

## Minutes from Book Club September 16/09/2021

Attendance: 40 people out of 74 sign-ups (*with Abbie and Janaina from Mirthy*)

### Introduction:

Welcomed new members.

Outline for meeting determined by set questions.

Recognised that, so far, Abbie has chosen the books and authors, rather randomly. A mixture of local and bestsellers. Historical and contemporary novels. All white, female authors so far.

3 months remaining: October, November, December - choose 3 themes?

Breakout rooms led by Nickie, Paula, Lesley, and Elaine.

### Starters for 10 - 10 mins in groups, 10 mins feedback - 11:05 - 11:15/ 11:25

*When did you join Mirthy's Book Club?*

- Some from the beginning of Book Club in April; some here for first time today.
- Many came from the 'Wedlocked: Women know your place' talk.
- U3A recommendations and World of Mouth too.

*Which book/author has been your favourite so far? Which book did you enjoy the least?*

- Favourite: Authenticity Project
- Least Favourite: First To Go (but don't like to say, and feedback that Author Q&A enhanced understanding of book)

*Do you attend the Coffee Mornings/Author Q&As/ both?*

- Value the connections with people, particularly through coffee morning.
- Q&A: providing an insight into the book; storyline from different perspectives

*Did you take part in the 'Summer Reading Challenge'?*

- Some did and enjoyed; others didn't because already had their own reading lists but looked out for particular recommendations
- Favourite from the list: Girl, Woman, Other by Bernadine Evaristo

### - Motivations - 20 mins in groups to discuss with aspirations 11:25- 11:45

*Why did you decide to join this Book Club?*

- Enjoy reading books you wouldn't otherwise choose
- Author Q&A
- Getting recommendations from other readers
- Friendly welcoming community - particularly at Coffee Mornings
- Particularly important for those shielding/with limited mobility

*Which event is most important to you? The Coffee Morning or the Author Q&A?*

- Value both in different ways
- Would like to have more open conversations in Coffee Mornings about books more generally, not just Book of the Month
- Author Q&A can also be 'expert' speaker too

*What do you value the most about being part of this book club?*

- Expanding choices of authors
- Online accessible book club
- International community
- New friends
- English language practice for non-native speakers

### **- Aspirations**

*How would you like books to be chosen?*

- Happy with Abbie choosing as "good job so far"! *Abbie says thank you!*
- Poll in Facebook group/on the website page for future reads (list provided by Abbie)
- Poll needs to include blurbs to enable informed decisions

*Which books/authors/genres do you want the group to cover?*

- Feminism: Isobel Olende, Margaret Atwood
- Comedy: Bill Bryson, uplifting books
- 'Travel the World' series: authors abroad (new year reading challenge idea)
- Theme each month- October Black History Month theme agreed
- Biographies
- Authors - not just women; Author Q&A include experts too

*Would you be interested in film and TV group discussions too?*

- Not particularly; just brought into Coffee Morning discussions
- Can be added into Facebook discussions too

*How often would you like the group to meet?*

- More regularly- agreed on once a fortnight
- Different times- not just mornings
- Breakout rooms in coffee mornings for those who want to discuss books and those who don't
- Would be helpful to have outline for Books of the Month in advance

### **- Any further ideas? Feedback for final 15 mins**

- Cooking recipes from books; making cocktails
- Events could be organised according to book choice
- New members would like a list of books already read by the book club (please see below)
- Newsletter for those not on Facebook
  - Content provided by Book Club members, based on Facebook group content
- Christmas reading challenge/ Classics reading challenge

**Sharing books read in group so far:**

*April- The Skylark's Secret by Fiona Valpy*

*May - The Song of the Skylark by Liz Shakespeare*

*June - The Authenticity Project by Clare Pooley*

*July - First to Go by Pam Skelton*

*August - The Silent Treatment by Abbie Greaves*

October Book Club (decided by Facebook poll): Small Island by Andrea Levy

**Upcoming Coffee Morning meetings:**

Thursday 14th October 2-3 pm

Tuesday 26th October 11:30 am - 12:30 pm

**Upcoming Q&A**

Friday 29th October 4-5 (Guest tbc)