



Registered Charity No. 1097214

Minutes of 2023 Annual General Meeting

2.00 p.m. 24th July 2023

Held at St Peter's Community Centre, Church St, Bexhill TN40 2HE

138 members attended the meeting, which was therefore quorate.

1. Welcome

The Acting Chair Richard Collisson welcomed members to the meeting and commented on the amazing turnout – it was wonderful to see so many members. He then proceeded to his report of the previous year.

It had been an amazing year which had flown by, marked by national events such as the death of the Queen, a new monarch, the easing of pandemic restrictions and mass vaccinations. It had also been amazing for H&Ru3a. More groups had been started, and a number of volunteers had come forward both for the committee and for other roles.

Richard introduced: Carole Benton as regional representative; Lynda Wood who has returned to the committee in the role of Groups Coordinator; new committee member Christine Evans who is sorting out venues for the monthly meetings (*note: Christine is not in fact filling this role but is meeting/greeting guest speakers at some meetings*); Ewa Goulding as Assistant Treasurer; Patricia Jobling who returned as Database Administrator. Richard particularly thanked Barbara Spackman who has done a great job as Speakers Secretary for many years, but is finally 'retiring'. Richard commented that as Acting Chair he has been supported by a fantastic committee team, and asked members to show their thanks for their work.

There are also volunteers in important non-committee roles: April Yasamee is coordinating risk assessments for groups meeting in hired venues; Pandora Bastian has stepped up to the role of Speakers Secretary; Brian Gould has returned as Website Administrator. Long-term volunteers include Derek Mitchell as sound engineer at St Peter's and the White Rock; Tony and his front desk volunteers; White Rock tea/coffee volunteers Jenny, Linda and April; the Newsletter proofreaders Anne and Christine who support John Goodwin in producing the Newsletter; and also the coffee morning co-ordinators: Josephine and Carol at the DLWP and Heide at the White Rock. Deborah and David Slim, and Heather and Robert Hadland, have organised very successful outings for several years. Richard noted that although the latest trip to Dover Castle had to be cancelled when the coach broke down shortly after setting off, this trip has been reorganised for September. Ernie Grice continues to look after the equipment inventory.

Richard stated that of course Group convenors are extremely important and should be thanked for their work. He noted that there are currently 66 groups for 615 members, with some members belonging to more than one group, and many groups have no vacancies. More groups are therefore needed. Richard appealed for more people to step up as group leaders/convenors; there is support available and the groups coordinator Lynda Wood

would love to hear from people. This could be for new groups on existing topics where the groups are full, or for new topics. There are currently 71 convenors/group leaders, as some groups have two convenors to share the responsibility and organisation.

H&Ru3a previously belonged to the Sussex U3A Network (SUN) but this had the drawback that most events such as workshops and courses were held in West Sussex. Over the past year a more local network 'East Sussex East' has been developing. Our Acting Chair, Business Secretary and new Regional Representative recently attended a meeting which included National Chair Liz Thackray and S.E. Trustee Susie Berry, where it was agreed that this local network can go ahead and can organise local and regional events in our area.

At last year's AGM there were a number of requests for new activities or groups. A few have been achieved e.g. Keep Fit (Qi Gong), and there are plans for a social in the autumn and possibly a Quiz in early 2024. Richard emphasised that new groups and activities can only be provided if there are volunteers to run them. Richard asked members to look at the packs on their tables and once again note down what they would like to see from u3a in the future, and perhaps even volunteer!

Finally Richard thanked Lorna and the team from the Strollers group, for setting up the tables and chairs (including additional ones at the last minute because of the unexpectedly large turnout) and organising the cream tea to follow the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

The Business Secretary stated that 40 proxy forms had been received from members unable to attend, and there were 7 additional apologies received.

3. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the AGM held on 25th July 2022, which had been available on the website and in printed form at the current meeting, were presented as a true record of the meeting. The motion to accept the minutes was proposed by Alastair Rosenschein, seconded by David Slim, and carried unanimously by a show of hands.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Acting Chair's report

This had already been given as part of the Welcome – see above.

6. Treasurer's Report & Accounts

Josephine Noyce presented a report on the past year. Copies of the accounts were available at the meeting. Josephine reported that the accounts have been partially audited and the audit will be completed in August (note: there is no legal or constitutional requirement for the accounts to be audited but it is done as a matter of good practice). Josephine commented that over the past year the u3a had moved out of Covid and was back to normal operating. Since April 2023 all groups are self-funding, as the subsidy for hiring venues ceased.

Because of rising costs and the likelihood that these will rise further, the committee decided to raise the annual subscription to £17. Josephine noted that the rate was £18.50 in 2018, was reduced to £12 in 2019 when there had been a large increase in membership, and

then rose to £15 in 2021 because of higher costs. It is therefore still lower than it was in 2018. Josephine described the u3a's reserves as still being 'within the comfort zone', but costs which have risen and are likely to rise further include printing and mailing (e.g. Newsletter, AGM and membership paperwork), speakers' fees, venue hire, tea/coffee, and administration costs. A 'capitation fee' (subscription) of £4 per member is paid to Third Age Trust for services they provide, including insurance cover for u3as, and this may also increase next year.

It has been decided to change the membership year to align with the financial year, as explained in a letter sent to members earlier, in order to make budgeting and financial reporting clearer and simpler. This means that renewal fees will be charged pro rata for 7 months from 1st September 2023 to 31 March 2024, after which individual membership will become £17.00 for a full 12 month subscription, from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

There were no questions or comments. A motion to accept the accounts and report was proposed by Anne Nevrides, seconded by Carol Crossley, and carried unanimously by a show of hands.

Josephine then reported that she had had an email from a member with questions regarding internet banking, and phasing out the use of cash and cheques. Josephine noted that around half of the members pay their subscriptions by cheque, despite many of these members also using online banking. This is probably because the membership form has to be sent anyway, so it would seem reasonable to include a cheque. Josephine suggested however that with banks increasingly closing branches, within a year all transactions might have to be online.

Concern was expressed at this statement but it was then noted that the u3a banks with Lloyds, and at the moment the Bexhill branch is remaining open, although other high street banks are closing or have closed their branches. Even if the Bexhill branch of Lloyds closes, there would probably still be a branch in Hastings, to which the account would be transferred. It is also possible to carry out bank transactions at the Post Office, including paying in cash and cheques. It was reported that other organisations whose bank branches have closed are already in this position.

7. Election of committee members

Note: The Constitution states that all officers and committee members are trustees of the charity. The charity should have 4 officers (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer). These are the only roles which must be taken by committee members, although Third Age Trust advises that roles involving significant amounts of members' data such as Membership, Database or Assistant Treasurer should also be trustees.

The number of trustees should be not less than 5 and not more than 15. Trustees are elected at the annual general meeting, but at any time during the year the trustees may co-opt up to 3 trustees until the next AGM. If there is a vacancy among the trustees then the trustees may appoint a person who is willing to act until the next AGM, when they may stand for election if willing to continue. This is currently the case with 2 trustees who were co-opted during the year. Trustees serve for 3 years and apart from Chair and Vice Chair, can then stand for re-election.

Nominations – election required

Chair (Officer)	Derek Hussey (co-opted as Vice Chair June 2023)
Vice Chair	None
Assistant Treasurer	Ewa Goulding

Committee Member	Christine Evans (co-opted February 2023)
Database Administrator	Patricia Jobling
Groups Coordinator	Lynda Wood (co-opted November 2022)

Existing Committee Members continuing – no election

Treasurer (Officer)	Josephine Noyce
Business Secretary (Officer)	Virginia Edwards
Membership Secretary	Matilda Jarvis
Minutes Secretary	Jenny Meteyard
Newsletter	John Goodwin

Non-Committee Roles (no election required)

Initial Enquiries	Sue Shilstone
Speakers Secretary	Pandora Bastian
Risk Assessment Coordinator	April Yasamee
Website Administrator	Brian Gould
Regional Coordinator	Carole Benton

The Business Secretary read out the list of current committee members, nominees for the committee, and those taking on other roles but not standing for committee, and proposed that those standing for election should be elected in a block rather than individually. There were no objections. Carole Benton proposed that all those standing should be elected, Sue Morrison seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously by a show of hands.

Derek Hussey as the new Chair thanked the membership and commented that it was going to be quite an eventful year. He has only been a member of H&Ru3a for 18 months and had not previously belonged to a u3a, but already appreciates how much work the committee do to keep the u3a running. Nothing 'just happens', without a lot of work from a number of people. He thanked the excellent committee and volunteers, particularly Richard Collisson as Acting Chair, who had ensured the survival of the u3a during some difficult times during the past year. He also thanked Lorna and the Strollers for organising the meeting and tea.

Derek also read out a letter sent by a former member, which he felt summed up the whole ethos of u3a. This member has moved to a different area, and expressed sadness at having to leave 'many lovely friends' behind, mentioning many different activities she had enjoyed, and saying that 'the u3a has been a great place to be, so supportive and inclusive' and 'taught me how to interact with people and how to make friends'.

9. Any Other Business

Presentations were made to Barbara Spackman and Richard Collisson to thank them for their work over many years.

10. Date of the next Annual General Meeting

The Chair suggested that because of the change of membership year the date of the AGM might change to an earlier month. This is to be decided, but may well remain as July.

Signed

Date

The meeting closed at 2.39 p.m. Minutes were taken by Jenny Meteyard.