

MINUTES OF BRIDPORT AND DISTRICT u3a ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD at 2pm on TUESDAY 18th AUGUST 2020 (using Zoom)

Membership present: Attending via Zoom: 28

With a total membership of 512 at the time of the meeting, the required quorum of 51, being 10% of the membership, was exceeded with 78 advance proxy votes from members being recorded.

Committee Members Present

Pat Grafton (Chairman), Valerie Gierth (Treasurer), John Collins (Business Secretary), Diana Coleridge, Maria Forbes, Paul Tebbutt, Tony Dix, Heather Harvey, Mick Holgate

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman, Pat Grafton, welcomed those attending the meeting via Zoom and thanked them for their valued participation.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Due to the large number of apologies, these are listed as an annex to these minutes.

3. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM

The advance Vote indicated that 65 members agreed that these be approved and the vote to accept them as being correct was proposed by Alastair Forbes and seconded by Alan Hobby. The Chairman's copy was signed as being a true record of the proceedings.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

2020 marks the 10th Anniversary of Bridport & District u3a, the first public meeting having been held in January 2010. We had planned to celebrate this fact with a party in June but, as you all know, things went a bit pear-shaped in March this year and we all went into lock-down due to the outbreak of Covid-19. So not only is there no party, there are no face-to-face u3a meetings at all – we shall certainly be ready for that party when we can eventually hold it!

However, most of the past twelve months saw our u3a busy and active. As at 31st March 2020, our membership stood at 669, including 18 Associate members. Quite a few new members joined at our Open Afternoon in October, the event attracting a large number of attendees, both existing and prospective members. The hall was crowded with a range of displays by Group Leaders to show their groups' activities and encourage others to join them. To date we have just over 70 interest groups with more being thought about for the future. New ones this year included Creative Writing and a second Poetry for Pleasure group.

Our monthly meetings have continued to be well attended, with a varied programme of talks throughout the year. Among other topics, we spent a nostalgic afternoon remembering the 1951 Festival of Britain, learned about Foraging for Wild Food and heard about the difference between life here and in India, both funny and very humbling.

Outings were again organised through the good offices of Crossways Travel of Dorchester and members enjoyed visits to a range of venues such as Hampton Court Palace and Gardens, Fishbourne Roman Palace and a shopping trip to Bristol.

Members of the committee continue to attend twice yearly Network meetings with other West Dorset u3as, hosted by each u3a in turn, where ideas can be exchanged and problems discussed. It's a case of 'compare and contrast' and there is always something of interest to discover.

Two members of the committee are standing down this year. Julian Rosbrook has organised the talks for our monthly meetings for several years and has found a wide range of speakers and topics with which to entertain and inform us. I should add here that Julian unfortunately suffered a stroke recently, but we have just heard that he is making good progress and that it's hoped that he will return home tomorrow. We send our very best wishes for his continued recovery.

Maggie Haworth has looked after the Press and Publicity slot as an ex-officio member of the committee and has publicised the name of Bridport & District u3a both in local publications and on local radio. Thanks are due to both of them for their hard work on members' behalf.

I was intending to stand down myself after five years as Chairman and was hopeful of finding a successor. However, this has not yet happened and, in view of the strange circumstances in which we find ourselves at the moment, it seemed only right to remain in post until things can return to some degree of normality. I'd like to thank the committee for all their support; I couldn't wish for a better group of people to work with.

u3a meetings haven't come to a complete stop due to coronavirus, far from it, as several groups have managed to organise online meetings through various platforms, emails have been flying around and phone lines buzzing. Plus there have been a host of links provided to rather more public platforms to enable us all to continue to 'Learn, laugh and live'. All this continues as I write and looks like doing so for some time to come; if nothing else many of us may discover more about our computers than we ever thought possible by the time face-to-face meetings can resume!

To finish, I'd like to thank the committee again for their continued hard work in keeping our u3a running as the active, vibrant organisation it is. In particular, a big thank you is due to Mick Holgate for the enormous amount of work he has put into getting this AGM organised and without whom it's unlikely we would be having an AGM at all. Thanks must also go to our army of wonderful Group Leaders for all the work they do in organising our many interest groups; these are really the life-blood of any u3a, and we have a particularly varied selection. And thanks too, to all the others who make tea, put out and clear away chairs and all the other tasks that go on behind the scenes; your help is invaluable.

6. TREASURER'S PRESENTATION OF ACCOUNTS

The Treasurer reported that the financial year end has been changed from 28th February for ease of management and now ends on 31st December. Currently, because of the difficulty in arranging for the countersigning of cheques, the paying of bills is being dealt with on-line, with the Chairman authorising all payments.

The branch membership has seen an increase year on year and at 31st December was 646 including 17 associate members, and income for the year was £9630. The large items of expenditure in the accounts are payments to The Third Age Trust, for the fee of £3.50 per member and Postage at £1,100 for distribution of the Third Age Matters magazine.

During the year, two laptops, a projector and small items of equipment for the Singers were purchased. All equipment is being written off over 4 years.

The current balance now stands at £13,625. Some of this was to have been spent on our Tenth Anniversary celebrations that have been postponed because of the Covid-19 virus.

Valerie wished thanks to Kevin Senior, our Independent Financial Examiner, to be recorded.

A question was raised by Alan Hobby who asked for clarification of the rent subsidy shown in the report. The Treasurer explained that some groups that needed to rent premises for meetings have 50% of the hire cost paid by the u3a. This is a practice that has been in place for the last three years.

7. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL EXAMINER

76 members had voted in advance to renew the appointment of Kevin Senior as Independent Financial Examiner. This motion was proposed by Stephen Godfrey and seconded by Vincent Sheppard, unanimously supported, and carried by the meeting.

8. ELECTION OF OFFICERS TO THE COMMITTEE

The following current members had been nominated and seconded: Pat Grafton, John Collins and Valerie Gierth, to serve as Chairman, Business Secretary and Treasurer respectively. All 78 of members' advance votes were in favour of their re-election, which was proposed by Vincent Sheppard and seconded by Stephen Godfrey. The motion was unanimously supported, and carried by the meeting.

9. ELECTION OF GENERAL COMMITTEE

Current committee members, Paul Tebbutt, Diana Coleridge, Tony Dix, Mick Holgate and Heather Harvey are standing for re-election, together with Maria Forbes for election, as she was co-opted and welcomed onto the committee during the year. All 78 of members' advance votes were in favour of their election which was proposed by Alastair Forbes and seconded by Philip Morgan-Smith. The motion was unanimously supported, and carried by the meeting.

Special thanks were given to Karen Herbert who has volunteered to serve on the Committee. It is intended to co-opt Karen onto the committee at the first committee meeting following this AGM.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting 2.24pm.

Signed:

Date:.....

ANNEX

APOLOGIES

June Ruffle, Denise Rowe, Antony and Judith Chaffey, Maureen Green, Sandy Anderson, Alan and Heather Hayball, Judith Baldwin, Barbara Stanley, Liz Tomlin, Anne Cleveland, Alan and Gwen Kinghorn, Debora Bowker, Heather Harrow, Lynda Scott-Williams, John Hind, Lesley Crocombe, Ahmet and Monica Erkan, Terry Brockhurst, Marghi Peacock, Trish Adams, Jenny Malyon, Kathleen Stevens, Terry Harrison, Val Johnson, Celia Evans, Glenda Willis, Richard and Elizabeth Russell, Elizabeth and Vaughan Skinner, Vicki and Stuart Owers, Veronica Butler, Mary Thomas, Sue Jones, Ro and Keith Windsor, Suzie Fry, John Haylock, Maggie Haworth, Irene Usher, Helen Jones, Charles Hallsworth, Jill Christison, Enid Bulpit, Alan Weston, Sue Pedlingham, Elizabeth and John Fisher, Myrtle Pacey, Lynne Thomas, Keith Bourne, Susann Winlow, John and Christina Walker, Marilyn Harrison, Alec Collins, Stella and Dennis Cotton, Anne Holbrook, Brenda Gibbons, Pammy Oakes-Eccles, Lin Luff, Christine and Adam Peat, Jill Harrison, Jim and Liz Basker, Peter Eaglestone, Penny Pither, Marilyn Elgie, Andrew Conroy, Sue Poppitt, John Thrower, Amanda Copp, Ann Brown, Peter and Lyn Sandall, Sallyann Stoodley, Elfrida Savigear, Dawn Johnson, Jean Keayes, John Haylock, Maggie Jamieson, Philippa Grier, Valerie Jones, Valerie Draper, Roger Smith, Ann Langridge, Robin Amswych, Chris Morris, Graham Brown, Jean Keayes, Gillian Summers, Peter Marchant, Glenda Willis, Lois Pearson, Veronica Butler.