

**Minutes of the 33rd Annual General Meeting of the Haywards Heath and District u3a.
Hybrid Meeting held in Cuckfield Baptist Church on 12th October 2023 at 2.00pm**

Present:	Wendy Gundry (WG)	Retiring Chair
	Philip Metherell (PM)	Chairman Elect
	Paul Roberts (PR)	Hon. Secretary
	Eric Bassett (EB)	Treasurer
	Susanne Roberts (SR)	Membership Secretary
	Amanda Trevitt (AT)	Ambassador
	Anne Morrison (AM)	Venues Officer
	Peter Caddy (PC)	Webmaster
	Pam Wheeler (PW)	Retiring Speakers Secretary
	Eric Whitaker (EW)	Membership Liaison Officer
	Chris Roe (CR)	Beacon Administrator
	David Waite (DW)	Publicity Officer
	Carole Andrews (CA)	Social Secretary
	Diana Cawdery	SUN Representative ex officio

Plus **70** members present and **14** by Zoom. There were also **55** postal/electronic voters. Total **139** members eligible to vote. As the membership was **931** members at the time of the AGM, a quorum would have been **93** which was easily surpassed.

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

1. Welcome and Introduction: On behalf of retiring Chair Wendy Gundry, Chair designate Philip Metherell and the other members of the Committee, Hon. Secretary Paul Roberts welcomed everyone present and those on zoom to the 33nd Annual General Meeting of the Haywards Heath and District u3a.

2. Apologies: **David Gee - Groups Co-ordinator** and 8 other apologies were received.

3. Tributes:

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

Patricia Newton	John Kinchington	Shirley Robinson	Vera Stevens
Rona Sharp	Monica Marchant	Alastair Porter	David Stevens
Robert O'Brien	Steven Mitchell	Pat Clarke	Derrick Grover

4. Approval of the Minutes of the 32nd AGM held on October 2022.

PR said that the minutes had been available for perusal on our website for many months and called for a vote that the minutes be approved

Proposer: **Geraldine Mills**

Secunder: **Ian Bain**

The resolution was approved unanimously.

5. Matters Arising: There were no matters arising.

6. Chairman's Address:

Following on from my address at last year's AGM we currently have 928 members. Whilst we do lose some of our members, mainly because of lack of mobility or moving, we continue to get new members joining us 129 in the last year. Our groups continue to evolve – some close as they have run their time and others open – we still have 74 groups – something for everyone.

You may remember last year I reported that Zoom was not getting the attendance numbers to make it worthwhile and in line with reserving funds and providing what our members want we have ceased running Zoom meetings for the time being – the last giving a history of Chichester had 22 attendees – possibly the largest number for some time.

Following a survey of members and many discussions within committee in the last year we have focused more on social activities, rather than stand-alone speakers. Our Bingo, Beetle Drive and Quizzes have all been very successful and it is great to hear the conversation and laughter that goes on during these making them a real social opportunity – but there is a definite competitive element!

As you know Pam Wheeler, our social secretary, has decided to stand down this year, having served on the committee for a good number of years, during which time she has sourced out many interesting speakers, with a diversity of subject matter, both face to face and virtually. The committee have really appreciated all the effort Pam has put into this role over the years

‘Applause’.

Carole Andrews is taking up the reins now and I look forward to seeing the 2024 calendar. As always the success of social events, of whatever nature, not only depends on the person organising but also on our members by attending and supporting. Paul’s ebulletin continues to keep us fully informed of what is going on, as well as the calendar and other information on our website. We need you to read these communications and take on board what is happening, spread the word amongst your fellow u3a members to ensure that everyone knows what is available and can join in.

The Betty Murrell day this year was another success with over 90 members attending. The speakers were interesting, some more than others, but I think one of the biggest successes with this event over the years has been the opportunity for members to come together, get to meet people they haven’t seen before, admire the work created by some of our Groups, as well as enjoy a good lunch. It was heartening this year to get some feedback from people who had known Betty advising that they thought she would be delighted with how well her legacy had lasted and how much enjoyment it had brought to some of our u3a members. There is still limited funds available for Carole to work with for 2024.

An issue many of you will already be aware of is in respect of our funding and how we can continue to offer benefits to our members, whilst maintaining an appropriate reserve budget in case of any unexpected occurrence. We showed how robust we were as an organisation throughout COVID and it is important as we now stretch out to offer more to our members that we keep an eye on the budget. This may well mean another small increase in our membership fees next year and also a look at hall hire contributions from groups. I wholeheartedly support any slight increase which will enable the HHu3a to continue and from conversations with many members I think this is a general view throughout our membership. So I would ask you all to work with your committee and support them as they try to balance the books and continue to provide as many benefits as possible to continue our ability to learn, laugh, live as a community of like-minded people.

So now the thank you s. I would like to thank all the serving members of the committee for their continuing hard work and support for me and the organisation, along with those who work tirelessly behind the scenes. Also, thank you to Group Leaders and Convenors for their efforts to try to keep the various groups up and running.

As you know this is my last event as Chair of the HHu3a being ably succeeded by Philip Metherell. I would like to take this opportunity to say how much I have enjoyed my time as your Chair since Spring 2018 – the highs and the lows, the challenges and the successes all culminating in our thriving u3a. So to finish I would just like to thank all of you, committee and members for your support and friendship over the years and I look forward to continuing within the HHu3a and enjoying some of the benefits on offer.

‘Applause’

7. Treasurer's Report and Adoption of Accounts:

Treasurer **Eric Bassett** said that this was probably the last accounts he would present that had been affected by Covid.

For the last 3 years, our finances have been affected, either by the pandemic itself or the recovery process that we are still going through.

Our reserves at the end of the year was £9,300 whereas we would normally expect it to be £16 -£17,000. This was due to the fact that we reduced membership fee from £14 to £10 and had to buy the necessary equipment and licenses for zoom meetings so that we could continue to function. All of the premises we use for hall-hire have put up their costs. We currently have £18,000 in our reserve which will, in the main, be the only income available for the year to meet all the costs needed to run our u3a.

PR thanked the Treasurer and called for a vote on the resolution that:

The annual report and accounts for the year ending 31st July 2022 be received and approved.

Proposer: **Julia Vokes**

Secunder: **Martin Chapman**

The resolution was approved unanimously

8. To approve the appointment of the Independent Examiner of the Accounts for 2023/24

Eric Bassett recommended that Geoff Martin be appointed Independent Examiner of Accounts for 2023/2024.

Proposer: **Alan Colgate**

Secunder: **Jean King**

The resolution was approved unanimously.

9. Annual Subscriptions for 2024 – 2025

PR said that the annual membership fees are used to cover costs imposed by the Third Age Trust as well as the cost of general administration/governance eg. printing costs associated with the GIB and membership cards and postage to non-email members, subsidising hall hire charges etc.

Consideration has been given to various means of raising additional funds to meet increasing costs and the committee believe that this small increase is the most effective and least onerous across the membership.

Max Woodward said that Crawley u3a charge £16 membership fee + £4 for the TAM magazine.

The resolution is that individual membership be increased to £15 from August 1st 2024.

Proposer: **Mike Tyrell**

Secunder: **Deidre O'Brien**

The resolution was passed with one objection.

10. Hall hire fees for 2024 – 2025

The committee proposal is that hall-hire fees be raised from the present 50p/hour to 75p/hour effective from August 1st 2024.

PM said that he would like to amend the proposal for the rise to be to £1 instead of 75p. He said that this would bring us into line with Crawley and Burgess Hill.

Deidre O'Brien pointed out that this would be quite an increase for members belonging to several groups and could the costs be split in two? **Carolyn Nurse** agreed, and pointed out that some members may belong to several groups so splitting the hall hire fees should remain an option.

PM commented that although this would increase the workload of the individual group leader/convener and Treasurer, this could be done.

PM also raised the matter of inaccurate membership records on Beacon; if we don't know how many members are in a group which meets in a hall – we don't know how much to expect from that group.

Due to the poor sound quality on zoom, **Lesley Bright**, indicated some confusion as to what the proposal was – 75p (as indicated on the proxy voting form) or £1.

WG replied that although the original proposal was for 75p, hall hire fees have risen and were continuing to rise and £1 was considered to be a better proposition.

Although this proposal couldn't be accepted at the AGM (because 55 members had already voted via proxy for 75p) **WG** asked if members present would be in favour of £1 from 1st August 2024 and asked **PR** to canvass the greater membership as to whether they would vote for or against this proposal.

There was some confusion, but the original 75p resolution was proposed.

Proposer: **Edward Handley**

Secunder: **Maureen Rea**

Although there were some reservations voiced including from **Michelle Burdis** and **Mike Tyrell**, and some confusion about 'how much' and 'when' from **Pam Smitherman**, the resolution was passed.

A further straw poll was carried out to see if there was general agreement for a rise to £1 from 1st August 2024. This engendered more debate with **SR** indicating her objection to the doubling of hall hire fees. **Mike Tyrell** pointed out that larger groups would be subsidising smaller groups. **AM** said that there is a minimum payment of £10 per meeting expected. **Jean King** said that we used to have our AGM much closer to our year starting date of August 1st so we didn't have this long wait between AGM proposals and implementation. **WG** replied that we changed the month of our AGM so that the financial statement was more current.

A question was asked about how much individual venues charged us for hiring their premises. **PM** and **AM** gave the figures for some of our venues but indicated that the prices were going to rise in the New Year. **AM** also said that we were also having to pay for the extra 30 minutes set up time.

Michelle Burdis objected to the rise to £1 as it might have the effect of excluding potential new members on cost grounds.

Lesley Bright asked if the committee had thought about being able to use their discretion in cases of hardship.

WG said that this could be something for the committee to discuss in the future.

Pam Smitherman agreed with **SR** that doubling the present hall hire fee was too much.

A point was raised that splitting the annual hall hire fee into half yearly payments would be an extra burden on 'volunteer' group leaders. **WG** said that this would be a decision for individual group leaders.

Max Woodward told the members that Crawley u3a split payments into 3 terms.

Maureen Rea asked if it might be better to raise the membership fee to £20.

11. Election of Committee Members:

PR introduced the Committee by name and title.

Two new members of the committee have to be voted on,

Eric Whitaker has been nominated by **SR** and seconded by **PM**

Carole Andrews has been nominated by **AT** and seconded by **PR**

The other members of the committee, with the exception of **WG** & **PW** who are retiring from the committee are prepared to remain and be voted back onto the committee en-masse.

The proposal is that the committee as previously indicated be elected/re-elected.

Proposer. **Ian Bain**

Secunder. **Martin Chapman**

The resolution was carried unanimously.

12. Questions or Comments from the floor

Maureen Rea asked ‘now that **PM** is our new Chairman, who is going the Groups Co-ordinator? – the answer is **David Gee**.

Max Woodward stated that Crawley u3a had a ‘short-mat-bowls’ group and would welcome new members.

Kevin Laue thanked the committee for their hard work – ‘Applause’

PM thanked **PW & WG** for their long service to HH u3a who were each presented with a bouquet. **WG**, our longest serving Chair was also awarded Life Membership. ‘Applause’

The meeting closed at 15.10 with Tea/coffee and cake and biscuits - **AT** proposed a vote of thanks to the **RUGs**, who she named, for their vital contribution to the meeting. – ‘Applause’

Subsequent to the end of the meeting, members attending via zoom indicated that they weren’t able to contribute to the ‘Comments from the floor’ due to the poor sound quality of zoom.

Neville Clay asked if future u3a meetings could be held in Haywards Heath, eg. the Methodist Church, as Cuckfield Baptist Church was an inconvenient venue for those members without private transport.

Lesley Bright said that in speaking to certain MSDC councillors re. Clair Hall, some of them had not heard of the u3a and had no idea of the size of our membership or what facilities we require for an organisation of nearly 1,000 members! Could the committee strongly raise our profile with MSDC.

Signed:

Dated: _____

Philip Metherell
HHu3a Chairman