



Exeter University of the Third Age

Registered Charity No. 1104480

AGM MINUTES

held at the Mint Methodist Church 27th April 2017

1The meeting opened at with 136 members present. The Chairman, Anne Vardy welcomed everyone.

2**Apologies** were received from: Daphne Andrews, Ivan Andrews, Maggie Bonfield, Susan Browne, Arnold Cade, Helen Cleasby, Peter Cleasby, Jude Dimuantes, Chrissie Edgington, Rose Gander, Heather Gibson, Jeremy Gibson, Mike Gillan, Margaret Hardware, Ray Hodgins, Chris Howe, Jo Joyce, Margaret Murphy, Juliet Ovens, Marion Ricketts, Nick Ricketts, Hilary Wigmore and Gillian Wills.

3**The minutes of the AGM 2016** were approved by the membership, proposed by Janie Smallridge and seconded by Ruth Sanders.

4**Matters arising**

There were no matters arising

5**Aims and Objectives of Exeter U3A** was read out by Ruth Sanders. These are:

- i) To advance the education of the public and in particular the education of older people no longer in full time gainful employment, in Exeter and its surrounding locality.
- ii) The provision of facilities for leisure time and recreational activities with the object of improving the conditions of life for the above persons in the interests of their social welfare.

1**Chairman's Report**

In November last year Daphne Andrews handed over the chairmanship of Exeter U3A, and so began a new journey for me. I had learnt so much from Daphne over the two and half years of her chairmanship and with the supportive and hard working committee members it has been one of the most satisfying and rewarding jobs I've done in the U3A. This AGM just seems to have happened and all I've done is write a report. Our Secretary Mary Swain is the fount of all knowledge when it comes to U3A matters. Thank you Mary for always answering my queries and giving me and the committee the support to arrive here today unscathed. Thank you Daphne and fellow committee members, for getting us through this year so successfully.

I feel like an Oscar winner saying "I'd like to thank my mother, my aunt, my agent....." I don't have an agent, but Oscars and thanks belong to Ivan Andrews and Dave Parsons for keeping the website fresh and informative; Chris Lane and her regular helpers who get every monthly meeting started in the best way with tea and coffee; We seem to cause chaos with our cups and biscuit crumbs but by the time we walk out of the meeting everything has been tidied and cleared away. Sandra, Jo, Jane and helpers who are always cheerful on the

welcoming and signing in desks. I don't know how they remain so unflappable in the arrival rush of the monthly meetings. Every month we've had entertaining guest speakers organised by Vivienne and Hilary, something that definitely does not just happen overnight and they deserve the best Speakers Secretary Oscars. The Rolling Programme we see on the screens every month is beautifully put together by Peter Barwell. I have sent him items on the night before meetings and he has always managed to include them. Dave Parsons and Keith have spent many hours getting The Beacon system introduced and this will make life considerably easier for committee members and convenors. Training is planned for later this year.

Our membership has grown to nearly 500 and we have over 50 groups. It is the members and the groups that are the core of the U3A, but we do need to be monitored and kept in order. I am happy to say that I haven't had much to do with how all this functions! I do know that it is a big and most important job and glowing Oscars go to Faith Wood and Lynne Morgan, who have done a superb job in keeping this running smoothly. The convenors of the groups now have their own Convenors' Cafe thanks to Penny and Trudi who seem to have boundless energy.

Our University Liaison is the envy of other U3As in our area and Groups Fairs and Musical Extravaganzas are being put onto agendas of neighbouring U3As – Dave White and Lynne Morgan your influence is growing. We will have a stand at the Devon County Show in May, thanks to Keith who together with U3As in the region have obtained a grant from National to fund this. An extra thank you to Keith for ensuring that our finances are in a very sound state.

You can read all about this and the many activities in the bi monthly newsletter for which Trudi Learthmouth is responsible. Trudi, you do an amazing job and before I continue with my rambling I would like to give you a special vote of thanks.

I've learnt so much from the members.

A few weeks ago I went for a walk with a friend, along the coast path near Branscombe. We had our picnic lunch on the beach in a biting wind and as we crunched across the sand and pebbles, my friend Jenny said, 'Oh look. There's a bird ring.' Nothing very special just a rather worn down piece of plastic, but she put it in her pocket. Jenny writes a Nature column in our village magazine and last week her article mentioned the bird ring. She'd managed to track down the owner of the ring number, who lives in Norfolk. He was delighted to hear from her and said that he races pigeons and this particular race last year, was from France and only one of his birds had not returned. He had wondered for months what had happened to it. I love that story because it would have been so easy to scrunch the bird ring into the sand. For me that walk has been greatly enriched by a bird ring.

I think that is what the U3A is like. We can go on a journey from A to B and not engage with anything or anyone along the way. But as U3A members we have opportunities to be open to those moments that will enrich the journey and as a result we enrich each other's lives.

Six weeks ago I was chatting to a member in the Strideout group who recently went off to South East Asia on his own with a rucksack. No definite plans, he just decided to go. I was so impressed with this courage and optimism that I finally did something I have been wanting to do for a number of years and never had the courage – I booked a ticket on the Eurostar to Lille and had a week cycling in Northern France on my own which I've never done before. Thank you Peter, for that nugget of inspiration. When Janie Smallridge first mentioned that she was starting a group for members who wanted short walks of about one mile my first thought was, 'Oh for goodness sake. Everyone can walk a mile'. How wrong and arrogant was I. Some members have had hip replacements, knee operations, are recovering from illness or haven't been able to get out for walks for many months and want to take up walking again. This group meets every week and now walk two to three miles and they are

never shy of ending a walk near a pub. I know because I'm now a member of that group and my life is definitely enriched by these active members.

At a recent U3A Discussion group, we were settling down with our coffees when M..... said, 'I don't like coffee much. I usually have a brandy and soda.' At 11 o'clock in the morning! Don't you just love those moments? It inspired me to ring my 95 year old mum later and ask her if I could come over for a sherry. She was delighted. 'I'll get the bottle out now' she said. It was 4 o'clock in the afternoon. I'm not advocating drink – but being open to those Brandy and Soda moments brightens my days.

So what is the point of my rambling on with these anecdotes? You have your own stories all of which enrich your journeys. These stories contribute to our thriving and vibrant U3A. Thank you everyone for the many ways you contribute to this success, by convening groups which requires commitment and effort and often many hours spent in research and planning, making tea, participating in groups, sharing knowledge, sharing friendships, being here today and above all, being positive and open to new things on your journeys. Definitely you are – to quote from the Aims and Objectives – “Improving the conditions of life for our members”.

You will have an excellent committee this year and I thank them for offering to serve and wish them as much satisfaction and fun as I have had.

Thank you for coming today and may your next year's journey from A to B be enriched with many Bird Ring discoveries and Brandy and Soda moments.

Anne Vardy

2Secretary's Report

It has been three years since I retired from employment as a Medical Secretary and three years that I have been Secretary for Exeter U3A, two and a half of these under the wise, personable and caring leadership of Daphne Andrews as Chairman. In a year of Brexit and political change in Britain we have had our own changes of leadership in Exeter U3A. We were saddened to accept Daphne's decision to stand down as chairman from the committee on 31st October last year. So we conducted a secret ballot in November and the clear decision of the committee was that Anne Vardy should take up the reigns of Chairman for the rest of the year. She has done an admirable job in stepping into Daphne's shoes, keeping up the momentum and bringing us to the 2017 AGM.

With Keith Shaw as treasurer, Jonathan Peat and Lynn Walsh as vice chairs, Lynne Morgan as Groups' Co-ordinator, Dave Parsons with his IT skills, Peter Barwell looking after the rolling news and Arnold Cade, we have been a busy crew ensuring that Exeter U3A delivers an excellent and accountable organisation for all its members.

Constantly looking for ways to raise the profile of our U3A in Exeter and facilitate and improve the groups, we have had events such as a coffee morning at St Stephen's Church on the High Street, a Groups Fair showcasing some of our varied activities, and bought our own projector so that we do not spend half a group meeting trying to get the technology to work! On that note, we have also bought into a National Database called Beacon which will assist Faith Wood, our Membership Secretary, and our treasurer, Keith, in keeping an accurate database of our members. This means that we can all be kept informed about what is going on. I know we all very much appreciate Trudi Learmouth's superb newsletter and diary of events. The opportunity to be involved with events at the University has been brilliant. And I have often said, I would gladly pay our annual subscription just for the speakers and events

that we enjoy at our monthly meetings.

Thanks to the accessibility of the Web site and people wanting instant information, I have been noticeably busier this year answering various queries from the public about our U3A. Also, in order to ensure that we are paying for the rooms we use and not paying for meetings that have been cancelled, I have been channelling our bookings for the monthly meetings, committee meetings and group meetings at The Mint and the other paid for venues that we use.

I know that with Keith Shaw, Lynn Walsh, Lynne Morgan and Dave Parsons offering to continue on the committee we can be assured of a solid core of enthusiastic committee members to see us forward into 2018.

Mary Swain

3 Treasurer's Report

2016-17 from a financial perspective was again a very stable year, with both income and expenditure being above plan. We started the year with a reasonable reserve and because our income exceeded expenditure, it has been maintained. We continued with the "Paid for Venues" fee which was aimed at offsetting the room hire charges and it will be retained at the same level for the coming year.

The total expenses for 2016-17 were £12186 and they can be summarised as follows;

[Room Hire	£7301
[National	£2653
[Printing	£391
[Speakers	£305
[Admin	£369
[Other	£1167

Our income of £15158 was mainly derived from our subscriptions, however there were also contributions from HMRC via gift aid and the PFV fees as follows;

[Subscriptions	£11831
[PFV Fees	£1783
[Donations	£34
[Tea/Coffee	£280
[Other	£1230

Going forward we have an agreed financial plan for the 2017/18 that provides a degree of flexibility for our members. The key elements of the plan are as follows;

- [The fee for 2017/18, due on the 01APR17, has been set at £20.
- [Renewal payments made in full before the 31MAR17 qualified for a 25% discount (£15).
- [The fee can be paid quarterly in advance (£5/quarter) by standing order only
- [You can pay by cheque, cash or direct into our bank account.
- [For members of those groups using "Paid for Venues" there is a surcharge of £1/month/group.
- [This fee is payable quarterly in arrears.

We will continue to provide you with quarterly feedback on our financial status at the monthly meetings. There will also be an internal audit of the finances to ensure compliance.

Keith Shaw

The treasurer's accounts were accepted - proposed by Hilary Wilkinson and seconded by Renee Terry.

1 Membership Secretary's Report

There have been 2 major changes to our membership records this year. The first is that we no longer issue Renewal forms. This means that members only have to give their details to us once. This means that we rely entirely on members notifying me of any change of address and so on.

The second change is that we have now moved to permanent membership numbers. This means that all existing members in 2016 have kept the same number, and this will be theirs for life.

I hope that these changes which are designed to bring the Exeter U3A into line with other Charities will prove to be beneficial.

As at 1st April we have 487 confirmed members for the coming year. There are a further 45 people who have not yet let me know whether or not they will be renewing their membership. Our membership is growing rapidly in size and is now at its highest ever for the beginning of a year.

This increase I feel is due mainly to our wonderful website – many enquiries are from people wanting to join a particular group. Our link with the University is proving to be very popular, with people joining especially to take part in their activities.

Faith Wood

Faith also asked the members if they would like her to produce membership cards. The general consensus was that they are not needed.

2 Group Coordinators' Report

Firstly, let me thank Janie Smallridge for handing over the role so competently to me. I have found it both interesting and sometimes challenging but nevertheless I have enjoyed my year as Group Coordinator.

Our members are extremely lucky because we now have 64 groups which includes six new groups that have started during the year. They cover a wide range of subjects stretching from Bird Watching to Discussion groups and Philosophy to Hearty Hikers! Most meet once a month, although a few meet fortnightly and some even weekly.

To help our Convenors we decided that a Convenors Café would be a good idea, where Convenors could come together regularly to discuss any problems they had and also tell each

other about practices that really worked. These now take place every other month at Weatherspoons on South Street and are well attended.

In January we held a Convenors Lunch which enabled us to invite all our Convenors out for a free lunch at Exeter College, as a way of saying thank you to them for all the hard work they put into convening their groups. 46 members attended the lunch, which was provided by the catering students who all did an excellent job of not only cooking us a delicious meal but also serving it in a very professional manner!

On January 26th we held a successful Groups Fair at our Monthly Meeting. 30 of our convenors set up their tables and prepared to tell members about, or show them, all the wonderful things that they do in their groups. We had 157 members who attended this meeting and many of them were enthused to sign up for new experiences with new groups. We also had several non-members who attended that day and then decided to join.

Group Convenors are encouraged to share their role and delegate responsibility – this is the ethos of the U3A – Shared Learning. Our members are a good example of this happening – many of them took over groups where convenors were ill, went on holiday or even left the country for 2-3 months or just simply felt like a change.

I would like to thank all the Group Convenors for their contributions and my fellow Committee Members for making this such a successful year.

Lynne Morgan

3University Liaison Coordinator's Report

Following the formal signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Exeter U3A and the University of Exeter in March 2016, the Project Team (Bertram, Carol and Trudi) have continued the work of arranging talks and developing opportunities for our members.

During the past year we have had twelve talks covering a diverse range of topics, including Moral Revolutions, The Effects of Diet on Cognitive Function and Health, The Origins of Higher Education, Chemicals in Plastic Food Packaging, Facially Injured Servicemen in the First World War and the Future of Work and Leisure.

In line with the mutually beneficial nature of our relationship with the University, Olwen Goodall and Peter Cleasby have continued to serve as lay members on the Ethics Committees dealing with Animal Testing and Social Sciences respectively.

U3A members have continued to attend the Family Classes for the spouses of international students, to be involved in the training of medical students in the Clinical Skills Unit, and to contribute to the work of the Centre for Biomedical Modelling and Analysis.

Newer developments have included our members becoming involved in research into “Life after Retirement”, psychology research into “Negative Thoughts” and supporting research into “Ageing and Cognitive Health”.

An exciting new development has been the involvement of ten Exeter U3A members in an intergenerational approach to literature studies. They have attended weekly two-hour seminars with final year undergraduates on the topic of “Reading for Life”. This collaboration has been so successful that a similar event is being arranged for the autumn.

4Communications Report

NEWSLETTER

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

There have been 6 newsletters produced since the AGM in April 2016, averaging 17 pages in length with a slight increase in the 2 summer issues due to more photographs.

Over 500 electronic copies of the Newsletter are emailed out, the number rising over the year with the increase in membership. Members have been encouraged to install the required pdf reader, with links to the necessary websites being included in the email accompanying the Newsletter.

At present, 85 black and white copies are printed for distribution and collection at general meetings and coffee mornings, and very few, if any, are left over. The number of members who do not receive an email copy and for whom the paper copy is essential is actually very low at less than 40. Some other members who do have email access have difficulty opening the electronic file or printing their own copy.

We continue to use Stormpress for printing the Newsletter. The cost of each 17-page copy of the Newsletter is about 75p.

FORMAT

Group leaders and other members continue to be really enthusiastic sending me photos of their activities and events which have helped to make the Newsletter more visually appealing. Please continue to do so. When there have been lots of photographs of a particular event, I have forwarded them to Ivan for displaying on our website.

The order of contents continues to emphasise key upcoming events and opportunities available for all members, starting with Monthly Meetings, followed by University Liaison events and other workshop opportunities. This helps achieve cohesion across Exeter U3A and enables all members to feel involved in what is going on in our U3A as a whole. The Newsletter then has news items and reports on past events, followed by information about new groups and finally reports on the separate group activities.

The Forthcoming Events section has been kept to 4 pages in length, despite the increase in the number of groups, with weekly groups now appearing in a separate section. This detailed programme information continues to be the most useful part of the Newsletter and is greatly valued by Exeter U3A members.

THANKS

As always, thanks to all group convenors and other members for sending me their news and photos – without you, there would be no newsletter!

PUBLICITY

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Posters have been produced each month to promote awareness of Exeter U3A by publicising the monthly talks and these are now regularly displayed in Exeter Public Library. A recent Groups Fair held in the monthly meeting slot succeeded in attracting new members.

Details of the monthly meetings are also regularly uploaded onto local listings websites (East Devon Hub etc) and emailed to the Express and Echo.

GENERAL PROMOTION

With a steady trickle of new members and membership now over 500, there has not been a specific drive this year to recruit more members to Exeter U3A.

A public information Coffee Morning was held in July 2016 at St Stephen's Church, Exeter.

Looking ahead, Exeter U3A will be part of a joint Devon Link stand to promote awareness of local U3As at the Devon County Show in May 2017.

Trudi Learmouth

5 Questions to the Committee Regarding the Reports

Ruth Sanders asked Keith Shaw for a breakdown of the room hire fees between those used for groups and those for the monthly meetings and committee meetings. Keith replied that the split was £1,756 for the monthly meetings and committee meetings and £5,548 for groups in paid for venues.

Suzanne Frost asked Ruth why she wanted this breakdown of the figures. Ruth replied that when she was Chairman, it was the payment of an increased number of group meetings in paid for venues that led Exeter U3A into a difficult financial position.

Ruth also asked if the subscriptions received before the 1st April are put into that year's budget or allocated after 1st April. Keith replied that they are added on receipt so that the bank balance is accurate.

Keith added that as we are in a strong financial position, perhaps the committee should reconsider the £1 supplement being paid by members attending groups in paid for venues. Jed Harris suggested that this should continue as it is fair and what is free becomes less valuable.

Jonathan Peat proposed that Ruth's request for a figure separately showing the cost of room hire fees for groups was adopted. Shanne Lane seconded his proposal and Keith agreed to do this in future.

Harry Ellis asked Trudi if we needed a diary of events in every production of the newsletter. Trudi replied that it has been appreciated by the membership and therefore she would continue to include it.

6 Election of Committee Members

Proposed	Proposer	Seconder
Maggie Bonfield	Penny Amraoui	Marcia Hampson
Amanda James	Penny Amraoui	Marcia Hampson
Kay Mathews	Edith Nield	Jeremy Coulson
Lynne Morgan	Daphne Andrews	Ivan Andrews
Dave Parsons	Daphne Andrews	Ivan Andrews
Keith Shaw	Daphne Andrews	Ruth Sanders
Phil Slater	Ruth Sanders	Colin Farlow
Anne Staley	Daphne Andrews	Jan Rolfe
Lynn Walsh	Jan Rolfe Daphne Andrews	Trudi Learmouth Ruth Sanders

Mary Swain asked for a show of hands for each proposal and all were unanimously carried with no dissentions and no abstentions.

7Motions to be Raised

No motions had been received by the deadline.

8AOB

Kris Frank asked why motions could not be sent to the AGM within the 21 days designated. Anne Vardy replied that proposed resolutions have to be sent to all the members 21 days prior to give them time to gather relevant information for discussion. (Item 14 ii).

Mary Swain asked if members would like to listen to an invited speaker after the AGM in future. The consensus of the meeting was that this would not give sufficient time to discussion of any proposals or motions.

Ruth Sanders gave the committee a vote of thanks.

The AGM was concluded at 11.30 am and group notices of forthcoming events followed.