

## Minutes of Leek u3a AGM 2021

St Paul's, Novi Lane at 2pm on Wednesday 27th October 2021

**Welcome:** Chairman Ivan Smith welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introduced the committee members and their roles. He thanked Leek Radio for lending and setting up the PA system.

**Apologies** were received from too many to mention.

**The Minutes** of the 2019 AGM were approved by a show of hands. There were no matters arising.

**The Treasurer's Report** covered 2019 and 2020 because of the cancellation of last year's AGM.

These accounts were prepared ready for u3a's AGM in (15th) April 2020. Unfortunately, just a few days before that date the pandemic restrictions overtook everything else and it was cancelled. The accounts had been prepared by an independent examiner (Mrs YAO Wood, Bennett Brooks (Leek) Ltd. (T/A Fearn's Marriott ) and approved by your committee in April 2020. You will need to go back in time and try to remember what life was like then, hugely different to now.

Before taking you through the figures shown on the summarised accounts, I need to say a thank you:

- Cashiers, Brenda, Eric, Marion, Margaret, and Val.
- Committee, for their help and advice over/during the 12 months.

Okay, now to the accounts, if anyone has a question, then I will try to answer it. Remember, this is before any lockdown, when times were normal.

Total income was only £20 less than 2018 but both class fees and membership were up. (Donations and Events and visits are down.) Costs are up, rent and room hire, mainly (group activities are up, this increase was not unexpected due to our extra groups). Also, repairs and maintenance are more (this includes replacement equipment). Obviously, Events and visits is down (equal to income), as is Management and administration costs. Fundraising and publicity costs is also less. Teaching costs were down slightly but as last year (2018), a number of informative meetings and speakers were undertaken.

Overall, the year shows a slightly smaller surplus than 2018.

If there are no questions, these accounts need to be formally approved, can I have a proposer and seconder.

***The accounts for 2019 were accepted by the meeting, proposed by Trevor Siggers and seconded by Ruth Quipp.***

I now move on to my Treasurer's report on u3a summarised accounts for the year ended 31st December 2020.

Times were even more disruptive to us all during the year and activity with the u3a was extremely bitty. It did, however, increase the usage of online zoom etc.

Before taking you through the figures shown on the summarised accounts, I need to say a thank you.

- Brenda who single handily undertook the Cashiers duties.
- The Committee, for their help and advice over/during the 12 months.

If anyone has a question, then I will try to answer it. The accounts had been prepared by an independent examiner Mrs YAO Wood, Bennett Brooks (Leek) Ltd. and approved by your committee in March 2021. Total income is down by nearly 70% which is explained by our forced inactivity during last year. Fortunately, our membership remained quite strong and your committee, to help us all, reduced the annual subscription to £5. There was no fundraising or trips at all in 2020, although a small cost was incurred (for Leek Show which was also cancelled (this cost is carried forward). Rent and room hire was also much reduced but as Norton House allowed us to use the office and store our equipment a reduced payment for monthly rent continued. In January, February and early March there was, relatively, a lot of activity and later in the year (late July, August and September was limited group activity) so reduced operating cost were incurred.

Overall, the accounts show a small loss, which the trustees have accepted as inevitable during this crisis but it has not weakened the trust's strong financial position.

***Question:*** Sue Wright asked a question about debtors. Ian said he would speak to her after the meeting as he needed to check his records.

If there are no further questions, these accounts need to be formally approved, can I have a proposer and seconder.

***The accounts for 2020 were accepted by the meeting, proposed by Alan Barr and seconded by Marion Smith.***

Now both sets of accounts have been approved can I propose that Bennett Brooks & Co Limited be reappointed as auditors and independent examiners for the 2021 u3a accounts.

***Auditors:*** Proposed by Ian Cantrill and seconded by Trevor Siggers that Bennett Brooks be appointed as auditors and examiners for 2021. This was accepted by the meeting.

**The Group Coordinator's Report** was prepared and presented by Dawn Thomas:

I'm pleased to report that all our groups have sprung back into action, and are as active as ever after their covid lockdowns!

We've still got around 70 groups, although they are not all the same ones as before: a few groups have ended, and some new ones have started. We've now added Flower Arranging, DIY and a new Music group to our list. If anyone fancies starting a new group, just let us know. Several groups have changed leaders, and we're pleased that the Table Tennis group has been able to restart in a new venue. Thanks to all our new leaders for making this possible.

Over lockdown some more enterprising and tech savvy groups continued online, using Zoom, WhatsApp and email. Bridge continued using an online Bridge game, and a few, including Scrabble, met up in small groups at home when the rules allowed.

As soon as we were able to meet again outdoors, or in small groups, lots of groups couldn't wait to restart. And as soon as the lockdown finally ended, most groups got started again without delay and have continued over the summer.

The Art Appreciation group managed to have a holiday in Northern Ireland - Derry and Belfast - in July this year as well as a short break in Durham including the local Kynren historical pageant in September. Both were much enjoyed by those members who attended!

We've promoted the u3a at several events in the last year, including the Manifold show, a festival at the Foxlowe and a coffee morning at Trinity Church. We also held a stall at Leek market on National u3a day.

It just remains to say, thanks as ever to all our leaders for all the work they do to keep the groups going – and to all of our members for hanging on in there!

**Question:** *There was a question from Julie Scott about first-aiders re-qualifying. Dawn said that another course will be organised as soon as possible.*

**The Chairman's Report** was prepared and presented by Ivan Smith.

Back in the Sixties Joni Mitchell sang...

*Don't you think it seems to be, that you don't what you've got till it's gone.....you don't what you've got till it's gone.*

I think we did know what we had got but it was no less hard when it had suddenly gone in March 2020.

But that was then and this is now in that most of our groups have restarted in recent weeks and we currently have over 800 members. We are all coming back to the things we do so well which also happens to be our motto – Learn, Laugh and Live.

So many thanks to you all for your continued support whether that be as Members, Leaders, Cashiers, “Open Housers” or Housekeepers – all the people who make Leek u3a function so well. Also special thanks to Chris Thomas for continuing to edit our Newsletter, which has taken on a major communication role during these sometimes bleak months. The many and varied contributions to the Newsletter have been much appreciated.

We are delighted that so many of our members operate on the basis of “it is not what the u3a can do for you, but what you can do for the u3a”. Long may that ethos remain.

I also want to thank the members of your Committee for their help and guidance through these trying times – we even had Zoom meetings for a period. Thanks to Dawn for setting those up – personally I would not really know how to!!

Two Committee members will not be continuing – so many thanks to Secretary Jen Kellett, our main point of contact for u3a Head Office and the Charities Commission. Also Mick Bentley who has always been a committed u3a Committee member and worked hard on our 25th Anniversary Year Book plus related items which have been obviously and frustratingly delayed. He has also been our link to the Norton House charity.

We continue to be appreciative of the ongoing support and cooperation we receive from the Norton House charity. To have Norton House and The Watson Centre as the hub of our operations is key and quite unusual compared to many other u3a's.

Despite the last two years our financial stability allows us to keep our membership fee at £10 (fantastic value in my view!) and we will be having a special Renewals/ Recruitment week starting Monday 6th December at Norton House.

Next year is the 40th Anniversary of the formation of the u3a in Britain (currently 1100+ u3a's and over 400,000 members) so we plan to stage some events to commemorate that including Saturday Coffee Mornings at Trinity Church.

However for the time being we are ensuring that all our members and potential members know that we are definitely back in business – Learning, Laughing and Living.

Very many thanks for your time and attention.

**Confirmation of new committee members:** there were two unopposed appointments to the committee, Sheila Abbott, proposed by Marion Smith and seconded by Lynn Jones, and

Keith Roberts, proposed by Pam Massey and seconded by Mick Bentley. The nominations were accepted by the meeting.

**Co-opted member:** Carol Sheldon is also joining the committee as a co-opted member.

**Any other business**

Thanks were given to Alison Fisher and the Singing for Pleasure group for entertaining the meeting.

There was a question about next year's subs and how to pay them, and Marion Smith asked how new members can join. Subs are £10 for 2022, and there will be a week of 'Open House' sessions beginning December 6th, from 2.30–4.00 Monday to Friday.

Noel Hughes asked about membership cards. Ann replied that membership cards are being reinstated for 2022.

**Close:** Ivan thanked everyone for attending.