



Buckingham & District U3A Annual General Meeting Minutes 2022

For the Annual General Meeting held at 2:30 pm Wednesday, 23rd November at the Community Centre, Buckingham.

- 1. Welcome:** The Chairperson welcomed everyone and opened the meeting. She declared the meeting quorate. Attendees were 68 in total, including the Committee members.
- 2. Apologies:** The Secretary reported that apologies had been received from 20 members, and a full list of these can be seen in the Appendix.
- 3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting:**

The minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting, copies of which had been posted on the Society's website, were approved. Approval was proposed by Pam Tonge, and this was seconded by Margaret Hooper.

4. Chairperson's Report

Lilia Bogle welcomed everyone to the meeting. She felt the year since the 2021 meeting had passed quickly, and having had 2 years of Covid, we were now looking towards a brighter future in our U3A.

She gave her condolences to those families who had lost valued members, who had passed away this year.

It was good to have face to face meetings again, with an increase in new groups and in the membership numbers.

The Newsletter has been re-started, and we are now forging ahead with developing and sustaining a very successful U3A in Buckingham and District.

She expressed her thanks, firstly to all the members, who have participated in groups, and continued supporting and keeping our U3A a thriving organisation, many of whom had stepped up and gone the extra mile in keeping the organisation going. -

She went on to thank all the members who were working behind the scenes, carrying out tasks such as supporting events at our exhibition, supplying coffee and teas, and who helped keep our social net-working possible, including those supporting new Member coffee mornings. Their efforts were enormously appreciated, for stepping in and helping when

needed. It was important to highlight that this was their organization, and its success depended on them. She felt proud and humbled to be part of this U3A.

Special thanks went to the Group Co-ordinators, as the lifeblood of the organization, for all their hard work, with their enthusiasm and commitment to the organisation this year, refocusing the groups and getting the organization back on the map. The audience applauded to show their appreciation.

Thanks also went to the Committee, who kept things running with tasks such as liaising with other U3As, Regional offices, and local net-working. They had used their own time to attend various meetings, both nationally and also in other local communities and U3As, continuing to maintain our high standards. They had also attended regular monthly meetings, been available to members, set up events, and generally maintained the principles of the U3A and constitution to continue as a well-run and creditable organization.

She went on to mention specific Committee members who had contributed greatly towards making the organization a continued success.

The Membership Secretary, Janti Mistry, who had stepped in during an emergency to take on the role, and had completely reorganised the membership data, helping the organisation get back on track after Covid. Her thanks were also given to his wife, for supporting his commitment through this process. This has now made the data information system more accurate, easier to use and a worthwhile asset to our organization. Dorothy and Derek had also put in an enormous amount of work on the new membership system, along with Janti. She felt that the Secretary, Dorothy, was quietly involved in running the organisation in the background.

The 3 Group Liaison Officers, Arthur, Katerina, and Mark had all stepped in during the year to support our groups, and they had been working hard to meet existing groups, set up new ones, and introduce new ideas, as part of our forward progress.

The Speaker Secretary, Roland, had continued to find to find excellent speakers, supporting them at the meetings, and had been very patient with all changes and requests for various events that sometimes included an impossible request.

Our Newsletter Editor, Sarah, had also stepped in to save the day and help with outreach communication with members through the Newsletter, giving them insight into what was happening in the organization. Despite running a busy family, with children, she has been able to put together two excellent and informative Newsletters.

The Vice-Chair and Publicity Officer, Howard, had used his wealth of knowledge and experience to involve our U3A in local community events, and raise our profile.

The Treasurer, Paddy, had kept things in line with the constitution, managed our finances in an alert yet relaxed manner, and had kept the organization floating very well.

She felt the Committee had all gone over and beyond the extra mile to make our U3A a success, and called for the audience to show its appreciation once again.

The Chairperson went on to bring members up to date on the challenges mentioned at the last AGM, and felt that most of these had been achieved, as follows :

1. Raising our profile: We had raised our profile within the regional and local U3A's and also in our community networking where we had been at events in the community advertising the U3A.

We had been able to increase our membership numbers through networking and community initiatives. There has been a demographic change in membership, because we now had many younger members, bringing in a wealth of enthusiasm and commitment, and an asset to the organisation in moving forward.

The launching of a Newsletter in September had also brought new energy for information to be circulated to groups, and to our membership, allowing more awareness of the organisation as a whole.

2. Recruitment and retention: There were a quite a number of new members this year and several very successful coffee mornings were held, to inform them about the U3A family. Many of them were interested in joining activity groups, and some were interested in becoming Group Coordinators.

3. Members adapting to changes: In order to remain agile and be able to adapt to change, we now have three Group Liaison Officers to support our groups.

The information system has been improved using Simple Membership, which offers much more accurate data management, in order to develop and sustain our database. Many members already appreciate the new Simple system as we move forwards.

However, there is still a need for change, because some Members regard the organisation as simply a provider of a range of established activities and services, which they have now paid to join. They will need to be reminded of our principles of self-help learning, and working as a team to help organise activities for their group.

The non-volunteering ethos can have damaging consequences, such as when a group coordinator steps down, after many years of loyal service, and the group folds because none of the members want to take it over.

There remains an on-going need for Members to step up and help in such a case, because in order for our U3A to survive, they need to play an active part in running the movement. However, many of them don't realise this is the case.

4. Future plans:

- Our aim was to continue improving recruitment processes, and raise our profile to attract new members with energy and commitment to the organisation, necessary for its future survival.
- Links with the National, Regional, and local U3As will be continued, in order to develop and grow. It would be great if some of our members could take an interest at the National level, in helping to make changes.

- More membership participation will be sought, for help in offering new ideas and initiatives.
- We will join forces with like-minded organisations, helping make our U3A better known locally.

In conclusion, the Chairperson offered some thoughts from the perspective of an experienced retirement coach. Some people like a structure to their retirement, and others do not, but it is important to make sure it works for them.

Lack of structure in retirement may actually feel to some like a loss of freedom. However, if retirement is structured, it will give more freedom, and afford a more fulfilled and balanced lifestyle.

Joining forces with like-minded others allows people to enjoy learning and laughter, to refocus their future, and feel excited about the freedom which joining the U3A can help them achieve.

5. Treasurer's Report:

Paddy Collins reported that the examined accounts had been signed off, and were available on the website with copies available if required. Finances were currently very good. We currently have a total of approximately £20k in the Bank which equates to around one year's turnover. Pam Tonge proposed acceptance of the accounts, and this was seconded by Martin Paul.

6. Other Reports as follows:

Membership Secretary:

Janti Mistry reported that we currently have 717 active members as against 625 at the last AGM. This was an increase of 15%. There have been 68 new members since 1st July. 279 had lapsed and 18 had left.

He reported that the new Simple Membership system was making progress, and that from February onwards the data had been moved over gradually until the job is now complete and the old database is discontinued.

The main elements of the system are the membership management, communications, and groups. This includes online/offline joining, fees, and automated communication to members for activation, renewal, and status changes.

He asked members to be sure to check their own information on Simple, they would receive a user name to log on and create a password. They could change profile items such as name, email, address, or phone details without needing to make reference to the Membership Secretary. They could see their own status and renewal date, view system emails, payment history, and so on.

Our website now contains a membership page that provides information on renewal dates, fees, how to pay, and where to send cheques; this can all be accessed without the need to ask the Membership Secretary.

He is proposing to reduce the renewal period from 12 weeks to 8/9 weeks to run from 1st September to 31st October. Fees are due to be paid on 1st October, and he asked members to make sure their Standing Order was active and set to pay on or before that date. We have no way to see that information, it is down to the members themselves to make sure. He mentioned that there is some confusion between Standing Orders and Direct Debits. The Standing Order will pay a regular fixed amount on the same date each year, unless changed by them, and we have no access to any of their Bank details.

Janti went on to say that he now had an Assistant, Fiona Catlin, who had been very helpful in renewing members and activating new members. He was very grateful for her help over the last weeks, and she had never complained about the workload.

Group Liaison Officers:

Mark Owen introduced himself and his two colleagues who became the Group Liaison Officers during the year. He reported on behalf of himself and his colleagues that they had been very busy with the new Simple System, and would be setting up some training sessions for Group Co-ordinators in the New Year.

The more information we get onto the system, the better the communication with Group Coordinators would become. If they could email a list of their members to Group Liaison it would help enormously, and move the whole process ahead more rapidly.

He invited them to send them a message regarding any issues with their members, changes of GC, venues and so on, and one of the GLOs will deal with their issue as soon as possible.

With regards to new Groups, anyone with ideas or suggestions was invited to put those forward.

Speaker Secretary:

Roland Simpkins gave an amusing report that mentioned how good it was to resume the Open Meetings. He had been looking at the talks this year, but felt they may have suggested too much violence, with subjects such as "The Life of a Police Firearms Officer", "War and Peace in and around Buckingham", and "Women in the American Civil War".

He felt that next year should start on a lighter note, and recalling the Zoom presentation from Fools Gold with the Flannan Island mystery, they would be back in January. This time it would be a live show called "Bang up to the Elephant". This is described as "this show is concerned with all things Victorian. Murders, Doctors, High Adventure and the working poor all make an appearance".

Moving quickly on, in February the speaker would be talking about Passports, which sounds pretty safe. The speaker describes the talk as "Thrill to a dramatic account of how a group of assassins brought about a change in the passport regulations; and how, for one man, the passport itself turned into a killer".

However, we should not despair as March will be a lot safer, our own Roger Edwards has a new talk about "The ten Dukes of Buckingham - from the Wars of the Roses to Victorian times". He says it includes a lot about beheadings, kidnappings and murders.

Thankfully, in April we have a talk about Medical Detection Dogs – he was sure they would not bite.

The last two talks had been suggested by some of the members, so if they had any nonmurderous ideas, they should let Roland know about them.

Webmaster's Report:

Derek reported that all the information about our U3A was available from the web site, and reminded members to use it as a resource. All the Group listings were now on the Simple System, although they still needed some updating from GCs.

He reminded everyone to respond to emails, for example information sent out for this Meeting and the Christmas social had a rather limited response. The Simple system sends messages to home email, and it is possible to check it has been opened, and is therefore more reliable than the existing system. It is worthwhile for Group Co-ordinators to start using it to message their members, as there are less likely to be rejected messages when sent from there. Messages sent to Group Co-ordinators in the webmail will no longer be forwarded to home email.

The Simple system offers a backup/audit trail for GCs because a new GC taking over can see what has been sent out previously. He asked members to consider volunteering to run a new group, help an existing group, give technical support, and so on.

There will be some training meetings set up for the New Year, where GCs will be invited to bring their laptops, so they can be helped to get started. Anyone with a desktop can have a home visit arranged as an alternative.

7. Election of Officers:-

The four Officers listed in the Agenda, namely Lilia Bogle, Howard Mordue, Patrick Collins, and Dorothy Morgan had indicated they were willing to stand for re-election, and this was approved by a majority show of hands from the members.

8. Election of other Trustees

The remaining 7 Trustees, namely Derek Morgan, Mark Owen, Katerina Owen, Arthur Newman, Roland Simpkins, Janti Mistry, and Sarah Katz, were all willing to stand for reelection, and this was approved by a majority show of hands from the membership present. There is one Trustee vacancy, but no nominations had been received from the membership.

9. Election of President

Martin Paul had indicated his intention to stand down as President. There were no other nominations for this role.

10. Any other Business

11. Members Forum Q & A

There were no specific questions from the audience.

The Chairperson declared the meeting closed and refreshments were served to the attendees.

Charity No. 1177534

Appendix:

Apologies List AGM 2022

Alan Spedding

Christine Dodds

Elizabeth Linton

Esther Turnbull

Geraldine Bluck

Gill Gibson

Howard Mordue

Irene Lee

John Amos

Marilyn Crawford

Mary Amos

Mary Forman

Patricia Shillington

Pauline Stanger

Sandra Truscott

Ray Smalley

Viv Smalley

Robert Winks

Sarah Katz

Ann Champion