

MINUTES OF
CATERHAM & DISTRICT U3A ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
held on Monday 25th November 2019 at the United Reformed Church Hall

Chairman's Welcome: Mike extended a very warm welcome to everyone present at the 2019 AGM, which according to the signing in book, recorded a total of 87 members in attendance. Mike also thanked the Recorder Group for providing superb music to greet everyone upon arrival.

Apologies for Absence: a total of 11 apologies were received by the Secretary and have been formally recorded.

Minutes of AGM held on 29th November 2018: have been available during the last month 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 2018 AGM.

Chairman's Report: (Mike Brigden): First I would like to welcome you all to our AGM. This is my first time chairing an AGM, so as they say in parliament when making a maiden speech, I hope that you will treat me with consideration!

I would like to start by thanking my fantastic committee. Being the Chairman is actually the easiest job on the committee, because you can delegate everything to everyone else. I can certainly do that with safety with my committee. They are so efficient.

Perhaps they would just stand as I mention their names, and remain standing so that you can all give them a well-deserved round of applause for all the hard work that they put in. Most of them will be saying a few words later as we go through the agenda, but this is our chance to thank them properly.

Our Secretary - Steve Woplin

Our Treasurer - Keith Lawrance

Our Membership Secretary - Alan Kingsmill

Our Groups Co-ordinator - Lyn Robinson Jones

Our Social secretary - Penny Kingsmill

Our Welfare Officer - Sheila Frost

and our Publicity Secretary - Corrie Ball

They are a great team. Willing to take on any task, and to ensure that it is carried out efficiently. My thanks to them all. I am delighted to confirm that they are all happy to continue for another year, and nobody is scheduled to stand down, so there will be no elections of committee members.

However, as our U3A has grown, so has the volume of work being undertaken by each committee member. We do not want to enlarge the committee, as it tends to make committee meetings too long, so we have sought the assistance of some non-committee members to undertake some specific tasks.

Likewise, if they are here, perhaps they would stand as I call out their names and remain standing, so that we can thank them as well.

Pauline Moull has taken up the task of welcoming new members, and arranging a welcome social event, which has always proved to be great fun. I am sure that our new

members settle in to the U3A much more effectively as a result of these social lunches.

Ray and Joyce Jessop have taken on the task of representing us at the Surrey Network meetings, and they attend committee meetings to brief us on what is going on in the network.

Phil Singleton has taken on the role of Webmaster and has done a great job – far better than the previous Webmaster (which was me!)

Andrew Harper has maintained responsibility for Beacon and is always on hand to help if we have any queries with Beacon.

And perhaps most important of all, Doreen Harper continues to edit and produce our amazing newsletter. It is a great publication, and I strongly encourage you all to read it regularly. Doreen did say earlier this year that she would quite like to hand over this role, having done it for so long. We have had no volunteers so far, so she has agreed to carry on, for which I am extremely grateful.

Many thanks to all these members. Of course, there are many others who help on a “one off basis” and my thanks to those members as well. We have a vibrant and active U3A, and it works because everyone is willing to pitch in.

My last “thankyou” is to the Recorder Group, who once again entertained us with their beautiful music. It really is a treat to hear you ladies. Thank you.

Having said my “thank you’s” I promise that my report will be brief!

The year started with a real tragedy, as we lost the lovely Marianne. Such a wonderful lady, and a true friend to many of us. We still miss her. I am pleased to report that we managed to get a tree planted in Queens Park with a plaque in her memory. I would like to think that our fun and happy U3A is a lasting tribute to her.

We have had a great programme of talks, organized by Lyn Robinson Jones. I have been to most of them, and although we have had some sound problems, we are asking all speakers to use the microphone, and have purchased a new sound system, so we hope that they will be even better next year.

A recent decision we took was to facilitate a wider knowledge of first aid, and are running a series of courses in the hope that every group will contain at least one person who has a basic knowledge of first aid, and what to do in the event of a medical emergency. Many thanks to Sheila for driving this initiative, and to Patricia Barnard for volunteering to run the courses.

We have had a fun year with our various social activities. Penny will no doubt speak about last year, and what is planned for next year, so I will not say anything about them, except that I really enjoyed all of them.

I mentioned the website earlier, but I would like to say a few additional words. It is very important as a window to the world, as almost all of our new member requests come from the website. It has been completely revamped, and there is now a “latest news” and a Wider Educational opportunities tab, as well as many links. We also put the Newsletter on the website (suitably redacted, so that contact details are excluded).

I do encourage you all to look at the website regularly, and I would ask Group Leaders to keep the website updated. Phil will always help, and is running a series of workshops to help us learn to update it ourselves. You may not all know, but many U3A’s around the country use the same programme to run their websites, and that programme was developed by Susan Jones, who is one of our members.

Speaking about keeping the website up to date, It is also helpful if they keep the beacon

records for their groups updated

We have made one change in the format of the AGM this year, and have invited Group Leaders to say a few words about their group's activities in the last year. Lyn will elaborate, but I thought that you might be interested to learn that the idea came from the Group Leader's lunch, when Maureen Jeffries said that not all of the Group leaders knew what went on in the other groups. So we do listen!

Please do feel free to raise any issues with us, either during the AGM, or over our seasonal glass which will follow.

I shall now hand you over to Steve, who will run the rest of the AGM – I told you it was all about delegation!

Secretary's Report: (Steve Woplin): Much of the role of Secretary involves dealing with correspondence from the various U3A bodies, which include;

Third Age Trust (U3A National Office);

South East Region U3A;

Surrey U3A Network

The South East Region and Surrey Network organise various seminars, events, talks and courses across the region and county, as publicised in our Caterham & District U3A newsletter and on our own website (thanks to Doreen and Phil).

With regard to the Surrey U3A Network which meets twice a year, I would like to thank Ray and Joyce Jessop for representing Caterham & District U3A at these meetings and acting as a point of liaison between the Surrey Network and our committee.

The undertaking of risk assessment for certain outdoor and physical indoor activities continues to be discussed at committee meetings and is something the committee will continue to highlight for the benefit of both our group leaders and members in the coming year.

Finally, our committee has met seven times this year and agendas and minutes for all these meetings are recorded and on file. I look forward to continue serving as your Secretary in the year ahead.

Treasurer's Report and Presentation of Accounts: (Keith Lawrance): I am pleased to have completed my second year as your Treasurer.

I am grateful to Michael Connick for having thoroughly scrutinised the accounts and signing them off as a true record.

The items in the accounts are largely self-explanatory and compare with the previous year. However, there are a few items I should comment upon:

Gift Aid: since we are now a Registered Charity, we are able to claim Gift Aid from HMRC on the Annual Subscriptions. That is £3 for each £12 Subscription. There are about 200 members who were members before we registered and who have not signed up for Gift Aid. We are identifying those members and shall be sending out a note to them at Renewal time and hope that they will return their form, if they are tax-payers, so that we may claim for them as well.

Total Administrative Expenses: we had two retiring members of the committee and each was given a token in appreciation of their five years' service

Magazine Subscription: the invoice was mislaid and has been paid subsequent to 30th September

Beacon Licence: we are now using the Beacon Membership Database, which was developed by U3A. We pay a licence fee per member. Our first payment was from start of our usage to March 2019; and we also paid for usage for the year from April 2019 to March 2020.

Publicity: Those of you who attended the AGM last year will remember that Chairman Marianne Woods had a Plaque on a Stake to go with the silver birch sapling that was planted in Queen's Park. Following her untimely death after Christmas, her daughter was unable to locate the Plaque, so we had a second one made that incorporated Marianne's name

We also paid for the flowers for the display competition in St. Lawrence's Church.

Equipment: We were able to purchase some items needed by the Croquet Group

Social Events: A number of most enjoyable Social Events during the year were able to be subsidised:

Festive Lunch: welcome drinks and a free Raffle provided

Cambridge Coach outing: reduced fares for the two coaches (one 53-seater and one 35-seater).

Summer Lunch: a new event, with a free raffle and refreshments for the Ukelele Band players who entertained us.

We will only plan to subsidise those events that are open to all members, rather than just to members of a Group. We have a healthy balance and hope to subsidise more events next year.

Membership Secretary's Report: (Alan Kingsmill): If you were at last year's AGM you may remember that I was elected as Social Secretary. A few weeks later I moved across to take on the role of Membership Secretary. However, I could not start doing that job as I was still wearing the Social hat and I planning for the Festive Lunch in January. Luckily Andrew Harper agreed to carry on the role of Membership Secretary until I was able to take it over. So, I would like to say a big thank you to Andrew for carrying on in the job he had been doing for five years – and at the busiest time when hundreds of you are renewing your membership. I also want to thank him for letting me steal all the spreadsheets he had invented.

At last year's AGM Andrew reported that membership stood at 545. Today we have 572 – a net increase of 27 or 5%. In you are interested, we can break that number down so that we have

Female	411	72%
Male	161	28%

You will probably know that we keep our records on a database system called Beacon. We have only been using it for a few years and we are constantly finding new ways of using it – the more we use Beacon the more time we usually save and the more we enhance the security of your personal details. Having your names, addresses and phone numbers on lots of different spreadsheets or record cards is not a good idea. Many group leaders are using Beacon to look after their group's administration and are finding it very helpful.

Beacon has a feature that we never had in the past - that is the ability to record an emergency contact name and phone number for all our members if they wish to give it to us. Like a fire extinguisher, we hope we never have to use it, but it may just come in very

useful if something happens and we have to contact somebody urgently. If you have not given us an emergency contact, and you want to, I have left some slips of paper for you to fill in and give to me after the meeting.

The last point I want to mention is email. I know that some of you do not have computers or access to the internet and we can't do much about that. But I also know that there are some who do have access but who do still prefer to have paper copies of the newsletter sent to them. One member told me that she prefers to read things on paper rather than on a screen. That is understandable but I would ask members likeher to think again.

I would like to give you a few figures:

Most members pay £12 subscription, £3 goes to National Office for insurances and other support leaving £9. Another £2 pays for the magazine, leaving £7. The Newsletter costs over £1 each copy to print and post – with 8 issues per year we have already spent more than the £12 we started with. Thus, if everyone asked for paper copies, we would have nothing to pay for the hire of this hall, speakers fees, subsidising trips and so on.

So I would ask you please do not ask for paper copies if you have access to a computer, or perhaps you might want to volunteer to pay a higher subscription to cover the cost of printing and postage.

Footnote: Several members asked questions about the 'Third Age Matters' magazine. Alan explained that if someone did not want to receive the magazine they should let him know so that he can update their Beacon record to prevent the magazine being posted to them.

Group Coordinator's Report: (Lyn Robinson-Jones): First of all, I would like to thank all our wonderful group leaders for all their hard work. As you know over the past year we have gained new groups including Wine Appreciation, Engineering and Knit and natter but already they are on the brink of becoming full and many other groups now have wait lists.

This problem will only get worse over time as we are a very vibrant and growing U3A with nearly 600 members and we desperately need more people to step forward and start up new groups not necessary new subjects but also for those that are full already as we shall not be able to continue to flourish if we cannot entice people to join.

If you feel you may be able to help, please see me or any other member of the committee and we shall all be willing to help with advice and the U3A Trust also has very good information on setting up new groups.

I do have one gentleman who would like to set up new groups but because of space constraints needs to find a lovely person who will share their home with the group so that it can be started, again, please let me know if you are able to help.

As you can see we have the advertising boards at the back with brief reports from many of the groups just to let you know what they are doing and especially the Recorder Group which has been playing for us today and the craft group who have brought along some of their projects also there have been slides scrolling which show the work of the Quilting group and Helen is going to give us an idea what they are getting up to, together with Jim Spinks from the Gardening Group and Mike Barker from the Photography group.

Also please read the newsletter as many of the groups, especially those like London

Discovery, write very good articles about what they have been getting up to. Finally, I have put some little sheets on the table for you to let us know what groups you would like to see and those you may be able to help start so please fill one in so we can have many more wonderful groups in Caterham.

Interesting talks was then provided on behalf of the following three groups:

- **Quilting and Patchwork (Helen)**
- **Gardening (Jim)**
- **Photography (Mike)**

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, know that we care 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.

Social Coordinator's Report: (Penny Kingsmill) I have almost completed my first year as Social Co-ordinator for Caterham and District U3A.

I decided to form a small team of volunteers to discuss and plan a varied programme and to assist with the organisation of the events. We are now a team of five. I am very pleased with what we have achieved so far this year and would like to extend my thanks to them.

Events:

- 2019 festive lunch, Coulsdon Manor Hotel
- Coach Trip to Cambridge
- Traditional pub skittles evening, Royal British Legion, Limpsfield
- Summer Lunch at Bletchingley Golf Club
- Quiz night and fish and chip supper, URC Caterham

Planned Events:

- Coach trip to Winchester Christmas Market
- 2020 Festive Lunch, Bletchingley Golf Club

We are learning all the time and after each event we discuss what went well and not so well. This way we improve what we are offering to our members. For example we have changed the coach company that we used and changed the venue for the festive lunch.

We are planning some interesting trips for next year. Details will be available soon and will appear in the newsletter, on website and will be sent out by email notification.

I would be very happy to receive suggestions for trips and events and members can contact me via the website. If anyone is willing to offer to organise a trip or event and maybe join our team you can contact me to discuss this too.

Publicity Officer's Report: (Corrie Ball): We have provided U3A stalls at local events:
Warlingham Hobbies event, Church hall, on 9 March

Caterham “things to do in Caterham” event in Soper Hall on 1 June

The monthly talks at the URC have been publicized on Next Door, which reaches a few thousand people in the wider area. As a result, non-members have been attending these talks (and perhaps joining the club?)

During the Caterham Festival, these talks got wider publicity as part of the Festival

We have booked the URC Hall for an Open Day next June, also part of the Festival

We have contacted the local press, freebee magazines etc with a view to broadening awareness of the U3A locally, and advertising our website.

We have started a review of whether social media should be used to publicise our activities. At present, we are concentrating on our website. Our website continues to improve and is increasingly visited. However, the best form of publicity is word of mouth, and we should all tell our friends and acquaintances what we have been up to in U3A ... ie "spread the gospel".

Election of the Committee: All current members re-elected en bloc: Chairman: Mike Brigden; Secretary: Steve Woplin; Treasurer: Keith Lawrance; Membership Secretary: Alan Kingsmill; Groups Coordinator: Lyn Robinson-Jones; Welfare Officer: Sheila Frost; Social Coordinator: Penny Kingsmill; Publicity Officer: Corrie Ball.

Any Other Business:

There was no additional business raised.

Chairman's Closing Remarks: Before closing the meeting Mike mentioned that we are always keen on starting up new groups and that the committee can provide some financial assistance at the initial start up phase for new groups. Mike then thanked everybody for attending, the recorder group for entertaining us upon arrival, those who had helped with the drinks and refreshments and also those who had helped with arranging and the setting up of the meeting.

Finally, Mike invited everyone to stay on after the meeting, socialise, and enjoy the Mince Pies and Mulled Wine.