



Northumbria Region U3A

Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting

Held at Hylton Castle on Tuesday 24th October 2023

From 10.30 to 15.00

Attendees: - Cecilia Coulson (Whickham), Sandi Rickerby (Morpeth), Jean Cubbins (Whitley Bay), Ann Carr (Bishop Auckland), Theresa Mulkerrin (Durham), Mo Brown (Newcastle), Margo Davidson-Wood (Saltburn), Jan Leach (Seaham), Ted Watt (Seaham), Alan Smith (Seaham Harbour), Gordon Ayre (Seaham Harbour), Gordon Ayre (Seaham Harbour), Malcolm Wilkinson (Seaham Harbour), Ruth Beckett (South Durham), Sue Clark (South Durham), June Elsom (Sunderland), Jane Mathieson (Teesdale), Diana Clark (Washington), Keith Allison (Washington), Sandra Cullen (Washington), Derek Ginsberg (Washington Village), Carol Donald (Wearside), Christa Lloyd (Wearside), Doug Knox (Wearside), Bill Brookes (Wessington), Pat Brookes (Wessington), Jean Barnett (Wessington), Peter Barnett (Wessington), Margaret Welsh (Wessington), Arthur Coulson (Whickham), Kathleen Reed (Whitley Bay), Pam Turner (Morpeth), Mary Barlow (Sunderland).

Apologies: - Catherine Stevenson (Newcastle).

Welcome: - Cecilia Coulson (CC), Regional Chair, welcomed everyone to Hylton Castle and informed the meeting of the housekeeping/safety rules before asking the Regional Support Team (RST) to introduce themselves and give a summary of the work they do.

Mary Dunning: - A message was read out by Jean Cubbins from Mary Dunning saying unfortunately she was having to stand down due to health and mobility reasons and thanked everyone for their support. Cecilia Coulson then wished her well and thanked her for the excellent work she had done for the region. Jean Cubbin is to take some flowers and a card to her apartment.

Sandi Rickerby: - Sandi stood down as North East Regional Trustee having completed her term of office at the National u3a AGM on 18th October 2023. She confirmed she will continue to work for the national office and region.

Cecilia then presented her with a bouquet after thanking her for all the work she has done.

Jean Cubbin: - CC introduced Jean Cubbin who has taken over from Sandi Rickerby and everyone wished her well.

The Chair said there had been positive feedback on the new format for these meetings which was trialled at Stannington in July therefore we were continuing with this system. Members had commented that they had learnt quite a lot and did not realise the breadth of our remit.

RST Meeting: -

CC introduced the RST area of the meeting saying that we had various workshops in place, but more were required.

Also, that we would welcome more members on the Regional Committee which would allow the work to be shared out more appropriately.

Regarding the Regional Events Team this was originally set up by Kelvin Rushworth who has since moved over to the north west of the country and therefore CC is now leading the team. There are six members on the team with one lady from Guisborough joining shortly. There was more on this subject later in the meeting.

Regional Trustee Update given by Sandi Rickerby: -

Regional Trustees are now called Council Members.

Waymap – This is similar to Citymap and is being trialled in the north east and will include the inside of buildings although the Glass House formally the Sage is the only building mapped so far.

National AGM – There were quite a number of people who had difficulty in accessing this via Zoom.

The only resolution to be carried at the AGM was that there should be greater advertising of the movement by National.

The Board has approved a new u3a at Glasgow Southside.

The new system for running the u3a with a smaller Board and a Council is being piloted. They envisage having the new system ready to put before the AGM in 2024.

M Brown asked would this allow councillors to have more time for work within the Region. The answer was yes.

M Brown then mentioned 'Fit for the Future.' There is a page on the Facebook along with some chat groups on various topics.

Financial Report – TATTL made a profit of £98k largely due to improved TAM advertising revenue. Reported membership levels were down on budget confirming a slow recovery since Covid.

It was noted by members at this meeting the excessive cost of some items within the trading arm, The Brand Centre.

Festival 24 – After the success of 'Off the Wall' this year at the Sill on Hadrian's Wall it was agreed to plan a three-day event called Festival 24. This will be from 18th to 20th July at York University. Several companies have expressed interest in providing some sponsorship. There have been 68 offers of interest groups. They are looking for more stewards so if you have any members able to offer assistance all details are on the national website.

The nation short story competition was won by Laurene Henderson from Wissey u3a.

TAM – National are looking at having an online version as well as the normal paper copy. More details in due course.

Trustee Week is taking place from 6 – 10th November and during the week a series of online workshops and events including the launch of the new EDI Presentation.

The total Facebook reach for September was 69,429 (up 500% from the previous month) and Instagram reach was 1,347.

Malcolm Wilkinson noted that during Seaham Harbour u3a event for u3a week they had a petition for lack of toilet facilities in the town. This is proving a national problem and especially effects older members of society.

Item from Saltburn District. Dementia Awareness Initiative. Graham and Deb Barwick attended an event at Redcar Civic Centre Council Chambers run by Dementia Action Teesside in September. If there is sufficient interest, there is the option to organise further events as and when required.

Jean Cubbin then said a few words about the huge learning curve she is on and will be leaning on Sandi Rickerby for advice.

Liz Thackery is coming to the region for three days in April 2024. She wishes to visit actual u3as not special events put on for her visit. Jean Cubbin and CC are organising the programme. If you would like Liz Thackery to visit your u3a please let them know.

CC then spoke about the regions Three Year Plan which is on our website. She then spoke about moving forward with ~~the~~ interest and subject networks. TAT is promoting eight on the national website. Northumbria Region has three Interest/Subject Networks at the moment and would like to increase this number. There is a possibility of a Geology Network being formed.

M Brown then mentioned that region has a Zoom licence and anyone wishing to hold meetings should contact her and she will make a note in the diary.

We also have the Creative Writing and iPad groups.

Peter Barnett and Arthur Coulson are looking into organising a photography competition in 2024 Jane Mathieson thought this would be popular.

Another suggestion was a Short Story competition.

M Brown admitted that she had once wrote a short play giving each member present a part. When asked she admitted she still had the play.

CC mentioned Active Learning Projects previously known as Shared Learning Projects details of which were on the National Website. This is where your u3a joins with another u3a or organisation on a subject. National have produced a leaflet with a flow chart on this subject.

Margaret Welsh from Wessington said that Washington had joined with Beamish Museum on a project regarding the War Memorials in Washington and Houses Through Time.

Malcolm Wilkinson mentioned that Seaham town was twinned with Stuttgart, Germany which their u3a visited. There they found they had a dedicated centre for the older population.

Christa Lloyd from Wearside mentioned they do seed trials with Which, the magazine. They are sent three packets of flowers and three of vegetables.

Workshops – Would it be possible to put on a Site Builder/Site Works workshop for our region. Members were asked to keep their site up to date which would make it easier for u3a websites to be transferred from Site Builder to Site Works.

A discussion followed on what workshops members would like such as one for new chairs.

Chairs Report – We are hoping this is the last time an outside venue will be sourced. The room alone at Hylton Castle cost £375. It is difficult to source suitable venues when considering accessibility, transport, and reasonable costs. It has therefore been decided to hold future meetings at u3a venues throughout the region. The January meeting will be held at Brunswick Hall, Newcastle, Newcastle u3as main meeting venue. A fun element is also a priority and a presenter called Pat Hodgson from Stocksfield who is similar to Victoria Wood will be there to provide this.

Would any u3a in the Region like a RQM held at their main meeting venue? Please contact Cecilia Coulson.

Succession Planning – It is noted that Mike Wallace the Regional Treasurer will have completed six years on the Committee in April 2024. We therefore need a new treasurer. Does anyone know of anyone willing to take on this role? If so please contact Mike Wallace and/or Mary Barlow.

Events – In 2023/4 the Regional Events Team have planned a varied programme.

- a. Hartlepool Marina – Details on the Regions website.
- b. South Durham is holding a south regional quiz on 29th November 2023
- c. Visit to the Tyneside Theatre and Opera House
- d. Combining with Durham University on an archaeology event
- e. Northern Regional Quiz in March 2024
- f. Regional Music Day possible in June 2024

Financial Report – This was distributed during the meeting.

Dawn Tweddell the Business Secretary of Blyth u3a has a sound system, projector, and screen available. If you are interested in these items, please contact her.

After the meeting Robert Pullen entertained us all with a quiz on ‘Halloween and Bonfire Night’.

Name Cecilia Coulson **Position** Chair **Date** 25th January 2024

Name Mary Barlow **Position** Secretary **Date** 25th January 2024