

Goudhurst and District



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON

WEDNESDAY 5TH AUGUST 2020 AT 2:30PM

VIRTUAL MEETING HELD ON ZOOM.

Present:

Linda La Roche	Mike Hollman	Jenny Dalleywater
Liz Toop	Gill Hollman	Ann Torry
Jo Dadley	Lynette Edwards	Richard Larkin
Val Harris	Barry Booker	Antony Harris
Janet Mitchell	Sheenagh Nicholson	Sylvia Harris
Robin Mitchell	Jim Hughes	Alan Goda
Clare Benfield	Sonia Foster	David Boniface
John Benfield	Ian Agnew	David Nichol
John McCaig	Wil Pretty	Sue Nichol
Veronica Inniss	Viv Everett	Total members attending 39
Richard Inniss	Robert Alden-Smith	
Ali Larkin	Jeremy Waters	
Elizabeth Mason	Janet Henley	
Bryan Mason	Joyce Veysey	
Maggie Mascall	Chrissie Markham	

Apologies received from:

Trevor and Sarah Thorpe
Carolyn Woodward
Sue Bateman
Ken Ash
Susan Ash

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks

Good afternoon everyone

Before we begin, as this is a very new way of holding this meeting, I'll start with a little housekeeping. We have intentionally muted everyone, except the principal participants. Those who have zoomed before know that if everyone tries to speak at once, no one can hear and muting can prevent a lot of background noise.

For those using video, if you wish to ask a question or make a comment, there is a chat box at the bottom of your screen and if you type your question there, we will answer them at the relevant time, if appropriate or all at the end. We will need you to vote on one or two things, so if you clearly put your hand up we will be able to see the numbers in favour or against the proposals.

Let's make a start.

Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to the 6th AGM for Goudhurst & District U3A. A very different AGM to one we have ever had before. Thank you all so much for joining us on Zoom. Literally, without you we would be unable to complete this necessary task, so we appreciate you being here.

You have received a copy of the Agenda, nominations for re - election of the committee, finance report and the minutes of last year's AGM.

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting on 15th May 2019 –

All members will have received an email with the Agenda and attachments and copies of relevant documents are available at this meeting.

The Minutes were agreed by a show of hands.

3. Chairman's Report

To say we have had an interesting year is a big understatement, but the motto of the U3A remains - Learn, Laugh, Live. A necessary requirement, maybe even more so in these difficult times.

I am not going to say a lot about Covid 19, as you have been bombarded with news of it every single day for too long now and we don't know for how much longer this will be going on. What I will say is that I truly believe that belonging to an organisation like the U3A, particularly in small villages, as we are, can provide much comfort and support to members who might otherwise not know as many people as they now do.

Covid has been tragic for so many and if we have kept ourselves and our loved ones safe in this hostile environment, we have so much to be thankful for. For obvious reasons, our monthly meetings stopped back in March. Little did we know then, that in August, we would still not see an end in sight. But the fortitude of our members has managed to keep many of the interest groups going in various and ingenious ways and I would like to pay a special thank you to the group leaders who have been dedicated in running their groups and maintaining contact with their members. Thankfully, the power of the internet, embraced by many has certainly helped make it easier to keep that contact with friends and family. We also run a WhatsApp group keeping people in touch and providing a lot of humour and information to keep us laughing. If you aren't on this group and use WhatsApp, just let me know and I'll add you.

I'm not going to labour this point but you will all have seen an email sent last week about our committee and the difficulties that might lie ahead. For family reasons I will, whenever I manage to sell my house, be moving up to York, with very mixed feelings I must add. I am going to miss Goudhurst, probably a bit too much. I remain Chair until that happens.

Also stepping down for various reasons are:

- Jeremy Waters, our Business Secretary who will be moving to Tunbridge Wells next spring. Jeremy retains his role until he moves.
- Founder member Viv Everett, who after 6 years has well deserved her retirement.
- Sonia Foster who so ably ran the Welcome group and Refreshments team.
- Wil Pretty, Website Editor, though he will continue running his 5 Interest groups
- David Nichol, our Speaker Organiser will complete his duties next March
- Chrissie Markham, Social and Outings Organiser who stepped down a few months ago

And all on my watch!!! Perhaps it's good that I am going.....

Seriously, we all have very valid reasons for the changes happening and I would like to take this opportunity to say thank each and every member on the committee for your unfailing work, dedication, support and friendship. Without you, we do not exist.

However, we have been very fortunate to have some nominations to fill some of the posts, which we will vote on shortly.

I hope Viv won't mind me mentioning that we lost our lovely Vice Chair and Speaker Organiser, Richard Bourne last December. Richard was a wonderful character who also ran some very successful interest groups and he has been a huge loss to everyone. Our thanks goes to David Nichol who ably stepped into his shoes to carry on the Speaker Organiser role. One good bit of good news is David Nichol has been working very hard to book speakers who are happy to offer online Zoom talks. We felt it was a long time since we have been able to listen to these fascinating speakers, so we have decided to go online and hope as many as possible can join in.

16th September 2020 Wednesday 2.30 - Imogen Corrigan talk on "The Glories of Anglo Saxon England"-15th October

15th October 2020 Thursday 2.30 - Jenny Mallin "My British Raj Family"

18th November 2020 Wednesday 2.30 - Ian Keable - "History of Cartoons- from William Hogarth to Private Eye"

16th December 2020 Wednesday at 2.30 - Gilly Halcrow - "The Shetland Bus" World War II campaign in Norway.

Interest Groups – Lockdown Update by Viv Everett.

Our monthly meetings are a wonderful opportunity for all members to get together, listen to a speaker and chat over a cup of coffee. But it is the Groups that enable us to spend time with people who share our own particular interests. Currently, we have 22 groups and there are more in the planning stage.

Lockdown last March brought everything to a halt while we tried to assess what was going on and what might be going to happen. It didn't take long for us to realise that some groups could continue using a video conferencing programme, such as Zoom. Some of the groups have been doing this very successfully. Obviously, other groups, such as the outdoor sports, are not suitable for Zoom. Others

have continued in quite an active way on email. Wherever possible, we have tried to keep in touch with our members, bearing in mind how tough it is to be self-isolating, especially if living alone.

So, I'll update you with what's happening with each group.

Art Appreciation – now led by Jenny C and Jeremy – has recently recommenced with Jenny setting arty questions by email, with a tricky twist. It's good fun and tests our knowledge of art and artists. This is until we can all meet up again indoors.

Val's Book Group has temporarily halted because the libraries are closed, and we rely on them to be able to read the same book. The plan for when we do meet up is to have a good talk about the books we have been reading during lockdown.

Chrissie is continuing bridge online for anyone who wants to take part.

Craft and Conversation is a group that cannot really be conducted over the Internet in any way, but Karin has kept in touch with her group by email.

Croquet – Wil has not restarted this group yet

Debating, run by Ali, has turned out to be very successful by email. The members vote on a motion, then they email their views and there is a final vote. The current motion is "Tourism Benefits the World". The final vote will be happening soon

Dorothy had just started her French conversation group when lockdown occurred. Since then, some of us continued on Zoom and now up to 6 people are allowed to meet outside, so we are getting together in members' gardens.

We are having to be patient about Sheenagh and Elizabeth's garden visits. It's really not an option at the moment – but, hopefully, may be possible before we head into winter.

Wil tells me he has restarted Golf on a weekly basis.

Trevor kept in touch with his History group by email, and suggested interesting programmes, but is now waiting until it is possible to meet up again.

Richard has set tasks for his iPad group, but is also waiting until we can all meet up.

London Walks has been suspended by Lynda for the time being.

At the start of lockdown, Anne sent a poem from the Shropshire Lad to her Poetry group but since then the group has been suspended.

The two psychology groups, run by Linda and Sylvie, do not lend themselves to being conducted over the Internet and will restart once lockdown has been eased a bit more.

Wil's Science group has remained extremely active via Zoom.

Jenny's Scratchboard group have continued to meet up occasionally via Zoom to show each other the work they've been producing and ask for advice if needed. Jenny is very proud of the standard reached.

Mike has suspended Table Tennis for the time being.

Veronica and Richard have recently re-started the walking group, with the plan to have two groups of 6 if necessary.

Ian called a few of his group together to plan the way forward for the Wine Appreciation group. The meeting was in Vicky's garden, some great wines from various countries were tasted, and there was a discussion on how and when it might be possible to restart what is quite a large group. A plan is forming and will be put into place as soon as we can meet up with more than 6 people.

Lockdown has shown us how flexible and resourceful people can be and our groups are no exception. What they do is invaluable for our community, so thank you to all our group leaders for everything they do.

4. **Financial Report by Mike Hollman**

I would like to thank Bryan Mason for his efforts in auditing the accounts again this year. It's nice to have someone who is thorough and detailed and prepared to ask questions..

I hope you have all taken the opportunity to look at the accounts and I hope you will agree that both the Social and Business accounts are in a good position, in credit. I would like to go through a few things starting with the Social account.

Over the financial year we made a loss of £136, this is not a true reflection of the years events as those that have income and expenditure over two financial years do skew the results. Out of the £368 in the account we have a surplus of £149 the remaining balance are monies carried forward to future events.

The Business account started the year with a healthy balance and ended the year even stronger with the balance standing at £6555. This is due to a significant increase in the number of guests at our monthly meetings, the lack of a recent bill from our printer, not having a March speaker and not sending a representative to the National Conference. Having built up a strong financial base we are in a position to offer existing members a 50% reduction in next year's subscriptions when they renew, due in October. We hope this will compensate for the lack of monthly meetings and reduction in interest group activities. Any new member joining now will start their membership immediately but only pay for a year, renewal October 2022.

No questions were asked.

Our accounts have been approved by the Independent Examiner, Bryan Mason, and agreed by the Committee. The 2019/20 accounts were agreed by a show of hands.

5. **Approval of the appointment of an Examiner for Accounts 2020/21**

Bryan Mason was proposed by David Nichol and seconded by Mike Hollman, and is therefore confirmed as Examiner for Accounts 2020/21.

6. Election of Committee

Post	Nomination	Proposed	Seconded
Chair person	Jenny Dalleywater	Brian Ferdinando	Penny Ferdinando
Vice Chair person	No nomination	-	-
Treasurer	Mike Hollman	Sarah Thorpe	Veronica Inniss
Business Secretary	No nomination	-	-
Membership Secretary	Trevor Thorpe	Gill Hollman	Veronica Inniss
Groups Co-ordinator	Veronica Inniss	Gill Hollman	Lynda La Roche
Welcome Group Co-ordinator	Anne Torry	Lynette Edwards	David Edwards
Social / Outings Organiser	Jo Dadley	Amanda Bond	Sonia Foster
Speaker Organiser	David Nichol	Bryan Mason	Elizabeth Mason
Publicity Co-ordinator	Ian Agnew	Richard Inniss	Gill Hollman
Website Editor	Jeremy Waters	Gill Hollman	Sarah Thorpe
Newsletter Editor	No nomination	-	-

As you can see and as mentioned earlier, we have some gaps to fill.

- Vice Chair, with a view to Chair when I move.
- Business Secretary - this role is vacant as on the nominations form as Jeremy Waters is nominated for Website Editor. However, until he moves in the Spring, Jeremy has kindly agreed to carry on as Business Secretary as well as undertaking the Website Editor's position. This we thank him for. Website editor could, in theory, run remotely when Jeremy moves on and is something we feel we can cope with, but of course we welcome anyone who has a burning ambition to wear the Editors cap.
- Speaker Organiser for when David Nichol steps down next March.

- Newsletter Editor is a new role, not critical, but would be an asset to have and would suit a creative writer.

Though too late to nominate for this year, anyone can be co-opted onto the committee until the elections next year and it would be very helpful for them to work alongside the committee members, until the time comes for them to take the reins themselves.

I cannot stress enough that without these vacancies being filled, the chances of keeping our U3A going are very slim. Support it or lose it I am afraid. If not you, if you can think of anyone willing to join us, please let us know.

Members gave a unanimous show of hands to confirm the nominations.

I hereby confirm the nominated committee members have been duly elected for the forthcoming year. I thank Jo Dadley, Veronica Innis and Ann Torry for their nominations and I congratulate and welcome them to our U3A committee.

7. Consideration of Motions

None received.

8. Chairman's Closing Remarks:

You will be pleased to hear me say, I will close the meeting now, but not before thanking you all again very much for joining us. If you have any ideas or suggestions on anything U3A related, please let us know.

We want to offer you what you want and we welcome hearing from you. In these difficult times, your continued support is really important. People can still join the U3A even under the current circumstances, so keep spreading the word to anyone you think could be interested to help us continue to flourish.

Thank you for your attention and I now close this AGM.

The meeting closed at 3pm