

MINUTES OF RAYLEIGH u3a 14th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at Holy Trinity Church Hall, Rayleigh on Thursday 3rd November 2021 at 2pm

1. Welcome:

Our Interim Chairman, Ray Lowe, opened the meeting and thanked Members (approximately 115) for attending.

2. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies were received from V Hayward, M Rawson, C French and C de Cisneros.

3. Approval of the Minutes for AGM 2020:

A copy of the minutes for the 2020 AGM had been previously made available to our members by email, mail or on our website. The Chairman asked if any amendments were needed. There were none. Approval of the minutes was proposed by Rosalinda King and seconded by Ray Osborne. The proposal was carried by a majority show of hands, no objections.

4. Interim Chairman's Report: Ray Lowe:

Welcome to the fourteenth Annual General Meeting of Rayleigh u3a. Since opening our doors at our new venue for our first Welcome Back meeting in August, we have been so pleased to see old and new faces as we slowly get back to our normal way of running Rayleigh u3a.

I stepped in as Interim Chairman in June 2021 following the resignation of Val Whitehouse and have continued in this role with the support of the rest of the Committee. I have been nominated and seconded and seek your vote to become the Chairman later in this meeting.

When we had our last AGM in September 2020, we had no idea that it would be nearly another whole year before we could hold meetings again, but one thing we have found, is that our members are resourceful and have found ways to keep the u3a on track. We also had to adjust to losing the Mill Hall as our venue and adapting to moving to this hall which is not as spacious but luckily was available for us to continue to meet.

We are so pleased that our membership has remained steady throughout the pandemic, and we thank you all for your support in keeping Rayleigh u3a going. We have over 460 members and around 50 Groups, which is excellent, but we need to keep moving forward.

As u3a members we belong to a movement built on the principles of mutual aid and self-help. Although we may join the u3a to learn a new skill or to enjoy meeting new people, we also join a movement where we are all volunteers with something to contribute – and that is our strength!

On your behalf, I should like to thank the Committee for their excellent work during these difficult times. They have worked together tirelessly behind the scenes and supported each other with ideas and offers of help. They are all volunteers who give of their time and expertise. During the

quieter months, we have managed to approve Role Descriptions for all the Committee posts and review, write, and approve new policies that have been recommended by National Office.

Our Treasurer, Wendy Edwards, manages all our accounts and was extra busy during membership renewal time dealing with the change the membership fee for this year. She also manages Gift Aid for us which contributes around £1,000 to our funds each year. I would remind you to complete a Gift Aid form if you are eligible – they can be found on our website or by speaking to Wendy.

Our Secretary, Debbie Bamber, has kept the membership informed and deals with all the National Office and Charity Commission work along with organising the Committee meetings and its paperwork. She manages the administration of our Beacon system and has also taken on the managing of the Rayleigh u3a website.

Amanda Lowe is our Membership Secretary, and she manages the membership renewals each year and with help, the new scanning system that is now in place to record who attends our monthly meetings. Amanda ensures that our new members are made to feel welcome, and she is supported in this by her team of Welcomers who wear their red sashes with pride.

Our Groups Co-ordinator, Roz King, has been supporting group leaders to restart their groups when possible and helping new members and existing ones to find new groups to join. Some groups are led by a Group Leader with specialist knowledge of the subject, but in most groups, the members help to organise activities and share their knowledge and experience. Do speak with Ros if you have an interest you would like to develop with like-minded members.

We have managed to keep the Newsletter going, with Val and Jim Whitehouse taking the reins for a short time, before Sheila Farrant resumed her position as Newsletter Editor, with help from June Jennings. Please do send any items of interest to Sheila, especially if you have photographs too, as our members are always interested to find out what is going on in our u3a. Our thanks must go to Terry Gouldsmith who mails our paper newsletters to those members without computer access.

Val Foley has taken up the reins of Speaker Secretary and has arranged the speakers for our main Monthly Members Meeting since we returned in September. She has some interesting ones lined up for the New Year and is also very happy to take suggestions from members as to possible future speakers.

Our Educational Events Co-ordinator – Val Skam – was busy on our return refunding members for all the cancelled talks and will be putting together a calendar of events for 2022 which we will share with you soon. The first being the event in November – Dreams can come true - which completely sold out in one day!

We also have many other Volunteers to mention – those who help with the technical equipment for our meetings and those who collect and transport this equipment, namely Peter Horwood, Laurie Yarham and Ray Osborne. Elaine Woodcock is a committee member who helps with the running of the u3a, Les Shrubsole, who runs our very popular bookstall, Val Whitehouse who designs our posters and tickets, our team of Welcomers and our members who are always ready to help man tables, do refreshments and whatever else is needed. Our thanks go to each and every one of our members who give their time to making our u3a work so well.

At this AGM, both our Treasurer and Secretary's terms of office end and they should be stepping down. Despite our pleas, we have not received any nominations to replace them. As allowed in our Constitution, they have both kindly offered to continue in their posts until next year's AGM, unless someone offers to nominate themselves later in the meeting.

We have recently heard the sad news that Hullbridge (Riverside) u3a are likely to be closing in November due to not being able to recruit Officers and Committee Members and we need to take this on board as we do not want to be following in their footsteps. Anyone who is interested in finding out about being a Committee Member or being the Secretary or Treasurer, please speak to a current Committee member. You would be welcomed to sit in on a meeting to see how we work and to find out if it may be something you would like to do to contribute to our u3a.

Finally, I would like to wish all our members another year of interesting and entertaining activities with Rayleigh u3a. Thank you.

5. Treasurer's Report – Wendy Edwards:

This is the report for year ending December 2020

I understand you have all had the opportunity to view the accounts which have been examined and signed off by Jeff Bowen, our accounts examiner. Thank you, Jeff, for undertaking this role and for agreeing to the same for one more year to the end of 2021 although I understand this will definitely be your final year!

I believe the accounts to be self-explanatory but please ask if you have any queries.

Our income in 2020 was £2,901.30 more than our expenditure leaving us with a healthy balance going forward which enabled us to substantially reduce our subscriptions for 2021.

The Social No.2 account is being re-introduced for easier reconciling of social events with the bank account.

Thank you to all members who have paid subscriptions and events directly into the bank account via the Bacs Payment Service. It saves time and effort with less trips to the bank.

During the year, due to COVID, I had to refund money to many members for trips and events that were cancelled. This was a much easier process for me when members agreed to have the money paid directly into their bank account. No cheques or envelopes to be written, no stamps to be used and no trips to the post box. Plus, it was lovely talking to you all on the telephone.

Thank you, everyone.

Finally, I would like to say how much I have enjoyed being your Treasurer for the past 3+ years but my term of office is now at an end which means we are looking for someone to take on the role.

It is sometimes time consuming but not onerous. In fact, it is quite straight forward and there would be help and training.

However, I have agreed, in line with our Constitution, to continue until the AGM in May 2022 if no one comes forward but I am not allowed to continue after that time.

The Treasurer asked if there were any questions and there were none. The Chairman asked for a proposer to approve the Accounts – Laurie Yarham and seconded by Amanda Lowe. There was a unanimous show of hands, no objections. The Accounts for 2020 were therefore approved.

6. Appointment of Examiner of Accounts for 2021:

Jeff Bowen was then nominated as the Examiner of Accounts and, proposed by Laurie Yarham, seconded by Amanda Lowe. Unanimously approved by a show of hands, no objections. Therefore, Jeff Bowen has been appointed as our Examiner of Accounts.

7. Appointment of Officers:

We received one nomination for the post of Chairman – Ray Lowe, who was nominated by Wendy Edwards and seconded by Sheila Farrant.

Approval was given by a unanimous show of hands – no objections. Ray Lowe has been appointed as Chairman.

Our Treasurer, Wendy Edwards, has completed her three-year term. However, despite our efforts no one has come forward to replace her. As per our Constitution, the members present were asked if anyone was willing to stand and there were no volunteers. Wendy was asked if she would stand for one more year and she agreed.

Our Secretary, Debbie Bamber, has completed her three-year term. However, despite our efforts no one has come forward to replace her. As per our Constitution, the members present were asked if anyone was willing to stand and there were no volunteers. Debbie was asked if she would stand for one more year and she agreed.

8. Adoption of Clauses to Rayleigh u3a Constitution

The Trust Office have given us some new clauses for our Constitution to cover holding meetings by other means – such as through Zoom or similar, following the issues due to the pandemic. Our current Constitution does not prevent us holding meetings by electronic means, but these new clauses make everything much clearer.

The Committee have approved these additional clauses and all members have had the opportunity to review them.

There were no questions raised and the clauses were agreed by a unanimous show of hands. The Constitution will be updated accordingly.

9. Any other Business:

There was no other business.

Ray Lowe invited Peter Huntly to come and receive a Lifetime Membership Certificate as thanks for his long service and commitment to Rayleigh u3a. A brief summary of Peter's involvement was given to members and Peter was delighted and appreciative of receiving this award.

10. Closure of the AGM Meeting for 2021:

The formal part of the meeting was closed at 2.25pm, and our speaker followed.

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