

Minutes of Banbridge and District u3a Meeting

Tuesday 10th October 2023

Bannside Presbyterian Church Hall

1. Present

There were 45 members in attendance including four new members.

2. Apologies

David Campbell, Margaret Campbell, Jacinta Downey, Anne Lavery, Sean Lavery, Jill Noble and Mary Morgan.

3. Welcome from the Chair

Veronica welcomed everyone to the meeting, she extended a warm welcome to our speaker Sharon Bleakley from Laurencetown, Lenaderg and Tullylish (LLTCA) Community Association.

4. Business

Veronica again highlighted the need for a musical director for the Singing Group and hopefully a volunteer will come forward in the near future.

5. September Speaker:

We were delighted to welcome Sharon Bleakley from the LLTCA Community Association. This is a charity run by a voluntary cross community management committee and this year they are celebrating 25 years in operation. They are supported financially by the Southern Health and Social Health and Social Care Trust.

Sharon co-ordinates the Connecting the Community initiative. She shared stories of her work in offering 1-1 support to people aged 65 years and over in the Laurencetown and surrounding area. They focus on three areas, using technology, befriending and time out for carers. With technology, volunteers provide introductions to Zoom, setting up an email account and general help. The befriending service matches volunteers with individuals, they may simply meet for a chat or may go for a walk or coffee. The 'time out for carers' initiative provides much valued support for older carers and those they care for by connecting them with a volunteer. This allows the carer to have a couple of hours for themselves.

Additional help is always required, and Sharon encouraged members to take the opportunity to become involved by volunteering, maybe just for a couple of hours per week/month. She is happy to discuss this further if anyone would like further information on the role.

6. Interest Groups - As there have been a number of new members the co-ordinators of various groups were given the opportunity to feature their activities. These are run weekly, fortnightly, or monthly and reflect the interests of the membership. Brief details are highlighted below.

Art Meet on the second Wednesday of the month. Contact Alwyn.

Badminton The Badminton meet 12.30pm every Wednesday at Banbridge Leisure Centre. Come along for a little exercise and fun. Contact Peter.

Crafts Meet on the first and third Fridays of the month in Bridgewater Tesco's community room at 2pm for a variety of crafts. Contact Anne.

Cycling on the Towpath A new cycling group are meeting every Tuesday at 10.30am at Scarva coffee shop, all levels welcome, for towpath cycling. Please contact Annette Smyth on the WhatsApp group. Contact Annette.

Family History The Genealogy group meet at the community room for 10:30am on the first and third Wednesday of each month. At present they are joined by some pupils from both local High Schools. Contact Florence.

History Group Meet on the third Friday of the month, this usually involves a visit, for example, October visit will be to Cavan County Museum at Ballyjamesduff. They also organise two residentials each year.

Flower Arranging The group meets on the last Friday of the month at 2:30pm at Tesco's Community Room. There is a suggested arrangement each month and arrangement details are forwarded via the group WhatsApp. Contact Veronica.

Photography Meet on last Wednesday of month at 10am in Tesco community room. The project for October is 'Autumn Colours'. Contact Keith.

Pickleball Wednesday at the Leisure Centre at 10.30am to 11.45, there is a small charge to cover the hire of the courts - £3. Contact Deborah Martinet, Roberta Bennington.

Walking Each Monday, meeting at Tesco's small car park on Castlewellan Road at 9.15am. Walks are easy to moderate and varied, for example, coastal walk, along the towpath, park walks and the Mourne. Contact Eppi.

In each group new members will be made most welcome. Further information and details of time and venue can be found on the website.

7. Our next General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 11th November at 2:00pm when the guest speaker will be Gary McDonald, Business Editor of the Irish News. His talk is entitled - *Journalism, from Quill to Quantum Leap* and we look forward to welcoming Gary.