives of some of the members and produced a book.

x/ We all have different skills and can offer these to others.

Patsy and Avis would welcome any further comments by e-mail.

10 Network Information

10.1 Speaker Database (maintained by Chairman). New up-dates have been received very recently, Avis will revise the list over the next few days. It was suggested that databases of speakers could be shared with other Networks and Regions. Thame and District had sent their speaker list to some other u3as but had little response in return.

10.2. List of Interest Groups (maintained by Fay Sinai) This is available on the TVN website. Fay repeated the request she made at the last Reps meeting for Group convenors to let her have up-to-date lists. To date she has received only a few which is very disappointing. (Lists received from Ridgeway, Chinnor and Chiltern; Chess Valley has also sent a list but received no acknowledgement, Avis will follow this up.)

10.3 TVN Contacts list (maintained by Chairman). **Please let Avis have up-dates as they occur.** This list is also held by the Vice-Chair. To comply with GDPR it is not circulated elsewhere. Contacts usually include the u3a Chair and any other who needs to be kept informed. Response re up-dating contact information varies. Avis would like to tidy up the list and suggested that u3as reconsider how many Reps they have. Chinnor pointed out that they use generic e-mail addresses, however, names of contacts will still be needed.

10.4 Events Contact List (maintained by Mike Price) The list has around 1900 members. Mike will check this against the Ticket Source applications.

10.5 Website (maintained by David Morton) www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk David reported that the website was up-dated with the new Events and had many visits daily.

He advised members to use the website to access Ticket Source for tickets for Events. It appears that those who go direct to the Ticket Source website experience difficulties in booking places on TVN Events.

Avis thanked David and Mike for establishing Ticket Source for Event bookings.

11 AOB

i/ Wantage and Grove have had difficulty finding Committee members, they currently need a Secretary. They have also published a book of Favourite Recipes.

ii/ A request for Reps to share e-mail addresses was turned down as this would not comply with GDPR, (written consent would be required from each person). Avis advised that messages could be sent via herself as she holds the Contacts list.

Reps were reminded that e-mails should always be sent using BCC, and Beacon was a useful communication tool.

12. Dates **AGM and Reps on Friday 29th April 2022 at 10.30am on Zoom**

Reps face-to-face meeting at Benson on Friday 29th July at 10.30pm

Avis closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

Date Chairman

14/02/2022

Useful details:

TVN www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk

SE Region <https://u3asites.org.uk/south-east>

SE Region Trustee <https://u3asites.org.uk/south-east/contact>

(use the link <https://www.facebook.com/groups/377393767067766> or search Facebook for Thames Valley Network).

Julie Travers julie@u3a.org.uk

u3a

Thames Valley Network

Minutes of the u3a Thames Valley Network Representatives' Meeting held via Zoom video link Friday 4th February 2022.

Present:

Committee: Avis Furness, Chairman (Reading); Fay Sinai, Vice-Chairman (Abingdon); Derek Randall, Treasurer (Thame & District); Anne Marie Lord, Mins. Secretary (Chinnor & District); Susie Berry, Events Co-ordinator (Ridgeway); David Morton, Website support (Reading); Gill Le Du (Henley); Margaret Sherrington (West Oxford); Patsy Thornton (Wokingham).

Representatives: John Orchard, Fay Sinai (Abingdon); Patricia Foster, Chris Fieldsend, Liz Rowe-Jones (Banbury); Bruce Collins, Janet Russell (Bracknell Forest); Kathy Dunmore (Carterton); James Cadle (Chess Valley); Janet Erskine (Chinnor & District); Kath Oldham (Didcot & District); Celia Barnshaw (Goring Gap); Josie Croft, Mike Price (Greater Thame); Gill Le Du (Henley-on-Thames); Francis Gerrard (High Wycombe); Brian Baldwin (Milton Keynes); Mary and Robin Blake (Newbury); Babs Cooper (Princes Risborough); Mary Butcher, Jane Sellwood (Reading); Judith Pernette (Ridgeway); Carol Bradbrook-Taylor (Thame & District); Stephanie Steevenson (Thatcham); George Goldsmith (Wantage and Grove); Beverley Birmingham (West Oxford); Pam Jones (Witney); Gill Gardner (Wokingham) Tessa Dove (Woodley & District).

Events publicity: Mike Price

S E Region: Regional Trustee Susie Berry

Regional Trustee Assistant Bucks, Berks, Oxon. Pam Jones

1. Welcome and Apologies: The Chairman welcomed all present via ZOOM.

Apologies had been received from Mary and Margaret Herbert (Bicester); Mike Watts (Carterton); Mike Lawson (Chalfonts); Peter Metcalf (Chiltern); Christine Clinch (Chipping Norton); Mary Turner (Goring Gap); Deborah Miller (Greater Thame); John Twytle (Maidenhead); Sue Carvey (Swindon); John Sutton (Thame & District); Neil Kelly (Thameside, Wallingford); Lyn Toms (Wantage and Grove); Judy and Nick Sturley (Wendover); Paul Atkins (Woodley & District)

Avis said that since our last meeting Buckingham u3a had been in contact and expressed an interest in TVN. With no Rep making him/herself known at this meeting we will look forward to welcoming a Rep. at our next meeting in April.

2 Minutes of the last meeting (22nd October 2021). Circulated prior to the meeting. The Minutes were approved.

3 Matters arising.

7.10 *Beacon for Networks will not be adopted by TVN at present.* Following on from a conversation as Reps were gathering for this meeting Avis agreed to re-consider the benefits of Beacon for TVN with a view to taking up the offer of Beacon free of charge to Networks.

9.4 *Reps were invited to share any plans in hand, comments or suggestions.*

iii/ *DBS checks and safeguarding issues.* The Safeguarding policy was reviewed by the executive resulting in the Housing Association involved agreeing to and paying for DBS checks for three Convenors who are now able to use the hall for board games.

4 Chairman's report

4.1 This is Avis's last Reps meeting as Chair, before the AGM on April 29th.

At the AGM Reps. will vote on a new Chair, information will be sent out in due course. If anyone would like to put him/herself forward as a committee member, we would love to hear from you.

4.2 Avis has attended as many of our various study events as possible and thanked everyone for their work in bringing these events to our members – everyone involved has worked so hard and judging from the responses received the events have been very much appreciated. Avis thanked those who have sent emails, saying how much their u3a members have enjoyed our events. Susie will speak about planning for future events later. Two workshops for Trustees, were held in November and December, they went well and were particularly aimed at new and prospective committee members, but also served as useful reminders for longer serving members.

Avis encouraged Reps. to look at the u3a website for information about workshops and tutorials and other online events – click on "online tutorials" under the Events tab at the top of the web page.

4.3 The South East Region Networks are continuing to hold meetings, these are a useful way of finding out what other networks are doing, and for exchanging ideas. Recently the SERN meeting highlighted the importance of reminding our members that we all get more out of our u3as if we put something in. Reps. are already doing this but it is useful sometimes to remind our members that their u3a needs them to come forward and contribute. A new workshop due to be announced may be relevant as it will focus on volunteers.

4.4 In November, Avis gave a face-to-face talk to Abingdon u3a. she thanked Abingdon and Fay for making her so welcome.

4.5 Avis has started a Facebook Group for the Thames Valley Network, currently it has 35 members. As there is no cost and very little time involved Avis will carry on with it. Reps are asked to mention it to members and ensure that they know it is a private group, for members of TVN u3as only. Chiltern u3a posted in our Facebook Group recently to invite members to join their Facebook Groups. It has been really interesting to see what they are doing.

5 Network Link Meeting Report

Network Link brings together u3a networks from all over the country, previously face-to-face meetings were held alternately in London and somewhere further north, they now take place on Zoom and bring together many more people. The last meeting had attendees from the Isles of Scilly to the North of Scotland, as well as some from Northern Ireland and one from Guernsey.

5.1 The next Network Link meeting is on 16th February. The programme will include an item on future strategy from Allan Walmsley, Regional Trustee for the West Midlands, case studies from networks in Wales and Chester, and an address from Liz Thackray, the Chair of the Third Age Trust. There will also be breakout rooms for smaller discussion groups enabling everyone to join in.

Avis is on the organising sub-committee for the Network Link, she has responsibility for the attendance list for the meetings, currently over 130 members are registered.

Eleven members of TVN have registered to attend the next meeting, there are still plenty of places if Reps would like to attend.

5.2 The Networks section of the u3a website has been updated and further changes are planned to make it easier to use – look under the “Support for u3as” tab on the u3a website.

5.3 The News for Networks newsletter was launched in January, it will be produced three times a year. A link is available in order to sign up, Reps can contact Avis by e-mail if it has not been received.

6. Treasurer's Report Financial Statement to the 31st January 2022

6.1 The statement of accounts to 31st January 2022 had been sent to Reps by e-mail. The sum of £12669.30 was carried over from 2021.

The balance currently held in Lloyds Bank is £12576.68.

Two fee paying events have taken place to date realising a surplus of £51.38.

The Administration Cost of £144 covers our Zoom licence for the first quarter of this year.

6.2 The financial statement for the year ended 31st December 2021 will be made available at the AGM on 29th April 2022.

6.3 Responding to queries Derek said that “cheques not yet presented” related to cheques paid to Speakers and that his latest Bank Statement covered the period to 5th January 2022. “Cheques in hand to pay in” are from Ticket Source.

Avis thanked Derek saying that she was very grateful to him for the clarity of the accounts.

7. SE Region Trustee's report

7.1 Headington u3a are the 500th u3a subscribing to Beacon.

7.2 The Brand Centre is offering new products many of which are aimed at the 40th year celebrations and also walking activities.

7.3i The 40th Anniversary programme is taking shape and will be published shortly. Michaela Moody and Julie Travers are organising this and u3as should contact Julie Travers at the office about any events planned by their u3a. (e-mail address below)

7.3ii On 23rd March there will be a lunch celebrating the launch of u3a in Cambridge with Eric Midwinter as Guest of Honour. This will be preceded by a filmed conversation between Liz Thackray and Eric Midwinter.

7.3iii u3as are encouraged to join in the “picnic in the park” which has been timed to coincide with the Queen's Jubilee celebrations, u3as can hold picnics any day that week.

7.4 Beacon is now available to Regions, the SE Region will be taking up this offer.

7.5i The SE Region Spring gathering will take place on 7th April. The 40th Anniversary will be a focus, particularly the aspect of having fun, u3as are encouraged to share their plans and are asked to let Susie know.

7.5ii Susie emphasised that any member is welcome to join these Gatherings and she asked Reps to encourage members to look beyond their own u3a.

7.6 A face to face Board meeting will take place at the beginning of March.

8 Events Team Report

8.1 Susie expressed her huge thanks to all the Team who have so many wonderful ideas for Events.

On average one Event is held each week and all involve a lot of work and effort. She also thanked all members who write in to say thank-you.

All Events are well-attended with some being erudite and scholarly, others more light-hearted and fun.

8.2 As u3as are opening up and running their own Events TVN will now offer just two Events each month.

Susie commended the programme which can be found on the website, and includes a quiz and topics such as What makes your Garden Grow?, Sutton Hoo, Thames Boatyards, the origins and development of anaesthesia; a trip to Wisely is planned which will be preceded by a lecture on roses. There will be a visit to Kelmscott which has recently undergone refurbishment and has new exhibits. The first face-to-face Event is planned for 29th July at Benson. The Reps meeting in the morning will be followed by lunch which will be open to both Reps and those registered for the afternoon lecture.

Avis thanked Susie and the Team for their resourcefulness as seen in the range of subjects covered. A program of events held on-line had not been anticipated at the time when Avis became Chair but in adapting to the situation we have learnt from each other and had fun, too.

