

**Minutes of the  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of U3A Carrick  
10.45 a.m., Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2017  
held at Perranarworthal Village Hall, Perranwell, Truro**

**1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME**

Chairman Jill Nicholls welcomed all present and thanked members for attending, remarking that it was an unusually large turnout.

**2. COMMITTEE ELECTIONS 1**

Jill explained that there were two candidates standing for the position of Membership Secretary, and Ballot Form 1(a) was distributed for members to vote on this. Wendy Gilyott-Brown thanked Margaret Ingles for continuing to stand and commended her on her previous excellent work. Members filled in the forms which were collected and taken for counting by the Tellers (Peter Dexter and Pat Butt).

**3. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received and it was noted that there were 223 members present, which constituted a quorum.

**4. MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD ON 6<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2016**

The minutes, which had been printed in the March 2017 newsletter, were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

**5. MATTERS ARISING**

None.

**6. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

We've had another year of ups and downs and as a committee have tried to deal with matters in the best interests of you all. Personally, I have again taken on board the responsibilities of Chairman within the ethos of the U3A guidelines. To that end I've involved myself on your behalf in wider matters both within our local link group and with regional colleagues sharing information about our differing structures and financing. It is clear that many other U3As charge between 50p and £3.00 for every group attended. We are experimenting with rotating the hosting of these meetings. St. Austell will be hosting us in May.

Last month Deborah joined me (at no cost to our U3A funds) on a visit to the Isles of Scilly U3A to attend their 5th AGM on 16th March. We gave them a warm invitation to join us any time they come over to the mainland. Our Group Leaders get-together in September at the Cricket Ground in Perranarworthal was very enjoyable, and raised important issues which we have taken on board.

Sadly, these days it is all too common to find members from interest groups who share no interest in the U3A as a whole, who rarely if ever attend the monthly meetings, but join just to take advantage of the great value we offer. I would really like to see more members attending these as I'm sure they would also enjoy them. Throughout the year we've listened to some excellent speakers at our three different venues (Falmouth, Perranwell and Truro).

Just before Christmas Richard Lander School dropped a bombshell by raising its charges from zero to £35 an hour from January. This brought the issue of venue costs (never far from our minds as it's our major expenditure) to the forefront of our discussions, as other venues are also raising their rates and we anticipate will continue to do so. The groups displaced from Richard Lander School were invited to find other venues, as the alternative would mean closing said groups and this does not fit well with U3A objects. However, these venue costs inevitably drained some of our reserves.

After a good deal of thought and deliberation from our subgroup (an initiative started back in the summer of 2016), the Committee is today offering members the choice of either adopting a capping policy or going for a straightforward rise of £5 in subscriptions, to £23 a year. The choice will be yours and we will then propose adopting the preferred option.

I must thank all of the committee members for their continued hard work and support. They all have my enormous thanks for their efforts. We've had six very lively and interesting meetings. Inevitably there are individuals outside the committee to thank who also work hard on your behalf:

Angela Beale for managing our website, [www.u3acarrick.org.uk](http://www.u3acarrick.org.uk)

John Whomersley for Paxo and the computer group

The Tea Ladies and John Harris, who so cheerfully dispense refreshments at the three general meeting venues

All of the group leaders without whom we wouldn't have so many opportunities to try something new

Andy Rendell for producing yet another successful Christmas show

We must not forget the numerous posties who save us a fortune by hand delivering newsletters.

## **7. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Margaret Ingles reported that U3A Carrick continues to be popular, with 160 new members joining since April 2016. The current membership stands at 1,045. She thanked the Treasurer, Dave Crawshaw, for ensuring that those members requesting the Third Age Matters magazine receive it five times a year, and John Whomersley for continuing to organise and oversee Paxo, the team of volunteers who stuff envelopes with the printed version of the monthly newsletter and deliver 350 copies each month, saving nearly £200 each time in postage costs. About 130 copies are posted at a cost of £73 a month as these members live outside the delivery routes. The Committee is pleased that about half the members have now opted to receive their newsletter by email.

June Clouston has restarted a service to new members, making contact and extending a welcome, and Margaret wished to thank the many members who encourage potential new members to join. Margaret concluded by thanking the President, Chairman, outgoing Secretary and the Committee for their support over the past year.

## **8. COMMITTEE ELECTIONS 2**

The result of the first ballot was announced. Margaret Ingles had been re-elected as Membership Secretary and was warmly applauded.

There were eight candidates for vacancies as Ordinary Committee members, and these were invited to stand and introduce themselves. Ballot Form 1(b) for these vacancies was distributed, filled in and collected while Jock Turnham provided an entertainment. The ballot forms were taken away to be counted.

## **9. TREASURER'S REPORT**

Dave Crawshaw reported that he had been co-opted onto the Committee as Treasurer on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2017 following the sudden resignation of the previous Treasurer due to ill health. Issues with being accepted as an account signatory by the bank resulted in him not being able to take over any accounting responsibilities until mid March, and consequently he was unable to present a report for the past year. The accounts for 2016 were available for members in the March 2017 newsletter but Dave was not in a position to comment on them.

The accounts were adopted.

Venue expenses had risen by over £1,000 per quarter and since January the reserves had been depleted by £4,000 from £20,000 to £16,000. Dave pointed out that unless the income stream is substantially increased there would be considerable losses, and said that membership of U3A Carrick

is very good value as it entitles members to participate in many varied activities for a low annual cost. He warned that the subscription may need to be re-examined in future years, and concluded by urging members to sign up for GiftAid as this is a valuable source of income.

#### **10. VOTE OF THANKS TO RETIRING OFFICERS / ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Jill thanked all the Committee, especially Tony Herring, Mark Breach and Deborah Moore for the wonderful support she had received during the year. She was very sorry to be losing Deborah who was stepping down from the post of Secretary after three years, and said she had provided invaluable assistance during that time. Deborah was presented with a bouquet.

Jill handed the Chair to the President, Tony Herring, who proposed that she should be re-elected as Chairman for a further year, and praised her excellent leadership of U3A Carrick through what had been a challenging and difficult year. The following Officers were elected unopposed:

|                      |                          |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Chairman             | Jill Nicholls            |
| Vice Chairman/Editor | Mark Breach              |
| General Secretary    | Caroline Saunders Martin |
| Treasurer            | Dave Crawshaw            |

#### **11. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**

The report from Ron Dale, the Independent Examiner appointed by the Committee, concluded that a comprehensive examination of the accounts had not been possible due to the absence of some invoices, and incomplete banking records; however all records that were available were satisfactory.

Ron Dale was re-appointed as Independent Examiner for a further year.

#### **12. SUBSCRIPTION BALLOT**

Ballot Form 2 for Membership Subscriptions and Venue Costs was distributed, and the reasons for asking members to vote on the alternative proposals were explained by Michael Wright, who had led a working party to look into the issue. Briefly these were that over the past year or two there had been an unwelcome trend of rising and unsustainable venue hire costs, which came to a head in October 2016 when Richard Lander School informed the Committee that as from January this year, they would charge £35 per hour for the use of the Sports Hall, and similar amounts for other rooms. As we had enjoyed the school's facilities for free since 1990 this, in conjunction with other increasing venue costs, presented a very serious financial situation. The Committee decided it would be necessary to relocate all the groups meeting at the school and asked the relevant Group Leaders to take immediate steps to do so from January 2017, guaranteeing that reasonable venue costs would be met up to April 2017, after which it would be necessary to re-examine the situation.

Michael summarised the options open to the members as follows :

##### **A To raise the annual subscription to £23**

'Up to now we have operated on the philosophy that one annual subscription gives access to each and every U3A activity, whether these activities are sporting, cultural, intellectual or just fun. To maintain this practice, the AGM will be presented with an option to continue to meet the costs of venues entirely from subscriptions. Groups and their members can come together for enjoyment, without any administrative action beyond that of maintaining the attendance register. It will, of course, be important that groups use venues that are economic as well as convenient. For this option to be viable, the annual subscription would need to rise to at least £23.'

##### **B To raise the annual subscription to £20 and introduce a capping option**

'The alternative capping option, which would require the annual subscription to be £20, would have administrative consequences for some Group Leaders. Most venues require upfront payment for bookings, and the Group Leaders affected would need to collect money from group members and account for it to the Treasurer. Other U3As which operate this way often establish 'terms' and

collect one payment at the beginning of each term, rather than collecting 'dinner money' each week. The Treasurer's workload would increase.'

Michael continued : 'Doing nothing is not an option. The resulting annual loss would reduce reserves below recommended safe levels in less than a year and to bankruptcy within four years. The Committee will be asking the AGM to decide between these two options.'

Comments and queries from members were invited. Liz Grant recommended Option A, emphasising the many activities available to members for just the usual contribution of 50p to cover refreshments at each meeting. Dave Neale objected to perceived censorship by the Editor of a letter objecting to the Committee's actions on the issue of venue costs which had been sent for publication in the newsletter, and Mark Breach replied that he had received the letter only five minutes before the close of printing, when the newsletter had already been put together for sending to the printers. Other members gave their opinions on the subscription issue, some saying that other U3As' costs were far higher and that it was important to be inclusive of all groups; and that for a very moderate subscription, even with the proposed £5 increase to £23 p.a., U3A Carrick offered a valuable opportunity to older people, especially those now living alone, of coming together to socialise and enjoy themselves.

Members were asked by a show of hands to vote on Option A, and this was agreed.

The completed ballot forms were collected and taken away for counting while Chris Breach read a series of entertaining monologues and poems.

### **13. RESULT OF BALLOT FORM 1b AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF COMMITTEE**

The Ordinary Committee Members elected to serve for the next two years were John Bishop, Helen Ellis, Mike Tapp and John Whomersley. These members are in addition to Richard Allen (Groups Co-ordinator), June Clouston (Assistant Membership Secretary) and Michael Wright, who were elected at last year's AGM and will be subject to re-election at the 2018 AGM.

### **14. RESULT OF BALLOT FORM 2**

The motion to increase the annual subscription to £23 was carried by 176 votes to 42 against.

Jill thanked the members for supporting the Committee's recommendation but reminded members that the figure of £23 p.a. may have to be reconsidered in the future. She thanked everyone who had helped to facilitate meetings during the year by providing refreshments, organising the book sales, setting out the rooms and putting the chairs away. She was grateful to the Tellers for counting the votes during the AGM, and much appreciated the entertainments that had been provided to cover the time taken while this was going on.

There being no other business, the AGM closed.