

# Minutes of the Crawley u3a AGM

**11<sup>th</sup> November 2022 14:30 onwards at the Friary Hall, Crawley**

**Present:** George Redgrave (Chair), Jim McGough (Vice Chair), Phil Light (Treasurer), Margaret Lloyd (Secretary), Graham Friday (Treasurer), Peter Beckley (Groups' Co-Ordinator), Sue Parker (Communications Co-Ordinator), Ann & Stewart Sole (Membership Secretaries) and 124 other members.

**Apologies:** Maureen Wicks (President) plus 47 other members (list available)

## 1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed it was quorate. He introduced the current committee members and reminded the members of the procedures to be adopted, in particular the requirement for all speakers from the floor to give their names before speaking.

## 2. Approval of the Minutes of the 2000/21 AGM held on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

These were agreed as an accurate record.

Proposed by [Glynis Mills](#)

Seconded: [Gill Cooban](#)

The motion was carried with no votes against or abstentions.

## 3. Discussion and Approval of the Annual Fees for 2022/23

The Chair asked if any members had any questions or comments.

[Clive Morris](#) made the following points:

- (i) The total level of expenditure in the budget seemed excessive and in particular the £1,300 for an annual celebration event and £4,000 for the communications budget
- (ii) Individual members appeared to be subsidising joint members
- (iii) That a special meeting be conducted open to all interested members as part of the 2023/24 budget and fee setting cycle so that members can understand, and approve, how the fees are set.

The responses to this were:

- (i) The Treasurer explained this was the first annual budget he had been involved in, and he had inherited no analysis showing how the joint membership fee related to the individual one
- (ii) The Treasurer also stated that the celebration event was intended to showcase the u3a and to grow membership. The costings were a guesstimate, and any funds not spent would go to reserves
- (iii) The Communications Communicator explained she had been new to her role when asked to provide an estimate of her expenditure on communications. Now she was more familiar with her role she realised that the estimate was excessive. A large component of it represented postage for the newsletters to be sent to members not on e-mail, and she was keen that many of these be delivered manually. In any case the number of members without e-mail had at least halved over that for 2021/22 and now represented around an eighth of the total Crawley u3a membership.

[Max Woodward](#) asked why there was an inconsistency between different indoor activity groups on the matter of the £2 fee per meeting. For some groups, the £2 fee was charged irrespective of whether a member attended the meeting or not, and for other groups it was charged only for meetings attended (an example of a group operating the latter policy was given).

The Treasurer responded that the policy was all the meetings should be paid for, irrespective of actual attendance, unless there were good reasons for absence (such as hospitalisation) and this was the policy he had inherited from 2020/21. The Vice-Chair stated he had no idea that the standard policy was not being followed and the Committee would investigate this.

### Motions

- (i) Proposal: That the 2022/23 Budget and Membership fee levels be approved

Proposed: [Stuart Sole](#) Seconded: [Marion Lang](#)

The motion was carried with 4 members against and no abstentions.

- (ii) Proposal: That a special meeting be held by the Committee, open to all interested members, as part of the 2023/24 budget and fee setting cycle enabling members to understand, and approve, how and at what level the fees are set.

Proposed: [Clive Morris](#) Seconded: [Anne Thorn](#)

The motion was carried with 5 members against and 13 abstentions.

## 4. Discussion and Approval of the Annual Report and Accounts for 2021/22

The Secretary, Margaret Lloyd, explained that the annual report now includes the accounts for the year, as is now the standard model, and the format and content is now aligned with that recommended by the Charity Commission (CC) for small charities.

The Chair gave a synopsis of the Chair's Report, a longer version of which is in section 3 of the Annual Report, thanking each of the Committee members for their work over the past year and the heroic efforts made by the Group Leaders in keeping their groups running smoothly. This had been the third and final year of his Chairmanship, the three years of which had included the difficult covid-lockdown periods.

The Treasurer spoke briefly on the accounts for 2021/22, explaining that the deficit for the year on general activity was largely the outcome of the year's membership fee being set at only £10 per individual, a level which was not expected to cover costs, reflecting the expectation that some activities might still needed to be restricted by Covid regulations. He reminded members that Crawley u3a was fortunate in possessing sufficient reserves to fund a deficit but that we needed to be mindful of how the donor contributing the funds forming a large proportion of the reserves had intended them to be used:

- (i) To ensure the u3a's long-term sustainability; and
- (ii) To ensure no group needs to close through lack of members' income [*in fact the donor intended that fees should not be raised to a level which would deter members on lower incomes from participation*].

There were no comments or questions on either the Annual Report or the Accounts.

**Motion** That the Annual Report and Accounts for 2021/22 be approved.

Proposed by [Jean Elmer](#)

Seconded by [Isabel Baker](#)

The motion was carried with no votes against and 4 abstentions.

## 5. New Crawley u3a Constitution

The Secretary explained that the new constitution was based on the most recent Third Age Trust (TAT) model, brought out in 2021, and outlined the reasons why this model was so much more comprehensive than their 2012 version, upon which the Crawley u3a current constitution was based. Individual u3as have only very limited scope to amend the terms of the current TAT model.

One of the clauses, for which we had successfully sought the Trust's permission to amend, concerned the maximum terms of office for the Secretary and Treasurer posts. The Charity Commission is keen that all Trustees be limited to a three-year term of office, but this can lead to difficulties in recruitment to Secretary and Treasurer roles for small

charities such as Crawley u3a, so we requested that the maximum term of service for both these posts any one holder could serve be increased from three years to six.

[Marion Lang](#) observed that under the old constitution only the Treasurer served for six years whereas under the new constitution both the Secretary and the Treasurer can serve for six years.

[Clive Morris](#) stated he did not agree that the Secretary should serve for six years. His own experience of serving on Committees had led him to believe that such a long period of service was undesirable. In any case he would not be voting in favour of the proposed new Crawley u3a constitution because, in contrast to the current constitution, it did not require members to approve the levels of membership fees set by the Committee.

The Secretary responded by agreeing that the requirement for members to vote on fees was, implicitly rather than explicitly, reflected in the Crawley u3a current constitution but not in the proposed new one. This was not out of any intention to exclude it, but due to the fact that it had not been included within the TAT's new model Constitution. She undertook to ask the Trust about their policy on this.

The Secretary also asked why Clive felt that the Treasurer could serve for six years but not the Secretary. The regular reports the CC issued on which charities were currently under investigation, and why, suggested that it was more often Treasurer's who was responsible for failings, rather than Secretaries. Also if the other Trustees were performing their roles correctly they would become aware and take necessary action if they believed the Secretary was performing in a way which could potentially be detrimental to the charity.

[Peter Beckley](#), the trustee acting as Groups Co-ordinator, reminded members that all Trustees are re-elected every AGM so members had an opportunity every year to vote out any Trustee they believed were not performing their role on the Charity's best interest. In his own experience it took a new Trustee over a year to really get to grips with their role, more so for the complex roles of Treasurer and Secretary, and so it was just not efficient to change these role holders every three years.

On the subject of membership fees, the Vice-Chair, [Jim McGough](#), stated that members should have the opportunity to participate in discussions on matters which directly affect them and that in future the Committee would seek to engage in more of a dialogue on such matters; it had already been agreed under agenda item 2 that a special meeting would be held open to all members as part of the 2023/24 fee setting process. He felt it vital to move to this new constitution, as the current one was outdated and no longer fit for purpose.

The Vice-Chair suggested the following motion:

#### **Motion**

That the New Constitution be adopted subject to the Committee obtaining advice from the Trust Age Trust on the best way to amend Crawley's proposed new constitution to ensure that the members do get an opportunity to agree, or otherwise, the proposed level of fees for each year. The Committee would report back to members the outcome on this via an article in the newsletter, and members would be granted a period of time in which to submit any objections. Only once any objections were resolved would the Committee implement the new Constitution.

Proposed by [Clive Morris](#)

Seconded by [Wendy Haig](#)

The motion was carried with no votes against and one abstention

## 6. Election of Officer Trustees

Post	Holder	Nominated By	Seconded By	Outcome
Chair	Jim McGough Jim McGough	Karen Darling Jean Austin	Ana Achucarro Kathryn Bennetts-Brown	Elected
Vice Chair	No nominations received			
Secretary	Margaret Lloyd Margaret Lloyd	Karen Darling Jean Austin	Chris Webb Kathryn Bennetts-Brown	Elected
Treasurer	Graham Friday Graham Friday Phil Light	Jacqui Mercer Jean Austin Jane Guest	Sheila Feasey Kathryn Bennetts-Brown Pat Johnstone	Elected  Withdrew 18 <sup>th</sup> Nov

Jim McGough took over as Chair of the meeting immediately after his election. He thanked George Redgrave for filling the role of Chair with such wit, charm, and ability to remember and quote ridiculous poems.

## 7. Election of Non-Officer Trustees

Post	Holder	Nominated By	Seconded By	Outcome
Membership Secretary	Jacqueline Mercer	Dave Rawlings	Janet Newson	Elected
Groups' Co-ordinator	Peter Beckley Peter Beckley	Maureen Bufton Jean Austin	Teresa Reynolds K Bennetts-Brown	Elected
Comms Co-ordinator	Sue Parker Sue Parker	Jean Austin Isabel Baker	K-Bennetts-Brown Jean Manuel	Elected
Events Co-ordinator	No nominations received			
Non-Officer Trustee 1	Janet Newson	Dave Rawlings	Janet Shorey	Elected
Non-Officer Trustee 2	Alan Pay	Ann Newcomb	Anne Finlay	Withdrew 18 <sup>th</sup> Nov

## 8. Call for Volunteers to Vacant Trustee Posts

The Chair asked whether any members were interested in putting themselves forwards for any of the vacant roles. There were no responses, and he stated the Committee would continue trying to recruit to these posts and any members who do come to decide they might be interested, to contact himself.

## 9. Any Other Business

Presentations were made to the outgoing committee members, and to the retiring RUG coordinator.

The business part of the meeting ended at 15:45 and was followed by tea and an entertainment from the Folk Singing Group led by John Hilder and Simon Hurdman.

Margaret Lloyd, Secretary Crawley u3a 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2022.