



Newbury Probus Club

Minutes of Committee Meeting

Held at 12 Longacre, Newbury at 1500 on 9th December 2021

Present: Richard Jones (Chairman)

Paul Bryant, Geoffrey Addis, Richard Willis, Wynn Anderson, Russ Burrows, Nick Battle

1. Apologies for absence

1.1. All committee members present.

2. Approval of last minutes

2.1. The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8th September 2021 were accepted as a true record.

3. Matters arising

3.1. Newsletter future

A discussion took place regarding the newsletter for members which has not been produced during the Covid lock down period. It was agreed that this newsletter would be included within the website, with some hard copies available if members required them. Russ Burrows agreed to produce future newsletters.

3.2. Lunches at the Chequers

This item was delayed for inclusion under item 7 of this meeting.

3.3. Pre lunch Exhibitions

Dave Stubbs has agreed to set up a rota for this event each month. RW to pass details he had, prior to lockdown, for this event.

3.4. Christmas celebrations

RB provided a feedback for this event, held the previous evening. He stated that the evening went well, but some committee members provided feedback of comments they had heard during the evening where some members were unhappy about some aspects of the food. Having the Gents moving table for different courses largely worked well. Regarding last minute cancellations RB to discuss the financial situation with the management at the Chequers Hotel and provide a final report on finances for the event.

Discussions on a venue for the Summer celebrations 2022 followed with the Donnington Grove agreed with a date in June – currently this is the 22nd.

3.5. Relationship with other Probud clubs

RJ has been in contact with a number of local Probud clubs including:

Kennet Valley Probud and has been invited to a meeting (held on the 4th Wednesday of each month).

Hungerford Probud – a discussion has been held with a committee member and will take the discussions further.

Basingstoke Probud – discussion with their president/chairman and has 35 members.

It was felt that it would be good to develop these initial contacts and share ideas and that it could also help in promotion of visits etc with the possible increase of participants. RJ to continue with the initial links made with these other Probud clubs.

3.6. Probus Ties

NB to organize an order form and present at a meeting in early 2022. It was felt that the availability of ties could be promoted on the website.

3.7. Membership

PB presented his report regarding the membership which is now 67 including 2 life members. This includes three new members:-

John Rance, Graham Holbrook and Nigel Connor.

The attendance over the last few months excluding guests was:-

August 46

September 45

October 44

November 49

December 52 (current apologies so likely to decrease)) Eventually this was 42.

This shows a fairly stable pattern. There are 7 members who for good reasons are not attending the other approximately 14 apologising members change from month to month. We are getting about 3 members not giving apologies. In the last normal year 2018/19 we had a membership of 71 and average attendance of 58 so 13 apologies. I suspect that things have not changed all that much and the current attendance is more or less normal and that memories of attendances of 70 incorrect.

4. Chairman's Report

This quarter has seen a full return to our monthly meetings which is encouraging, although attendance has still been fairly low. We don't really know why – possibly some Covid-anxiety from members but I am more inclined to think it may be also linked to some long-term health issues. Trouble is we are once again entering more challenges from the Omicron variant and that may skew any attempt to delve more deeply into the attendance figures.

The Chequers still doesn't sit too well with a few members so we need to keep them on board by ensuring that the quality of food and service is maintained at a good level. Meanwhile we will still investigate alternative venues.

I have made contact with Hungerford and Kennet Valley Probus Clubs and received a welcome response to doing this. After a slow start post-lockdown both are thriving number-wise – each have about 50 members (men and women).

It has been very encouraging to have 3 new members joining us and we look forward to them helping run the club in the future. Whilst we are far from the heady days of 80 plus a waiting list, if we can achieve early 70s that would still be acceptable and manageable.

We have set up the webpage working party and look forward to seeing how that emerges.

5. Secretary's report

5.1. RW requested that any files sent between committee members be in a standard format (either Word or DXF)

6. Treasurer's Report

6,1 At the end of this financial year, we might decide to have only one bank account rather than two. A proper record of memberships and speakers' remunerations can still be kept. It also avoids the

extra paperwork involved at the bank and the occasions when members pay for an outing or dinner by bank transfer into the No 1 account. I have spoken with Tony Hadwick about this and he is relaxed about it.

7. Future Venue

7.1. Following a number of discussions with members and some email correspondence a lengthy discussion took place regarding options that have been suggested as alternative venues. It was agreed that we should continue with the Chequers, which is a good option, at present but this topic should be reviewed as an ongoing topic. RJ to report back to members who have sent him comments via email.

8. Website progress

8.1 RW provided a preview of the draft website. It was agreed that the website should be available to go live early in the new year with an opportunity to for committee members to review prior to release to members.

9. Walks, trips and Spring Break

9.1 Walks

SC suggests changing the day of the walks due to many country pubs now being closed for lunches on a Tuesday. The Committee Members agreed and decided that the third Thursday be the preferred day with Simon setting the start date in his walk plan for 2022.

9.2 Message from SC

A message from SC had been received regarding visits – that he wishes to stand down from doing the arranging of these events. So we will need to look for his replacement before the end of 2022. He is happy to carry on with walks and will soon publish my list of walk leaders for next year. Committee Members to identify suitable candidates to approach.

9.3 The Newbury College lunch

This was a success with 44 diners. Feedback was that it was the best lunch members had experienced at this venue.

9.4 Trips

The trip survey recently produced by SC produced a great response including the following: Blenheim, Longleat, Williams F1, Didcot Railway Centre, MINI Factory, Tower of London, Strawberry Hill House and Garden, Police Museum Sulhampstead, British Legion poppy factory, Tower Bridge, Bank of England, Museum of Army Flying, Bath American Museum, D Day Museum, Fort Nelson, Denbies Vineyard, Kew Gardens and most popular of all, a Theatre Matinee.

As a result SC is looking at organising a trip to *The Da Vinci Code at Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham* on March 23rd 2022 (Further details at December lunch).

9.5 Spring Break

Glenn is waiting for final details from Warners. The credit note received from the 2021 break has been used as a deposit for the 2022 booking which has 27 attendees.

10. Any other business

10.1 Succession planning for Committee Posts needs to start for election at the 2022 AGM. The Chairman and Russ will start the process.

10.2 RJ to set up 'New members – get to know us' session

10.3 All is quiet regarding the Probus magazine. The magazine Editor says that this is due to limited contributions from Clubs due to fewer activities under Covid regulations and to falling off in advertising revenue because clubs are not undertaking visits. Credits for subscriptions will be carried forward for when publications re-starts.

Date of next meeting 7th March 2022 (To be confirmed)

Richard Willis

Secretary

19th December 2021