

Minutes of Culm Valley U3A 2020 AGM
held via video conference on 3 September 2020 at 2pm
due to Covid 19 National Lockdown

Present: U3A Steering Committee: Sue Hooper-Lawrie (SHL) [Chair], Marian Luck (ML), Gill Sole (GS), Carol Mitchell (CM), Susan Greenhough (SG), Richard Taylor (RT), Vicki Woodward (VW), Kevin Woodward (KW) [part meeting only], Catherine Boyack (CB)
Members: Sue Tremeer, Doreen and Norman Mouldsley, Simon Bartlett, Linda and Andy Arnold, Barbie Bradbury, Angie Cheshire, Sandra and Tony Sutton, Janet Bryant, Moira Wood, Lorna Knowles

Apologies: Peter Morris
Minutes: Catherine Boyack

Pre- Meeting Notices

ML notified the attendees that the meeting is to be recorded and asked them to turn off their video input if they do not agree to their image appearing on the recording. The recording was then started and will be available on the U3A website until the end of September. It will then be deleted.

ML also noted that she would initially mute everyone apart from SHL [meeting chair] to avoid issues with background noise. If attendees wanted to address the meeting they were asked to raise their hand, wait until invited to speak and then start by giving their name for the meeting record. Attendees were requested to raise any general questions in the scheduled Q&A session.

Welcome

SHL welcomed all attendees to the first AGM of the Culm Valley U3A. She explained that although the Steering Committee would have much preferred to hold a face-to-face meeting this had not been possible under the current restrictions.

Apologies for absence

Peter Morris – former Chair of the Steering Committee – sent his apologies.

Chair's Report (by Sue Hooper-Lawrie)

SHL presented her report, covering the formation of a Steering Committee and setting up of Culm Valley U3A in 2019 through to the formal replacement of the Steering Committee by an elected Executive Committee today. She thanked past and present Committee members for their contributions and expressed the hope that when the U3A is finally in a position to meet together face to face again it will be with the same amount of enthusiasm and interest as at the first Inaugural Meeting a year ago. SHL concluded by asking everyone to remember that Culm

Valley U3A is run by its members for its members and that we are all in this together as we strive to provide opportunities to learn, laugh and live together.

The full text of Sue's report is included as an appendix at the end of these minutes.

Treasurer's Report and formal adoption of annual accounts

In Kevin Woodward's absence the previous Treasurer Richard Taylor reported that the U3A's finances are in a good healthy position. There were no questions on the annual accounts and they were formally adopted by the meeting [Proposer: Norman Mouldsley, Seconder: Barbie Bradbury].

When KW later joined the meeting he thanked Richard Taylor for setting up the bank account, starting the books for Culm Valley U3A and assisting in the initial set-up of the committee. He noted that it was a pleasure working with Richard during the handover period.

[Post meeting note: KW's report was not delivered at the meeting but is included here for information:

Total income for the period ended 31st March was £2,796.50 – this included advance subscriptions for the current year of £225.00. Our expenses were £728.09 made up of £549.81 paid out during the year, and £178.28 paid out after the year end.

We ended the year with £2,246.69 in the bank, and after future liabilities the Culm Valley U3A ended the year with reserves or available funds of £2,068.41

Covid19 has meant that quite a few of our members have not renewed, but we have received a further £850 in membership fees in the current year, and currently have £2,160.79 in our bank account. We have £45 due to be refunded to members who have paid twice, leaving reserves standing at £2,115.79.]

Formal Adoption of Culm Valley U3A Constitution

The Culm Valley U3A Constitution was formally adopted by the meeting. [Proposer: Marian Luck, Seconder: Carol Mitchell]

Q&A

There were no questions from attendees. SG thanked SHL for all her work since taking over as Chair and the tremendous job she has done in keeping members involved and informed. RT also thanked SHL for her inspirational leadership and CM noted her achievement in transitioning Steering Committee meetings from general chats to formal gatherings.

Official retirement and formal conclusion of the AGM

On behalf of the Steering Committee SHL announced that the entire Steering

Committee was standing down with immediate effect and formally concluded the Culm Valley U3A's first AGM.

Results of the Election of Officers (Gill Sole)

GS thanked the 42 members who cast their votes for the Election of Officers for the Executive Committee. 40 members voted in the online ballot and 2 by post; there were no votes received by email.

All votes cast were for existing committee members, there were no other names put forward for inclusion on the Ballot Paper. Therefore GS confirmed the following appointments to the Executive Committee with immediate effect:

Chair - Sue Hooper-Lawrie
Treasurer - Kevin Woodward
Business Secretary - Gill Sole
Membership Secretary - Sue Greenhough
Groups Co-ordinator - Vicki Woodward

Finally, as the U3A has to have a Vice-Chair, GS was delighted to announce that Lorna Knowles had agreed to be co-opted onto the Executive Committee in this capacity with immediate effect. Lorna has been a member since CVU3A's inauguration and GS welcomed her onto the committee and looked forward to working with her in the future. Lorna then introduced herself to the meeting.

CM congratulated the new Executive Committee and wished them success.

Vote of Thanks

SHL thanked all present for joining the meeting and expressed the hope that some of them would join the U3A Management Team in the coming months.

End of meeting

The meeting ended at 15.45.

Appendix to the Minutes of Culm Valley U3A 2020 AGM

Chair's Report (by Sue Hooper-Lawrie)

Back in the first half of 2019 a group of strangers met together to consider setting up a U3A for the Culm Valley. In July 2019 a group of about 14 held their first meeting as a Steering Committee, chaired by Peter Morris. No one had any idea what we were letting ourselves in for, we just knew that we wanted to make this thing work, and our enthusiasm drove us forward. We were fortunate to have the guidance of both national and regional U3A volunteers in the form of Marion Clements and Frances Berry, who guided us through what had to be done to get to our inaugural meeting, which was held on Thursday 5th September 2019 at Willand Village Hall. As we set up the hall and got everything ready, little did we know what the coming year had in store for us!

To say we were overwhelmed by the response to the publicity would be an understatement! We couldn't believe the number of people who turned up and we were thrilled with such a positive response to a new U3A starting in the Culm Valley. Our first Membership Secretary, Sue Tremeer, experienced probably the busiest time this U3A will ever see when she, with the assistance of Richard Taylor, our then Treasurer, worked tirelessly to record and confirm our first batch of just under 100 new members.

As a Steering Committee we were still learning the ropes but were so excited to see such a huge turnout. We are a group of people who came together to help an idea become a reality. Along the way we have had to get to know one another and work together, we have had to manage some difficulties and we have faced a number of challenges, but throughout this past year we have all had one focus and one aim – to make Culm Valley U3A something people want to join and get involved with, by encouraging and enabling an interesting and diverse variety of activities and events.

Behind the scenes we had to do quite a lot of work, in those early months, to ensure that as an "organisation" we were legal, responsible and safe. At times this has been frustrating as we have had to struggle with legal requirements and responsibilities versus – hey guys we just want to enjoy ourselves, have fun and relax! Creating a Constitution, understanding the responsibilities of being a Trustee, creating necessary policies and procedures, creating a database, setting up a bank account and signatories, familiarising ourselves with Insurance matters, creating a website and Facebook page, and considering how best to keep members informed about what is happening and what is planned while, at the same time, continuing to attract new members..... all these challenges were faced and managed. However, everything is under constant review and evaluation as we move forward, as we do not want to become complacent or stuck in the mud!

Along the way we have had to say "thank you" and "good bye" to a number of people who were part of the original planning and development of Culm Valley U3A. As their own circumstances and, in some cases their health, meant they were unable to continue. We will always be very grateful to each of them for their input, enthusiasm and willingness to be part of something where none of us really knew what we were

doing!

I do have to thank Richard Taylor who suggested the first three speakers we had for our first three monthly meetings. They really set the tone and the bar, for others to follow. Carol Mitchell and Gill Sole then took over and set about researching and creating a very interesting programme of speakers for 2020. Sadly, we only managed to hear from a few of those speakers, before we were suddenly affected by the coronavirus pandemic, as it took hold across the world. We hope that when we are back up and running with our monthly meetings, that we will be able to rebook and hear from those who we have missed out on, so far this year.

As well as being Vice Chair and Speaker Co-ordinator Carol Mitchell was also responsible for co-ordinating our team of refreshment makers at the monthly meetings, who always did a fantastic job. Thank you to Carol and the team for all you did to help with our monthly meetings. With that in mind, thank you to everyone who helped get set up and cleared away for our monthly meetings, we very much appreciate all you did and hope that it will not be too long before we can be part of that buzz again as we set up for our first meeting back together.

Another big part of any U3A are the Interest Groups. Interest Groups are set up because a few members have shown an interest in a certain activity, topic or hobby. Some initial ideas and suggestions fell by the wayside, but in the main most of the interest groups set up at the start were still in operation when we went into lockdown. As a Steering Committee we are very grateful to individual members who were, and continue to be, willing to be the person who provides organisation of group activities and provides photos and news for the website and newsletters. Without the Group Organisers we would not have the groups that we have, or be able to read about, or see what groups are doing. Many thanks to Vicki Woodward, who was so willing to take the role of Groups Co-ordinator on, knowing that it would not be an easy role. Of all of the roles on the Steering Committee the role of Groups Co-ordinator can be one of the most time consuming, challenging and, yes at times, thankless roles. So a big thanks to Vicki for sticking with it and doing a great job.

One of the results of creating a Facebook Page was that a certain Marian Luck asked to join the page. Marian was based in Fife in Scotland at the time, where she was on the Fife U3A Committee. It turned out that Marian and her husband were in the process of relocating to Cullompton which excited us very much and as soon as Marian arrived in Cullompton she got in touch and before long was a member of the Steering Committee, looking after the website and eventually the Beacon database system. Marian is also on the national Beacon team so has been a great asset in all things Beacon related. Marian was also webmaster in her previous U3A, so quickly and graciously took on responsibility for the website too. We are very grateful to Marian for her input, expertise and patience as she has led us through the setting up and use of Beacon and shown us more capabilities of the website as well as generously sharing her wealth of experience and knowledge accumulated over the years.

More recently we have been joined by Susan Greenhough, who took over the role of Membership Secretary when Sue Tremeer stood down due to fragile health. Many thanks go to Sue Tremeer for all her hard work, time and energy in getting

membership records and the database set up with the help of Peter Morris who also did a heroic job when he volunteered to be the Chairman of a bunch of people he didn't know, who all had their own ideas, who were enthusiastic if a little erratic at times and who didn't always follow committee procedures and protocols. We are grateful to Susan Greenhough, for taking on the role of Membership Secretary and for her experience and input to the Steering Committee.

Another great addition to the Steering Committee is the very efficient Catherine Boyack who joined us as the Minute Secretary. Catherine produces clear and concise minutes and makes all the preparations for our monthly committee meetings, which is a great help.

Kevin Woodward joined us as the new Treasurer when Richard Taylor felt it was time to reduce the amount of responsibility he had in his life! However, Richard was willing to stay on board as the Assistant Treasurer and has worked with Kevin to ensure the finances of Culm Valley U3A are well maintained and managed. Thank you to both Kevin and Richard for your contributions to date. Thank you too to Kevin, who just before lockdown, arranged for 500 Culm Valley U3A leaflets to be printed, free of charge and also managed, through the company he works for, the mass mailout to all members, which provided the information about the election and AGM.

And so folks we arrive at today, a year old and a very different AGM than we had first envisaged. As the Steering Committee officially stands down and makes way for our first Executive Committee, may I take this opportunity, on behalf of all members of Culm Valley U3A, to thank each and every member of the Steering Committee for your commitment, enthusiasm, contributions, patience and support as we have travelled this somewhat unpredictable adventure together over the past discombobulating year! As we look forward to the next year, does any one of us dare to predict what we may be talking about at our next AGM?

As well as being very thankful to all those who have been, and are, part of the Steering Committee I am also extremely grateful and thankful to you, the members of Culm Valley U3A for your support, encouragement and involvement in every aspect of our short life so far. A very special thank you to Carol Mitchell, the Vice Chair and Speaker Co-ordinator, who felt she needed to step down from the committee and not seek election. Carol thank you for all you have done over the past year and we do hope that you will continue with us, perhaps in some way on the Management Team when it is set up.

Thank you to all those who nominated candidates for the election of officers, thank you to those who were willing to be put forward and thank you to all those who voted in the election. We received no nomination for the role of Vice Chair, however we must have a Vice Chair in order to be Constitutionally and legally correct. I believe Gill Sole will cover this when she formerly announces the results of the election which she will do once the formal business of this AGM is concluded and the existing Steering Committee has formally stood down.

Culm Valley U3A will adopt a different structure in terms of Governance and Management as we move into our second year. You can find out more about this on the website. I do hope that we will all continue to support and encourage the new

Executive Committee and that some members will be willing to join the Management Team in due course.

And finally there is still an amount of uncertainty about when we will be in a position to meet together face to face again, but I do hope that whenever it is, we will all do so with the same amount of enthusiasm and interest as we did for that first Inaugural Meeting a year ago. The past is for learning from mistakes and challenges, the present is for exploring and experiencing new things and the future is for creating hopes. Please always remember Culm Valley U3A is run by its members for its members, so we are all in this together as we strive to provide opportunities to learn, laugh and live together.