

MINUTES OF THE 25TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF SOUTH LAKES U3A HELD ON 16 MAY 2018 AT CASTLE STREET CENTRE, KENDAL

Present : 98 Committee and general members were present.

Apologies were received from Val Garvey and Carolyn Houghton.

1. CHAIR'S WELCOME

Mary Choiseul welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. MINUTES OF LAST YEAR'S AGM

The minutes of the AGM held on 17 May 2017 were accepted as a correct record: proposed by Linda Wood and seconded by Jane Willis.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Item 4: In response to a question from the floor, Mary confirmed that there was still an issue with some groups being full, and that the matter would be covered in her Annual Report.

4. CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT

Mary was pleased to report on a successful and special year for South Lakes U3A.

As well as providing and extending the wide range of activities on offer, we had celebrated our 25th anniversary. Our continued success was reflected in a significant increase in membership and, thanks to new volunteer co-ordinators, more interest groups to choose from. We welcomed more than 200 new members, bringing our numbers to their highest ever at 1,331 by the end of March. We now had 79 interest groups, (of which 13 were walking groups) an increase of 6 in the past year. Inevitably - as was reported last year - with membership increasing, a number of groups had closed and carried waiting lists. We therefore were encouraging members with a passion or interest that was not catered for, to establish a group. Support would be provided.

The 25th anniversary celebrations began at the Open Morning on 6 September. Special guests Beryl Caton, (founder member), Sam Rayner (Deputy Lord Lieutenant) and Andy Blackman (Mayor of Kendal) joined us. A birthday cake was enjoyed as well as a specially written song to celebrate the U3A. This was written and performed by John Brown (folk group coordinator), accompanied by Kelly Arkle. The festivities did not detract from the business of the open morning which, thanks to Chris Needham and her team of volunteers, ran like clockwork. To complete the birthday celebration, an oak tree was planted on Greenside in Kendal. It represented our aspiration that the organisation would continue to grow from strength to strength to be enjoyed by generations to come.

Work was continuing on the Beacon Project that had been mentioned at last year's AGM. This was an information system designed to streamline the management of membership and finance. Mary expressed her appreciation for the way that Colin Edwards (Membership Secretary) had applied his extensive IT skills to this and to the new Data Protection regulations, in addition to his main job.

This year we had been able to recognise the many job-sharers who jointly ran interest groups by inviting more than 90 coordinators to the annual afternoon tea in February. Thanks to the Abbott Hall extension we were able to enjoy musical accompaniment from the Recorder Group. Mary explained that our co-ordinators were the back-bone of the organisation. In some groups, sharing the work between two joint co-ordinators had made the work more manageable. The co-ordinators, freely giving their specialist knowledge and organisational skills, were the U3A and she expressed her gratitude for all their work and energy.

She reported that - behind the scenes and no less important - there were a number of people performing essential functions to ensure that the U3A ran as we had come to expect. She expressed thanks firstly to Sheila Watson for arranging the series of monthly talks, which had become increasingly popular and well-attended. Fiona Crosbie and her team of refreshment providers had been faithful caterers for every event on our busy calendar and were much appreciated. Ann Quintilla had continued to produce the excellent newsletter, valued by all. She had been supported by Ian Cunningham, Bob Shearman, Chris Johns and the delivery team. Peter Bunney had looked after the website and Kathy Webster and Anne Kirby had overseen access to the venues used by our groups. Their contributions, and those of numerous other occasional helpers, were vital and were much appreciated by all of us.

Mary said that she could not have done her job without the continuing support of the Committee. As ever, at this time, some members had completed their tenure and she offered thanks to Gill Helsby (Assistant Treasurer) and to Mary Christian (Minute Secretary) who were standing down. She noted that Chris Needham and Colin Edwards had worked beyond the call of duty. She also thanked Ian Fishwick (Treasurer), Cath Sharpe (Membership Secretary) and Val Garvey (Assistant Secretary).

Lastly she expressed her gratitude to Bob Wells for overseeing matters relating to existing and new interest groups for two years in his role as Vice Chair, and for his ongoing commitment to the U3A - exemplified by his willingness to be the next Chair. In his capable hands, supported by our excellent committee, Mary had every confidence that this great organisation would continue to flourish, evolve and enhance the lives of its members.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT 2017/18

Ian Fishwick introduced his report by expressing his thanks to all the team members: Gill Helsby (Assistant Treasurer) for handling the money collection and the group attendance records; Cath Sharpe and Colin Edwards for dealing with the subscription collections; the Co-ordinators for collecting room charges; and Stuart Hinton for examining the accounts.

He explained that without all their help, the job of Treasurer would be significantly more difficult.

6. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2017/18

Ian presented the accounts for 2017/18. He explained that the independently examined accounts were available on the website. Taking members through the Annual Accounts, Ian drew attention to the following points:

- a. the Receipts and Payments side of the accounts showed a large deficit of £3,563.94 as opposed to a small surplus of £153.37 in 2016/17 and a more significant surplus of £2,056.71 in 2015/16
- b. despite a rise of £708 in subscriptions, the amount collected from group attendees had gone down by £441.84, this together with a rise of £2820.19 in the hall hiring fees had resulted in a large overall deficit of £3488.16 for Group Activities.

The Committee had reviewed the group analysis earlier this year and decided that for the time being we could stand this loss from our reserves. As a consequence, our reserves now stood at £17,897.23 which represented 55% of our annual expenditure; this is in line with the Charity Commissioners directive. Ian explained that the situation of making such a large loss could not be sustained and that the Committee would be looking at ways to remedy the situation in the forthcoming year. This would result in either an increase in the subscription fee or an increase in the £1 paid by group attendees.

Because our total income was in excess of £25,000, we were required to submit independently examined accounts and a Trustee Annual Report to the Charities Commission. This would be done later this year.

The Annual Accounts were accepted unanimously: proposed by Ian Fishwick and seconded by Hilary Pickup.

7. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Ian Fishwick proposed that Stuart Hinton be appointed as Independent Examiner for 2018/19. The proposal was seconded by Mary Christian.

The proposal was accepted unanimously.

8. CHANGE TO THE CONSTITUTION

Mary explained that there had been problems in the way that some U3As (not South Lakes) were operating their finances. Therefore the Third Age Trust (our national advisory body) in conjunction with the Charity Commission, had advised all U3As to amend the object clause in their Constitutions, so that all groups were working to a prescribed and common object clause.

The proposed change was to remove from our constitution the current clause 2.1:

To advance education and in particular the education of people not in full time gainful employment who are in their Third Age (being the period of time after the first age of childhood dependence and the second age of full-time employment and/or parental responsibility) residing in the South Lakes region

and to replace it with a new clause 2.1:

The advancement of education and, in particular, the education of older people and those who are retired from full time work, by all means including associated activities conducive to learning and personal development

In response to a question from Grant Bramwell, Mary confirmed that the phrase 'by all means' gave sufficient flexibility for us not to have to make any changes in our current activities.

In response to a question from Hilary Pickup, Mary explained that the Committee considered that 'residing in the South Lakes region' was no longer appropriate, as many of our members came from further afield.

The proposed change to the Constitution was accepted unanimously: proposed by Sheila Watson and seconded by Ian Fishwick.

9. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2018/19

Mary introduced the nominees for Committee positions as follows:

	Nomination	Proposed by	Seconded by
Chair	Bob Wells	Chris Needham	Colin Edwards
Vice Chair	Jennifer Harrison	Bob Wells	Chris Needham
Secretary	Chris Needham	Bob Wells	Sheila Watson
Assistant Secretary	Val Garvey	Gill Helsby	Mary Christian
Treasurer	Ian Fishwick	Chris Needham	Bob Wells
Assistant Treasurer	Audrey Stainton	Ian Fishwick	Mary Choiseul
Membership Secretary	Catherine Sharpe	Colin Edwards	Gill Helsby
Assistant Membership Secretary	Colin Edwards	Bob Wells	Ann Quintilla
Minutes Secretary	Stella Canwell	Mary Christian	Chris Needham

As none of the nominations was contested members were invited to accept them on bloc : proposed by Kathy Webster, seconded by Linda Wood and agreed unanimously.

10. PRESENTATIONS

Bob Wells then took the chair and gave gifts and thanks to the retiring committee members: Mary Choiseul, Gill Helsby and Mary Christian.