

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF SUTTON COLDFIELD U3A

HELD ON 22nd NOVEMBER 2018

AT THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH CENTRE SUTTON COLDFIELD

1. Chair's welcome and Introduction

The Chairman, Richard Austin-Clapham (RAC) welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their support over the past year before introducing current committee members in attendance namely: -

Tony Power; Jim Drummond; Mike Fowler; Anne Darby; David Lissaman; Will Wheeler; Jean Soper; Peter Bailey; Ian Sawyer; Sue Ingley, Barrie Christian. Minutes Secretary: Anne Darby

The Chair then proceeded to explain certain applicable Health & Safety matters such as the location of fire exits and meeting point opposite the front of the church on the steps to the shopping centre. He also advised that the format of the AGM would be from 10.00 - 11.00 followed by a refreshment break and the monthly talk to be given by U3A member Roger Ide in Cedar Hall. Drinks and entrance to talk free.

2. Apologies

Carol Raby, Colin Roper, Julie Hamblen, Shirley Mercer, Chris Chadwick, Margaret Chadwick, Margaret Cooley, David Barr, Eileen Barr, Rosie Power, Paul Moore, Tony Merrett, Beryl Merrett.

3. Appointment of Tellers

Martin Malpass and Eve Steedman agreed to act as tellers in case required.

4. Approval of Minutes of the AGM held on 26th October 2017

The Chairman requested permission to sign the minutes of the AGM held on 26 October 2017. There were no questions and Marion Powell proposed and Martin Malpass seconded a motion to accept the minutes as presented. This was carried unanimously.

5. Annual Report of Sutton Coldfield U3A Activities (Trustee's Report)

The Chairman presented the Trustees' report to the meeting. He explained that he had left the section on structure and management in the report because it had surprised him how many members did not appreciate what the U3A was about or how SCU3A was run. He drew attention to issues which present pressing risks to the organisation. Firstly, there was a general lack of membership interest in becoming a committee member or assisting in committee work. The committee needed 'new blood', and SCU3A rules were having to be interpreted flexibly to allow current committee members to continue in their roles. The second issue was to do with compliance with central office/ government regulations relating to members with disabilities or impairments [U3A Plus] plus data protection. The Chairman and committee worked on the principle of letting common sense prevail within guidelines given, but groups must, if they did not already, ensure that members in the group are helped and looked after so that all can enjoy what is on offer.

The Chairman reported that the Beacon system was already in use and most organisers had been cooperating in entering the membership of their groups. Yet ten organisers still had not bought in to the system and hence not populated their Group Folders with their members which would enable easy contact within the group. Mike Fowler was Beacon Master.... RAC added that he believed there to be a touch of the Darth Vader in this role.

The Chairman put out a plea for all groups to identify Computer Buddies for those members of their group who did not have computers. Whether members like it or not the computer was here to stay and as a method of communication it should be embraced because, it was the easiest, cheapest and most efficient way to contact members. It was however accepted that not all members had computers and it was hoped that each group would have at least one computer buddy who was willing to act as a link for those group members who did not have computers.

Objectives - the third item 'Ensure the continuance of SCU3A as a thriving organisation' had been the most important objective this year and had required an enormous amount of effort on the part of the committee to achieve a functioning committee for the year 2018/2019.

Membership currently stood at 1368 new and renewed members. 275 people had let membership lapse from last year, while there were 153 new members.

The Chairman thanked Sue Ingley and the Interest Group support team for setting up 9 new groups during the year. Groups needed to look at succession planning. Ann Scott had been very successful in working with groups to find new organisers when current organisers had stood down.

The Chairman concluded by requesting approval of the Trustees' Report. Approval of the report was proposed by Geoff Swinnerton, seconded by Eve Steedman, and carried unanimously.

6. Treasurer's Report and Approval of Examined Accounts

Tony Power (TP) gave a brief overview of the Statement of Account for 2017/2018, together with the notes in conjunction with the annual Accounts. Questions and observations were invited from the floor.

Mike Johnson asked why depreciation had reduced. TP replied this is because of the way items were written off through depreciation over 3 years. After 3 years they fall out of the accounts. Peter Cooley asked about the continuing large reserves. RAC explained that, for prudence, the organisation needed to keep a sum equivalent to about 6 months running costs in order to keep going in an emergency. TP referred to the fact that overall the Interest Groups were making a bigger loss each year; he estimated that the reserves would fall at between two and three thousand pounds per year. Mike Johnson said he noted that someone had attended the National AGM of the Third Age Trust and requested some feedback. RAC said that the person concerned had submitted a report to the committee and that he would send Mr Johnson a copy, if he emailed him.

Tony Power explained that the accounts and money were dealt with by a small team and appealed for anyone with skills and/or an interest in this area to join that team.

The Chairman requested a proposer and seconder for the Annual Accounts. Chris Bailey-Green proposed and Peter Cooley seconded the adoption of the accounts by the meeting. This was carried unanimously.

7. Election of Independent Examiner of Accounts

The Chairman thanked Chris Mitton for his role as auditor/independent examiner. Chris Mitton indicated that he was willing to act again in 2018/2019.

Approval of the appointment of Chris Mitton as Independent auditor for 2018/2019 was sought from the floor. This was proposed by Tony Power and seconded by Martin Malpass and carried unanimously.

8. Election of Committee Members

The Chairman read out the list of those members willing to stand for election to the committee for 2018/2019 together with their proposers and seconders.

Members wishing to stand for the committee:

Tony Power – Jean Butterworth/Irene Harden
Jean Soper – Nina Hamilton/Dorothy Slater
Peter Bailey – Anne Shardlow/Sheila Davies
Jim Drummond – Peter Williams/Carol Somerville
Mike Fowler – Linda Warwick/Dominic Powell
Anne Darby – Kay Bason/Sue Greenwood

Barrie Christian – Janet Mackinnon/June Wright
David Lissaman – Rita Dale/Fred Stevens
Will Wheeler - Derek Cocks/Mary Wheeler
Ian Sawyer – Isobel Hollis/Lynda Doona
Sue Ingley – Shelagh Gelling/ Ann Scott

Thanks, were also given to Anne Darby for execution of the Minutes Secretary role in the past year. It was stated that the position of Membership Secretary was vacant.

Approval of the new Committee was requested. Marion Powell proposed the election of the above named and was seconded by Chris Bailey-Green. The motion was carried unanimously.

9. Any Other Business

Brian Sharp asked if contact details of the committee could be put on the website. Ian Sawyer replied that at present it was not possible due to data protection regulations, but that there would soon be a new website with a private 'Members only' area, where such details could be displayed. The Chair confirmed that details would be published in the next issue of SAGE, and also displayed on the noticeboard in the URC foyer.

Cedar Hall sound equipment

Derek Cocks had prepared a motion, concerning the problems with the audio equipment in Cedar Hall, together with explanatory notes, which was made available to those attending the AGM. He explained that this equipment had not worked properly for a long time and this caused great difficulty to those groups using Cedar Hall. Many attempts had been made to address this with the URC, but it appeared that no progress had been made. Ann Scott said that the History of Art group had been allowed to purchase new equipment for the use of her group but felt that it would be much better if the URC equipment in the Cedar Hall was in good working order. Members felt that if the URC lets out the hall, the equipment should work. Martin Malpass pointed out that a small group from English History had been trained to use the equipment in the Sanctuary, and perhaps that may be an option for other groups. However, not many groups would have the numbers for this option.

Referring to the proposed motion RAC said that there were problems with Sutton Coldfield U3A having their own equipment. This included storage, movement to and from Cedar Hall, and who would operate it, as not all groups have someone who is computer savvy. All were volunteers and could not provide technical cover every day! If the U3A were to offer to fund new equipment for Cedar Hall, that would raise issues of ownership and responsibility for maintenance etc. SCU3A have already told church officials that they are willing to help with the cost of replacing this equipment. It must be remembered that not only were our own support officers volunteers, but the members of the church technical team were also volunteers.

After much discussion the following motion was proposed by Derek Cocks and seconded by Lynda Doona.

'The Sutton Coldfield U3A executive committee should take action to ensure that the sound equipment in Cedar Hall is kept on good operational condition for the regular use of the U3A groups who use this room.'

The motion was carried with one vote against.

Derek Benson said that the needs of both the URC and U3A need to be carefully considered. RAC said that a review of current equipment and the needs of the Interest Groups were currently being reviewed. SCU3A comprised amateurs and volunteers with limited time and knowledge to do this. Derek Benson indicated that he would be willing to help.

The Chairman thanked all those who worked behind the scenes - interest group convenors and their organisers, those members who were on the committee's helper's list, Chris and Margaret Chadwick [new members applications and registration], Colin Toy and Colin Topliss [managers at the URC and Methodist churches respectively] and the catering staff at the URC café. And not least to Derek and Catherine Benson for their production 'U3A in the Afternoon'. He also thanked to Jane Nangreave - organiser new members coffee morning and the organiser's lunch. He went on to thank teams that are in action behind the scenes but are in effect co-opted by the committee:

Publicity - Bob Scott [MailChimp], Andrew Hopkins [Posters] and Geoff Swinnerton [preparation of SAGE centrefold].

Interest Groups - Shelagh Gelling/Chris Milburn/Ann Scott.

Geoff Swinnerton proposed a vote of thanks, on behalf of the membership, for the work of the Executive committee.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 11.15 pm.