

**Minutes of the 32nd Annual General Meeting of the Haywards Heath and District u3a.
Hybrid Meeting held in Cuckfield Baptist Church on 3rd October 2022 at 2.00pm**

Present:	Wendy Gundry	Chairman
	Amanda Trevitt	Vice Chairman
	Paul Roberts	Secretary
	Eric Bassett	Treasurer
	Susanne Roberts	Membership Secretary
	Philip Metherell	Groups Coordinator
	Anne Morrison	Venues Officer
	Peter Caddy	Webmaster
	Pam Wheeler	Speakers Secretary
	David Gee	Membership Liaison Officer
	Chris Roe	Beacon Administrator
	David Waite	Publicity Officer
	Diana Cawdery	SUN Representative ex officio

Plus 47 members present, 22 by Zoom and 47 postal/electronic votes. Total 129 members eligible to vote. As the membership was 910 members at the time of the AGM, a quorum would have been 91 which was easily surpassed.

Chris Roe explained the process of voting via the Webinar to all those connected via zoom.

Prior to the AGM formalities, **Stephen Hand** of the **National Coastwatch Institution** gave a brilliant presentation which offered a fascinating insight into, what must be, the Cinderella of the emergency services. A subsequent collection yielded £195 which will be sent to the Shoreham branch of NCI.

1. Welcome and Introduction: On behalf of Chair Wendy Gundry and the other members of the Committee, Hon. Secretary Paul Roberts welcomed everyone present and those on zoom to the 32nd Annual General Meeting of the Haywards Heath and District u3a. He then introduced the committee to the membership.

2. Apologies: There were 19 apologies but the 47 postal voters should be included with that number.

3. Tributes:

Paul Roberts asked for a few moment's silence to remember the following members who had died during the year

Jean Hart	John Foster	Doug Durrant	Michael Misler
Teresa Nash	Eileen Hilton	Ann Best	Victoria Trew
Isobel Duncan	Julia Tytheridge	John Stevens	

4. Approval of the Minutes of the 31st AGM held on 23rd September 2021.

Paul Roberts said that the minutes had been available for perusal on our website for many months. The resolution was approved by 128 votes for, with 1 abstention.

5. Matters Arising: There were no matters arising

6. Chairman's Address:

Wendy Gundry said that she was pleased to say that our u3a has survived the restrictions of Covid and is now emerging again into a thriving organisation. Since the start of the year we have had 117 new members making our total membership just over 900 and, whilst a few groups have closed, new ones have opened and we still have over 80 active groups. Being a popular subject brings its own problems and I am aware of over ten groups that are full to capacity – if your group is full and you have a waiting list it would be great if someone were able to step up as a leader to start up another group to welcome those waiting members or, indeed, if you are a waiting member you may like to consider starting a group.

Whilst our groups are thriving and enjoying the opportunity to resocialise with their fellow members our face-to-face and zoom meetings are not doing so well. Over recent months attendance at zoom meetings have often been below 20 and we cannot sustain running these as we still have to pay a speaker and Chris Roe has to give up his time to facilitate. There are a number of zoom platforms out there including The u3a HQ platform and Mirthy. For our face-to-face meetings attendance is also low and whilst we try to get speakers covering a wide variety of subjects again we cannot sustain running costs with such low turnouts. Therefore for 2023 we are looking at a change of focus to re-energise our u3a and try to provide opportunities for our members to socialise, network and hopefully learn something along the way. To this end we now have a Membership Liaison Officer – David Gee – who is working hard trying to touch base with as many members as possible in order to get an idea of what you like or don't like or would like to give us new ideas for 2023. Although David has not received a great response to his questionnaires he has spoken directly to a number of you and I am pleased to hear from him that there is a great deal of satisfaction out there and some useful constructive suggestions which we will be able to take on board as we move forward. We have had a number of suggestions for face-to-face meetings – possibly moving away from the idea of a speaker into a more social event. We are aware also that a few of our members would like zoom meetings to continue.

So we currently do not have a planned programme for 2023 – we intend to have a change of focus on what we offer and your committee will be working hard over the next couple of months to put a plan in place. However, we need you to play your part as well. Paul's ebulletin is a huge success amongst those who take the time to read it. We have been asked to produce a more calendar like structure – this is available on the website and in Paul's last ebulletin he included the link. We need you to read our communications and take on board events that are happening, spread the word amongst your fellow u3a members to ensure that everyone knows what is available and can join in.

A couple of successes I would just like to touch on are the much-enjoyed Betty Murrell Day. We had a slight hiccup with one of our local speakers getting lost and having to return home. How lucky are we within our organisation to have people who can step into the breach and our very own Philip Metherell kept us thoroughly entertained for the whole hour. Mind you this wouldn't have been quite so easy if Philip hadn't happen to have a thumb drive on him and Paul hadn't happen to have a laptop in the car! How lucky was that. For 2023 Amanda will be taking over the arrangement of the Betty Murrell Day and I am very much looking forward to attending as an attendee – I am sure she will do a wonderful job.

Another huge success was our showcase event – thank you to all the groups who manned tables to let people know what their group had to offer. We had a marvellous response from the public – in the main due to our publicity team, led by David Waite, who made sure information posters were visible all around the area and Amanda who stood outside and encouraged many a passer-by to come and have a look.

We also had a lovely Summer Concert filled with the usual delights of the orchestra, singing, monologue, readings etc. Christine is now busy arranging the Winter Concert Saturday 10th December – save the date.

We are hoping to take a tree this year at the Cuckfield Church Christmas Tree Festival so if you have an opportunity pop along, support the church and see our tree which I am sure will be beautifully decorated as always.

I have very much enjoyed being your Chair over the last few years, through the highs and the lows, but I will be stepping down at the 2023 AGM – over the last few years we have dealt with many governance areas and I would like to spend this last year working on enhancing the social and physical side of our organisation so please get in touch with David Gee to give him your ideas of what we can do.

Now for the thank yous. I would like to thank all the serving members of the committee for their continuing hard work and support for me and for the organisation along with those who work behind the scenes, without whom the smooth running of the u3a would not be quite so smooth. Also, thanks go out to the Group Leaders and Convenors for their efforts to try to keep the various groups viable.

So hopefully moving on with a positive vibe for 2023 are there any questions from the floor.

7. Treasurer's Report and Adoption of Accounts: Eric Bassett.

Paul Roberts explained that the reason there were two years accounts being presented was that our AGM had moved from April to October and the 2020 -21 accounts were not ready to be presented at our last AGM. Our treasurer Eric stated that the notes on the reverse of the statement of accounts gave a fuller explanation of the figures in the accounts. Our 2020 - 21 income was badly affected by COVID restrictions on group meetings. However we still had fixed costs to meet, with zoom licenses and equipment being purchased to enable groups to keep meeting electronically. He also made a plea for members paying various fees by BACS to indicate what those payments are for!

The proposal is that the annual report and accounts for the years ending 31st July 2021 & 2022 be received and approved.

The resolution was proposed by Graham Stanley, seconded by Alan Colgate and was passed by 128 votes for and 1 abstention.

8. To approve the appointment of the Independent Examiner of the Accounts for 2022/23

Eric Bassett recommended that Geoff Martin be appointed Independent Examiner of Accounts for 2022/2023. He extended thanks to Geoff for the work and advice he has given.

This was proposed by Pam Smitherman seconded by Jean Marshal and was carried by 128 votes for and 1 abstention.

9. Election of Committee Members:

The Secretary indicated that u3a officers Chairman Wendy Gundry and Treasurer Eric Bassett were elected for 3 year periods and so did not need re-electing this year. All other members of the committee were willing to stand for another year. In addition, Amanda Trevitt and Paul Roberts would require to be elected.

Amanda Trevitt was proposed by Pam Wheeler and seconded by Diana Cawdery.

Paul Roberts was proposed by Susanne Roberts and seconded by David Waite.

The resolution that the committee be elected en-bloc for 2022 - 23 was proposed by Bridget Lane and seconded by Janice Spence and was carried by 126 in favour, with 3 abstentions.

10. Annual Subscriptions for 2022 – 2023

The Secretary reported that in an effort to keep our fees as low as possible and following feedback, the TAM magazine is now an optional extra. Fees for 2022 - 23 are £10 without TAM and £13.35 with TAM. We no longer have joint or associate membership. General running costs are continuing to increase. In addition, TAT are proposing to increase capitation fees by *'an amount related to the annual increase in the UK's state pension from the 1st April 2023 and each year thereafter* (Paul Roberts informed the members that he would be attending the TAT AGM to vote against this proposal – to some applause!)

To meet these increased costs, the committee propose that the membership fees for 2023 -24 will be £14 exclusive of TAM and £14 + the cost of TAM for those who wish to receive it. The secretary relayed some local u3a membership fees which varied between £14 and £40. He also indicated some of the various expenses that the membership fee was spent on. Bill Nicolle inquired as to the proportion of members who

have opted to receive the TAM magazine, the figure of 80 was mentioned – it was subsequently found to be 184! He asked if there might be a more efficient way of individuals receiving the magazine – there wasn't because of the way TAT process and account for it. The resolution was proposed by Deidre Palmer, seconded by Christina Bentley and was carried by 123 in favour with 6 abstentions.

11. Hall hire fees

Since COVID we have received more requests for groups to meet in halls rather than in member's homes. With increases in light, heat, rates etc. hall hirers are increasing their hourly rates. In order to continue to facilitate the option of hall space for groups, the committee propose to increase the hourly charge to be paid by group members from 35p to 50p per hour from 1st January 2023. The Secretary reported that our principal venue for meetings, HH Methodist Church, would be increasing their hall hire rates from 1st January 2023 and has reserved the right to increase them again during the year if energy costs continue to rise. The committee appreciated that many groups have already collected hall hire fees from their members for the entire year up to 31st July and that asking convenors to collect another 15p/hour per meeting from Jan – Jul was an inconvenience but thought that it wouldn't be too difficult a problem for them. There were a few comments from the floor asking for clarification. Graham Stanley advised that the hiring of Lindfield Church was by way of a donation and asked if this would still be the case – it is. Bill Nicolle commented that it would be a hassle if this hall hire fee increase (in January) were to become an annual event. The Chairman agreed and said that if it looked like this was to be a more regular occurrence then the committee would have to find another way of advising the membership of any proposed increase. Gordon Davis suggested that groups collected fees on a 6 monthly basis – this was thought to be a good idea and some groups already do.

The resolution was proposed by Gordon Davis, seconded by Janice Spence and was carried by 125 votes with 4 abstentions.

12. Questions or Comments from the floor

The Chair then asked if there were any questions or comments from members. Jean King thanked speaker secretary Pam Wheeler for the quality of speakers she has booked throughout the year – this was applauded. Bill Nicolle expressed reservations about whether we were moving into a 2 pronged u3a, between zoom meetings and non-zoom, face-to-face, meetings. Can /should zoom be continued long term? The Chair said that zoom meetings are sparsely attended and that although we are aware, from reports to Membership Liaison officer David Gee, that some members with mobility problems are keen for them to continue, we are a social organisation and must get back to a pre-covid situation regarding meetings.

David Gee, reiterated that some members, for various reasons, have asked for zooms to continue. The Chair said that she is in favour of a hybrid AGM because of quorum requirements but wants meetings to be face-to-face but members need to turn up. Sarah Cuthbertson said that her Latin group still met on zoom because some of her members had mobility problems. Chris Roe said the computer group still met on-line as it was more convenient. Alan Colgate pointed out that only 2 or 3 years ago, nobody had heard of zoom! Janet Davis asked if we had an agreement with Burgess Hill and HH&Ditchling u3a to join one their groups if we didn't have a particular group – and vice versa. The Chair said that we had a very good relationship with HH&D and we were invited to attend their monthly meetings on production of a membership card. We also had joint groups. Paul Roberts mentioned that one of his Ukulele group was a member of HH&D u3a and could attend our ukulele group without having to join HH u3a as they didn't have a ukulele group.

The meeting closed at 16.00

Signed:

Dated: October 2022

**Wendy Gundry
HHu3a Chairman**

