

# Minutes of AGM held on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at Wymondham Central Hall



**The meeting commenced at 14:00 with 136 members in attendance (21%)**

A quorum was present, being over one tenth of the total membership at the time.

## **Apologies for Absence**

Received from Lin Brett, Diane Gibbins, Diane Gordon, Tony Leggate, John Peat, Jean Pelling-Smith, Jo and Jim Sinclair and Christine Watts

## **Minutes of 2023 AGM**

The previous AGM had been held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023, with the minutes having been approved by the Committee and circulated to the membership prior to this meeting. The adoption of those minutes was proposed by John Spencer and seconded by Val Smith.

## **Matters Arising from the 2023 AGM Minutes**

There were no matters arising.

## **Chair's Report**

John Dollimore addressed the meeting as follows:

“At last year’s AGM, for the first time ever we believe, we had a contested election. This year we have had nobody come forward to join the Committee. Within the next twelve months we need 4 members to come forward to join the Committee, or this wonderful club that we have all made together will have to close. The last time we functioned without a Secretary was in 2014 when we had 120 members and we were below the radar. Today we have some 650 members and we have to conform. This has been demonstrated with the rewrite of our policy documents and the introduction of risk assessments. This work has been undertaken by your Vice-Chair, John Peat and he has done a wonderful job. When I asked him if he would like to join the Committee last year, his reply was “What would I do.....I don’t know anything about the running of a u3a.” If he was here today, he would probably tell you he hasn’t stopped all year. In addition to his reorganizational skills, John has taken over the editing of our newsletter and he also stepped into the breach and filled the role of Membership Secretary since Jo Sinclair stepped down through ill health. Jo had streamlined the way we operated our membership operation and is sorely missed in Committee. We all wish her to regain good health in the near future.

Today we say goodbye to Georgette Vale. One of our rules is that you can only serve for 9 years on the Committee. Georgette joined the Committee in 2015 as Secretary and when we included the Secretary in the 3 year rule she had to step down and became Speaker Secretary. Whilst she will continue as Speaker Secretary, it will be from outside the Committee. Georgette has played a huge role over the 9 years in developing our u3a and will be sorely missed at Committee meetings. We are currently looking at our Constitution and it is hoped that we shall be able to welcome Georgette back on the Committee in the future. I would like to ask Georgette to accept a small gift from all of us in appreciation of her hard work.

*At this point Georgette was presented with a hamper by Vivienne Dollimore, Co-Honorary President of Wymondham u3a.*

The most important role in our u3a is that of Group Leader and the whole membership has to thank the 50 or so members who lead groups. Without them the u3a would not function. Whether they lead groups in their own houses, or lead larger groups in hired venues, our thanks go to them all for the hard work that I know goes into running a group. Coordinating all the groups is Stuart Crowther. His job is not an easy one, as most members when they join have a list of groups they want to join and he has to tell them that their chosen groups are full. That he manages to place many new members into groups is a testament of the thoroughness of his work. Stuart has also managed to create many second and third groups which has kept waiting lists down and members happy. It is also good to see completely new groups starting up being led by new members.

As you will be told in a few minutes time, our financial position is robust. We do not follow other u3a's in building up large sums of money but retain enough to be prudent and as you have all seen we return surpluses to you the members in the form of reduced subscriptions. We are lucky to have Geoffrey Briggs as our Treasurer. He quietly goes about his business and produces glowing financial reports to the Committee. He is very supportive of the Committee spending money when it benefits us all. This year the accounts have been verified by David Giess and we are grateful to him. I will let Geoffrey tell you the rest in a few minutes.

It is very difficult not to be complimentary about our Secretary, Howard Brown. He keeps our records meticulously, seldom speaks in Committee, but when he does you know you have to listen. He keeps us all in order and I am very grateful for the support he gives me and the work he does.

There are 3 other members who we need to highlight: Iris Burden, who welcomes everyone to coffee mornings and open meetings; Sandie Fellingham and her team of volunteers who serve coffee every Thursday morning; and Gilly Spencer who has taken on the role of greeting new members and making them feel welcome.

One of the initiatives coming out of Gilly's regime is our Life Long Learning section under the leadership of Alan Browne. This has been further developed in the last year and tomorrow we are holding a Special Interest Day with 4 speakers, including our MP. There are still tickets available if you would like to attend.

Finally, our social activities were most successful last year and supported by more and more members. This year's are going well and I would like to thank you all for your support.

I'm going to end, where I started. In the next year we need 4 new Committee Members. A Membership Secretary. An IT Controller. A Secretary and a Treasurer. The first 2 we need now. The latter 2 by this time next year. I sincerely hope that we have 4 members willing to step up to the plate.

It has been a great privilege to lead our u3a again and I thank you all for the support you give Vivienne and myself. Thank you everyone."

## **Treasurer's Report**

Geoffrey Briggs gave the Treasurer's Report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

He expressed his thanks to Iris Burden and to the new Examiner of Accounts, Mr David Giess for the work done to support the Treasurer's role. Geoffrey confirmed that David is a professional accountant of many years standing and our accounts had been certified by him and he had provided us with a certificate to that effect. Geoffrey commented that our official accounts were required to be sent to the Charity Commission and that we had a policy of open air accounting.

Geoffrey then displayed 6 slides on the screen and described the figures shown in turn:

**GENERAL ACCOUNT BANK BALANCE:** The main feature of our financial report was that this balance had increased from £4,056 at end 2022 to £10,155 at end 2023, due to the transfer of surplus funds from the Social Account. The closing balance of £10,155 would enable us to set up a financial reserve (as suggested by John Peat) of £5,000, support the replacement of equipment as and when necessary and provide additional accommodation on Thursdays for the increased number of attendees.

**FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2023:** Numerically it was noted that the surplus for the 2023 year of £6,099, when added to the opening Bank balance of £4,056, resulted in the end year bank balance of £10,155.

**GENERAL ACCOUNT - INCOME:** Memberships income had decreased from 2022 due to the reduction in the Annual Fee to £10 per person from April 2023, which Geoffrey considered to be very good value. This decrease was offset by the greater number of members during the year. 'Other' income of £5,500 was the transfer from the Social Account of accumulated surpluses therein. Groups income had increased roughly in line with the growth in membership. Income from Coffee Mornings had increased significantly because of the Thursday morning fee doubling to £1, the greater number of attendees, and the low base in 2022 due to Covid.

**GENERAL ACCOUNT - PAYMENTS:** The growth in payments for Groups' expenditure followed a similar pattern to that of Groups' income (previous slide). Hall hire in 2022 was affected by Covid and the prepayment of hire fees in 2021. Payments to the Third Age Trust for Capitation fees, the Third Age Magazine and the Beacon system increased because of higher number of members and inflationary pressures.

**SOCIAL ACCOUNT:** Geoffrey stated that 2023 had been a busy year for the Travel Department. £5,500 was transferred to the General Account as described above. The closing bank balance was £23,220.

**SOURCES OF MONEY:** It was noted by Geoffrey that moves had been made towards the 'cashless society' by the increased use of the Square system, however the thorny problem remains over the 32% of cash (approximately £7,500) handed to the Treasurer for banking. This was mainly due to the £1 entrance fee on Thursday mornings. The closure of the NatWest bank, possible uncertainties over the long-term visits by the 'Bank Vans' had resulted in Geoffrey having to bank the cash in Norwich. This had raised concerns over where this cash could continue to be deposited. (Members in attendance later provided several suggestions to help resolve this problem, which would be subject to further study).

In conclusion the Treasurer remarked that the year 2022 had been a good year for our finances and 2023 was a very good year. He expressed the hope that the year 2024 would continue in a similar vein.

The adoption of the accounts was proposed by Gilly Spencer and seconded by Tony Vale.

### **Election of Committee Members**

It was proposed by the Chair to elect the Officers and Committee Member en bloc, there having been the one nomination for each role. This was further proposed by Douglas Beattie and seconded by Pam Dawson. A vote was taken and all Officers and the Committee Member listed below were elected unanimously.

#### **Officer Posts**

**Chair:** John Dollimore - Proposed by Terry King, Seconded by Terry Minto

**Vice Chair:** John Peat - Proposed by Paul Moss, Seconded by Tony Vale

**Secretary:** Howard Brown - Proposed by Alan Browne, Seconded by John Spencer

**Treasurer:** Geoffrey Briggs - Proposed by Linda Burkett, Seconded by Mike Harris

#### **Other Committee Member**

**Groups' Co-Ordinator:** Stuart Crowther - Proposed by Sandra Fellingham, Seconded by Barbara Fielder

## **Any Other Business**

The Chair invited members in attendance to ask any questions or raise any points.

### ***Committee Recruitment***

**Tony Vale** mentioned his experience of a local Pensioners Club failing due to a lack of leaders when only 2 were required and he was concerned that the same fate could befall our u3a. He stressed that every effort should be made to ensure this didn't happen.

**Jean Beer** suggested a learning curve for Committee roles. The Chair responded that this had already been suggested in our Newsletter. He also reiterated the Committee retention rules we had to abide by within our Constitution.

**Alan Archer** queried whether the Third Age Trust's Model Constitution was a national requirement. The Chair explained that it was meant to be, with the Charity Commission's guidance stipulating a periodic change of Committee Members.

**Ros Krieger** was in agreement with the 9 year rule concerning the total Committee membership period as otherwise older members could stay on too long. The Chair commented that even if the rule was relaxed and we couldn't find new members then those due to retire would have to carry on if they so desired. He added that with people retiring later now, the average age of all of our members was increasing.

### ***Coffee Morning Entrance Fee***

**Pam Dawson** suggested that the refreshments be covered by the annual membership fee. The Treasurer advised that the hire of the hall was also included in the entrance fee.

**Terry King** and **Alan Archer** both thought a £10 docket system could work as the attendees were recorded on a computer.

**John Spencer** was of the opinion that we could afford refreshments to be free.

**Colin Butcher** thought that a return to a £15 annual membership fee would give an extra £5 to cover refreshments and hall hire.

**Liz Annison** stated that if the cost was covered within the annual membership fee, then it would penalise those who didn't wish to or couldn't attend Coffee Mornings.

**Val Smith** suggested that people brought their own biscuits!

**Helen Keegan** queried whether a card 'tap and go' payment would work but the Treasurer thought that for just a £1 and a resultant longer queue, it would not be appropriate.

**There was no other business and the meeting then closed at 14:40**