

MINUTES OF
CATERHAM & DISTRICT U3A ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
held on Thursday 29th November 2018 at the United Reformed Church Hall

- **Chairman's Welcome:** Marianne extended a very warm welcome to everyone present at the 2018 AGM, which according to the signing in book, recorded a total of 68 members in attendance. Marianne also thanked the Recorder Group for providing superb music to greet everyone upon arrival.
- **Apologies for Absence:** a total of 17 apologies were received, all of which were read out by the Secretary and have been recorded.
- **Minutes of AGM held on 30th November 2017:** were included in the December 2017/January 2018 issue of the newsletter and have also been available for the last two months on the C&D U3A website. In addition, printed copies of these minutes were also available to read prior to the start of the meeting. These minutes were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the 2017 AGM.
- **Chairman's Report:** (Marianne Woods): With incredible speed another year has passed, my third as Chairman of Caterham & District U3A. Once again our membership has hit a new high thanks to all of you and our excellent Group Leaders. I'm personally very pleased that more members and friends are attending the excellent, and may I add free to members, programme of talks organised by Lyn here at the URC. We are hoping a move to Monday afternoons next year will encourage even more people along as group activities are very busy on Thursdays.

Speaking of Groups, we have number of new ones. I'm enjoying Cryptic Crosswords run by Roger Dale and French advanced with Danielle McCarthy-Castlecomer. That gives you an idea of the breadth of topics we cover in 40+ diverse social and educational groups with more starting all the time. That's not to say our backbone of long-standing groups are fading away, far from it, they are thriving and growing with some 130+ members in The ever popular London Discovery Group, Glee celebrating its 8th birthday with St Mary's full to bursting, tunefully of course, popular theatre groups here at the Miller and in London....I enjoyed being amongst 60 plus members at 'The King and I'. There are many other hugely popular groups Art with Faye Twomey and her team, Family History with Anne, Laurel and Dave and our extremely popular Dining Group with Wendy Brigden always something to look forward to.

Speaking of members, without the valuable services of Andrew Harper at Membership and Madeleine James, coordinator of our popular social events for the last 5 years I'm sure we wouldn't be in the wonderful position we are in today. As set out in our constitution they will stand down today and we wish them well and hope they will remain involved going forwards. I must mention a special project Andrew has been very involved in on our behalf which will make communication with groups much easier for our leaders, this is called Beacon and its an initiative from Third Age Trust (TAT), it also ensures leaders can check their members are fully paid up and thus covered if necessary by insurance, I'm sure you'll agree at £1 per month subscription it's money well spent!

Your committee would also like to recommend another resolution from TAT, an object clause which is slightly shorter than our existing one which details the district, it's now on the screen and I'd like to ask you to vote. (This was Agreed).

Thank you and now for my favourite part of proceedings, expressions of gratitude to people who have gone way above and beyond expectations when called upon, Barbara Holloway and the excellent recorder group who gave us a lovely musical welcome today. Sue Careless who is providing a floral display at St Lawrence's Church on our behalf this weekend and I do hope you'll try and pop along to view exhibit 16 on 1st and 2nd December. We are then going to donate the display to Elizabeth Court where they have been most welcoming to groups as diverse as the Sewing/quilting and Science Groups. Phil Wright for being an excellent quizmaster for our annual quiz organised by Madeleine.

Thank you for some questions I could answer!

A huge thank you to your committee, our finances are robust despite a highly successful two coach and over 100 people visit to Oxford. Our membership is strong and mostly healthy and we have Sheila on hand for those who are not faring too well.

Finally a few words of thanks to a non-committee member who we couldn't do without, Doreen Harper who compiles our excellent and informative newsletter, you are amazing.

Thank you all and I look forward to the next year with pleasure and confidence.

- **Secretary's Report:** (Steve Woplin): I have spent much of my first year as Secretary trying to understand the U3A structure, since the various bodies have been sending me a considerable amount of information by post and email. These include the Third Age Trust, U3A National Office, the South East Region and the Surrey U3A Network, dealing with a wide range of issues such as Public & Products Liability Insurance, Copyright Licensing Authority, Performing Rights, and in the case of the Surrey Network, various events, talks and courses available across the county and region, as publicised in our Caterham & District U3A newsletter and on our own website (many thanks here to Doreen and Mike).

With regard to the Surrey U3A Network, which meets twice a year (usually a Thursday in April and October), I would like to ask if there are any members interested in representing Caterham & District at these meetings, as unfortunately I'm unable to make Thursday's. If interested, then do please contact me following today's meeting. The more of our members that would like to get involved with the Surrey Network, the better, as I believe that participation is the key to these meetings.

GDPR became law this year and required a considerable amount of work, time and effort with new membership forms and privacy and data protection policies needing to be drafted, with a considerable amount of this work being undertaken by our Membership Secretary, Andrew Harper, to whom we are indebted.

Risk Assessment is another matter which provoked much discussion at committee meetings during the last year and is something that the committee will continue to publicise, promote and support during 2019, not only for insurance purposes, but also for the support and safety of our members, groups, and group leaders.

Finally, our Committee has met six times this year and I have prepared the Agendas and Minutes for all these meetings, which are on record. I look forward to continue serving as your Secretary in the year ahead.

Question: Roger Dale enquired about Insurance cover for people who came along to groups for a trial before deciding to join the U3A. This was investigated and confirmed that cover would be provided, but limited to one trial meeting only, following which they would have to join the U3A if they wished to continue.

- **Treasurer's Report and Presentation of Accounts:** (Keith Lawrance): I am pleased to have been your Treasurer for the last year. I am also pleased to have got the accounts in an order where our Auditor, Graham Stevens, was happy to certify that they are a true record of the transactions throughout the Financial Year to 30th September. Graham has also agreed to audit next years' accounts.

A copy of the Accounts has been published in the latest U3A Newsletter (our thanks to Doreen Harper for continuing to produce her excellent Newsletters) and it has also been available on our website. Most of the entries in the Accounts are straightforward, self-explanatory and compare similarly to last year's Accounts.

I should expand on a few of the entries:

- The Donations figure of £28 is mainly where non-members have attended our excellent monthly talks and have been asked to pay £2.

- The Equipment figure of £104 is where we have been able to help set up The Boules Group with two sets of Boules and help the Ma-Jong Group with the purchase of suitable tables.
- Welfare figure of £302 is Sheila Frost doing a great job keeping an eye on our members when they are poorly and sending them cards and flowers as appropriate.
- On the Social Account we have been able to provide a welcome drink at the Festive Lunch; we have subsidised a coach outing to Oxford where, to our surprise, we were able to fully fill up two 53-seater coaches. Hopefully we shall arrange a similar outing next year. Last year's Quiz actually worked out as a small surplus and the £100 is the advance hall deposit for this year's Quiz.

For next year we shall be using a system developed by the U3A for managing our Membership Records, the Beacon system, which our out-going Membership Secretary, Andrew Harper, will explain. This is a fully-supported system and will incur a cost of 50p per member, which will be paid out of the current £12 subscription.

I am pleased to say that our Accounts are currently healthy and we anticipate being able to subsidise more events, as we did this year, for the benefit of as many members as possible.

- **Membership Secretary's Report:** (Andrew Harper): I have now completed my 5 years as Membership Secretary. When I started the Membership stood at 321. It now stands at 545 an increase 224, however I hasten to add this is not my doing - all I do is to take down their details.

The reason for the increase is down to the publicity either at events or by yourselves who sell the merits of the organisation to your friends.

In the last year we have introduced the new database system which makes the work of the Committee and Group Leaders easier. It has not been fully rolled out yet but it should be within the next few weeks. The merits of the system are that it provides all the information that the Committee and Group Leaders need to make decisions based on facts. It is Internet based so the information is available and can be acted upon wherever needed.

One of the benefits to the Group Leaders is that they have a list of the members attending their group and can add them, and remove them as the situation changes. They are also able to see if they are still in good standing, which is important from the U3A's point of view for administration purposes such as insurance.

To illustrate this I would like to read an e-mail I received from Moira Smith who runs the Flora and Fauna Group and has just started using the Beacon system.

"Just to say that the system definitely works and is earning its keep! I recently had an email from someone wanting to join my group and so I tried this morning to add her to my waiting list. However I could not find her listed on the database so I emailed her back asking if she was a very new member etc., etc. She replied that she had just found my group via the internet and didn't know who she needed to contact about joining. I have pointed her in the right direction".

This person would have been attending this group without being a Member. A situation which must be avoided.

The system also provides the following Statistics

Members by Status		
Current	545	
Resigned	1	

Total	546	
Current members by class		
Associate (Belong to another U3A)	17	3%
Individual	528	97%
Total	545	
Male	149	27%
Female	396	73%
E-Mail	473	87%

The e-mail figure of 473 leaves 72 members receiving the Newsletter by post. Each Newsletter costs over a pound to produce and post. This is a cost of some £9 out of the annual £12 fee which means that with other costs associated with Membership they are being subsidised by the majority. We do of course appreciate that if you don't have a computer or a means of printing a document, then a hard copy is necessary and we are very keen for you to continue to receive it. What am I driving at is if you can find a simple way of reading and printing the newsletter by e-mail please let us know.

I have enjoyed my 5 years in office and wish my successor every success. Thank you for your attention.

- **Group Coordinator's Report:** (Lyn Robinson-Jones): This has been a successful year for our groups, they have grown in strength with many having to put new members on a waiting list as our membership continues to grow. That being said there has been a rise in new groups being formed which includes current affairs, French, knit and natter, 2 wine appreciation, engineering structures appreciation, boule, cryptic crosswords and also a new beginners Spanish has been put forward together with a beginners badminton and indoor bowls. Although even some of these new groups have found that they have had to limit numbers.

If you are interested in any of the groups then maybe you could come forward and help host a group, you do not need any special qualification only a willingness to host a meeting and provide tea and coffee! As you can see people are coming forward to start new groups, you do not have to a specialist knowledge of a subject as most groups are people who get together with a shared interest and learn together either by books or digital media. There is always someone who will be willing to help you get started.

Although we have a large number of varied and diverse groups there is always room for more and we have received suggestion for antique appreciation, meteorology, origami, maybe another language or even learn to ballroom dance, jive or country danced although with these we do need a hall (do you know of one - preferably free), opera and there are bound to be many more that members would like to see.

So, if you think you may like to start one of the above or have your own ideas please do not hesitate to come forward and all of our present group leaders will be willing to help and tell you how worthwhile it is and how many new friends they have made. Please contact me on lyn.rjones43@gmail.com with either your suggestions or offers to start new groups.

- **Social Coordinator's Report:** (Madeleine James): I have now completed my 5 years as Social Coordinator and I have, on the whole, thoroughly enjoyed the role. It has been difficult at times due to the sometimes slow response to the events advertised, but after one or two gentle reminders all the events advertised have gone ahead.

The events this year - the Festive Lunch, our visit to Oxford, where we enjoyed a beautiful sunny day, and the quiz proved to be extremely successful and I believe that everyone who participated thoroughly enjoyed them.

I wish my successors every success in the future and look forward to enjoying some of the events as a participant and not an organiser.

- **Welfare Officer's Report:** (Sheila Frost): My main role as Welfare Officer for the Caterham U3A is to try to ensure that U3A members who are ill or who have had a bereavement, feel that someone cares about their welfare. I do this by sending cards and making phone calls, offering practical and emotional support, and any help that we are able to give. It is also my remit to send cards to members who reach significant birthdays- 70, 75, 80, etc. Due to Data Protection Regulation we are no longer able to hold members' dates of birth on our records.

Therefore, in order for me to function fully as your Welfare Officer, I need members to inform me about any other member who is unwell, bereaved or who has a significant birthday. Many thanks.

- **Publicity Officer's Report (including New Members Introduction):** (Mike Brigden):

Publicity

The major thrust of my work this year has been to try to ensure that the website is up to date, and provides a comprehensive picture of what we do. We are finding increasingly that a lot of our new introductions come via the web, so it is obviously important to ensure that non-members visiting the website get a comprehensive and accurate picture of our activities. Group Leaders are encouraged to put on the website details of the past and future activities. This can either be done direct or by me. We also put details of our talks on Next Door.

With considerable support from the Money Matters Group, we took a stand at a recent "Scams, Safety and Support" exhibition, aimed at older people in the community. We have also arranged for a sapling to be planted in Queens Park, with a plaque indicating that it was donated by Knights, and arranged by the Caterham U3A.

We also took a stand at the "Things to do in Caterham" exhibition in Soper Hall which is held in conjunction with the Caterham Festival

New members

We have continued the process of sending a welcome email to all new members, and are now holding a new members social event twice a year. This has proved to be very popular, and we have had a number of ideas for new groups put forward at these social events, and even some volunteer Group Leaders!

- **Election of the Committee:** Existing Members re-elected: Chairman: Marianne Woods;
Secretary: Steve Woplin; Treasurer: Keith Lawrance; Groups Coordinator: Lyn Robinson-Jones;
Welfare Officer: Sheila Frost; Publicity Officer: Mike Brigden;
New Members elected: Membership Secretary: Vera Gray; Social Coordinator: Alan Kingsmill;
- **Any Other Business:**
 - A question as to whether the data contained within the new U3A database system (Beacon) could be viewed on the website was raised, but confirmed that it couldn't and that Beacon sits behind the website, running in the background.
 - The question of whether microphones could be used for all future talks was raised and whilst we wouldn't want to make this mandatory, it will certainly be recommended going forward. It was also noted that with talks now switching to a Monday afternoon, it is hoped that more members

will be able to attend in the future.

- An issue was raised regarding internet search engines, on occasions, diverting to the U3A 'website builder' rather than to the actual website itself. This will be investigated further.
- **Chairman's Closing Remarks:** Marianne reiterated Steve's earlier request regarding any members interested in representing Caterham and District U3A at future meetings of the Surrey Network and also displayed the wooden stake that will accompany the recently planted silver birch in Queens Park. Marianne then thanked everybody for attending and invited everybody to enjoy some Mince Pies and Mulled Wine.