



## **Northumbria Region u3a**

### **Hybrid AGM and Quarterly Meeting**

**25<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

**From 11.10 – 15.10**

Present: - Mo Brown (Chair) (Wooler), Cecilia Coulson (Whickham and District), Ann Carr (Bishop Auckland), Peter Barnett (Wessington), Malcolm Wilkinson (Seaham Harbour), Mike Wallace (Newcastle), Peter Barnett (Wessington), Sandi Rickerby (Regional Trustee) (Morpeth and District), Louis Ferguson (Cestria), Katherine Elliott (Consett and District), Patricia Scorer (Consett and District), Pauline Kearney (Consett and District), Irene Best (Derwent Valley), Lorraine Skeen (Derwent Valley), Valerie Green (Derwent Valley), Gloria Burns (Derwentside), Laurie Beckwith (Derwentside), Pam Robinson (Derwentside), Wendy Beckwith (Derwentside), Geoff Marshall (Dunston and District), Anne Bothwell (Durham), Patricia Johnson (Durham), Keiron Neil Cooke (Middlesbrough), Catherine Stevenson (Newcastle), Lilin Wright (Northallerton), Sheila Middleton (Northallerton), Robert Pullen (Prudhoe), Edward Watt (Seaham and District), Jan Leach (Seaham and District), Mable Hepplewhite (Seaham Harbour), Linda Chadd (South Durham), Ruth Beckett (South Durham), Jane Mathieson (Teesdale), Diana Joy Clark (Washington), Keith Allison (Washington), John Lloyd (Wearside), Arthur Coulson (Whickham and District), Hamish Crawford (Whickham and District), Ian Crawford (Whickham and District), Kelvin Rushworth (Wooler), Mary Barlow (Sunderland),

Via Zoom – Kathy Platt (Alnwick), Joyce McKay (Bedale and District), Steve Morris (Morpeth and District), Pamela Turner (Morpeth and District), Marian Atkinson (Seaham Harbour), David Pattinson (Tynedale), Christa Lloyd (Wearside), Doug Knox (Wearside), Mary Dunning (Whitley Bay).

Apologies: - Ruth Beckett (South Durham).

Mo Brown (Chair), welcomed everyone to the meeting and after giving out the housekeeping and safety notices explained the voting system we would be adopting. Note - Members were given a voting form on arrival and David Pattinson collected the votes on Zoom and informed the Tellers.

The meeting was declared quorate, with more than the necessary 25% of voting representatives present or voting on Zoom.

Tellers: - Peter Barnett and Arthur Coulson volunteered and were proposed by Jan Leach (Seaham and District) and seconded by Malcolm Wilkinson (Seaham Harbour) and members voted to accept these to members as tellers. There were no abstentions.

Previous minutes had been put online and copies put out in the room. The adoption of the minutes as a true record was proposed by John Lloyd (Wearside) and seconded by Ann Carr (Bishop Auckland). Members voted on the form.

Matters Arising: - None raised.

Chair's Report: - The full report is in the April issue of Messenger which is on-line. Mo Brown (retiring Chair) thanked members of the Regional Committee and Trust Volunteers along with various u3a members for their help and support. Mo Brown said it was wonderful to meet and talk to people in person again. The acceptance of the report was proposed by Pam Robinson (Derwentside) and seconded by Sheila Middleton (Northallerton). Members voted on the form.

Financial Report: - The previous year's accounts were examined and agreed by Ray Shirley (Gateshead). Proposed the accounts be accepted by Peter Barnett (Wessington) and seconded by Ann Carr (Bishop Auckland). Members voted on the form.

Mr Shirley has noted he will not be available to check the accounts in subsequent years.

Regional Subscriptions – It is proposed now that u3as have restarted to reintroduce the subscriptions keeping them at 2019 rate. Acceptance of reintroduced subscriptions was proposed by Mike Wallace (Newcastle) and seconded by Arthur Coulson (Whickham & District). Members voted on the form.

David Pattinson (Tynedale) volunteered to take over examining the accounts. Acceptance of this was proposed by Cecilia Coulson (Whickham) and seconded by Mo Brown (Wooler). Members voted on the form.

Election of the Committee: - Mo Brown is stepping down from the committee. All (other) current members of the committee are standing for election. It is

proposed that the nominations be accepted. Proposed by Jan Leach (Seaham and District) and seconded by Linda Chadd (South Durham). Members voted on the form.

Updating the Constitution: - The following clauses have been amended

Clause 11.6 – 11.12 Hybrid meetings

Clause 13.2 Quorum

Clause 16.1 and 16.2 Voting

Clause 22.4 Committee meeting online

Clause 30.7 Notification by email

The acceptance of the changes was proposed by Geoff Marshall (Dunston) and seconded by Peter Barnett (Wessington). Members voted on the form.

Motion for debate: -

Wearside u3a consider that now is the time to review the basic aims and objectives of Northumbria Region u3a.

The discussion needs to address the following points:

1. Individual u3as are all having to consider their future and that should include what they want from the Region.
2. There are now many small "networks" that encourage sharing/solving particular problems.
3. Is the NRu3a now the means of the Third Age Trust disseminating information such as Insurance Certificates rather than contacting individual u3as?
4. Is the growth of the membership a Regional responsibility?
5. Is there a desire for large gatherings of u3as?

The motion that this be discussed was proposed by Malcolm Wilkinson (Seaham Harbour) and seconded by Ann Carr (Bishop Auckland). 37 members attending and 9 on Zoom agreed with 2 abstentions.

John Lloyd (Wearside) - Spoke about the reasons the motion was put forward plus the recent email from our National Office regarding the rising number of paid staff when we are a charity of older people who usually

have more free time to volunteer. Does the Region still keep to the original reasons why it was set up and is it time we started to think of the future?

Wendy Beckwith (Derwentside) - Noted nationally that one member is paid between £80/£90k and two members paid between £60/£70k. Do we get enough support from National Office? She went to another u3a coffee morning and got more meaningful information/ideas. She is worried about the rising costs.

Christa Lloyd (Wearside) - Information sent out by the National Office to Chairs and Secretaries often has contradictory. There is a lack of response from National Office to requests for information.

Mo Brown (Chair) – The remit of the Regional Trustee has changed in recent years to them imparting information from the National Office to the Region. When the position of Regional Trustee was set up it was so they could feed information from regions to the National Office.

Sandi Rickerby (Regional Trustee) – There are two issues, the role of the National Office and the role of Northumbria Region. She noted we are the seventeenth biggest charity. The roll of staff at the National Office is being looked into and more information will be available shortly. Sandi also reminded everyone that each u3a is an independent body.

Laurie Beckwith (Derwentside) – Costs are high over £886k in wages and pensions and this does not sit well with members. Also, there is a lack of response to questions raised with the National Office.

Sandi Rickerby (Regional Trustee) – She has made a note of the issues raised and will be taking these back to the National Office. She told members that Northumbria Region is raised as an example to other areas notably as we were in the forefront using Beacon, the use of numerous Networks and short-term Working Groups but we also have the universal problem of getting people to volunteer for committees.

Malcolm Wilkinson (Seaham Harbour) – Our costs are comparable when looking at other charities. Could the National Office publish the role of staff members? He noted that he had had only prompt and positive responses from the National Office.

Mary Dunning (Trust Volunteer) – Support for and from the networks has been both positive and enlightening. Regarding costs, salaries in general have increased.

Catherine Stevenson (Newcastle) – u3as still have members who are not computer literate and u3as in general have computer and Zoom issues. Various u3as are still in the initial stages of opening up again after closing due to Covid. Catherine thanked the committee for keeping the Region ticking over and giving cohesion during these difficult times.

We also need to promote local u3as and share good practices. We need to promote the benefits provided by region and the networking done within networks. At meetings we need to provide time to promote what we are doing.

Doug Knox (Wearside) – We need local volunteer groups with a range of skills and promote these groups. We need region as a counterweight to save us from being taken over by National Office.

Neil Cook (Middlesbrough) – We need publicity on what we do as u3as. He liked the idea of small networks and envisaged more being needed. He feels the Trust is using Region as a post box. He noted that quite a few u3as do not come to regional meetings and therefore miss out on so much.

John Lloyd (Wearside) – In responding to the discussion - looked at where the Region started and stated that it needs to remain relevant for the future. We need to promote the work we do more. We also need to put motions forward to the National bodies so that they are aware what local u3as require otherwise it becomes a one way system. The national newsletter has approximately a circulation of 40k are members happy with its content and could it be improved.

Jane Mathieson (Teesdale) – Instructions should be initiated at the bottom level and go to the top not the other way as often happens. On the national website there is a place on the Network Link where you can find dates of a two yearly meeting where you can place a motion to be considered.

A constitution is a legal document and is much more likely to be accepted by the Charity Commission if they are aware that the legal team at our National Office have seen it first.

Any Other Business.

No items raised.

Results of the voting.

	Accept	Reject	Abstain	Total No of Votes
1. Minutes of the 2021 AGM	18		3	21
2. Chairman's Report	21			21
3. Financial Report & Accounts	21			21
4. Subscriptions for 2022	20	1		21
5. Appointment for Examiner of accounts for 2022	21			21
6. Nomination of Committee for 2022 - 23	21			21
7. Update the Constitution to allow on-line and Hybrid Meetings	21			21

Cecilia Coulson at this point presented Mo Brown the out going Chair with a plant and a voucher for the Sage at Gateshead.

Mo Brown thanked everyone and informed the meeting that Cecilia Coulson had agreed to become the new Chair.

The next AGM will be on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023 venue as yet unknown.

The main meeting closed at 13.05 for lunch and was followed at 14.10 with talk by Doctor Robert Pullen on Sleep and Dreams.

The brain is made up of nerve cells which develop at a phenomenal rate. If each brain cell was a can of Coke the cans would cover the entire earth.

Babies normally sleep for approximately 16 hours per day whereas older people seem to need only 6 hours.

If you were deprived of sleep for three days you would suffer from extreme tiredness, memory lapse, hand tremors, bags under the eyes, confusion, hallucinate, headaches and increased stress hormone levels.

If you were deprived for seven days you would also have seizures, psychosis and death.

We were shown a chart showing the pattern of our sleep from deep sleep to REM (rapid eye movement) and how this fluctuates from one to the other during the night.

We dream during REM and these are often about recent events, usually disorganised, often we cannot move but we can talk.

He mentioned a book by Sigmund Freud called Interpretation of Dreams.

He also talked about sleep disorders such as insomnia, snoring, jet lag, restless leg syndrome, sleep apnoea.

Dr Pullen answered several questions mainly on dreams.

Cecelia Coulson (Chair) thanked Dr Pullen and closed the meeting.

Name	Cecilia Coulson	Position	Chair	Date	26 <sup>th</sup> April 2023
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Name	Mary Barlow	Position	Secretary	Date	26 <sup>th</sup> April 2023
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