

**U3A THAMES VALLEY NETWORK AGM/Representatives' Meeting**  
**held at Benson Parish Hall, OX10 6LZ**  
**on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2014**

**Present:**

**Committee:** Mike Price Chairman (Greater Thame), Susie Berry Vice-Chairman (Ridgeway), Agnes Budagowska Treasurer (Swindon), Anne Marie Lord Secretary (Chinnor & District), Len Smith (Wokingham), Anthony Burdall Events Team (Faringdon), Avis Furness (Reading).

Pam Jones - (Witney) Trustee South East Region

**Representatives:** Fay Sinai (Abingdon), Shirley Stokes, Geoff and Val Young (Aylesbury Vale), Peggy Penfold, Sandie Stevenson (Bicester), Pamela Palmer (Bracknell Forest), Ian Wright (Carterton), Eric Magson (Chess Valley), Peter Metcalf (Chiltern), Diane Carver, George Hunter (Chinnor & District), Yvonne Beaumont and Roy Coates (Chipping Norton), Anne Hales, Liz Sweet (Didcot and District), Ann Walsh (Goring Gap), John Brandis and Elaine Parkes (Haddenham), Ruth Waddle (Headington), Gillian Le Du (Henley), Mike Davies and Brian Humphrey (Marlow & District), Clive Dray and Derek Child (Newbury), Pam Lee (Oxford), Malcolm Baker (Princes Risborough), Jane Sellwood (Reading), Margaret Wiggall (Ridgeway), Colin O'Rourke, Annie Burkitt (South Bucks), Drusilla Attwood and Glenys Bettley (Swindon), Derek Randall (Thame & District), Neil Kelly (Thameside), Margaret Edmondson, Jill Procter (Wallingford), Margaret Sherrington, Rosemary Spivey (West Oxford), Jane Standley (Windsor), Marny Leech, Valerie Palmer (Witney), Olga Hughes and Patsy Thornton (Wokingham).

**1 Welcome and Apologies:** The Chairman welcomed all present.

Apologies: Theresa Doherty (Bracknell Forest), Molly Milner and Dorrie Oliver (Chinnor & District), Sylvia Bowley and Peter Foot (Faringdon), Pam Feltbower (Greater Thame), Margaret Graham (High Wycombe), Harry Burnham (Maidenhead), Peter Grout and Peggy Miles (Thame and District), Gill Pittock (Thatcham), Susy Brigden (Witney), Edward Miles (Wokingham)

**2 Minutes of AGM of 10<sup>th</sup> May 2013** These are available on the website.

The Meeting approved the Minutes which were duly signed.

**3 Matters Arising** There were no matters arising.

**4.0 Chairman's Report** Mike welcomed all Representatives and thanked them for coming.

He thanked the Committee for their work and support over the year and also all who had organised the various and successful events. All our behind-the-scenes helpers, those who serve refreshments, set out the tables and chairs and help with registration were thanked for all they do. Finally Mike thanked our Trustee, Pam Jones, for all her hard work on our behalf.

Organisation of Events planning is to be addressed and the Chairman said the challenge for the coming year is for U3As to encourage members to come forward with ideas for Study days and, particularly if these are within their area of interest/expertise, organise them. There has been a range of events over the past year and more planned for the coming year. More ideas are needed and suggestions for suitable speakers would be welcome.

The Events Team has been disbanded as it was duplicating much of the Committee efforts and was considered a factor by the Committee when looking at how to reduce the rising cost of network organisation.

Mike said that an apology was due to a couple of U3As whose members had problems proving their U3A membership when attending Events. The application forms are currently being revised to ensure that people sign to confirm U3A membership. The reason for this is to ensure that members have first chance of attending study days. Those attending study days should be U3A members or invited guests; this is a requirement of our public liability insurance.

Mike emphasised that as well as study days, the Network is important as a forum for members of U3As to meet members from other U3As to exchange ideas and discuss common problems.

Finally Mike advised that Pam Jones had circulated a request from Hilary Robinson for any U3As that are involved in conducting research into the ageing process or the position of older people in society to contact her.

**5 Treasurer's report**

**5.1** Agnes Budagowska circulated copies of the **TVN Account Summary** for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013. This had been presented at the Reps' meeting in January.

In response to queries Agnes explained that travel expenses currently stand at 40p per mile for the Committee, it is anticipated that these will decrease now that the Events team is no longer meeting formally. Meetings for Committee are held in member's homes saving on venue costs. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Age Trust mileage allowance is 45p.

Study day refunds are made through Agnes.

A surplus of £593.61 was realised by the Study days, this is included in the accounts

The cost of wines for the wine tasting study day had been included within the overall costings for the event.

The Network purchased copies of the “Memory” books, they have been available at study days and meetings but few have been purchased.

The overspend has been paid with money from reserves.

The £473.30 reserved for account to be submitted refers to an account under negotiation as it was deemed too high. It has subsequently been paid.

The available surplus is £2333.19

In response to questions regarding presentation of the accounts Agnes confirmed that they had been independently verified by a member of TVN and that she is a book-keeper not an accountant. It was agreed that the Committee will investigate how best to present the accounts.

Anthony Burdall thanked Agnes for all that she does and Wallingford U3A thanked the Committee for taking time to travel to meetings.

Val Young (Aylesbury) proposed that the Treasurer’s Report and Accounts be accepted; Diane Carver (Chinnor) seconded this proposal which was agreed by those present.

**5.2** It was proposed that a 10p per head **affiliation fee** be implemented for the next financial year (Jan 2015- Dec 2015).

Following discussion it was agreed that the amount payable by each U3A would be based on the membership return sent to the Third Age Trust in April 2015.

It was suggested that Study days could be costed to cover Committee expenses. Hall hire for Reps’ meetings is taken from the affiliation fees. Money also needs to be available to cover any shortfall in study days. Reps were reminded that the Network was established for enabling “networking” between U3As as a source of ideas for other ways to inter-act and also to run study days and events. £3- £5 per head could be added to Study days but income will then fluctuate accordingly. The comment was made that the Network has been extraordinarily lucky to have had 3-4 years with no affiliation fee. By having a set fee the Treasurer will know how much will be in hand.

The “Pathways” project is also organised by the Network and the walks in particular have no charges.

The affiliation fee is likely to raise in the region of £1000. When last proposed it was set up for two years, it will be reviewed next year.

The proposal was agreed by majority with 4 against.

## **6.0 Election of Committee**

The Committee for 2013 – 2014 was as follows:

Chairman Mike Price (Greater Thame); Vice-Chairman Susie Berry (Ridgeway); Treasurer Agnes Budagovska (Swindon); Secretary Anne Marie Lord (Chinnor & District); Events Team Anthony Burdall (Faringdon); Avis Furness (Reading); Martin McBride (Carterton); Anne Gould (Abingdon); Len Smith (Wokingham).

Martin McBride and Anne Gould have resigned, Avis has taken over as Speaker data base secretary.

Gillian Le Du (Henley) is willing to stand as a Committee member and Anne Hales (Didcot and District) as a co-opted committee member. This was proposed by Geoff Young (Aylesbury Vale), seconded by Fay Sinai (Abingdon) and agreed by the Reps present.

**7 Resolutions** None received

## **8 AOB**

**i** Amersham U3A is organising a Summer Jazz Festival on 24<sup>th</sup> August. This is a U3A event with members of Network U3As invited to attend.

The AGM closed at 11.30 am.

Chairman..... Date .....

23/05/14

## **U3A THAMES VALLEY NETWORK Representatives' Meeting held at Benson Parish Hall, OX10 6LZ on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2014**

*For those present and for apologies please refer to the Minutes of the AGM held prior to this meeting.*

### **1 Network Activities**

#### **1.1 Events Team Report/Programme for 2014**

**i** The Events Team has been disbanded. There will be a meeting following this meeting for anyone who would like to organise a study day the purpose being to gauge enthusiasm for running a day. Events will then be organised using the model of finding people interested in a topic who will put together a programme plus a group of people to take on the administration. It is anticipated that there will be less formal and fewer meetings. All activities will be reported to the TVN Committee.

**ii** There has been an issue with communication as some U3A members are not receiving information about events as these are released. It relies on each U3A communicating with its own members. However, Anthony also uses a database of previous participants who receive the information directly and at the same time as it is sent to U3As. If there are members of any U3As who would like to be added to the database please let him know. The website also has the information. [www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk](http://www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk)

There was some discussion about how to ensure equality for all members, Chess valley encourage a buddy system for its members who do not have e-mail. The issue will be discussed at the next Repls meeting. Please let Mike have any ideas.

#### **iii Programme for 2014**

- 24<sup>th</sup> June Railways at Didcot
- NB Gardens of the Thames valley is likely to be arranged for 2015
- 2<sup>nd</sup> July Treasures of the Ashmolean (second study day)
- 30<sup>th</sup> September Researching Local history – Witney details available shortly
- 15<sup>th</sup> October Training/Experience day (Committee membership- legal obligations? Technology including data protection? subject undecided as yet TBA) - Benson
- 29<sup>th</sup> October Poetry is everywhere
- 19<sup>th</sup> November Photography, “The Photographer’s Eye” – Benson

#### **1.2 Programme for 2015**

- March Book study day – Abingdon
- April History of Painting – Rewley House Oxford
- May Work of the NT
- May/June ? Forensic Science – Culham
- Gardens of the Thames Valley
- July Oxford Botanic Gardens
- Sept/Oct? Philosophy day - Rewley house, Oxford
- November History of Opera – Rewley House, Oxford

This is a nebulous programme. On a show of hands it was felt that study days on cosmology and philosophy would be supported. A 2016/17 programme will be circulated by Mike when available.

#### **1.3 Historic Pathways update**

Patsy Thornton encouraged U3As to view the calendar of events on the website ( [www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk](http://www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk)). This is up-dated as soon as possible.

- 15<sup>th</sup> May Walk – Abingdon U3A
- 23<sup>rd</sup> May Uffington and the Ridgeway study day and walks – Uffington
- 4<sup>th</sup> June Chess Valley and Chiltons walk
- 5<sup>th</sup> July “St Birinus Pilgrimage” - Dorchester Abbey
- 22<sup>nd</sup> July Aston Rowant walk – Chinnor & District U3A
- 9<sup>th</sup> August Public Event – Wokingham U3A

A Residential meeting is planned in 2015

Organisers are willing to talk about the Historic Pathways project at individual U3As... contact Patsy.

### **2 Network Information**

**2.1 Contacts List.** Mike Price asked U3As to let him know of any changes along with the name of the U3A. Any information is sent out to those on the list en bloc. Each U3A is then responsible for passing this on to its relevant members.

**2.2** Avis Furness is now overseeing the **Database of Speakers**. Please note that any information/comments re Speakers should be sent to Mike Price. A prompt will be sent out with the next list requesting additions and concerns.

Positive responses re speakers may be logged but not disseminated. The rising cost of speakers was highlighted and reps were reminded that U3A members can be encouraged to speak but can only ask for expenses. It is possible that a list of U3A members who would be available as speakers could be compiled.

**2.3** The Network website [www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk](http://www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk) kept as up-to-date as possible. Len encouraged U3A members to view the Events programme and the Historic Pathways calendar.

### 3 Report from our Regional Trustee

Pam reported that her three years as Trustee are almost at an end. Over this period she has learnt a huge amount about U3A and about people. There have been many wonderful experiences and she has gained in confidence to the extent that she had recently abseiled for charity down the Spinnaker tower in Portsmouth.

The SE Region covers a wide area and has the greatest number of U3As posing a huge task for the Trustee. The Third Age Trust is now about to train people to take on the task of setting up new U3As in order to relieve the Trustee's workload. Additionally **Regional Links** (volunteers) are being sought from Networks who will meet the Trustee a couple of times a year to report on network activities and to exchange news and ideas with other networks. Pam asked for a volunteer from this meeting. Expenses would be paid. She said that most regions already have something like this in place and this would mean the Trustee could attend just one network meeting a year.

**Nationally** there are many impressive offers and competitions available through the magazine due to the efforts of one of the National Office staff including RHS discounts. There is an information leaflet about the National Conference.

This will take place in Cirencester and Pam encouraged the Network U3As to send delegates. Third Age Matters reaches more than 200,000 homes and members can request it for themselves if their own U3A does not take it.

The centre of the last edition had an article entitled "U3A and You". The article was Pam's idea. The Guiding Principles have been simplified and the whole article is ideal for committees and to publicise what U3A is about to members. A Vision and Mission Statement was also enclosed with the last mailing. It is also available on the National website.

94% of U3As are using the Resource Centre which has benefitted from a revamp. The NEC is formulating a 3 year plan and has subsequently become more aware that we must embrace technology. Information is now being gathered about electronic systems that U3As use for membership database and subscriptions. This is varied and Pam is hoping Wokingham which is very IT focussed will report back, too.

The grant available to enable U3As to showcase their organisation to the public has been raised from £100 to £200 from 1st April.

Each U3A will have received a St. John Ambulance pocket guide covering 5 common conditions where first aid could be the difference between a life lost or a life saved.

Apart from Didcot, it has been some time since we have had a new U3A in the Network. Pam is looking into the possibility of new U3As in Eynsham, Denham, Slough and the Gerrards Cross area.

Pam concluded by thanking everyone for listening and for their support over the years, it has been much appreciated. She wished TVN well.

On behalf of TVN Mike thanked Pam for all she has done as Trustee.

**4 AOB** i Marlow & District (671 members) uses my office on line to communicate with members. This uses a secure server data base which is used to e-mail directly to members. It costs £400 per year .

ii Bracknell Forest requested shared information. The Third Age Trust Website is useful.

iii It was suggested that TVN put together a set of advice sheets.

iv Reps were reminded that the Third Age Trust offers a Free Legal Advice service for members. It deals with all legal matters and is recommended by Reps present at this meeting.

v Reps are asked to bring documents re communication and advice that are useful to the next meeting.

**Date of next Meeting** 25<sup>th</sup> July at the Sports Hall, Watlington. (Apologies received from Sec. Anne Marie Lord)

NB Please ensure that you book lunch in advance with Susie Berry. ...See Agenda when issued

Chairman.....

Date .....

23/05/14