

Welwyn Hatfield U3A

Minutes of 33rd AGM

Held at Breaks Manor on Wednesday 11th March 2020

		Action
1	Apologies J.Mackie, C.Parsons P.Barratt J.Scales H.Bell, S.Brown, J.Brown,D.Coxon	
2	Minutes of 2019 AGM Approved and signed	
3	Matters Arising None	
4	Chairman's Report - PW <p>A little over a year ago our U3A looked as though it might be in a potentially parlous state. We were about to lose three of our officers at once and the committee was in need of fresh blood. It was into this situation that I offered first to be on the committee and then to take on the role of Deputy Chair in one step! That still left the post of Chairman with no nominees, but, at the last AGM, Richard Griffiths stepped in at the 11th hour to save the day. We already had a volunteer to take on the role of Treasurer, under the expert guidance of Judy Grant. I would like to say here how brilliantly Sue Talbot has undertaken this role. There have been many additional duties involved in this role this year in terms of devising a financial policy in compliance with national guidelines, compiling an assets register and bringing us into the 21st century by introducing on-line banking. Not tasks to be undertaken lightly. Needless to say, we all embarked on a steep learning curve. But I have to give formal thanks for the support and guidance from the previous incumbent of my post, Ann Davies. The tasks she undertakes are numerous and we simply wouldn't have functioned nearly so well without her input. The other person who has steered us through this year has been Marie Scales. Marie, our Secretary, handles all the paperwork involved with minutes and meetings and she, too, has had to deal with constitution matters and policies we are required to have in place. But, like Ann, Marie is always to be found behind the scenes giving help where help is needed.</p> <p>I am taking time here to dwell on the work of the Committee because that's what makes our U3A tick and tick so well. The aim of the Committee is to make our U3A experience the best it can be and this needs to be done in a spirit of friendly co-operation and that's what we seek to maintain, along with a team of willing volunteers. As far as other committee members are concerned, Roger Swaine is our Webmaster and communications guru. The website is a valuable resource and most of the information you may seek is there, so it's important that we use it and help to maintain and update the information. Peter Fox is our membership secretary and it is his role to manage an up-to-date membership register, liaise with the Treasurer re subs and to keep a tally of attendance at meetings. New members are dealt with by Jill Longman. As you are aware, we have a very professionally produced newsletter, appearing three times a year, which outshines many another such publication in terms of its appearance with colour photographs and the variety of its content. The editor responsible for this is Hazel Bell and I would like to bring this to your attention as it is also responsible for raising the profile of our U3A. If we were <i>the</i> Cabinet, I would like to think of Tony Tutton as the Minister for Fun, because he is responsible for bringing us so much fun, whether it's the supper dances, quizzes or other events. So important.</p>	

Well, I'm not going to adumbrate each member but suffice it to say that each person has a valuable part to play which helps us to function.

So, what have we been up to this year? I like to think of our U3A as having two key cornerstones; one being the Wednesday meetings and the other being the wide range of study and interest groups. Most other U3A groups only have monthly meetings or fortnightly, so we are most fortunate to have these weekly. We are indebted to Bharati Chauhan and her team for the variety and quality of the Wednesday talks. They are invariably interesting and stimulating. My own particular favourites have been: Behind Closed Doors – an unexpected look at the life of a prison officer; The view from the wings - about the life of a Stage Manager; History of Bedfordshire Churches, Remarkable Women of Hertfordshire and Prime Ministers' Extra-Marital Affairs . But they continue to surprise us and the attendance figures reflect the fact of their popularity as we are almost always near capacity for our venues. The other benefit of the weekly meetings is the opportunity to chat with and make new friends, have coffee and catch up with the latest trips and visits on offer. The only problem has been ongoing issues with parking, which we continue to explore but this is an issue.

The study and special interest groups give people much pleasure and fulfil that need to develop in retirement something we may not have had enough time for in the past or to explore something completely new to us. The "Meet the Groups" sessions give us all the opportunity to appreciate the talent and variety of the skills people share. Not all groups are relevant or appropriate for display but are nonetheless worthy and valuable. It is interesting that our most popular of these is the Exploring London group which now runs five subgroups to cope with demand. The number and range of all these groups represent much hard work and organisation by group leaders and the work of co-ordinating the groups has been undertaken by Ann Davis, who is soon to be succeeded by Joan Scales. Highlights of the year for me have been the trips organised by the Travel Group to Spain and Shropshire, both so memorable and the many visits organised by the Arts Appreciation Group; Oxford, Cambridge, Tate Britain, Hampton Court and more. I have been responsible for the Theatre Visits group and we have managed several visits this year. I've enjoyed them all but particularly "Fiddler on the Roof" and the day at Sonning Mill to see "Private Lives". The trouble is, with so much on offer, it's hard to choose. It would be possible to do something every day of the week!!

The third area of our endeavours is the social events which take place throughout the year and are open to all members. In addition to the traditional seasonal events, we have, in recent years, been treated to the Sixties Supper Dances, organised by Tony Tutton with his band. We had one at the end of June and another at the end of November. These are very popular and enjoyable evenings when the years seem to slip away and we return to "the way we were". Tony was also responsible for organising the quiz for the Christmas Party, which was pitched just right and followed by a buffet lunch provided by members and wine from the "bar". This event rounded off the year but was followed by the annual Christmas lunch at Homestead Court. We definitely celebrated the season with good cheer. Last summer the garden party at the end of "term" was another enjoyable occasion. This year we were entertained by a visiting Ukelele band who, together with our own fairly novice group, provided a light-hearted medley for our delight. Once again it was Tony who stepped in to provide the quiz and act as MC. It was a lovely sunny afternoon so we were able to make use of the garden to consume our food and drink. You can't say that U3A members don't know how to enjoy themselves.

The year has not been without some challenges; as mentioned, parking is often an issue; rental for premises used by groups has not yet been resolved. But we have

	<p>succeeded in putting together the required policies in line with the national organisation. We have strengthened our links with the Herts Network – thanks to Penny. We are in a healthy financial state so we have been able to replace certain items. The new sound system for groups on trips has proved invaluable and a new radio mic for speakers has proved effective. Plans are in place to celebrate the national U3A Day on 3rd June. So, apart from a dispute at the end of the year, resulting in the departure of our chairman, this committee remains – well - committed and in accord. So....onward and upward into the next decade. I hope you may all continue to enjoy and derive as much benefit from your membership as I know I have.</p>	
5	<div data-bbox="646 571 893 683" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Treasurer's Report - ST</p> <p>It is one year on from taking over from Judith Grant. I would like to record my thanks to Judy for her time helping me negotiate my way around the specific spreadsheets and bank reconciliations etc.</p> <p>Our Accounts were independently examined this year and my thanks to Gail Maisey for her diligent work. The annual income and expenditure figures presented – easier if there any comments to see me later than take time now, if don't mind.</p> <p>Year of some changes: -</p> <p>Obtained a debit card – enables cash from any ATM and not a trip into town with a cash cheque. This gives cash for petty cash and paying directly for some purchases. Changes enforced with regard to account payee on the cheques as only U3A Welwyn Hatfield is legally acceptable.</p> <p>On line banking introduced and so reducing the number of cheques and thus making for easier, quicker, and simpler method of payments. The payment of venue rentals for the various study groups was done by David Cushen but David is now stepping down from the committee and this coincided with paying these rentals by BACS. I wish to record my thanks to David for all his help.</p> <p>New directives from U3A HQ and the Charity Commission and so we have produced our Finance Policy which outlines our financial duties and responsibilities, especially with regard to the running of all our great study groups. Unfortunately, this has meant a few more forms to complete but at least we are doing things the right way.</p> <p>Subscriptions were raised to £30 this year to prepare for rental increases and any Brexit effect on prices generally! There are some members who did not change their SO and so please check your bank statements to see if you are one of the guilty ones!! We will announce, around September the subscription fee for 2021.</p> <p>We have reviewed all our equipment and are in a position to replace some old equipment, ie, those appliances not economically worth repairing. The remainder will be PAT tested (appliances electrically tested) next week and on a regular basis thereafter.</p> <p>We start 2020 in very healthy state, supporting our membership as it continues to grow, our study groups increasing and varied, along with our excursions and trips, the range of speakers and to face increases in rentals, postage etc.</p> <p>Accounts to be made available on the website.</p>	S.T
6	<p>Membership Secretary's Report – P.F</p> <p>Another dynamic year since the last AGM with new members joining all the time Since the last AGM our membership has increased from 845 to 901 an increase of 6% Nett</p>	

	<p><i>During the same period 109 people joined and 53 people left /passed away</i> Up to the time of this AGM 32 new members have joined this year alone.</p> <p>Attendance at the Wednesday meetings has increased, we now have between 150 and 180 Members attending each week So a big thank you to Bharati and her team for organising the speakers,</p> <p>As you should be aware from the website, emails and 80 letters sent out last year we reverted back to an annual subscription of £30. I am pleased to say that 673 of you changed your standing orders (or left them at £30 during last year) and are fully paid up. With the Honorary members this equals 708. 116 members have yet to pay their fees, but that is partly due to the fact that we have not yet received the bank accounts for payments in February. There are 77 Members who have not paid the full amount – not changed their SO. So we would appreciate it if you can check what you have paid and pay the difference to Sue by Cheque. This will save us chasing you. If you are not sure how much you have paid see me afterwards and I can tell you what you have paid to-date. It amazes me that people do not check every so often their bank statements or list of Standing orders. We have received payment from people who passed away more than 2 years ago. We have also seen payments of different amounts based on when they set up their standing orders a number of years ago, we have people paying both £30 and £5. We have 35 Honorary members. Honorary members are not required to pay an annual subscription from the end of the year in which they reach 90. So please ensure I am informed that you have reached this age and then cancel your standing order. Similarly, if you change you address, telephone number or eMail address please ensure I am informed, as we then not only update the database but also the mailing system we use and the U3A trust use for The Third Age Matters Magazine. Just as a reminder, in our compliance to GDPR, we do not keep your bank account details the standing orders are passed to the banks once we have added your membership number to them</p>	
7	<p>Group Co-ordinator’s Report – A.D</p> <p>It has been another good year for our 66 interest groups. We now have a second Tai Chi group and an Android discussion group. Exploring London 5 is thriving and is now full. Throughout each term outings, visits and holidays are organised so we have plenty to offer our members. Over the past year some groups have changed leaders but a member within the group has taken over so there have been no group closures. The Ukulele group goes from strength to strength and has done at least one public performance. Last March the Meet the Groups morning had another record attendance when people came to see what some of our groups get up to. In November the Art and Photography exhibition wowed the visitors too. I hope for an even higher attendance this year on April 1st at Meet the Groups. There have been a couple of problems with room availability but Ludwick Family centre was able to help out temporarily. Parking is another issue that keeps raising its head. We still are not absolutely sure of the outcome of the Council’s plans but we will work out together how to deal with it. If you have a burning interest in a topic that we don’t currently offer please come and ask us to advertise it. As long as there is sufficient interest and someone willing to be the Point of Contact we can set it up. We have several self help groups where people teach themselves and take turns in leading. As ever I must say a big thank you to the Group Leaders. We need their support to keep us going and I</p>	

	<p>really do appreciate their efforts. Please help them wherever you can-even if it's making the tea, a most important part of the proceedings. Last year, after more than 6 years, I decided it was time to step back and give someone else the chance to hold this lovely role. I'm pleased to officially hand over to Joan Scales and hope she will relish the post as much as I have.</p>	
8	<p>Programme Secretary's Report –B.C The Speaker team have all worked very hard in the last year and we have had some really good talks which have been enjoyed by our members.</p> <p>We have almost completed booking speakers for 2020 and have commenced taking bookings for 2021.</p> <p>I have been doing the Speaker Bookings for the past six and half years and am stepping down due to my personal demands within my family. I have really enjoyed doing the bookings and looking after my team and would like to thank the Committee members and my team for all their support. I am handing over to Jill Longman who I know will do a really good job with the Speaker Team.</p>	
9	<p>Appointment of examiner of the accounts Gail Maisey Proposed by S.Talbot Seconded by M.Scales, duly appointed</p>	
10	<p>Appointment of Officers Chairperson P.Williams Proposed by M.Scales Seconded by S.Williams Deputy Chairperson P.Barratt Proposed by P.Williams Seconded by A.Davies</p> <p>The above were duly elected S.Talbot and M.Scales approved to continue for 2nd term of office The above were duly elected</p>	
11	<p>Appointment of Committee i)J.Longman approved to continue for 3rd year ii)J.Scales, C.Sladeand P.Williams approved to continue for 2nd year The above were duly elected iii)Re –election The following are willing to continue on the Committee P.Fox, Proposed by M.Scales Seconded by P.Barratt R.Swaine Proposed by P.Barratt Seconded by T.Tutton H.Bell Proposed by A.Davies Seconded by T.Tutton The above were duly elected The above have been duly elected New Committee Members Dave.Charlwood Proposed by A.Davies Seconded by J.Longman Karen.Chandler Proposed by V.Godman Seconded by J.Sole Dianne.Coxon Proposed by J.Longman Seconded by S.Talbot</p>	

	<p>Steve Hall Proposed by T.Tutton Seconded by P.Fox</p> <p>Roy Madell Proposed by A. Davies Seconded by J.Longman</p> <p>Ann Higgs Proposed by A.Davies Seconded byJ.Longman</p> <p>As we had more nominations than vacancies on the committee, a vote took place,the following were duly elected for a three year term D.Charlwood ,D.Coxon, S.Hall, R.Madell and A.Higgs</p>	
12	Any Other Business None	