

U3A THAMES VALLEY NETWORK AGM/Representatives' Meeting
held at Benson Parish Hall, OX10 6LZ
on Friday 10th May 2013

Present:

Committee: Pam Jones - Chairman (Witney) Trustee South East Region, Mike Price Vice-Chairman (Greater Thame), Agnes Budagowska Treasurer (Swindon), Anne Marie Lord Secretary (Chinnor & District), Susie Berry (Ridgeway), Martin McBride (Carterton), Len Smith (Wokingham), Avis Furness (Reading) co-opted, June Morris (Abingdon) co-opted.

Representatives: Anne Gould, Pauline Nuttall, Pamela McQueen and Fay Sinai (Abingdon), Shirley Stokes, Geoff and Val Young (Aylesbury Vale), Norman and Esme Dutton (Banbury), Beryl Burn and Peggy Penfold (Bicester), Theresa Doherty, Anthony and Janet Russell (Bracknell Forest), Ian and Josephine Wright (Carterton), Eric Magson (Chess Valley), Peter Metcalf and Tim Layfield (Chiltern), Diane Carver, Alison Hood, George Hunter, Ann Long, Molly Milner and Dorrie Oliver (Chinnor & District), Yvonne Beaumont and Roy Coates (Chipping Norton), Anita Coolbear, Anne Holmes, Chris Jones, Brenda Mainwaring and Shirley Rouse (Didcot and District), Anthony Burdall and Fred May (Faringdon and District), Judith Aguda and Ann Walsh (Goring Gap), Ann Atkins and Pam Feltbower (Greater Thame), John Brandis (Haddenham), Ruth Waddle (Headington), Nadia Ellis and Margaret Graham (High Wycombe), Hilary Brodie, Harry Burnham, Jenny Cooper, Pat Davey and Bill Field (Maidenhead), Mike Davies and Brian Humphrey (Marlow & District), Robin and Mary Blake (Newbury), Jill Sweeting, Terry and Maire Walden (Oxford), Dolores Hodgson, Caroline Langdon, Michael Montague, Helen Neil and Estelle Thomas (Reading), Pat Fewell, Nina Stonham, Jacky Wagstaff and June Waterson (Ridgeway), Jeanie Dickie, Phil Eagle, Gill McKinnon and Jill Warren (Swindon), Len Davidson, Peggy Miles and Derek Randall (Thame & District), Sally Fehr, Sheila Findlay, Neil Kelly and Jan Menzies (Thameside), Margaret Edmondson, Françoise Manvell, Jill Procter, Christine Scragg and Hermione Whitehouse (Wallingford), Graham Fisher, Joan Ford and Liz Woollven (Wantage and Grove), Rosemary Spivey (West Oxford), Joan Jones, Gay Killeen, Carol McNamara and Valerie Palmer (Witney), Barry Byrne, Richard Hughes, Edward Miles, Val Reeve and Patsy Thornton (Wokingham), Lesley Summers (Woodstock).

Guests: Barbara Lewis –Chairman of the Third Age Trust, Stuart Lewis.

1 Welcome and Apologies: The Chairman welcomed all present. Apologies had been received from Margaret Herrington (West Oxford).

2 Minutes of AGM of April 20th 2012 These are available on the website.

Geoff Young (Aylesbury Vale) proposed that the Minutes for the AGM held on 20th April 2012 be approved. This was seconded by Margaret Edmondson (Wallingford), agreed unanimously and the Minutes were duly signed.

2.1 Matters Arising Under 10 AOB i Various problems are still being experienced by several U3As regarding delivery of “Third Age Matters”. It is hoped that these will be resolved through contact with the Third Age Trust or adjustments to individual U3A databases.

3.0 Network Committee Reports

3.1 Chairman (summary) Pam welcomed everyone and gave a special welcome to Barbara Lewis, Chairman of the Third Age Trust. Pam noted that there were representatives from almost all the 38 TVN U3As and hoped they would enjoy the time to talk to members of other U3As and exchange ideas and practices.

This has been another good year for Study days and a Training day and Pam felt that the standard was getting better thanks to the Events Team. TVN was very proud of the Riverside Project and Pam felt particularly proud that it has inspired Sussex Network to set up the South Downs Project in consultation with Patsy. This is an excellent example of networking which is what the U3A is all about. Patsy and her team are now developing the Historic Pathways Project. Pam spoke of her enjoyment as Chairman of the Network particularly as more U3As have been drawn into network activities. Being geographically spread out members often travel quite long distances to attend study days and other meetings, Pam thanked them for their interest and for the kindness she had received.

Pam stated that she has had a great committee and Events Team to assist her and she thanked Susie Berry who produces such wonderful lunches supported by her catering team. She thanked them all. The Committee were thanked particularly as they had supported Pam over the last 18 months since she had been appointed a Trustee. There are 7 networks in the South East Region of which TVN is the largest. TVN is a slow growing but already tightly packed network and so it was good to welcome Didcot as a new U3A in the past year.

Pam wanted to leave the following thoughts with delegates:

- U3A is the greatest organisation for our age group as it is unique.
- We need to remind ourselves of the Aims and Principles so that we follow them.

- Pam feels it is her mission to emphasize the unique quality of U3A as in becoming members we have signed up to the ethos of a lifelong educational organisation which tailors its programmes according to the wishes of its members by using the resources of that membership.
- When people join it is as important to ask them what they can do for the U3A as what U3A can do for them.
- Paid tutors are not used. There are groups outside U3A who provide classes that need a tutor.
- A waiting list could be the core of another U3A. There should not be waiting lists for membership.

In conclusion she quoted from Eric Midwinter's Founders Lecture of April 2013:

“Is there anywhere in this country a working model of a service rather than a system, where education is for its own sake and for that moment, where it is based relevantly on individual wishes, fuelled by personal gifts and worked out in learning circles in which the vibrant co-operative spirit wins out over the dourly selfish competitive edge, where the group leader is a kindly steward and facilitator not a programmed didact, where attendance is willing not grudging or enforced, where this engagement with mutuality is threaded into the interstices of the community in church and civic halls, social clubs, on walks and trips and, most endearingly of all, in peoples' own homes instead of confined within institutionalised premises, where the mood is ever companionably supportive and the involvement life enhancing, to the point where social, physical and mental well-being improves to the benefit of the individual, the family and the community, and where, most importantly, each individual is respected, valued and esteemed of being of equal worth? It is the University of the Third Age.”

Pam thanked all who had helped her over the past year and wished the Network well.

3.2 Treasurer's report

Agnes Budagovska circulated copies of the TVN Account Summary for the period 1st January 2012 to 31st December 2012. All cheques issued had been cleared by 31st December and there were no outstanding accounts or monies held over for forthcoming events at that point.

Committee administration and Events expenses totalled £9360.75, this included the sum of £3450.73 held over from the Residential event at Wellington College in 2011. The final surplus for this Event was £215.30.

Study days are expected to be self-funding but those that may incur a small loss will be covered by the surplus on other days.

Working on a two-year basis the Committee decided to maintain a fund of £2000 for eventualities and a further £1000 for 2 years' administrative expenses. Sufficient funds remain so that the Committee has agreed to waive the affiliation fee for 2013/14. The decision as to whether the following year can be free will be announced at the 2014 AGM.

The total surplus for Study days was £651.34. (Social History £121.20, Opera £188.62, Staying Healthy £190.00, Historic Pathways at Reading £151.52). Abingdon Conference was subsidised to the sum of £488.39.

The Balance at year end was £3887.47.

Agnes thanked Phillip Eagle (Chairman, Swindon U3A) for checking the account which he deemed correct.

Len Smith (Wokingham) proposed that the Treasurer's Report and Accounts be accepted, Mary Blake (Newbury) seconded this proposal which was agreed by those present.

Pam thanked Agnes for her work as Treasurer and for preparing the accounts at this time.

4.0 Election of Committee

The Committee for 2012 – 2013 was as follows:

Chairman Pam Jones (Witney); Vice Chairman Mike Price (Greater Thame); Treasurer Agnes Budagovska (Swindon); Secretary Anne Marie Lord (Chinnor & District); Events Team Avis Furness (Reading) co-opted; Ann Mary Ware (Marlow and District); Susie Berry (Ridgeway); Martin McBride (Carterton); June Morris co-opted (Abingdon); Len Smith (Wokingham).

Pam Jones has reached the end of her 3 year term as Chairman and Ann Mary Ware has resigned from the Committee. Pam Jones proposed Anne Gould (Abingdon) as a member of the Committee, this was seconded by Mike Price and agreed.

Geoff Young (Aylesbury Vale) proposed that Mike Price (Greater Thame), Treasurer Agnes Budagowska (Swindon and District), Secretary Anne Marie Lord (Chinnor and District), Avis Furness (Reading), Susie Berry (Ridgeway), Martin McBride (Carterton), Len Smith (Wokingham), Anne Gould (Abingdon) and Anthony Burdall (Faringdon) (co-opted Events Team leader) be elected en bloc as the Committee 2013/14. This was seconded by John Brandis (Haddenham) and agreed unanimously.

5 Resolutions None received

6 AOB

i Len Smith (Wokingham) pointed out that the Chairman had not been elected. Pam Feltbower (Greater Thame) proposed Mike Price as Chairman, seconded by Agnes Budagowska (Swindon) and agreed unanimously.

ii Brenda Mainwaring (Didcot and District) thanked Pam for all she had done in enabling Didcot U3A to become established.

The AGM closed at 11am.

Representatives' Meeting

1 Network Activities

1.1 Events Team Programme for remainder of 2013

Anthony Burdall introduced himself as the Events Team Leader and thanked Ann Mary and Avis for all their hard work and enthusiasm.

The Programme planned for 2013 continues as follows:

- May 28th Books – A window on the world Patsy Thornton reported that there were 5 places remaining
- November 6th – “Crushed grapes”- Wine Appreciation Day at Benson
- Historic pathways is on-going with a day planned for 25th September.
- 4th October Network Training day – Communications

Currently High Wycombe are promoting a study day –“High Wycombe Past and Present”. This event is financially supported by High Wycombe U3A. There was some confusion over whether this was a TVN study day but Anthony explained that several U3As have organised study days and invited other U3As within the Network to join in but these are not Network Events. A Network event is for the benefit of all Network members and should be equally open to them at all times. It is the financial responsibility of the Network. Anthony asked for any further suggested definitions for Network study days. The definition of a Network Study Day should be put on the website for clarity.

A request was made that a training day for new Committee members be repeated, this has been held in the past at Rewley House and was very helpful. The Events Team will consider this but at present are planning a training day on Communication.

Patsy Thornton spoke about the Historic Pathways project which has been set up at the invitation of the Berkshire Records Office. It is looking at all kinds of pathways such as Drovers roads, Pilgrims paths, Roman ways etc.in Berkshire and neighbouring counties. A second Study day is planned for 25th September at Shillingford Bridge Hotel, information will be sent out within the next week.

Representatives were asked to use the website to find information.

1.2 Draft programme for 2014

- April Family History prepared by Chiltern U3A
- June Railways at Didcot
- September Activities Day
- Understanding Germany

The next meeting of the Events Team will be in August. Anthony asked for more members to join the team in planning and organising events especially as several members were standing down.

2 Network Information

2.1 A **Contacts List** has been sent out. Mike Price asked U3As to let him know of any changes along with the name of the U3A.

He uses this information to circulate Network information for Study days and individual U3A events. To be effective this information needs to be sent out in plenty of time. Information relating to a Jazz day has been sent out recently.

2.2 Martin McBride reported that he has recently sent out the latest version of the **Database of Speakers**. He removes names when 2 separate U3As have complained about a speaker but adds names on recommendation of one U3A.

Martin was asked if he would include where speakers had given talks or the U3A that had recommended the speaker. However, as U3As are all different it was felt that some speakers would be more acceptable to some U3As and not to others. Martin recommended that Speaker Secretaries ask potential speakers which U3As they have spoken at and then contact those U3As for feedback.

Speakers are using digital projection more frequently but it was pointed out that many still use slides.

2.3 Len Smith asked U3As to encourage new members to use the **Network website** www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk He reported increasing use, information is up-dated as often as possible.

3 Open Forum

3.1 Presentation by Maidenhead U3A on how to run The Memory Course

Bill Field said that Maidenhead had just completed its 3rd Memory Course. He made the following comments:

- The course gives an understanding of the processes going on in the brain.
- It is based on 2 books (one is yellow and the other white which are copyright to Ormskirk U3A)
- The course had been developed in response to anxiety expressed by U3A members wanting to understand the symptoms of dementia.
- The style of the course is psycho-educational. It is not a diagnostic or therapy course. It uses 2 co-presenters and is held on 4 successive weeks keeping to a strict timetable.

Session 1 deals with memory processors and the sensory process of input of short term memory, long term memory and working memory. It includes the impact of sleep, anxiety, diet and exercise on memory.

Session 2 looks at vascular dementia and the role exercise plays in improving blood supply which keeps neurons fit and healthy. Alzheimers disease is also considered with its characteristics of plaques which are protein particles that break away and become mixed with the neurons, and tangles which are tangled up blood vessels. It is felt that people who have built up a cognitive reserve are better able to deal with the symptoms of this disease. A cognitive reserve is attained through engagement with many types of activity including: intellectual such as study days, projects and field trips; physical, such as dancing; social ; languages and acquiring new skills.

It was pointed out that U3A provides all of these.

Bill said that all the sessions are valuable and that the course should be run by 2 people with suitable professional skills/experience and 2 administrators.

Pam asked representatives to provide her with contact details if they were interested in obtaining the course material.

Bill was thanked for a very interesting and informative presentation.

3.2 Discussion on U3A related topics

No topics had been received and those present were invited to open a discussion.

i The day course on the Gothic phenomenon was commended.

ii The U3As in Buckinghamshire are contributing to Bucks County Council which is producing a guide to Policy Performance, initially this will be a pilot issue for information .

iii The Committee were congratulated on providing cards for each U3A with the U3A name on the back and front.

iv Following on from comments in the Chairman's Report regarding new members offering something to their U3A Chipping Norton asked how other U3As encourage this. The following points were made:

- the application form asks for previous occupation
- one to one contact made with new members
- membership application form asks people to list any skills they are willing to share and Committee members follow these up at social events such as new members days.
- Newbury holds a new members' coffee morning at which the job descriptions for Committee members are set out in bullet points. Many people concentrate on their groups but do not always know the committee members.
- The chairman of Thame and District keeps in touch with Group leaders who are well placed to recognise members who may be able to help.
- There is an annual Group leaders' meeting at Chinnor to exchange ideas, discuss any problems and successes.

v Pam listed the many benefits that the Capitation fee has for U3As and their members. These included: Liability insurance, Trustee indemnity, Tour operator liability for short, specific courses, a 24 hour legal helpline, free postal loan service, a magazine and 2 summer schools. It was agreed that this list should be on the National website.

vi Pam asked whether the reserves held by individual U3As are too great.

It was thought that a reserves policy should be based on the equipment required plus the largest expense likely to be incurred.

Chinnor has recently bought new equipment, High Wycombe has paid for Third Age Matters for all members until the next subscription is due.

4 AOB None

Date of next Meeting tba. Mike asked if anyone would like to propose venues for meetings.

Chairman..... Date

03/06/13