

AGM 2022-23 Proposed Amendment

The committee propose that with effect from 1st August 2024 the annual membership for the Whitby Whaler u3a is increased to £20.

Supporting Statement

Following a financial deficit of £910.10 recorded in 2021-22, the Finance report for 2022-23 shows a larger deficit of £5,023.78 recorded for 2022-23. Projections indicate that a similar or larger deficit is almost certain to be seen for the coming year 2023-24, and it is anticipated that this would reduce our reserves to a level below that recommended by the Charities Commission and Third Age Trust.

The main cause of the deficit is due to increases in the cost of venue hire, which make up by far the largest part of our expenditure. Largely in response to the recent rises in heating and lighting costs we have seen hire rates rise by as much as 50% and while the committee are continually on the lookout for alternative cheaper venues, and negotiate the best deal we can for the hire of the venues we use, we can see little opportunity to reduce this expenditure going forward.

The increase in these costs mean that, in the majority of cases, the income from class fees is no longer sufficient to cover the hire cost of the venues used. To address this deficit, we therefore need to increase our income either by raising our annual subscription fee, increasing class fees or a combination of both.

Ideally, all groups and activities should be self financing. However, if this criteria was strictly imposed, we anticipate that some groups would become unviable and have to close, as class fees would need to be increased to level that would be considered unacceptable to many members. This is not something that we feel would be beneficial to the overall long-term health of the Whitby Whaler u3a. A rise in class fees across the board would also unproportionally affect those members who attend multiple classes a week, and it is therefore felt that an increase in annual membership subscription would be the best way to help address the deficit.

An increase of membership subscription from the current £12 to £20 represents a rise of 66%, which we recognise is a large increase, and unfortunately may result in the loss of some members. However, it would be the first increase made for many years, and we feel still represents extremely good value for money and allows us to maintain class fees at their current level.

It should be noted that if membership numbers are maintained at existing levels and expenditure remains the same, then this proposed increase should be sufficient to counter the deficit. However, with further venue increases anticipated, going forward the committee will review the level of annual subscription prior to each AGM and may propose further smaller increases each year to reflect rising costs. As laid out in Section 5.i) of our constitution, any changes to the annual subscription must be put forward and approved by the membership at the AGM. However, the Executive Committee do have the power to adjust class fees during the year and this option can be taken if felt necessary to ensure our financial security going forward.