

WELWYN HATFIELD U3A

Minutes of the 30th Annual General Meeting held at Breaks Manor, Hatfield on Wednesday 8th March 2017 at 10.30am

Jean Mackie, Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed the members.

(1) Apologies for Absence: Sandy Pizzey, Jill McKinnon, Marion Sklar, Hazel Bell.

(2) To agree the Minutes of 2016 Annual General Meeting: Agreed.

(3) Matters Arising: None.

(4) Chairman's Report – Jean Mackie

Events: It's been another busy year for Welwyn Hatfield U3A. Our weekly meetings, a key feature of our organisation, have been well supported with well over 100 members attending each of the talks. Topics covered have included "The future of our energy supplies", "The history of pantomime", and a lively session on osteopathy, not to mention talks about gardens and local sites of interest. The increasing number of study groups continues to thrive and grow with some now having a waiting list.

We have also held other successful events – the summer party, for example which had a theme of Royalty, and led to some interesting facts emerging both from Jack Wood's quiz and Judy Grant's photos on the subject. This was the first time we'd had a quiz in the summer and it was well received, so we're hoping to repeat that again this year.

A good time was had by all at the Christmas lunch, with another quiz fronted by Jack.

A new event for this summer is to be the "60s" Supper Dance in May organised by Tony Tutton. Tickets are selling well and it promises to be a good night out. I am hoping you're already looking out those short shift dresses, purple shirts and head bands!!

Fees: Of course one of the major issues for us this year has been the matter of fees. It has been a very difficult and frustrating time for us all. The latest news is that the fees will be introduced in the coming months once Health and Safety checks are completed. Fees will vary according to the size of the venue. Despite this delay, as our subscriptions are paid in January, a decision had to be made by the Committee based on your responses.

Many thanks to those of you who have updated your Standing Orders, and a gentle reminder to those of you who still have to do this, please do so as soon as possible. The Membership Secretary and Treasurer, Suzanne and Judy are working extremely hard to ensure that the finances are in order and that your bank has also processed the changes correctly!

Thanks: My thanks go to all of the Committee for all their sterling support throughout the year and without whom we could not sustain our breadth of activities. In particular I must mention Ann Davies – Vice Chair and Groups Co-ordinator who has always been ready to step in to the Chair's role when necessary. Carol Mills - Secretary and Sandy Pizzey – Programme Secretary are both stepping down today after providing invaluable support to ensure our organisation runs so efficiently. Special thanks go to them. Thanks must also go to all those who help to ensure the smooth running of the Wednesday meetings – Front of House, refreshments, Reception team, Welcomers and the Sound team. Thanks also to those who support our other social activities throughout the year. I would also like to mention the Group Leaders who willingly give of their time to run their groups which I know so many of you enjoy.

Farewells: Whilst welcoming a good number of new members to our U3A this year, we must also remember those who have sadly passed away. In particular, Diane Reddaway who ran the Recorder group so enthusiastically, Jan Porter who ran the popular Luncheon Club and, most recently Ed Pizzey who many of you will know through the groups that he belonged to, and not least the sterling work he did for the Front of House and Sound.

This is our 30th year and I hope that we will continue to thrive and grow for at least the next 30 to come.

(5) Treasurer's Report – Judy Grant

This has been a good year financially. We have covered our costs and ended up with a surplus of **£2,588.77**. This comes from the **£1.00** charge we made during the Autumn term and a **£500** bequest from a former member. So in fact we are just breaking even. We do have a reserve in the bank of **£4,428** should we need it.

Income: Receipts from subscriptions have risen as our membership increases. Gift Aid is a great benefit to our finances, so many thanks to all those who signed the form.

Expenditure: Rental costs for the Wednesday meetings and for the 7 groups who meet in rented accommodation are a significant expenditure.

We pay **£3.50** for each full member to Head Office each year which covers items such as insurance, the magazine, general admin, setting up new groups etc.

Assets: We have bought a digital projector costing **£647** for use and storage at Breaks Manor, so we now have a projector and computer at each venue. These are borrowed by groups as necessary.

Finally, I would like to thank Arseven Gumush, the previous Treasurer as he continues to support me and has acted as the Examiner of these accounts.

(6) Membership Secretary's Report – Suzanne Brown

Our membership year to December 2016 had been another busy one with **114** new members joining us. Already since January we have had **24** people join, reflecting the usual surge at the beginning of the year. Perhaps it's down to people putting New Year resolutions into action.

During 2016, **106** members left our group so you can see our membership remains pretty constant and is currently **876**. We have **28** Associate members – these are members who belong to another U3A group, and **22** Honorary members – for those of you who don't know, these are members who are over 90! Being an Honorary member of course means you no longer pay subscriptions.

The Wednesday morning meeting registers show we have an average of **140** attending each week which again remains on par with previous years. Our most popular talk with **189** attending was *Luton Hoo: Past, Present, Future*, followed by *A Year by the Thames* with **165** attending.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you about letting me know should your personal details change. It is very difficult to make contact should we need to if we don't have up to date details, and may also mean that you will not receive your copy of the Third Age Matters magazine sent out to you by The Third Age Trust. Thank you to all those who have remembered to let me have their new addresses, phone numbers or email addresses, it is a great help.

Judy and I are currently wrestling with reconciling 2017 subscriptions. It appears we have:-

189 members who have paid only £16.00 instead of £30.00.

54 members who have paid both £16.00 and £30.00.

98 who have paid no subscriptions at all for 2017.

I think these figures give you an indication of what a mammoth job we have to sort out. Judy will be sending refund cheques to members who have overpaid, and I will be following up those who have underpaid. I would urge you to please check your own bank account to ensure you have **one** Standing Order set up to U3A Welwyn Hatfield for £30.00 for the January 2018 payment. Neither of us want to go through another session like this.

The final thing to mention is please wear your badge. If you have lost your badge or never had one, collect it from me, I have them with me today. I usually bring them at least once a month to a Wednesday meeting. Future dates of when they will be are shown on our web site.

If anyone has any questions regarding membership I will do my best to answer them.

Thank you for your attention.

(7) Group Co-ordinator's Report - Ann Davies

2016 has seen our groups thriving and we now have **65** groups listed. Exploring London is a very popular pastime and the third group was set up last year and it was quickly over-subscribed, so we have added a fourth one. There may be a need for a fifth one as so many people are interested.

Some groups have changed leaders during the year for various reasons but I'm pleased to say that none have had to close. The members worked out solutions together, the perfect answer to the U3A's basic tenet. The Theatre group had a complicated change-over because banks were involved, but all is sorted out and they are planning their first outing next month.

Our two major group events ie The Art & Photography Exhibition held in November and the Meet The Groups occasion in March were very well supported. We hope for good attendance at this year's Meet The Groups on 29th March. There will again be demonstrations of Tai Chi and Line Dancing.

As mentioned, we have a lot of new members who, I hope, will soon be willing to start up a new interest group or fully support an existing one. Our wonderful groups would not be able to continue without the hard work and commitment the leaders provide. They all do a great job and we thank them all wholeheartedly for doing this.

(8) Programme Secretary's Report – Sandy Pizzey

Our Wednesday morning meetings are held every week during term time. Last year we had a total of **34** speakers which included one of our own members. The talks covered a wide range of topics and we hope there was something of interest for everyone.

There were also six other events during the year which included Meet The Groups, a Christmas party with a quiz, and also a Christmas Lunch. Details of these events are on the programme leaflet available each term and on the web site.

The cost of speakers varies – some have a set fee and others just ask for a donation. Last year we paid an average of **£74.00** per speaker including travelling expenses which is about **£9.00** more than the previous year.

Booking speakers is a team effort and I would like to thank the other three members of the team who help with this - Bharati (Barty) Chauhan, Corrie Godfrey and Sheila Wilder. If anyone would like to join the team and help us with speakers, we will be pleased to hear from you.

Finally, thanks to all the members for their feedback, suggestions and recommendations. Please keep it up, it really helps us with future planning. Thank you.

