

OUSA Sheffield Branch, Tuesday 25 August 2009

Red Lion Charles Street Sheffield

Final Draft Minutes of Meeting, including the face to face meeting at 8 pm on 25 August 2009, and on line items from OUSA Regional Forum for Sheffield as at 4 September 2009.

Present:-

Cat Marshall Chair

Kath Eades

Nick Dibben Secretary

Trixie Hunter

Helen Griffiths

On Forum:-

Julia Patrick, David Cox, Carl Price

Ruskin's was shut with no indication of whether it will re-open after work on Tudor Square is complete. We therefore need to agree a new City Centre venue. Ideas please to Cat

1 Apologies:-

Robert Murray Treasurer, David Cox, Julia Patrick

2 Minutes of last meeting 28 April 2009

Addition of Trixie's second name, then Accepted, Nick D to amend and publish.

3 Matters Arising:-

- Newsletter - Helen has a problem with her PC, to copy to Cat and aim for it to be available for September social meeting, after updates to reflect the new date.
- Wednesday afternoon meeting for Branch - suggested meet at Graves Café on Wednesday 21 October, contact Cat if you wish to attend. Cat will check Graves café is still open (as building alterations in progress)
- Social events - waiting to hear what we can do with our money as regards paying speakers and for locations
- Open day at Walton Hall - Nothing happened
- Regional Forum 13 June - Nick Cat and Helen attended
- Honorary members - we can have up to 5 - please send Cat any suggestions. On the Forum, Carl Price asked who can be an Honorary Member. Cat replied that the OUSA handbook, section 4.5, says whoever the Branch agrees, so, please ask anyone interested to put themselves forward to the Branch.
- Clarification on Servers 1 and 2 - put to Regional Forum
- Regional Forum - After our attendance in June 09, no item on Agenda at RF to help here, so we are asking for this at next November meeting.

4 Newsletter

Carried forward, still stuck with Helen see 3 above, hope to have a version to agree at September social meeting

5 Report back from Regional Forum

The electronic forum is now open to read, only agreed list of people can write to it (to enable voting via the forum). Otherwise the 2 hours was largely procedural and we were unable to deal with our agenda items. We expect to do so at the next meeting.

6 Election of RF representatives.

Cat Marshall and Julia Patrick proposed. David Cox has proposed Cat via forum, and Robert Murray, who had to decline. All agreed. After voting on line, Julia had 6 votes, Cat 5.

7 Election to Yorkshire Regional Committee

This happens the morning of the RF, ie on Saturday 12th September at Leeds. Nick Dibben was proposed and accepted.

8 Attendance at next RC RF Leeds 12 September

Please contact Cat if you wish to attend in her or Julia's place or as an observer. Nick Dibben will endeavour to attend YC and YRF in person.

Since the face to face meeting, the RF has been cancelled. The next meeting is their AGM on November 7th.

Items proposed for Agenda are (see end of notes for explanations):-

RF Objectives

Spend the Budgets

Training to understand and use First Class forums

IT Support for Branches and Regions officers - Filestore and e-mail lists

9 Social Meetings

See item 3 for first afternoon meeting. Any ideas to Cat

10 AOB

On forum:-

11 Dates of Next formal meeting: the AGM:-

8 December 8 pm, to include a meal afterwards - please send Cat ideas for a place.

Socials - Tuesdays 29 Sep, 27 Oct, 24 Nov at 8 pm, **location to be agreed**

Wednesday 21 October 2 pm Graves Cafe

Summary of Actions required:-

- Newsletter - Helen to update and copy to Cat for 29 September
- Wednesday afternoon meeting for Branch - Cat organising on 21 October please contact her if you wish to attend, Cat to check Graves café open on that day.
- Social events - can anyone suggest speakers they know would wish to come?
- Regional Forum 7 November - contact Cat if you wish to attend
- Honorary members - suggestions to Cat
- Regional Forum - Our Agenda items, Nick D to send to Laura Ward
- AGM December 8th - meal afterwards, ideas for where?

Details of proposed RF agenda items

RF Objectives

My concern is, that the RF's objectives have become obscure especially to new Branch officers, we need to re-state them. I expect it to include being a forum for Branches to discuss matters of mutual concern - so we need a regular agenda item for that (there was no such item discussion at the last RF meeting).

Spend the Budgets

I also want to discuss how we spend our budgets.

The Region has over £2,500, each branch nearly £500, that must be over £5,000 which we don't spend on the objectives of OUSA because we all find it too hard. This point remains even if Branches no longer exist.

This also means we are failing to help students as much as we could. It might mean that we need OUSA HQ to change the rules.

Training to understand and use First Class forums

I also want to raise IT support and the training available for using the Forums. First Class forums seem to me hard to understand so are a subject we could do with on how they work, both within OUSA, and within a course. Though the changeover to Moodle will alter the details, the point remains valid.

There is a set of guidance, but this is mostly about etiquette, rather than how they are monitored, permissions, expiry dates.

The form of this training is also important - face to face training may be best but history tells OUSA that volunteers put a lot of effort into preparing them and then very few students turn up for them. We need to look at computer based training materials, something the OU is good at?! So we need to lobby OUSA to lobby OU HQ to provide this. Students then need a link to find the on-line course

IT Support for Branches and Regions officers - Filestore and e-mail lists

I think there are other possible IT improvements - having a decent shared file store for instance. And using an e-mail 'list server' to give Branch and Region officers the facility to e-mail all students in their geographical area. This is possible without the people doing the e-mailing seeing the list of e-mail addresses or the names, they just see a list name eg 'OUSAYorks', or 'OUSASheff', and without contravening the data protection act.