

TWEEDDALE U3A

Minutes of Annual General Meeting
held at St Joseph's Neighbourhood Centre
on Tuesday 12th June 2018, 2pm - 4pm

Item

1. **Arrivals & Welcome**
Acting Chair, Cecelia Clegg (CC) welcomed 49 members to the 2018 AGM.
2. **Introduction**
Members were asked to introduce themselves with the aid of coloured and numbered cards. These cards would be used again at the end of the official part of the AGM during informal table discussions.
3. **Formal Start of the AGM**
CC was pleased to note that there were enough members present to be quorate for the AGM and changes to the Constitution
4. **Apologies**
Received from: Lyndal Bale, Fiona Hunt, Rosemary Hamilton, Janet Bowie, Ros & Graham Pyatt, Mike & Margaret Betts, Jim Lyon, Gill Hawken, Geoffrey & Bonnie Hamilton, Trevor McGee, Joyce Stokes, Sue Bakker and Dorothy Crombie (16)
5. **Minutes of 2017 AGM**
There was one recommendation from Ronnie Watt that members who attended the AGM should be listed by name, instead of those who sent apologies. CC agreed to have this discussed by the committee. Otherwise **the minutes were approved:**
Proposed: Rosemary Shaw
Seconded: Enid Cerie
6. **Amendments to Constitution**
Under the current Objects (paragraph 3), many U3As have been making distinctions of monies for education and monies for social activities – in default with the Inland Revenue and charity regulators. Tweeddale U3A has not followed that practice. Due to the complicated system, U3As from all over the UK got together with the Charity Regulators to draw up a new objective, which covers everything we do. The proposed new wording of paragraph 3 OBJECTS is: *“The advancement of education and, in particular, the education of older people and those who are retired from full-time work by all means, including associated activities conducive to learning and personal development.”* With the exception of a comment made about the phrase ‘by all means’, **the motion was passed unanimously.**

Quorum: At present, our Constitution (paragraph 15) states that one third of our members (which would currently be 77 due to increased membership) should be in attendance to approve and pass any motions. The Committee of Tweeddale U3A wish to change this to 15% of our membership to reflect the actual numbers attending the AGM. **The motion was passed unanimously.**

7. **Report from the Chair**

CC, the acting Chair, reported that 2017 to 2018 had been a very successful year for TU3A with membership increased to 232 and interest groups to 30. She outlined some highlights of the year and paid tribute to the volunteers and committee without whom the organization could not function. She also pointed out that TU3A needed to develop a culture of members volunteering in a timely way for leadership posts or the development and perhaps even the future of the organization would be put in jeopardy. See the full text of the report in the document attached with these minutes.

8 **Treasurer's Report**

In Fiona Hunt's absence, the Treasurer's Report was summarized by Gillian Limb. As copies had already been circulated, the main point to be raised was that Tweeddale U3A has an excess of money in the bank and are looking for ideas from the membership on how to spend it. Several suggestions were made and these will be considered by the Committee. In general **the report was approved:** Proposed: Jill Mordaunt Seconded: Liz Johnson

9 **Committee Nominations & Elections**

Two nomination slips had been received for 2 of the 4 vacancies on the committee. These are: Cecelia Clegg nominated for the Chair and Marilyn Neal as Secretary. There being no further nominations or volunteers from the floor, **Cecelia and Marilyn were duly elected unopposed –**

Chair – Cecelia Clegg Proposed: Rosemary Hamilton Seconded: Gillian Limb
Secretary – Marilyn Neal Proposed: Catriona Lyon Seconded: Gillian Limb

That leaves two vacancies on the committee to fill: Vice Chair and Programme Co-ordinator. Ronnie Watt suggested that the Programme Co-ordinator's role should be for 2 years only – **this will be discussed at committee level.**

10 **Any Other Business**

None

11 **Date of Next AGM**

Tuesday 11th June, 2019

Although this date has been fixed, there is a question mark over whether June is the right time of year for the AGM given that attendance numbers are low due to so many people being on holiday. Also, it does not tie in with the current

financial year-end. **Committee to discuss.**

12 **Formal Closure of AGM**

Before bringing the meeting to a close. Gillian Limb presented and talked about Tweeddale U3A's new annual publication showcasing a year in the life of our U3A. Taking the place of the old twice-yearly newsletter, this new venture will include interest groups reports, work of the committee, stories, reflections and accompanying photographs. The Committee would appreciate feedback, which will be helpful for future publications. 200 copies have been printed and members were asked to collect on their way out. They were also asked to pass on the booklet to other people once they have read it to keep it in circulation for a while. Copies will be retained for future new members.

CC formally closed the meeting.

13 **Farewell and thanks to Dorothy Douglas after 14 years**

Alison Moore, Web Manager, on behalf of the TU3A committee and members paid tribute to Dorothy Douglas for the 14 years of almost continuous service on the committee that she has given. Dorothy, who was a founding member of TU3A and has served in almost every committee post, is stepping down at this AGM but will continue to be active as a group co-ordinator of the Art Group. She was presented with a bouquet of flowers in the blue and gold of the U3A, which included an ornamental thistle to represent Scotland.

14 **Informal Table Conversations**

CC invited members to move to the tables, which matched the colour on the number cards they were given at the beginning to join in table conversations about questions to do with the future development of TU3A. Tea and cakes were served. The groups were asked to discuss three questions:

- ? Name **one or two** things that have helped you to get to know people in TU3A?
- ? Name **one or two things** that are not working as well as they might in TU3A? What could we do about it?
- ? What might you offer to TU3A? ... *Starting a group? Volunteering?*

The discussions were lively and there were a number of suggestions made by each group in written table notes, which will be collated and considered by the committee.

Chair's Report June 2018

The year between AGM's has been a busy and successful one for TU3A. It is also one that has brought a number of significant changes. In December, our new chair, Norma Cox, had to stand down for reasons of health, which is why, at present, I am Acting Chair. I am glad to say that Norma continues to be an active member of TU3A managing the catering for our Open Meetings and ably facilitating the Lunch Club.

Another noteworthy change has been the move from our twice a year Newsletter to a Monthly Bulletin that allows us to advertise events and issues for the month ahead and to an Annual Review, which allows us to reflect more extensively on a 'year in the life of TU3A'.

A third major change which has been forced on us by the General Data Protection Regulations, which came into force on 25 May 18 means among other things that we have to change the way we handle people's data especially in terms of email addresses. Group facilitators have been asked to use blind copies of emails so that group email lists are not public. This has the knock on effect of meaning that any of us (not just committee or group facilitators) who have access to people's email addresses via the U3A may not use them for anything other than official U3A communications to do otherwise is to break the law!

2017 to 2018 has been a year of growth. Our membership has grown to 232 and the number of active interest groups to 30. In keeping with the ethos of the U3A movement, interests groups are at the heart of who we are and what we do. They are run by the members for members on an entirely voluntary basis.

These groups meet in a variety of locations, often in member's homes, but increasingly in public spaces. We are indebted to our hardworking group co-ordinators, Gillian Limb and Rosemary Hamilton, and their large team of group facilitators, without whom none of this activity would be possible. In the last year the group co-ordinators have held two very successful group facilitators meetings to help to share wisdom, ideas and good practice among the facilitators and to discuss on-going concerns in the running of interest groups.

One change that the committee introduced this year, in order to ensure that our charity was operating correctly under the terms of our public liability, was to arrange hall hire for group activities directly through the treasurer, taking the hire fees from member's subscriptions. This has also meant that any group that has 'outgrown' the space available in member's homes has the option to move to a hired hall/public space to accommodate its members rather than having to divide into two groups. I realise that this may not always be the best option, smaller groupings can facilitate better discussion, but at least it is an option now.

In an effort to help the members to get a flavour of what the interest groups are about, we have introduced a 3-minute slot at the beginning of each Monthly Open meeting during which a group is invited to give members a little 'snapshot' of what the group is and what it does. A further opportunity for groups to let people experience their activities has been afforded by inviting groups to provide interludes during our events. For example, during

the lovely Christmas get together in the Eastgate Studio in December. We hope to continue and expand the possibilities for groups to 'show off their wares' in the coming year.

A mainstay of the life of TU3A has been the programme of excellent speakers at our monthly open meetings. Dorothy Douglas, our Programme Co-ordinator, has done a wonderful job in finding speakers on a wide variety of interesting, informative, humorous and practically helpful topics. Dorothy, a founder member of TU3A and who has held almost every office on the committee is (as you know) standing down this year. We are going to miss her wisdom, energy and organisational ability on the committee but hope that she enjoys finally being an ordinary member of this organisation that she has nurtured for so long.

In a report like this it is impossible to give more than a brief glimpse of some of the riches of our year. I want to signpost just three other highlights. First the excellent Summer Outing to Ford and Etal last July organised by Howard Clarke and Mike Betts. Not only did we see the beautiful villages and learn some of their history but we also got a ride on a little train and a visit to a mill! Second, the highly successful and enjoyable visit of the walking group from Provence, France in September. This group had hosted our walking group in Provence earlier in the year, so this was the return visit. Third, we had the delight and enrichment of experiencing the U3A's international dimension when a Finnish couple, Marja and Timo took up short term membership of TU3A and joined in our monthly meetings and some interest groups during the 6 weeks they stayed in Peebles. Many of the events or activities that I have mentioned here are described in much more detail in the Annual Review.

Clearly an organisation like TU3A relies heavily on many volunteers who undertake the roles that keep us functioning. I want to acknowledge and thank Gerard for managing with quiet calm the sometimes tricky IT/AV requirements for Open Meetings and events and to his assistants Jim and Mike. We owe a big debt of gratitude to Evelyn Inglis, who for a number of years has edited our 'Newsletter' producing two editions a year. A heartfelt thank you to Norma, Amy, Jenny and Joyce who have provided the catering for Open meetings and events this year. The unfailing smiles of Enid, Kathleen and the welcome team are the first thing that visitors encounter at our events and provide a great introduction to TU3A – so thank you to them and especially for seeing that new people get linked up with someone from the committee or another member to help them settle into the meeting or event.

But TU3A could not exist at all without the hard work and dedication of the members of the committee who ensure not only that our groups and programmes function (Gillian, Rosemary and Dorothy) but also that we manage our charity in accordance with an array of increasingly complex charity and organisational laws. Fiona our treasurer works away quietly and carefully to keep our finances on track. Jill, who is known to many through her role as communications co-ordinator has kindly this year taken over the membership secretary duties also. Alison has designed, put in place, and manages the TU3A website, which gives us a web presence that is helping people to find out about us. Last but not least, Lyndal, our secretary who apart from managing the secretarial duties has also been

responsible for all the good media coverage that TU3A has had this year. Lyndal steps down as secretary this year but remains an active member and co-facilitator of the Circle and Song Group. We wish her well for the future.

We will shortly be electing new officers to replace those stepping down. It has been evident in the last months that this U3A appears to have developed a culture of people not volunteering for committee and other leadership roles. We still have no nominations for Programme Co-ordinator or Vice Chair. While I understand people's reluctance to take on what is seen as 'more work' if everyone takes that view three things happen or are likely to happen:

- The present committee or group facilitators are expected to take on more work or to serve longer to cover the gaps OR
- We stop being able to offer whatever the person was responsible for AND
- Ultimately we will have to close down the whole organisation

I do not believe that it is fair or even wise for committee members or group facilitators to be pressured to stay in post longer than 3 years or to have to take on extra roles. If people fear that they will be expected to do more than 3 years they will not volunteer and the cycle just accelerates. We need to get into a situation where volunteers come forward on time so that everyone knows and expects that they will get to step down after their agreed time. If they want to volunteer to serve again that is another question but it must never be an expectation nor a request that is automatically but grudgingly acceded to.

I am going to say a word to those who are very new to U3A, especially those who are 'younger' members (it is all relative!). Not knowing much about U3A can be as much a strength as a hindrance when joining the committee. It means that you can ask the daft lassie/laddie questions that have not occurred to those who have been in the organisation for years. So if you would like to be involved even if you are not sure you want to be programme co-ord or vice chair please get in touch with me or one of the committee because it may be possible for us to shuffle roles so that we can make use of your strengths.

As things stand, if we do not get a volunteer for programme co-ordinator we will simply not have an Open Meeting programme for 2019 to 2020.

If interest groups cannot find someone willing to be the facilitator then they will need to cease meeting under the auspices of U3A. If the people want to go on meeting they may do so but it will no longer be a U3A group.

What I am pointing out is that ultimately the path we seem to be on at present will lead to the disbandment of Tweeddale U3A because no organisation can or should continue without regular rotations of leadership.

I do not want to see that happen and nor do the committee. That is why we have given space at this Open meeting to discuss how members see the future of TU3A and what we can all do to make our organisation as vibrant as the life of our groups.