

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE COTSWOLD LINK

held via Zoom

on Wednesday 23 March 2022 at 14:00

Present:

Jeremy Furtado (chair), Dennis Chamberlain (treasurer), Marion Collighan (secretary) Sue Russell (committee member), Jenny Harrison (committee member + Ledbury), Steve Orme (co-host).

Chris Hucker (Hereford), Peter McNamara (Leominster), Jim Christie (Ross-on-Wye), Theresa Howard & Mike Byrne (Bromsgrove), Gay Enoch (Droitwich), Chris Wolstencroft (Evesham & District), Sally Whyte & Jackie Jolley (Pershore), Roger Hunt (Malvern), Ann Kelly & Alan Russell (Worcester), Pam Davis & Myrtle Moreton-Cox (Cam, Dursley & District), Janet Ropner, Chris Wardle & Ken Inglis (Cheltenham), Roger Streatfield & Jane Moore (Churchdown), Anne Vardy (Cirencester), Gerald Robins (Gloucester), Alun Davies (North Cotswolds), Joan Toon (Stroud), Duncan Fraser (Tewkesbury), Phil Hawthorn (Winchcombe).

Allan Walmsley (Regional Trustee West Midlands), Susan Parker (Regional Trustee South West).

Apologies:

Mike Philpot (Webmaster), Paul Clark (Bourton), Carmel Burton (Tetbury), Norman Taylor (Thornbury) Sally Ferrers (Bishops Cleeve), Michael Vann (Fairford & District) Laurence Wale (Worcester), Lesley Brook (Leominster), Clive Harper (Gloucester), Richard Phillips (Malvern), Ian Barber (Tewkesbury), Deborah Andrews (Evesham & District), Sue Gibson (Cam, Dursley & District), Jenny Mackelworth (Winchcombe), Marilyn Reynolds (Ross-on-Wye).

There were voting delegates representing 19 u3as out of the 26 Cotswold Link members, which is 73%.

1. Welcome from the Cotswold Link Chair

Jeremy Furtado, as chair, welcomed everyone to this AGM. He asked the participants if there were any who objected to the meeting being recorded to make the secretary's job easier. The recording would be deleted within the next fortnight. There were no objections.

2. Minutes of AGM held on 24 March 2021:

There were no objections to the minutes, which were approved unanimously.

3. Matters Arising:

Marion Collighan raised that the minutes record her election for a 3-year term, however, she found out later that election of committee members is only for a 1-year term.

4. Report from the Chair

Jeremy advised that his report focuses on the events and developments within Cotswold Link and its committee over the past year.

He began by welcoming Hereford u3a as the latest member of Cotswold Link. He hopes that they find much to interest them in the activities of the Link and in the exchange of ideas and views on best practice with fellow u3as.

Jeremy reminded delegates that Bromyard u3a has closed. He stressed the importance of asking for help early if a u3a is experiencing problems that might affect their ability to continue, either from a nearby larger u3a, Cotswold Link or their regional trustee.

Our member u3as have provided reassuring reports of steady recovery in 2022. Some have held Open Days with a pleasing increase in member numbers as a result. In contrast to this trend, it appears that recruiting to their committee remains a problem for some u3as.

The pandemic and the resulting official restrictions meant that we did not hold any physical meetings, as we have done in recent years. We have relied on Zoom for both our half-yearly meeting in October 2021 and for this meeting. However, Jeremy hopes that this will be the last time that such a meeting is held via Zoom.

A feature of the Link calendar is the Special Interest Day, which is structured around an agreed theme and features experts who speak on associated topics. An in-person meeting was impossible in 2021 so we organised three separate talks via Zoom for Link members. However, in 2022 we intend to hold a Special Interest Day with in-person attendance. This will be discussed in the half-yearly meeting, which follows.

Mike Philpot joined as Webmaster during the year and has brought a fresh perspective to bear on the management of the site. We thank him for his work and will support him in his efforts to make the website contents current and relevant for our member u3as.

The committee supports the Trust in ensuring that networks continue to play an important role in the coordination of communication between the Trust and u3as. We signed the Network Link Membership Agreement two years ago, and this year set out to adopt the draft Constitution to replace our existing Constitution. Marion will summarise its contents and implications later in this meeting.

Meanwhile Sue, Marion and Jeremy have attended all Network Link meetings over Zoom organised by Hilary Jones. These have covered a number of key topics in two short hours per session. Marion and Jeremy have also attended Zoom meetings organised by Susan Parker, our South West Trustee, who is here today. At her last meeting Susan invited Michaela Moody, Vice-Chair of the Trust,

to speak about arrangements for the national 40th Anniversary celebrations. Jeremy took the opportunity to inform her that Gloucester u3a is volunteering to hold a National u3a Robot Challenge as its contribution. She has supported this suggestion most enthusiastically and has secured the collective support of the Trust for this event. This will be discussed in the half-yearly meeting, which follows.

Jeremy reminded delegates that today he steps down as Chair. He thanked the committee, Marion Collighan, Dennis Chamberlain, Jennifer Harrison, Sue Russell for their support and guidance over the last year. Special thanks to Dennis, who is also stepping down, for his advice on financial matters. Clive Harper has had to resign from the committee so there is therefore a vacancy, which Jeremy hopes will be filled before long.

A final thank you from Jeremy to all the representatives of our member u3as, for your courtesy towards him and your prompt responses to any calls that he has made on your valuable time. With your continuing membership he feels that the Link will continue to work to meet the objective of establishing an effective movement through cooperation and self-help.

There were no questions.

5. Report from the Treasurer

The accounts had been circulated before the meeting showing a balance at the end of December 2021 of £1,321.90. There was only one transaction of £40 in the year, due to the lack of in-person activity. Denis reminded u3as that the 2020 subscription had been extended again to 36 months, so there will be no payment of fees until January 2023. There were no objections to the accounts for 2021, which were approved unanimously.

6. Committee elections

Sue Russell (Worcester) as Chair, was proposed by Lawrence Wale (Worcester) and seconded by Janet Ropner (Cheltenham). There were no other candidates and no objections. Sue Russell was elected unanimously as Chair for a 1-year term.

Ann Kelly (Worcester) as Treasurer, was proposed by Lata Taylor (Worcester) and seconded by Bill Culshaw (Malvern). There were no other candidates and no objections. Ann Kelly was elected unanimously as Treasurer for a 1-year term.

Marion Collighan (Cheltenham) as Secretary and Jenny Harrison (Ledbury) as member confirmed their willingness to stand for election for a further year. Jeremy Furtado confirmed his willingness to stand as a member of the committee to ease the transition to the new Chair. He intends to resign when that support is no longer necessary. There were no other candidates and no objections. All were elected unanimously for a 1-year term.

Jeremy reminded the attendees that we are short of one committee member and encouraged them to consider whether anybody in their u3a could join the committee, particularly from Gloucestershire, which is underrepresented.

7. Revised Constitution

It is proposed to revise the constitution of the Cotswold Link, along with the document "How the Link is run". The proposed revised documents, including some suggested changed from u3as, had been circulated before the meeting. Marion reminded attendees that the proposed revised constitution is based closely on the "small network constitution" advised by the Trust. The proposed document "How the Link is run" contains those items that apply specifically to Cotswold Link and reflect its aims, objectives, and principal activities but are not naturally part of a constitution.

Some adjustments to the draft documents have been suggested by u3as. These were discussed with attendees as follows:

- a. The rules around the composition and election of the committee have been included in the document "How the Link is run" and not in the constitution document. The Trust recommended this approach to allow changes to be made more easily without having to go through the formal process of agreeing a new Constitution and lodging it with the Charities Commission.

Alun Davies raised that it might be better, in the interests of transparency, if the tenure of the committee members was stated in the Constitution so that members do not have to search for it in an ancillary document. After discussion, it was agreed to leave the information on committee member tenure in "How the Link is run"

- b. How the Link is run: The Finance section contains the sentence "Activities organised by the committee should be self-financing."

Ken Inglis suggested that the word "normally" is added before "be self-financing" because if a grant is applied for it might not be necessary for an activity to be self-financing. This was agreed.

After discussion, it was further agreed to adjust the sentence "Any proposed changes to the levy are announced at the autumn half yearly meeting." to "Any proposed changes to the levy are discussed and agreed by a simple majority of those present at the autumn half yearly meeting."

- c. How the Link is run: The section on Cotswold Link u3a Meetings contains the sentence "All member u3as are entitled to send two delegates to an in-person meeting."

Ken Inglis suggested that the following sentence be added "The

committee may increase the size of delegations, e.g., for electronic meetings.” It was agreed to amend this slightly to: “The committee can increase the size of the delegation if circumstances allow.”

There were no further changes suggested, or objections to the proposed constitution or the document “How the Link is run”. Both documents were approved unanimously.

Phil Hawthorn thanked the Secretary for the work on the constitution.

8. AOB

There was no other business.

9. Date of Next Meeting – The next AGM should take place in March 2023 and is scheduled to be hosted by Bishops Cleeve u3a, subject to their agreement.

Signed..... Date