



Much Wenlock and District u3a

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Much Wenlock and District u3a held at 2.00pm on 10th May, 2023 at the Priory Hall, Much Wenlock.

Present: Robert Toft (Chairman), Alison Richards (Secretary), Glynn Emery (Treasurer), David Foster (Vice Chair & Groups Co-ordinator), Michael Theobalds (Membership Secretary), Linda Davies (Executive Committee Member), Ian Cohen (Executive Committee Member) & Jo Cohen (Executive Committee Member) and members of the u3a making a total attendance of 51 persons.

The Chairman welcomed members to the eleventh AGM of the Much Wenlock and District u3a.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Dee and Kevin Murphy, Linda and Ken Wallace, Jean and Phil Buswell, Charlie Garratt, Andy and Jo Jackson, Tina Kelly, Bill and Jane Hague, Peta and Paul Seedhouse and Lynn Rust.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The draft minutes of the AGM held on 11th May, 2022 were accepted without amendment. Alison Richards was thanked for producing them and they have been posted on the Much Wenlock & District u3a website.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

4. Chairman's Report on behalf of the Trustees

The Chairman (Robert Toft) presented his report.

He was very pleased to report that our u3a continues to be in good shape. He noted that we have grown our membership from 236 at this time last year to 252 at present, close to the high point of 270 which was achieved in March 2020, just before the pandemic hit. Membership is very evenly split between those who join as individuals and as couples and we have 34% men and 66% women (similar to u3a's nationally).

Robert reminded the meeting of the recent 10th anniversary celebration with a tea party and entertainment from a magician and the u3a guitar group.

He said that there are now nearly 30 activity groups with new groups in the last year including Art for Beginners, Beginners Bridge, a second Out with Friends group, Psychology, Spanish Beginners and Table Tennis. He continued that we are also seeking to establish a network called MOTO (Members on Their Own) which will enable members who live alone or whose partners cannot easily take part in activities to keep in touch with each other and organise events or activities. At present the only group with a waiting list is Wine Tasting although the continuing success of the Walking Group (with 30 members) may mean that a temporary waiting list may be necessary. Robert took the opportunity of thanking all Group Leaders for the continuing time and effort which they put in and which will be rewarded this year with a Group Leaders lunch on 7th June.

98% of Much Wenlock & District u3a members can be contacted by email so this is our main means of contact with regular messages about monthly meetings. There is also a Facebook page which now has 96 members where we can give information on items which may be of interest to members without the need for a further email. The annual newsletter has just been sent to all members by email and postal copies will be sent shortly. Unfortunately, the website, like all websites using the standard u3a facility WebSite Builder, lost all attachments including photos and documents at the end of last year due to problems with the website host company but these are gradually being restored.

A promotional event was successfully held in the Square in Much Wenlock last September showcasing our activities and accompanied by our excellent ukulele group Uke3A and our guitar group. Monthly meetings are publicised in the Wenlock Herald and Village Life. More recently, Glynn Emery, our Treasurer, has been promoting activities in Broseley, from where we are now attracting more members.

Robert offered thanks to Jean Buswell who has found the speakers for the monthly meetings. He said that we have enjoyed a very varied, lively and interesting variety of talks with some excellent performers including magician Jack Dent, costumed historian Max Keen and, at Christmas, the ethereal sound of Shrewsbury Handbells. He also acknowledged Jean's excellent organisation of the annual trip to Kilworth House where members enjoyed another excellent performance, this time of Rogers and Hammerstein's *Carousel*.

Robert closed by thanking the committee for their hard work, for continuing to make the regular meetings so lively and good-humoured and also for the many tasks which they perform to ensure that the Much Wenlock & District u3a is able to operate effectively and serve our members. He also thanked the many members who help with group activities, with the tasks that are needed at our monthly meetings and to all members for continuing to support us.

He explained that he will be stepping down as Chair at the end of the meeting as his health has not been too good recently. He then announced that his successor will be Alison Richards, who is stepping into the role having been Secretary for the past two years.

5. Financial Report for 2022

Robert explained that the Financial Report for 2022 (covering 1st January 2022 to 31st December 2022) has been issued by our Treasurer, Glynn Emery and published on the website. This shows a healthy closing position at the end of the financial year. Paper copies were made available at the meeting. Questions for the Treasurer were invited but none were forthcoming.

6. Appointment of an Examiner for the Accounts (1st January to 31st December, 2022)

The Chairman thanked Jo Cohen for her work on the accounts for 2022 which were diligently examined. She has kindly agreed to examine the accounts for 2023 and he proposed her acceptance, which the meeting approved, after a question regarding the independence of the auditor.

7. Proposed Changes to the Constitution

Robert outlined that we are proposing three changes to the constitution this year, one of which is a change of the name of our u3a, the second seeks to change the maximum length of service for our officers (Chair, Vice Chairs, Secretary and Treasurer) and the third a change in the percentage of members required to render a meeting quorate. All these changes will be submitted to the Third Age Trust, the national u3a body, to seek their approval.

i) Name Change. The first proposal was to change the name of the u3a from "Much Wenlock and District u3a" to "Much Wenlock, Broseley and District u3a". Robert noted that this was slightly different to the wording on the agenda as, after further reflection, the committee thought that Much Wenlock should remain in full rather than having just Wenlock.

The rationale in seeking this change is that there are an increasing number of members joining from the Broseley area, which does not have a u3a of its own. The change seeks to reflect this and the increased number of activities now being held in the Broseley area.

So that requires two changes to our constitution:

1. NAME

The name of the charity is Much Wenlock and District U3A hereinafter referred to as 'The U3A'.

Replace “Much Wenlock and District” by “Much Wenlock, Broseley and District”.

3. OBJECT

The object of the U3A is:

i) The advancement of education and, in particular, the education of older people and those who are retired from full time work by all means, including associated activities conducive to learning and personal development residing in Much Wenlock and its surrounding locality.

Replace “Much Wenlock and its surrounding locality” with “Much Wenlock, Broseley and the surrounding locality”

Robert asked for any questions about the proposed changes and Neil Lloyd queried how many members of the Much Wenlock and District u3a are from the Broseley area? Glynn Emery said approximately 40.

A vote was held and the meeting voted unanimously in favour.

ii) Officer – Length of Service. The second proposal was to change the maximum limit of periods of service as Officers from three years to six years for Vice Chairs and to ten years in total.

The rationale for this change was that as a relatively small u3a, it can be challenging to find new members to fill the Officer posts. This has sometimes meant that posts have needed to be filled after the AGM by existing committee members in “Acting” Officer roles as they have exceeded the current length of Officer service under the constitution. The proposed change seeks to ease the situation and allow election of experienced Officers by the AGM for up to 10 years in different posts.

This requires the following changes to our constitution (all in article 7 item viii):

7. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND OFFICERS

viii) Limit on periods of service of the other Officers

The following limits apply to periods of service as Officers:

(a) An individual may serve not more than six consecutive years as Treasurer or Secretary. He/she may not then be appointed to any other Officer role. For the avoidance of doubt, if a Treasurer or Secretary serves less than this period, he/she could then stand for appointment as Chairman or for another Officer role.

Replace “Treasurer or Secretary” by “Treasurer, Secretary or Vice Chairman”

Delete “or for another Officer role” as there are no other Officer posts, other than Chairman, which is limited to three years in the preceding item 7 vii.

(b) An individual may serve not more than three consecutive years in any other Officer role.

Delete this item as there are no other Officer posts, other than Chairman, which is limited to three years in the preceding item 7 vii.

(c) An individual may serve not more than six years in various different Officer roles (subject to the provisions regarding the terms of office of the Treasurer and Secretary). For the avoidance of doubt, an individual who has served as a non-Officer member of the Executive Committee is permitted to then serve up to that six year period in various different Officer roles.

Replace “six years” by “ten years” and “six year period” by “ten year period”

Replace “Treasurer or Secretary” by “Treasurer, Secretary or Vice Chairman”

There were no questions about the proposed changes and the meeting voted unanimously in favour.

iii) Change Quorate Percentage The third proposal was to change the percentage of the membership required to render an Annual General Meeting quorate from 20% to 15%.

The reasoning behind this proposal is that as the number of members of the u3a increases, then a smaller percentage can be justified, particularly as the actual number of members remains similar.

This requires a change to the constitution with respect to Article 16:

16. NOTICES, COMMUNICATIONS AND PROCEDURE AT GENERAL MEETINGS

and specifically Article 16 item iv:

There shall be a quorum when at least 20% of the number of members of The U3A, are present at any General Meeting (see note 6).

Replace “20%” with 15%.

In response to a request for questions, Neil Lloyd did query whether there could be an ability to cast votes by proxy at future Annual General Meetings. The Chairman said that this could be considered.

The meeting voted unanimously in favour of this proposal (iii).

8. Election of Officers (Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and up to two Vice-Chairmen)

The Chairman reported that the following nominations were received by the closing date of 12th April, 2023 for:

Chairman	Alison Richards
Vice Chair	David Foster
Treasurer	Glynn Emery
Secretary	Robert Toft

The meeting approved these as valid nominations and, in the absence of other nominations, Robert declared Alison, David, Robert and Glynn elected.

No nominations were received by the due date for the post of the second Vice Chair. However, a nomination was received after the due date for Linda Wallace. The meeting gave its approval to accept the nomination of Linda Wallace (as per Constitution Item 7 ix) and Robert declared Linda elected as Vice Chair.

9. Election of Executive Committee Members

The Chairman stated that, under the Constitution, there can be up to 13 members (including the officers), thus 8 committee places were available.

Valid nominations were received by the due date from:
Jean Buswell, Ian Cohen, Jo Cohen, Linda Davies, Bill Hague, Jane Hague, Michael Theobalds (7).

In the absence of other nominations, Robert declared Jean, Ian, Jo, Linda, Bill, Jane and Michael elected.

A further nomination was received after the due date for Christina Gore to fill the remaining place. The meeting gave its approval to accept the nomination of Christina (as per Constitution Item 7 ix) and Robert declared Christina elected.

All were welcomed to the committee.

10. Membership Fee for 2023/24

The membership fees have remained constant since the inception of Much Wenlock & District u3a. The committee have reviewed this and believe that there are sufficient reserves for the coming year, so propose no change in fees, despite high inflation rates prevailing.

There was one comment about membership fees from the floor: "excellent value" and the meeting gave its approval for the fee to remain at £15 for individual membership and £28 for joint membership.

The Executive Committee will decide on discounts for those paying late in the membership year and for members of other u3a's.

11. Any Other Business

Alison offered a Vote of Thanks for the phenomenal contribution made by Robert Toft, both as Chairman and throughout the ten years that he has been active in Much Wenlock & District u3a. The meeting responded with warm and extended applause.

The meeting closed at 2.31pm.

The members were then treated to an excellent talk on The Great American Songbook, by Roger Browne before refreshments were served.