u3a
Petersfield
Charity No. 1060354

MINUTES OF A MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
held on Friday 8 December 2023 at 2.00pm at 2 Home Way

Present: Charles Price (Chair)

Jenny Thwaites (Vice Chair)

Greg Cumming (Treasurer)

Robina Whitehorn (Secretary)

Sandy Stephens (Membership Secretary)

Louise Fox (Groups Co-ordinator)

Peter Lake (Committee Member)

1. There were no apologies. No interests were declared.

2. **Chair's Opening Remarks –** Charles Price commented on the success of the recent meeting with Conveners to discuss volunteer recruitment; further work by the sub-committee (Jenny Thwaites, Louise Fox, Peter Lake) was promising.

3. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 October 2023 were agreed to be a true record.

4. **Matters Arising** – Robina Whitehorn, Secretary reported that owing to other commitments, the review of Policies and Procedures at para 15 of the Minutes had not progressed. The immediate priority was the review of Beacon access rights. She had now received the latest individual access list from John Donlan and would circulate it to MC members for comment and approval. **ACTION: RW**

5. Peter Lake stated that the proposed purchase of a Mi-fi device was on hold, pending assessment of the newly installed Wifi at the Community Centre. The new laptop was now in operation.

6. The Secretary further reported that she had asked the manager of the Community Centre if she could recommend who might lay out and put away chairs prior to the General Interest Open Meetings. She was unable to help; it was agreed to continue the search for volunteers.

7. It was agreed that Agenda Item 8 – Film Interest Group Funding – required no further discussion as the matter had been resolved. On the wider subject of Group Funding, the MC agreed that in accordance with the Byelaws the Groups Coordinator would initially consider all such requests for either start-up or ongoing funding and make a recommendation to the Treasurer and Chair. It would be necessary to amend the Byelaws to increase the Treasurer's delegated authority to £100; the Treasurer undertook to draw up a proposal. **ACTION: GC**

8. There was further discussion of the ownership of assets that were nominally the property of an individual groups but were available for use by several groups. It was acknowledged that all assets held within a local u3a ultimately belong to that u3a. It was agreed that within that provision there were essentially three types of assets. Assets purchased by the Management Committee which may be used across a variety of groups (for example the mobile sound system), these would be maintained and if necessary replaced using trust funds. Secondly, assets purchased through trust funds as part of the start-up arrangements in order to get a particular group under way. The group in question should adjust its subs to accrue for maintenance and replacement. Finally, assets purchased from group funds, which would also be maintained and replaced by the groups themselves. In the latter two categories the individual groups had exclusive ownership for their duration. In the event of a group's closure, assets would be transferred to the individual u3a and the Trustees would decide on their future use. Where necessary Byelaws should be amended to reflect this.

9. **Finance Report –** Greg Cumming, Treasurer, reported that the two accounts with the CAF Bank stood at £6251 and £30558. Purchase of laptop and mugs had now been completed. He had distributed a demonstration set of Excel finance sheets to all the groups that had lodged funds with Petersfield u3a to show their Treasurers how funds held centrally would be tracked.

10. The Treasurer was still examining ways of separating the end of the Financial Year from the annual membership renewal process, in which early renewals created complications in the presentation of the accounts. The MC agreed unanimously that moving the date of the AGM from October to November would make the situation easier. The Secretary would draft an announcement for Connect and inform the Speaker Secretary. **ACTION: RW/GC**

11. **Membership Report –** Sandy Stephens, Membership Secretary, reported that total membership now stood at 719, including 32 new members since 1 September. She was not aware of any groups having waiting lists, although about five were full.

12. The Membership Secretary also outlined her proposal to introduce an electronic renewal process during 2024 for all members except those without IT.

13. **Vice President's Report –** Jenny Thwaites summarised the recent meeting of the Volunteer recruitment sub-committee, at which she felt encouraged that progress had been made. Linda Hutton and Heather Nicholls had kindly volunteered to help in following up members who had expressed willingness to help. She requested all MC members to review and update the vacancy list; it was agreed that volunteers should also be sought to support key roles, such as Treasurer and to facilitate succession planning.

14. **Christmas Event 11 December –** Jenny Thwaites stated that the Events Team, led by Marjorie Day were well prepared and were expecting nearly 100 guests. The MC would be running the bar. It was agreed to donate £150.00 from the ticket proceeds to the Dementia Choir.

15. **Meeting with Conveners –** The MC discussed comments and suggestions that had been made to encourage volunteer recruitment, and the priorities that had emerged. These including splitting down MC member roles to improve organisational resilience and make roles less daunting, as well as the suggestion that the MC should be more formally split between subjects reserved for trustees and the ongoing running of the organisation. Members felt the proposals in this area were insufficiently clear and the Chair undertook to set proposals out more clearly before the next meeting. It was agreed that further consideration would be required, and that feedback should be sent to Conveners, summarising actions taken to date and future intentions. It was also agreed to hold such gatherings on a regular basis, and to invite Conveners to suggest topics for discussion. **ACTION: JT/LF**

16. Two issues that had been raised had been the provision of First Aid Training, and IT instruction. Peter Lake agreed to ask John Donlan if the Computer Support Group could help with the latter. Conveners were also in favour of outreach to schools, which was already underway on a small scale, and would be further encouraged.

17. **MC Members' Priorities for 2024 –** These were already underway in all areas of responsibility; it was, however, recognised that each of the seven committee members was already fully committed and that the ability to undertake extra tasks was limited.

18. **News and Views –** The MC discussed the future of News and Views following the departure of Andy Borthwick. It was agreed that much of its content had been superseded by the improved website. Connect fulfilled a separate purpose as a weekly reminder of upcoming events and deadlines. Being one of the editorial team, Peter Lake agreed to discuss potential future formats, including electronic, with colleagues. **ACTION: PL**

19. **External Requests for Advertising and Publicity –** Noting the recent increase in requests from external individuals and organisations for advertising to u3a members, the MC agreed that all future such applications should be declined because of limited resources to manage them.

20. **Petersfield u3a Publicity Material –** It was believed that there were about 60 trifold leaflets remaining, but that they required update. It was agreed that once they were all used, they would not be replaced, but that in future publicity would be primarily through notices and QR Codes. This would include a web page link for potential new joiners.

21. **Reserves Study and Options –** The Chair summarised the discussion to date, the primary options appearing to be either a managed rundown of the Reserve surplus by means of a reduction in subscriptions, or an extension of Petersfield u3a's activities, within the Charitable Objects. Either course would require consultation with members, after careful consideration of what should be an appropriate target Reserve level, and within what timeframe and budget. It was recognised that a wider range of activities and projects would require more volunteers, who were not presently forthcoming, and this was the subject of separate conversations. There was a reluctance to undertake long-term commitments, and at the same time a feeling that perhaps Petersfield u3a should focus on continuing to offer its present range of activities, to the highest possible standard. The Chair emphasised that we had committed to reviewing our reserves policy in the new year and that a let's wait and see policy would not do. Chair and Treasurer to lay out implications of alternative proposals for next meeting. **ACTION: CP/GC**

22. It was agreed to consider the various options over the Festive Season and to identify a way forward at the first MC meeting in the New Year. **ACTION: All**

23. **Any Other Business –** Members discussed who might be invited to accept the Presidency of Petersfield u3a following the departure of Andy Borthwick; it was agreed to consider the matter more fully in the New Year.

24. The Secretary stated that the national u3a was going ahead with the proposal to introduce a Members' Council in 2024, and that the Regional Trustee would be giving a presentation to Chairs in March.

25. **Date of Next Meeting** – Monday 22 January 2024 at 2pm at 2 Home Way.

RW 13/11/2023

Signed ..... Chair

Date .....