

CATERHAM AND DISTRICT U3A . BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

Minutes of the Branch AGM held on Monday 27th November 2023 at 2.30pm.
At the United Reformed Church , Harestone Hill , Caterham , CR3 6SX.

Mike Brigden (Chair) started proceedings by advising those present where the fire escape doors are and where to assemble in the unlikely event of a fire. Those with mobile phones were asked to switch them to “silent” for the extent of the meeting.

With housekeeping complete, he proceeded to his “welcome from the Chair”.

Welcome from the Chair.

Mike welcomed everyone there and thanked them for coming. I am very pleased to see so many people here, especially with the weather conditions as they are. I will now hand over to Ray Jessop (Secretary) to steer the meeting through to the mince pies and mulled wine.

Paul Knight commented that he wished to say something regarding Mike at the end of the meeting.

Apologies for Absence.

There were 15 apologies for absence, of which 7 have given their vote by proxy to others.

Meeting attendance.

There were 65 Members , plus 6 Committee Members. (7 proxy votes).

Approval of the Minutes of last years AGM 2022.

Vote. Approved Unanimously.

Matters Arising. There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

2. Committee Reports.

*Please Note. The Committee Members reports were displayed on a screen at the meeting. A brief verbal addition to these reports was given by the relevant Committee Member.
The written reports are included in these minutes.*

Chair’s Report.

Mike Brigden. This will be my last official duty as your Chairman, as I will be standing down after this AGM. I leave with lots of happy memories and a feeling of great satisfaction. I can honestly say that it has been a pleasure and a privilege. At the conclusion of the formal proceedings, we will gather for our customary refreshments of mince pies and mulled wine, with

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the prospect of that to follow, should hopefully speed up proceedings! My Main duty is to thank my wonderful committee, our helpers and our Group Leaders. They really do all the work, and make my life very easy.

I am pleased to report that with the exception of one committee member - who like me has completed his term, all of the other Committee Members, and all of the Helpers have agreed to continue, which will make life much easier for the incoming Chairman.

Caterham u3a is of course part of the wider u3a Movement, and I am pleased to report to you all that I have been asked to join the committee of the Surrey Network as their Vice Chair, so I hope to see many of you at the Network Study Days. So let me start by thanking the members of the committee and Helpers for their work over the year.

Firstly, my Vice Chair and Publicity Officer - Paul Knight. He has done a huge amount of work over the year, in both capacities, and I have been extremely grateful for his support. I do try to attend every u3a event, but as we have grown and the number of activities has grown, this has become extremely difficult. Having a very efficient deputy means that our calendar does not have to be dependent upon my availability. Once again, we held an Open Meeting, and once again it was a triumph, with around 30 members joining.

Our Admin Secretary is the master of the minute taking, and deals with all the requests for information from the Third Age Trust. He is brilliant in the committee meetings, ensuring that we do not move on from a discussion point without confirming what has been agreed. Luckily, he always reminds us after the meeting what we agreed!

Our Treasurer, Ken Johnson, had additional work to do this year, since he applied for a grant. This involved a lot of work, but he will tell you more in his presentation about our finances. They are of course impeccable.

What can I say about our Groups Coordinator - Liz Whittaker. She continues to conjure up new groups like a magician, and somehow manages to persuade members to agree to run them. I don't know how she has managed to do this so successfully, but perhaps it is just as well that we offer First Aid training after Liz has been on her arm-twisting missions. However it is done, the results have been amazing. She not only supports the creation of new groups, but takes a real interest in their continuing progress. As I did last year, perhaps I can combine my thanks to Liz with a thank you to all the group leaders.

Our Social Secretary - Joyce Jessop - has performed wonders this year. I know that she would like me to acknowledge the Social Committee, which I am certainly happy to do, but I will leave to her the job of thanking them properly. We now have a huge range of social activities, which I

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am pleased to report are all well supported. Speaking personally, I find them all fun, and very well organized.

We changed our Network Link Officer This year, with Elizabeth Collins handing over to Alan Speed. My thanks to both of them for the work that they do keeping you all informed as to what is going on in the Surrey Network, and particularly the Study Days. If you have not tried attending a Study Day - either live or on Zoom, I strongly recommend it.

Finally, I come to the other “Alan” on the committee. Alan Kingsmill is our Membership Secretary, and has performed that vital task in an exemplary manner for 5 years. In accordance with our rules, he is standing down and we have already identified a replacement’s who has been helping Alan for a while now, so I should also thank Rita Dael, who has been undertaking the role as acting Membership Secretary, as Alan is away on holiday.

Turning to our helpers, we are extremely grateful to them all. The individuals concerned are Philip Lawson, who manages our website, Deb Skinner who took over our Newsletter from Lyn Barlow during the year and also runs our holidays and has volunteered to organize a repeat visit to Thursford if there is sufficient interest, Margaret Smith, who is our New Members Mentor, and has been kept very busy as we keep acquiring new members, Sheila Frost who is our Welfare Officer, Lyn Robinson Jones, who runs the programme of talks, and Andrew Harper, who looks after Beacon. They all play a vital role in running the organization, and we are all very grateful to them for the work. Although COVID is now less of a problem, Welfare remains a vital part of our u3a, and we are very lucky to have Sheila doing this job so effectively.

Perhaps at this point, the committee members and Helpers would all stand for a moment and you might like to show them your appreciation.

So now to the highlights of the year. We held our first overseas holiday in Northern France, and I know that everyone who went on the holiday enjoyed it immensely. I certainly did, and will never forget the juggling waitress in Rouen! We are hoping to repeat the holiday, and have been a bit more ambitious this year, and are hoping to go to Germany.

I have put the details on the welcome table. If you would like to join us, please do let Deb know. At the moment, we do not have enough support for it to go ahead, so if you are still thinking about it, please do make a decision. I cannot promise another juggling waitress, but I can promise a fun week.

We also went on a trip to Thursford, to see the Christmas Spectacular. The organization for this trip was very complex, and I must say a very big thanks you to my lovely wife - Wendy - who had the idea, and was prepared to put it into effect. The entire trip was a success, and I think that everyone enjoyed the short stop in Bury St Edmunds, the hotel, and the show, which lived up to

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its billing as a Spectacular. The Light Show was a bonus for those who went around the indoor and outdoor exhibits. I am delighted to tell you that Deb Skinner has kindly agreed to organize another visit this coming year.

We have had some really memorable social events, including our regular lunches, and the successful launch of a regular coffee morning, but I will leave Joyce to talk about them.

Our membership has now passed 700, and our groups are over 75. We have done all this, and kept our finances in good order. Perhaps we should sell our secret to the Government (or maybe lend then Ken)! So a truly great year, and I have enjoyed every moment of it. I am now going to sit down and let Ray do all the work (Nothing changes Ray!). However, I will say a few words at the end of the meeting.

Administrative Secretary's Report.

Ray Jessop. Firstly, if you have not already done so, would you please write your name in the Attendance Book so that we have an accurate record of who is here today.

Secondly, I can advise that I have not received any nominations for Committee positions, so those members who have volunteered for positions, and as they appear on the meeting Agenda, will be standing unopposed for election at the vote for the Election of Officers.

There will be two votes. Re-election of those continuing in their positions, and the election of those taking on Committee positions.

This is my third AGM as the Branch Administrative Secretary.

The first on Zoom, the second, last year, live.

There have been 6 Committee Meetings within the year, plus other meetings on specific subjects such as Open Day and this AGM. Lots and lots of emails.

Like last year, I have brought the Asset Register up to date. Something that has become an annual task as we continue to expand and increase in numbers.

With the support of the committee and the help of Deb Skinner (Newsletter), I have conducted an investigation into the popularity of the Third Age Matters magazine. It was found that not all members wanted to receive this magazine, and so by reducing the number of copies requested for our membership, we were able to make a saving on our branch costs.

As required, I have kept the u3a Committee Minutes Book up to date, and have signed them off when approved.

Please don't forget to visit and make use of our excellent Website. It is full of information, and has easy to use links to Groups, Events, News and current and past Newsletters, and lots more.

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Finally, I would like to thank Mike Brigden for all his help, support and guidance.

May I introduce Rita Dael, who is standing for the position of Membership Secretary. Rita has been shadowing the outgoing Secretary, Alan Kingsmill, for a little while. Rita will present the Membership Secretary's Report in the Absence of Alan Kingsmill. Also, Alan Speed is standing for the position of SurreyU3a Network Co-Ordinator. Alan was co-opted by the Committee, and has been doing the job for some time now, having taken over from Elizabeth Collins. He will therefore present his own report.

I would like to add my thanks to all those who have worked for our Branch this year. Here's to next year !!

Treasurer's Report.

Ken Johnson. Funding is in a good position. There have been a number of payouts from the social fund relating to coach trips etc. since the Accounts were finalized for the end of the financial year.

This is my third year as your Treasurer and I'm very grateful to Keith Lawrance for again reviewing the accounts and for his guidance so they can be signed off as an accurate record.

The accounts are in a similar format to previous years with the addition of receipts and payments on behalf of various new groups.

As a Registered Charity, we claimed Gift Aid from HMRC on the full amount of the Annual Subscriptions for all tax-paying members who have given us permission – this is a valuable means of increasing our funds to promote events.

We were also successful in applying for funds from the National Lottery Community Fund receiving £1800.00.

Beacon Licence - We pay a licence fee per member for using the Beacon Membership Database, which was developed by U3A, and have paid for usage up to March 2024.

Capitation – We also pay to U3A Head Quarters an amount for each member – unless they pay it through another U3A that they belong to.

TAM – The U3A Magazine is delivered to all members who have asked for a copy and is paid for by us – although any member who does not wish to receive a copy should contact Rita Dael our membership secretary.

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General Meetings & Talks - We have made good use of the URC Hall for meetings and events again including yet another successful U3A Day where many new members joined.

Social Events - Thanks to the very active Social Committee we were able to organise many events including the Summer Lunch, Skittles, Beetle Drive, Quiz Night, Thursford Christmas Spectacular, many trips including France, Bletchley, Portsmouth, and shortly a Christmas outing to Rochester. There is also a holiday organised to Berlin for next year.

Our U3A accounts are still in a healthy position with adequate funds – for this reason the membership subscriptions remain unchanged again – however we will have to monitor this situation with the current financial climate.

**The audited accounts are attached at the end of these minutes. **

A question was asked from one of the members at the meeting. Mr. Tim Mouldsley.
“The treatment of deficits seems to be inconsistent between 2021/22 2022/23. Also, the large negative deficit for 2022/23 probably needs some more explanation from the Treasurer. “

Both Ken (Treasurer) and Keith (Auditor) replied as follows.

“The increased surplus (Negative Deficit) compared to previous years was due to money received for events that were still to occur after the year end. This includes Thursford Visit, £2,600.00 , Germany Trip, £567.00 , Portsmouth Trip, £990.00 , Bletchley Park Visit, £570.50 The presentation will be reviewed with a view to making it as clear as possible for next year’s Accounts, and the Annual General Meeting.”

Vote. Adoption of the Accounts. The Accounts were adopted by the Meeting. **Unanimously.**

Vote. To appoint Keith Lawrance as the Branch Auditor, as the previous year.
Keith was reappointed as the Branch Auditor. **Unanimously.**

Vote. Recommendation and proposal on the Branch Membership Fee.

It was proposed, by Ken, on the basis of the position of the accounts. that the Membership Fee should remain as the previous year. Note. This is subject to the general financial situation remaining the same. If things change drastically, this is to be reconsidered.

This proposal was passed by the meeting. The vote was **Unanimous.**

Membership Secretary’s Report.

The Report was presented by Rita Dael on behalf of Alan Kingsmill.

Rita gave thanks to Alan for his help and guidance over the last few months to “ease” her into the position of Membership Secretary.

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Branch Membership – September 2022	664
Branch Membership – September 2023	717
New Members 2021/22	157
New Members 2022/23	146
Members who have left.	
Resigned.	45
Lapsed.	42
Deceased.	6

Group Co-Ordinator's Report.

Liz Whittaker. Our groups are thriving. Last year I reported that we had 64 in total. We currently have 77. We already have several groups planned to start in 2024. Jazz , Philosophy , A second Shakespeare Discovery , Meditation and Belly Dancing to name a few.

Every group has a webpage on our website. Group leaders can be contacted via the link on the relevant page. Some groups are full, but many are actively seeking members. If a subject group is full, we try to set up another group.

Every group has a hard-working Group Leader or Administrator driving it forward. I hope that all members appreciate their effort and commitment.

I extend a massive Thank You to the Group Leaders and Administrators.

You are Magnificent !!

With our increasing membership, I am committed to expanding our range of groups. I need your ideas for new groups. For groups to start and to thrive we need your help. As Participants, as Group Leaders and as Administrators.

Perhaps 2024 will inspire you to develop new skills and interests. I do hope so !!

Welfare Officer's Report.

Sheila Frost. I have been the Caterham u3a Welfare Officer for the last 8 years- the first 5 years of which I was also on the u3a Committee.

As Welfare Officer I have continued to try to offer practical and emotional support and advice to those of our members that are living alone, vulnerable, are unwell or bereaved. I have done this by sending cards and making phone calls

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It has also been my remit to send cards to members who reach significant birthdays. Due to the Data Protection Regulations, we are no longer able to hold member's date 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 members who fall into any of these categories.

To ensure that Caterham u3a members are appropriately cared for when engaged in u3a activities, I continue to emphasise the importance of considering the welfare of all of our members in everything that the Caterham u3a does. To this end I am invited to comment on welfare topics and issues if they present, or if they are to be discussed at the u3a Committee meetings.

The Committee has recently reviewed the Caterham u3a Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, which is on the Caterham u3a website.

We are encouraging Group Leaders and their group members to take part in First Aid training - an initial First Aid course, or a refresher course if they have already had training. We have had two more general talks on First Aid for members earlier this year and hope to run a further one.

The Caterham u3a is committed to ensure that its members are appropriately cared for when engaged in u3a activities. This care includes endeavouring to ensure physical and emotional well-being and safety at all times.

Social Co-Ordinator's Report.

Firstly, I would like to thank the Social Committee. We have 12 members on the committee including me. They are Alan & Penny Kingsmill, Rita & Peter Dael, Hazel & Eric Piper, Paul Knight, Sheila Frost, Keith Lawrence, Wendy Brigden and Ray Jessop.

We aim to provide a diverse programme of events over the coming months, having an event of some sort every month.

During the year we have had our usual Festive Lunch, Summer Lunch, Quiz nights, Skittle lunches, Beetle Drive and also visits to Rochester Dickensian Festival & Christmas Market, Winchester/Bombay Sapphire, Bletchley Park, Portsmouth. In November we did something very different. We visited the Thursford Spectacular in Norfolk. Staying in a hotel overnight.

The Social Committee have already planned the Festive Lunch in January and a Beetle Drive in February and look forward to planning more events for the rest of the year.

As Social Secretary I would like to thank all the members of the Social Committee for their continuing help in organizing events and activities with such willingness and enthusiasm.

Surrey u3a Network Report.

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Alan Speed. The U3A Surrey Network provides advice & support to 25 U3A Branches and organizes Study / Exploration Days at Yehudi Menuhin Hall, Stoke d'Abernon.

I will be sending out emails throughout the year regarding the study days. Recently, 15 – 16 members have been to study days. There are Zoom Talks & On-Line Interest Groups

We are Part of U3A South East Forum - which organizes Annual 3-Day Summer School at Chichester University SURREY NETWORK LIAISON REPORT Study / Exploration Days at

Stoke d'Abernon It is like being back at Uni - BUT with much more interesting & better prepared / delivered lectures & demonstrations. The cost is only £12 per day - compared to the £60+ per day charged by most UK Universities (Based on £9,250 annual fees).

- Held in a luxurious & comfy venue with unlimited free tea & coffee
- Up to 160 Participants
- 8 Caterham U3A Members attended the 17 November 2023 Study Day on Life of Rembrandt.
- 6 of these 8 Members had car-share lifts.

Study Exploration Days at Stoke d'Abernon for next year are :

16 Feb 2024 A Day on the Train - A Railway Journey, Railway Adventures & Cultural History of Railways Paul Atterbury, Antiques Road Show Veteran & at one point Britain's Best Selling Railway Writer.

15 March 2024 Europe at War - Putin's War in Ukraine & the British Commitment Gordon Corrigan.

19 April 2024 Earth's Atmosphere - Our Life Support System Professor David Phillips, Imperial College London.

17 May 2024 The Jazz Age & Beyond - With Talks, Film, Demonstrations & Musical Finale Howard Lawes, Grace Evans & Dave Allison with The Alleycats.

There are also extensive study days in York. So, please "Watch this Space".

A point to note. There are no exams at the end of the day !!

Publicity Officer's Report. (Including our Open Day 2023).

Paul Knight. We have a Closed Facebook Group with 171 members compared with initial target of 100. The External Facebook (open page), is gaining traction with 138 followers and 105 likes. We had a Stand at the Warlingham Hobbies Fair. Lot of interest was shown, and we gained new members.

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The Main event of the year is our Open Day. This enables :

- Groups to sign up new members. This was a general success.
- Members to socialize.
- Recruit new members - at least 20 plus new members.

I would like to give a big thank you to everyone who supported the Warlingham Hobbies stand and all the groups and volunteers who supported the Open Day.

3. Election of the Committee.

The next item on the Agenda was the Election of the Committee.

As previously stated, I have not received any nominations for Committee positions, so those members who have volunteered for positions, and as they appear on the meeting Agenda, will be standing unopposed for election at the vote for the Election of Officers.

There will be two votes, as shown on the Agenda, the re-election of those continuing in their positions, and the election of those taking on Committee positions.

The following members of committee (Ray Jessop – Administrative Secretary , Ken Johnson – Treasurer , Liz Whittaker – Group Co-ordinator , Joyce Jessop - Social Co-ordinator) are standing for **re-election**.

A vote was taken, and the above members were re-elected Unanimously.

Standing for **election** : Paul Knight – Chair , Rita Dael – Membership Secretary , Alan Speed - Network Co-ordinator and Corrie Ball , Publicity Officer.

(Please Note. Mike Brigden and Alan Kingsmill are standing down from the committee.)

A vote was taken, and the above members were re-elected Unanimously.

4. Any Other Business.

Paul Knight. We are investigating using our Beacon System, for members to renew their membership using this system, on line. This should prove more convenient for members, and the Membership Secretary. Members will be advised about this when the system has been established, and is up and running next year.

Paul Knight. It was felt that this particular meeting could not be concluded without giving special thanks to our outgoing Chair, Mike Brigden.

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On behalf of you all I would like to thank Mike and pay tribute for his outstanding contribution to our u3a over the last five years. As you know he stepped into the breach when our previous chairman Marianne Woods sadly passed away in tragic circumstances.

Since then, he has led our u3a with a bright and cheery outgoing personality. He has driven new ideas and pushed for their implementation. He is a very caring person always considering the needs of people who may need extra support and friendship.

His term of office included the Covid Lockdown when he himself was stuck in Australia. His master stroke was to appoint our welfare officer Sheila Frost as his deputy while he was away. During that dark period our u3a kept things going with multiple zoom talks, a zoom murder mystery play and even a Zoom quiz.

We are generally recognized as being one of the most successful and dynamic u3as. Mike should be proud of his leadership over the last five years.

He always says he just does the talking and then deputizes but the Mike and Wendy team thought up the successful French holiday last year aided by Deb Skinner on the admin, while Wendy took the lead on the Thursford trip.

Finally, I must mention Wendy and thank her for supporting Mike as well as doing her own things. As a couple they are a dynamic duo full of energy and very caring.

Please show your appreciation in the usual way before I give Mike a token of our appreciation on behalf of all of you

Paul presented Mike with a Majestic Wine Gift voucher.
(For the purchase of Wine, or wine related items !).

Mike responded with thanks to Paul and Ray. Mike related to the time of Covid-19 and when he was unable to return to England from Australia. At the suggestion of Sheila, our Welfare Officer, he started his "Mini-Newsletter", which continued on his return when we were unable to meet freely. Mike thanked the Group Leaders for doing such a wonderful job.

Finally, Mike asked members to remember to be welcoming, and to be friendly to all.

With a final request to "stack the chairs" when they are no longer needed, Ray Jessop closed the meeting, and invited everyone to indulge in Mulled Wine and Mince Pies.

Meeting Closed.