

Lyme Regis U3A

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Woodmead Halls on Friday, 8th November 2019

Committee Members/Trustees Present:

Rachael Pope	(Chair)
Ann Fleet	(Secretary)
Mary Bohane	(Vice Chair)
Mike Moyes	(Treasurer)
Kate Pitts	(Speaker Finder)
Graham Pitts	(Membership Secretary)
Sue Wilson	(Newsletter)
Penny Rose	(Groups' Co-ordinator)
Susie Butter	(Publicity)

There were 106 members and visitors in attendance

1. Welcome

The Chair, Rachael Pope gave a warm welcome to everyone and thanked everyone for coming to our 2019 AGM.

There may be some visitors here. Non-members were reminded that you can only observe, and cannot vote. Voting is for local U3A members only.

Rachael said that she was following in Val Doney's footsteps in wanting this AGM to be short and snappy, so that you can get to your coffees at 10.30 before the speaker at 11.00.

2. Apologies

Kevin Benfield, Sandra Lello, Frances and Peter Smythe, Helen Hughes, Shelagh and Bob Mercer, Pat Powell, Merry Bolton, Carl Salter, Val and Richard Doney, Judy and Trevor Mace, Tricia and Malcolm Dean and Ed Standhaft.

3. Minutes of the AGM held on 9th November 2018

Approval of the minutes was proposed by the Chair and seconded by Jim Moseley. Members voted to a show of hands.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Chair's Report

Val Doney stood down as U3A Chair in November 2018. I took over on 8 March 2019.

We currently have 646 members. The monthly meetings, groups and trips have continued as normal. Three new groups have been formed – Strollers, Plant sharing and Sea front Gardens. Sadly, the Needles and Stitches and Creative Clay groups have finished.

Further to this there has been a focus on the following areas of work:

a) Updating the constitution

The committee decided that we should update to the U3A National model constitution. The constitution in itself is far more developed than the previous one which was dated 2006. Part 1 Section 3 'Object' was actually approved at our last AGM in 2018. Incorporated into this new constitution is the formal name change. Earlier this year the committee agreed to use the simpler name 'Lyme Regis U3A' for all practical purposes. The main reason for the change was that not many people knew what our name was, including me. We are moving towards all main headings on our literature having 'Lyme Regis, and surrounding area', on them.

The main benefit of the new constitution is that we will be able to have up to 12 committee members/trustees if we wish, with the co-option of three other trustees, if required. Currently eight is stipulated, but we actually have 9 people. Everyone who is a committee member is automatically a trustee. Another benefit is the inclusion of Section 16 and Clause 19 and the requirement of all trustees to sign an eligibility declaration regarding fraud and other offences. This is going to take place today, if you approve the committee, and the forms sent to the Charity Commission. Such declarations are part of routine good governance. I have recently undertaken a half day training for trustees, arranged by Lyme Forward. The secretary Ann Fleet is hoping to attend in the New Year.

I would like to draw your attention to what is the only criteria for joining the U3A in Part 1. Section 3 – being no longer in full-time work. There is no age limit.

I will say more about the constitution and its flaws, under the next item on the agenda. There will be an opportunity to comment.

b) Risk assessment

Several incidents have taken place in some of the U3A groups. Though nothing serious happened, there could have been a very different outcome. It was felt that actions needed to be taken to ensure the safety of all concerned. These include discussions about risk assessment and setting guidelines for good practice. Group leaders agreed to share information about any incidents so that learning could take place.

First Aid: Maintenance of Life sessions were arranged. These are taking place at the Lyme Regis Baptist Church hall, led by a paramedic. Five sessions have been scheduled. The last two are in November and December. A few places left. The feedback from the first session was mixed; some very positive, some not. Changes were made to the format and presentation and the verbal and written feedback since then has been extremely positive. When completed approximately 70 people will have taken part in this training including members of the Uplyme Help at Hand organisation. Non-members paid a fee for their places. The committee will be considering whether to arrange further sessions next year.

We will also be advertising the local Lyme Heartbeat sessions in the Newsflash, with training on CPR and use of the defibrillator. I went to one of the sessions and it was very good.

c) Review of publicity leaflets

It was decided to have a new A6 flier to advertise the U3A. This is still a work in progress. We have consulted on the first draft and changes will be made.

A review of the A4 folded leaflet is also underway. Kevin Benfield is assisting with this. Work on that was delayed as we waited to hear what the national office was doing with the logo. The logo is remaining the same except for a new strap line of 'Learn, Laugh, Live'. They have removed the phrase University of the Third Age from the logo.

d) Website

John Marriage has come forward to help design a new website. We are going to use Weebly website builder. Work has started on this, but it will be a while before it is up and running.

e) Collaboration with other organisations

Making connections is important. Building upon earlier work we have tried to build more links with other organisations. There have been mixed results. One collaboration we think will be very positive and of mutual benefit is with the Charmouth Village People. We are also exploring using Abbeyfield in Lyme as a venue for groups, which could involve the residents. The opera group used to meet there. Chris Tipping, manager at Lyme Forward has been very supportive and regularly sends out details of our talks in their weekly newsletter. We were able to support Help at Hand with access to the First Aid sessions. It's all about mutual support.

f) Informal drop-in at the Pilot Boat, Lyme Regis

For all members on the last Thursday in the month at 10-00 am. Anyone is welcome. Ann Fleet and I are hosting this. Come and meet up with friends. Come to share any ideas you might have, or give feedback.

g) Latest ideas/work in progress

Pat Chambers initiated and arranged a very challenging and intensive day session You the Jury. Twelve people worked through two real life murder cases. I'm told it was very successful.

Ann Fleet is working on a comprehensive list of venues and facilities in the area to supply to group leaders.

There is a possibility of teaching children to knit at the St Michaels Primary School. A meeting of different generations to pass on skills. Our suggestion was greeted with much enthusiasm. I am hoping to meet with the headmaster soon to explore what is required. If we go ahead, we will need people (men as well) who can knit and who are willing to take part. We will also need someone enthusiastic and willing to coordinate the project. Please contact me if interested.

General business and administration

Earlier this year the membership secretary Shane Ridley left the committee. Mary Bohane again stepped into the breach to rescue us. Graham Pitts has now come forward to take her place. Mike Moyes is leaving us today, after 8 years in total, as the Treasurer. Graham Cumming is taking over that position. Membership secretary and treasurer – we cannot do without you.

Thanks were expressed to Mike Moyes for all his hard work and the Chair presented Mike with a gift.

Thank you to all the volunteers. Thanks to the group leaders, those who help with refreshments, moving of furniture at meetings, registering attendees, website support and those who have helped me with ‘meet and greet’. We need a few more ‘meet and greeters’. Thank you to Heather Britton who managed to de-stress the committee by helping to conquer the electronic equipment. She is now our meeting ‘Tech Support’. Thank you to all the committee members, and also Val Doney, who have supported me in my new role as Chair. Thank you to everyone for all your hard work.

As we go into 2020 we want your ideas and suggestions of how we can all improve what we do. You don’t have to be a committee member to contribute. For groups that have waiting lists we need people who are willing to start a new group. A number of ideas for new groups have been put forward, again we need leaders. Leaders, leaders, leaders.

We need to promote this U3A and encourage new members. That is something we can all be involved with.

6) Approving the constitution

The Chair commented on the Constitution as follows:

I naively thought that updating the constitution to the national model would be straightforward. I was completely wrong. You may have spotted the mistakes in the document we sent out.

There are presentational and formatting errors, a spelling mistake and informal language not suited for a formal document. Mary Bohane and I would fit very nicely into Pedants Corner. This document is extremely frustrating for people who want things presented well.

I had talks with the national office expressing my concerns and followed up with an e-mail. I didn’t get a reply. They had told us these errors could not be corrected. As a Pdf version we were unable to correct them. I was not going to ask someone to re-type this document; far too onerous a task. This left us with a dilemma. We decided to go ahead despite the errors. We concluded that this constitution, though flawed, was better than the old one. I am asking you to approve the content and meaning, and not the presentation. It is not ideal.

I also need to highlight Part 2. Section 16. This details the time limits for total periods of service of committee members/trustees. A maximum of 9 years in total in all roles and the need to have a break in service after 3 years. I believe that, with the exception of the Chair role, that this U3A has never been able to follow this. There is a very simple reason. People have not come forward to volunteer as committee members. We need to recognise that we also may not be able to achieve this, though an attempt will be made to do so. If we followed Section 16, currently, most of the committee would have to disappear instantly and I don’t think that is a very good idea.

Has anyone got any comments to make before I ask you to vote? There were no comments.

Despite the flaws, I propose that we approve this constitution. This was seconded by Jim Moseley. Members voted to a show of hands.

7. Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement

The Treasurer, Mike Moyes, presented his Report and Financial Statement 2018/19.

The total income was £2250.80 and the expenditure £22986.28 giving a deficit of £483.48 for the year 2018/19. This compares to a surplus of £1657.48 for the previous year.

The difference in two years is mainly due to the income and expenditure for the trips. In 2017/18, the trips had a surplus of £1712, and this year the corresponding value was £383.

The other main contributor to this year's deficit was Administration which was £706.13 more than in 2017/18. This was mainly due to the increase in the number of groups taking up the £50 grant and the First Aid Courses which cost £100 each. Plus a small amount of inflation.

Members were asked if there were any questions about the accounts.

- Jim Moseley queried the date on bottom of Financial Statement which had been signed by the auditor. Agreed that the date was incorrect and should read 31st August 2019 not 2018.
- Richard Malim queried why the amount of Gift Aid that we have claimed was not included on the Financial Statement. Mary Bohane replied that Gift Aid was waiting to be processed by the new treasurer.
- Jim Moseley asked if there would be a reduction in the annual subscriptions. Chair replied that a free year had been discussed by the committee. The treasurer had advised that we currently didn't have enough money to give a free year. The committee will reassess for next year (2021).

Members were asked to accept the Financial Statement (with date correction): proposed by Heather Britton, Seconded by Pam Shirley. Carried by members vote.

Thanks were given to the Treasurer.

8. Election of Committee Members/Trustees

The following people are prepared to stand as committee members/trustees: Rachael Pope (Chair); Mary Bohane (Vice-Chair); Ann Fleet (Secretary); Graham Cumming (Treasurer); Penny Rose (Groups Leader); Sue Wilson (Newsletter); Kate Pitts (Speaker Finder), Susie Butter (Publicity) and Graham Pitts (Membership Secretary).

We have not received any other nominations from our request in the last Newsletter.

Members were asked to accept the committee members: proposed by John Marriage, seconded by Alan Swannell. Carried by members vote.

9. Any Other Business

Pam Shirley suggested that the Charmouth Community Halls could be used as possible venues for group leaders. Difficulty with acoustics in St Andrews Community Hall was noted and comments made that parking could be a problem in Charmouth in the summer. Ann Fleet agreed to liaise with Pam. Thanks were expressed to Pam.

The Chair ended the meeting by thanking everyone for coming and asked that we ‘spread the word’; encourage people to join. The U3A is a very successful organisation and has a very positive impact on lots of people. Let’s keep supporting it.

The AGM was declared closed at 10.25am.

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