

Annual General Meeting 19th April 2021

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Monday 19th April 2021 online via Zoom

PRESENT:

Clive Wilkinson	CW	President
Tony Henry	AH	Chair
Lesley Patterson	LP	Treasurer
John Rutherford	JR	Group Convenor Co-ordinator
Averil Fendley	AF	Membership secretary
Pete Burrow	PB	Social Activities secretary
Ian Webb	IW	Website and communications secretary
Pam Campbell	PC	Business secretary

26 Coquetdale U3A members present on screen.

1). Welcome and Introduction

AH welcomed U3A members to the 2021 Coquetdale AGM and thanked members for attending via the Zoom online platform in view of the restrictions on physical meetings due to the pandemic. There was a special thanks and presentation to Ian Webb, in appreciation for her contribution to the committee on which he has served for over 10 years. AH also thanked Geoff Hoskins for his time as Chair, and Pauline Wilson for holding the position of interim Chair prior to her move South.

2). Apologies for absence

None

3). Minutes of the last meeting on 15th April 2020

These were taken as a correct record. Copies had been sent out electronically to all members prior to the meeting.

4) Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

5). Chair's Report

One minute's silence was observed in memory of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

AH stated that it had been a difficult year due to the pandemic, with no face to face meetings since February 2020 when lockdown commenced. However, the committee had rallied and in November had purchased a licence for Zoom Pro – enabling us to host upto 100 participants at Zoom meetings on-line, with no time limit to meetings. Our first trial Zoom for the membership was the very successful Xmas Quiz run by Pete Burrow.

Following this there have been Zoom monthly meetings with Northumbrian songs from Rosie and Graham Stacey & Northumbrian dialect poetry from Angus Armstrong, a talk on Covid from Prof Hugh Pennington in February; and a talk on sailing across the South Atlantic from Des Herron in South Africa in March. Numbers participating in these meetings had ranged from 40-63.

AH thanked Pauline Wilson for being interim Chair (and previous Business secretary) in 2019-20, and thanked Geoff Hoskins for being Chair for the previous 3 years. He also thanked Clive Wilkinson for his ongoing support as President. A presentation of malt whisky was made to Ian Webb who is stepping down as Webmaster after 10 years, thanks were given for his excellent work.

6). Treasurer's Report (with membership report)

LP tabled the year end accounts. She reported that there is still £2778.14 in the main bank account-an expenditure of £1086.08 since the previous year. There is now an additional Events account, opened in June 2019 specifically to handle finances of theatre bookings and other social events, and this currently stands at £1387.93. This is money allocated for tickets, i.e. not money available to the organization. The use of this money is further explained in the Social Activities Officer's report (below).

LP explained that the usual £10 subscriptions were waived in 2020-2021 as it was not possible to hold any physical meetings but all members were retained. The Third Age trust still required payment of £3.50 per member to maintain our status but as all U3A's are required to maintain contingency funds Coquetdale has been able to pay all fees without income.

LP explained that outgoings have been kept to a minimum- with the purchase of Christmas cards for all members to maintain contact, and the purchase of a professional Zoom package to enable up to 100 to participate in virtual meetings and to enable the Committee to meet regularly. This has proved invaluable. LP stated that the subscription for the forthcoming year (2021-2022) will be reduced to £5 as meetings will not be physically happening immediately. It is also hoped this will help encourage new members to join. LP explained that BACS payments for membership fees would be preferred and PC will send out an email with the necessary details on how to do this. Receipts will be provided via email.. Payments may be in cash at physical meetings where this is preferred and this is likely to commence in July.

LP also delivered the Membership report in view of the close crossover between the two roles.

She stated that in March 2019 there were 160 members, and 174 in March 2020. However,

as subscriptions were waived in April 2020 we are unaware how many people would have renewed, but we have maintained all existing members on our contact list for communications.

LP added that general meetings over Zoom had been introduced in January 2021 with attendance offered to non members to encourage them to join when physical meetings resume

The committee has decided that an estimate of last years membership will be made by member participation in Zoom meetings (monthly meetings/Xmas Quiz/group activities).

LP explained that in order to cut costs and be paper light we had debated the need for Membership cards-. Email receipts for payment of membership fees can be used as proof of membership or membership cards are available on request to the membership secretary if wanted . Cards can be collected at physical meetings to save on postage.

7). Officers' Reports

Business secretary

PC outlined the role of business secretary which involves setting the agendas and writing up minutes of meetings for the committee which have been held monthly so far, as we get used to the Virtual way of operating. She has also attended Regional meetings and workshops around recruitment and retention.

Group Convenor Co-ordinator

JR reported that most groups have been dormant during the pandemic . He encouraged members to take the plunge and open new groups or discuss ideas with him and reassured that support will always be available for new groups.

Membership Secretary

Report included within Treasurer's report

Website and Communications Secretary

IW reported that the website continues to be updated, and is well used with 4429 hits this year He explained the importance of the website in attracting new members, as this will invariably be their first port of call when considering joining a U3A

Social Activities Secretary

PB explained that it is difficult to plan ahead for Social Activities at present but there are several booked events which have been re-scheduled and others that members may be interested in over the next few months. In order to gauge interest in Social Events he asked members to respond to a simple questionnaire that would be sent out following the meeting.

PB outlined the shows that have already been booked by members and are now re-scheduled to the following dates.:-
Simon and Garfunkel show Alnwick Playhouse - October 20th 2021

Feast of Fiddles. Alnwick Playhouse - 9th April 2022

Book of Mormon. Theatre Royal - 29th June 2022. (please note that this is a new date, it had already been re-scheduled for 2021).

We will Rock you. Theatre Royal - 24th August 2022

Kate Fox. Alnwick Playhouse. Postponed - to be re-scheduled.

RSC As You Like It - This has been cancelled. Refunds will go to those who have booked and paid, or the money could be kept as a credit for future bookings. PB will be in touch with those members who had booked to identify their wishes

Some members have already paid the full amount for these shows, others have paid only a deposit. PB has the details relating to this, and is aware that some members who have

previously booked may not now wish to go or are unavailable on new date. PB needs to be informed If members do decide they no longer wish to attend a show so that he can open those tickets up for other members.

PB also recognised that some members may now prefer to use their own transport to a show rather than use the Community minibus; he outlined some issues with parking for the minibus and was receptive to some posed solutions.

PB highlighted possible future events commencing with the first social gathering this year which will be on the afternoon of July 19th when we have our first ever Garden Party at the Three Wheat Heads in Thropton (Government guidance permitting). Additional social events include our annual Christmas Quiz arranged in the golf club on Friday 10th December .

PB asked members if they would be interested in is Matthew Bourne's Nutcracker ballet, at the Theatre Royal during the first week of April 2022. As tickets are selling fast he emphasised the need to respond as soon as possible if interested.

PB explained that although there had been plans to attend the Paxton Festival of Music this is online this year but he hopes to arrange for a visit in the summer of 2022. He is also hoping to arrange a visit to Jupiter Artland (a wonderful open air sculpture and art exhibition near Edinburgh) sometime in 2022

PB also referred to the very enjoyable coach visit to Newby Hall and Richmond that took place in 2019 and was hopeful that another coach visit may take place in 2022.

PB explained that in order to gauge the feelings of members are before committing to making future bookings he has put together a questionnaire that needs to be completed and returned directly to him as soon as possible. To keep things simple members can just send the question number and your response e.g. A2, B2, D1, E2,4,6,7

8). Election of Committee

CW as president presided over the election of the committee members. There was a unanimous show of hands for re-election of the chair and committee members. As IW stood down as webmaster Gerry Hoye was co-opted to this post. He was given unanimous approval by the members. CW thanked IW and the committee members for their work throughout the year.

9). The Coming Year.

AH outlined the wide range of speakers planned for the coming year (available on the website) and stated that he was looking forward to meeting members again face to face when restrictions have (hopefully) been lifted at the end of June

10). Any Other Business – Questions

There were no further questions. Members' questions were addressed during the presentations.

The meeting was followed by a poetry reading by Karenza Storey and Northumbrian dialect songs by Davey McCracken.