

MINUTES OF RAYLEIGH u3a 17th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at Mill Hall, Rayleigh on Wednesday 1st May 2024 at 2pm

1. Welcome:

Our Chairman, Ray Lowe, opened the meeting and thanked the members for attending (146 present).

2. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies were received from Jenny Tuck, Derek Pitchers, Sheila Beaney, Rita Cooper.

3. Approval of the Minutes for AGM 2023:

A copy of the minutes for the 2023 AGM had been previously made available to our members by email, mail, newsletter or on our website. The Chairman asked if any amendments were needed. There were none. Approval of the minutes was proposed by Jim Whitehouse and seconded by Jean Birch. The proposal was carried by a majority show of hands, no objections.

4. Chairman's Report: Ray Lowe:

Welcome to the Seventeenth Annual General Meeting of Rayleigh u3a.

(Read by Jane Reeve)

As u3a members we belong to a movement built on the principles of mutual aid and self-help learning for those in the third age. This is defined as a period in life after full time employment has ceased.

Although we may join the u3a to learn a new skill or to enjoy meeting new people, we also join a movement which has, as its strength, our members.

Each of these contribute in their unique way to run groups, arrange our monthly meetings, or support our committee to provide our members with the information they need to get the most from their u3a membership.

Every year we appeal for members to join the committee. This year our appeal is extremely poignant as Leigh on Sea u3a has recently had to close because, despite having 600 members, they have been unable to find officers to form a committee. This could well be Rayleigh u3a next year. Some current committee members terms are finished at the next AGM and we already have vacancies at this AGM.

Ray Lowe is due to step down as Chairman this year, but we have not received any nominations for this role. We are relying on a decreasing committee trying to cover the activities required to support our members. For Example, Debbie Bamber is acting as our Membership Secretary as well as Newsletter Editor, Website Editor and Beacon Administrator.

Please consider if you could perhaps take a committee role. We have fun and support each other as a team. It would be ideal to have some new committee members this year, to allow them to gain experience before taking over new roles next year. As always, please speak to a member of the Committee to find out more details.

Unless some of you are prepared to step forward we could well be facing closure next year, this is not an idle threat; this is the reality of the situation.

Our membership has remained strong in the last year with increasing numbers of new members. We are starting this membership year with a total of over 443 members. Whilst some groups have had to close, we still have over 40 active groups.

With the recent closure of other local u3as the committee have taken the decision to limit our membership numbers to 475. We will also be encouraging all members to get more involved in our u3a in line with u3a principles – the more you can give the more you will gain.

(Read by Ray Lowe)

On your behalf, I should like to thank the Committee, they have pulled together as a team, working tirelessly behind the scenes, and supporting each other, they are all volunteers who give their time and expertise for the benefit of all our members.

Debbie Bamber is our Membership Secretary (amongst other things as you have heard) and Debbie manages the membership renewals and the scanning system to record who attends the monthly meetings. She is assisted by a team of Volunteers, particularly Diane Langdon and Sue Lamont.

Debbie also ensures that our new members are made to feel welcome, along with Amanda Lowe, and she is supported in this by her excellent team of Welcomers who meet and greet members. Thanks to Linda Osborne, Ann Surety, Alison Yarham, Wendy Edwards, Sue Suri, Jane Godfrey, Jenny Perry and Lesley Athey.

Our Groups Co-ordinator is Paul Reeve. Paul helps members, new and existing, with finding groups to join and has been instrumental in starting up several new groups this year. Please speak with Paul if you have an interest you would like to develop with like-minded people. You do not need to be an expert in any subject to start up a group – just interested and enthusiastic.

Please continue to send any items of interest to Debbie Bamber for inclusion in our Newsletter, especially if you have photographs as our members are always interested to find out what is going on in our u3a.

Our thanks must go to Terry Gouldsmith who posts out our paper newsletters to those members without computer access and thanks to Paul Reeve and Stuart Evans who have been hand delivering our newsletter. Please come forward if you have the skills and would be interested in becoming our newsletter editor.

Thanks to Val Foley, our Speaker Secretary who arranges the speakers for our main Monthly Members Meetings. Val is stepping down from this role at this AGM and we would like to thank her for her hard work in compiling a varied and enjoyable programme of speakers over the last years which have been both interesting and stimulating.

We appeal to you all to consider if this is a role you could take on as without this role we will not be able to offer speakers at our monthly meetings.

Our Educational Events Co-ordinator, Juli Fowles has put together some very interesting Talks for All and Educational Events which are selling well.

We also have many other Volunteers I must mention.

Thanks to Laurie Yarham and Ray Osborne who set up and run our sound and visual equipment and Jim Whitehouse who steps into the task if Laurie and Ray are unavailable and supports the technical team with his knowledge and expertise. Thanks also to Derek Pitchers who transports the equipment to and from the hall each month.

Thanks to Les and Carol Shrubsole, and Stella Lutterloch who run our very popular bookstall. Thanks to Val Whitehouse who designs our posters and tickets and together with husband Jim, runs our Quiz Nights and several groups. Thanks to all our group leaders without whom we would not have so many varied and interesting groups to join.

Our thanks go to each one of our members who give their time to making our u3a work so well, those who are always ready to help man tables, do refreshments and whatever else is needed.

Finally, I have two important people to thank without whom our u3a would not have run so smoothly and efficiently over the past year. Both Jill Cann our Treasurer and Jane Reeve our secretary.

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

Val Foley was presented with a bouquet of flowers in appreciation of her hard work as speaker secretary.

5. Approval of the Trustees Annual Report for 2022

The Committee have completed and approved a Trustees Annual Report as required by the Charity Commission for our last accounting year – January 2023 to December 2023. It has been circulated to members for approval.

The Trustees Annual Report for 2023 was approved by a majority of votes received with no objections.

6. Treasurer's Report – Jill Cann:

This year has passed quickly and has been an excellent year. The Committee has worked extremely hard and we have had entertaining Speakers and interesting and informative Talks. We have more Groups than we have had before and 66 new members.

Your subscriptions are our income. We also received £918 from Gift Aid. This is why we ask anyone who is eligible to complete a Gift Aid form. Jill was surprised to learn that not all u3as

apply for Gift Aid and so we have to thank Peter Huntly, a past Chairman who set this up for us in 2011.

Jill thanked Jim Whitehouse, our Independent Accounts Examiner, for signing off the accounts for our financial year January to December 2023 and he is willing to do this again next year. Jill also particularly thanked Debbie Bamber for her continued support. If anyone has any questions regarding the accounts, please ask Jill Cann.

The Chairman asked for proposer to approve the accounts – Dave Sheffield, seconded by Paul Reeve. There was a unanimous show of hands and no objections. The Accounts for 2023 were therefore approved.

7. Appointment of Examiner of Accounts for 2024:

Jim Whitehouse has expressed his willingness to undertake the examination of the accounts for 2024. He was proposed by Jane Reeve and seconded by Laurie Yarham.

He was unanimously approved by a show of hands, with no objections. Therefore, Jim Whitehouse has been appointed as our Examiner of Accounts for 2024.

8. Election of Officers & Committee Members:

Ray Lowe was due to step down as Chairman at this AGM. However there were no nominations received for the role of Chairman. Jane Reeve asked the members if anyone was willing to step forward and there were no candidates. Ray Lowe kindly agreed to stand for a further year as allowed under our constitution. This was proposed by Jane Reeve and Seconded by Jim Whitehouse. There was a unanimous show of hands with no objections so Ray Lowe was confirmed as Chairman for another year.

Nomination forms for the vacant committee posts were made available to all our members. The Secretary has received one nomination: -

Amanda Lowe nominated to join the Committee;, proposed by Jane Reeve and seconded by Debbie Bamber. A short profile was read out in support of Amandas nomination and approval was given by a unanimous show of hands – no objections.

We still have a vacancies on the Committee for a Vice Chairman, Newsletter Editor and Committee Members. The members were asked to speak to a Committee Member if they may be interested in this post, and the Committee would continue to be pro-active in searching for someone.

9. Any other Business:

There was no other business.

10. Closure of the AGM Meeting for 2024:

The formal part of the meeting was closed at 2:20 pm, and our speaker followed.

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