U3a Kent Network Autumn Meeting

23rd September 3pm on zoom

Minutes

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| **U3a**  | **Representative** | ***Apologies***  |
| Ashford, Wye and District |  | Barry Andrews |
| Bearsted and district  | Jenny Akehurst  | Kevin Willis  |
| Canterbury | Robin Terry |  |
| Cranbrook |  |  |
| Dartford |  |  |
| East Medway |  |  |
| Edenbridge  |  |  |
| Faversham  | Babs Stone, Vice Chair  |  |
| Goudhurst and District  |  | Ian Agnew Ashby Merson-Davies |
| Gravesend |  | Sandra Parker  |
| Hawkhurst  | Julia Newman, chair |  |
| Isle of Sheppey |  |  |
| Kings Hill and District  |  | Melanie Blewer  |
| Knole |  |  |
| Maidstone  |  |  |
| Maidstone Invicta  | Liz Judson, groups coordinator |  |
| Malling District  | Chrys Short, chair Valerie Willsher, secretary  |  |
| Medway | Kevin Booth, vice chair Tony Bevis, SE Region PR | Angela Howe |
| Meopham | Mike Chantry, Chair Linda Hall, Treasurer | Andrew Morton |
| Orpington  |  |  |
| Paddock Wood  | Michelle Sinclair, chair  |  |
| Pembury |  | Maggie Hall  |
| Saxon Shore  |  |  |
| Sevenoaks | Ken Brown, Chair Beryl Mansell, vice chair |  |
| Shepway and District  |  |  |
| Swanley and District  |  |   |
| Tenterden |  | Jenny Stevens  |
| Thanet  |  | Adrian Everix |
| Tonbridge | Frani Hoskins |  |
| Tunbridge Wells  | Eryll Fabian, Chair |  |
| Westerham | Tony Pearson, committee member  |  |
| White Cliffs Country  | Sue Edwards, ChairEleanor Brooks, Treasurer  |  |
| Regional Trustee | Susie Berry  |  |
| Plus Committee  | Carole Dickenson, chair  | John Russell, volunteer  |
|  | Rob White, PR  |  |

1. Chrys Short welcomed everyone.
2. Rob White led a session on “Communication” to help address recruitment issues, particularly for committee members. His presentation is attached. For a flavour, some challenges he set included:
* Can people do “tasters” of groups, to encourage them to join or start new ones?
* Are the images on your website likely to attract new-retired people?
* Do you leave your newsletter in local clubs and places where potential members might see it?
* Does your committee remember that there may be people at monthly meetings who don’t know your name?
* What do you do to welcome new members?

The session was well-received and generated good discussion. Everyone who would like to join Rob’s PR network please send their forename, surname, u3a and email to Eleanor.brooks1661@gmail.com so they can be added to the group in Beacon.

1. Updates:
2. Peer to peer group update

Chrys Short reported that the chairs group has already started and plans to meet 4 times a year on zoom, and there is support available between sessions.

Other groups we hope to start soon include:

Treasurers – Angela Howe

PR – Rob White

Speaker secretaries – John Russell

Group coordinators – Carole Dickenson

Secretaries – Eleanor Brooks

We would like to email people directly with information about when these meetings are to be held. Many thanks to those chairs who have already sent us details. Other u3as please send details to Eleanor.brooks1661@gmail.com so they can be entered into Beacon.

1. Report from the SE forum

Carole Dickenson reminded us about Summer School that will be in September at Chichester. She urged us to share the information with members when it is available.

1. Regional Trustee report

Susie Berry reminded us that the AGM will be on 6th October as a hybrid meeting. Details of the SE Region gathering will come out after the AGM but it will be on 17th November. There is a Hadrian’s Wall walk planned for next May to help celebrate 1000 years. The tree planting has reached 9500 and expects to make 1000. Countryfile plan to cover it. Diaries are now available and we are urged to place group orders to save on postage. New publicity leaflets will available soon and will be more customisable. The newsletter is due out imminently. TAM would love information for the November edition by 1st October. There are new risk assessment forms available for committees. Read the general advice sheet that explains, for example, if 3 groups meet in the same hall you might be able to cover them with one risk assessment. FAQs on the constitution are on the website. There are new workshops coming out on contingency planning and facilitation skills. On 13th October there is an “ask the Trust”. The network link is on 19th October.

We discussed a lack of ease in finding the toolkit which has great resources. For the time being we are advised to google it rather than try to find it.

1. Frequently asked question.

This is our new feature of meetings where we ask Susie one or two of the questions members have been asking us!

**Question1: Can we pay someone to run a group?**

Susie honestly said that a few years ago this was prohibited but now there is a divergence of views in the u3a on this topic. She said that where it is necessary for health and safety (mainly sports groups for qualified tutors) then that is definitely allowed. If it is occasional, such as a model for an art class, that is probably okay too. However, generally the thing that makes u3a different to any other group is that we are run by members for members so keep to the spirit of u3a as much as you can. If you are paying someone make sure they have the appropriate insurance. If you are paying a tutor the group must fully fund it between themselves.

**Question 2: My u3a has a collection at the monthly meeting for our charity of the year. In TAM it said we shouldn’t be giving to charities – is there a way round that?**

Susie says that as an organisation we can only give to other charities where their aims are in line with ours which are:

* To encourage and enable older people no longer in full-time paid employment to help each other to share their knowledge, skills, interests and experience;
* To demonstrate the benefits and enjoyment to be gained and the new horizons to be discovered in learning throughout life;
* To celebrate the capabilities and potential of older people and their value to society;
* To make U3As accessible to all older people;
* To encourage the establishment of U3As in every part of the country where conditions are suitable and to support and collaborate with them.

If you hold a collection for a charity it must be clear that this is donations directly from individuals to the charity as is not u3a money, so should not go through the accounts.

If a speaker asks you to give money to charity on their behalf, you can do this, but the Treasurer needs to make it clear in the accounts the payment is in lieu of a speaker fee.

WE MEET AGAIN ON WEDNESDAY 16TH NOVEMBER AT 10AM ON ZOOM.