

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Livermead and Preston u3a held on Wednesday 24 May 2023

1) **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Margaret Coward, Thelma Bickford, Colin Porter, Chris Evans, Mike Langley-Smith, Phillipa and Peter Grantham. From the floor: Carole Weed

2) **Minutes of Last Meeting**

These were approved and adopted

Proposed: *Mary Ann Burt* **Seconded:** *Angela Snell*

Unanimously approved

3) **Treasurers Report – Maggie Tolkien**

Maggie thanked everyone for coming today and showing their support for Livermead and Preston u3a. We continue to have a secure and solid core group of members, which is rewarding and encouraging. She reminded everyone of the difficulties of the past year with the war in Ukraine leading to economic chaos, raging inflation and the cost-of-living crisis.

Despite this, a year ago we were feeling quite confident. Membership had remained very much the same and it was felt our income was sufficient. We therefore celebrated with the Anniversary Cream Tea, hoping that the year would continue well.

Our income during 2022 - 2023 has been good, supported by the increased meeting fee of £2 and the money from the sale our Calendar - a great success, virtually self-financing.

Looking at our expenditure, most was well under control. Room hire was half what it had been at the library. This venue may not suit everyone, but it is extremely good value, with great staff and we all benefit from club prices for drinks whether we are members here or not.

Speaker fees rose as speakers have raised their prices to cover their own rising costs. We benefited from one month where the speaker did not charge. Such generosity is always much appreciated.

Printing and postage were much higher this year, not only because of the rising cost of postage, but because there were some additional projects requiring professional printing. Not only did we revise the constitution and the rules, we formulated a new finance policy, had a total revision of the Facilitator's Pack, which then had to be printed, and our decision to join Paignton u3a on a stand at the Ageing Well Festival in September meant that new promotional leaflets and signage were needed. If all these things are taken into consideration, the amount we spent compares favourably with previous years.

We saved money on travel expenses, and benefitted from receiving a projector stand, a screen and a PA system when Brixham u3a closed. It was agreed we would complete our range of equipment by the purchase of a new and up-to-date projector, shown under capital expenditure on the Statement. We are now able to offer our speakers everything they might need, which means we can offer a full and professional approach.

The Christmas Lunch at Horizons Restaurant was well attended and successful. It was only slightly subsidised out of funds to pay for the Secret Santa. Maggie then made a point of thanking Jill Jackson for helping to choose, buy and wrap the gifts.

In summary we suffered a slightly larger loss than in recent years, mostly accounted for by the extra printing costs already mentioned, the purchase of the projector and the cream tea. On top of this we have to pay bank charges, but now that we have internet banking it's hoped this year it will cost little more than £60 (the basic £5 a month fee).

We therefore have a working surplus of just under £1000 to carry forward.

Maggie then explained how she had also taken on the role of membership secretary this year, and she hoped that in due course someone would join the committee and take this over, or at least

share the work. She thanked the small band of volunteers who have helped at recent General Meetings and made so much difference.

Looking to the future, we need a minimum of 100 members. It costs at least £100 to put on a General Meeting, and there are the annual costs of the capitation fee and the Third Age Matters magazine that we pay for, both of which are based on the number of members we have. So far this year just over 80 people have signed up. We are likely to struggle to make ends meet with that number, but we are intending to keep costs under as much control as we possibly can. It is hoped that more will join but the committee wish to ask the members if they would be prepared to pay just another 50p for the meeting fee, so £2.50 instead of £2.00 – less than the price of a cup of coffee almost anywhere. It could raise around £150 if attendance remains at current levels which may be all we need. This will be voted on later in the meeting.

4) **Adoption of Treasurer's Report**

Proposed by: Beryl Beckley Seconded by: Jill Jackson Unanimously agreed

5) **Election of Financial Examiner for 2024-2025**

Edward Jackson has been our Financial Examiner for the past few years. He has agreed to continue to act as our Financial Examiner for the next financial year

Proposed by: Sue Allen Seconded by: Dee Dimmock Unanimously agreed

6) **Secretary's Report – Gary Dimmock**

Thank you all for attending the AGM today.

The last three years have been difficult on many fronts. Last year the Committee built on the efforts of the previous Committee, headed by John Ceely, who steered us through the Covid pandemic. Since then everybody has been affected by high inflation and the reduction of real income which is having a negative effect on many U3A groups.

As Maggie our Treasurer has already covered a lot of the day-to-day business of our group and Linda, our Chairperson, will report the overall picture, I have decided to go "off piste" a little and read out an email from Colin Porter. I'm sure most of you know Colin who has done a lot for our U3A over the years and the committee members were moved by his email.

Hello Linda,

Unfortunately I am prevented from attending the AGM, so accept my apologies please. I do NOT think it would make any difference, but if I were there, as founder Chair of Livermead and Preston u3a, I would stress to the members the following:

We are a small, friendly and valued u3a and it is up to ALL members to do their bit if they want to keep it going. Other u3a's are closing rapidly owing to lack of loyal members and leaders, and if you want us to survive, we need more members urgently. Otherwise we will be another casualty.

If you value your u3a do not sit on the fence and allow a very few hard-working people to volunteer. It will only survive with a vibrant committee, and members to run our Groups.

Surely it is not too much to expect more members to take a small part in its continued success; maybe not as Committee Members, but as Group Facilitators.

We need to have more interest groups which are the backbone of the organisation, and people to volunteer to run our groups. Not all academic, but Walking, Talking, Gardening, Reading, Games groups etc, all of which would be easy to organise. If you have a hobby and could share it with others speak to a Committee Member.

How about everyone speaking to a neighbour or friend about u3a and inviting them along to a monthly meeting?

As Father of the branch, please take this on board; do something and throw Livermead and Preston a lifeline.

I would like to pay tribute to our wonderful Chairman who is always cheerful in spite of her limitations, and the others on the Committee who are determined to keep the flag flying.

So, think what YOU could do to allow LIVERMEAD and PRESTON to buck the trend and be a vibrant U3A to be proud of again. Thanks and good wishes, Colin

I think that says it all, and leading on from that, I would ask everybody to consider giving up some time to help. We particularly need someone as Membership Secretary. It's not too arduous for most of the year and during the busy membership renewal period other Committee members are available to help.

We also need people to help out with our Activity Groups, I won't expand on this as Linda is going to cover it in her speech. Thanks again for attending the AGM.

7) **Chairperson's Report – Linda Skipper**

Linda opened her report by thanking so many members for coming to the 12th AGM of L & P u3a and showing their continuing commitment and support after what had been a difficult year. Continuing repercussions from the Covid pandemic of 2000 had led to fewer members, and therefore a lower income had meant walking a fine line financially to keep our u3a afloat.

Linda went on to thank and praise the committee for their hard work in helping to ensure our future as a small but strong u3a. She also added her thanks to the small team of volunteers who help out at General Meetings throughout the year; then asked for a round of applause from the members to show their appreciation and thanks to everyone who gives their time.

However, these are not the only volunteers and special thanks must also be given to the Group Facilitators, members who have put themselves forward in the past to run our activity groups, which are the lifeblood of any u3a. Sadly, several people have chosen to step down this year after many years of running their group, and from 21 active groups in 2019 we now have only 13 with nobody offering to come forward to replace the retiring facilitators. As a result, the committee wishes to seek the views of the members through a questionnaire about which groups they attend and what possible new groups they would be interested in. But any new groups will need members to run them, with help from the committee and the group members themselves. Linda therefore asked people to show their interest and commitment by offering their help on the committee or in running a group.

Despite the uncertainty of the times, Linda hoped that with the continuing support of the members, for which she gave her personal heartfelt thanks, we can enjoy many more years of fun activities, interesting speakers and most of all, friendship.

8) **Nominations from the Floor** None

9) **Election of Officers**

As the number of nominations was less than the number of vacancies, all those nominated were duly elected:

Chairperson:	Linda Skipper
Treasurer:	Maggie Tolkien
Secretary	Gary Dimmock.
Committee member:	Geoff Simpson – who has agreed to continue being our Webmaster
Committee Member:	Thelma Bickford
Committee Member:	Dee Dimmock

10) **Any Other Business** None

11) As there was no further business the meeting was closed and tea and cake enjoyed by all