



## Minutes of the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting

held at Sandbach Town Hall on Monday 6 November 2017

**Committee Present:** Alan Casey (Chairman), Louise Adams, Alan Butler, Kevin Dean, Judi Hewitt, Barrie Hacking, Alice Holmes, Geoff Coldwell, Alex Black, Jinty Pyke, Geoff Pyke and Linda Richardson

**Present:** 137 members

**Apologies:** Peter Doughty, Jill Brown, Ken Brown, Ruth Wheelan and Trevor Mills

- 1. Welcome:** Alan Casey welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed delight at seeing so many attending. The meeting would be followed by a speaker on the subject of regional dialects which promised to be entertaining.
- 2. Minutes of 2016 AGM:** The Chairman asked for a proposer for the Minutes of the 2016 AGM to be adopted as a correct record. Proposed by Lesley Farrar and seconded by Paul Hebden. Vote – in favour.

### **3. Chairman's report:**

#### **Membership Statistics**

A year ago, we had just over 1200 members, we now have over 1300 and it looks almost certain that we will reach more than 1400 during the current year, making the growth rate is at least 100 members a year.

We now have 95 groups, six more than last year. These include extra geology, photography, bridge and table tennis, but we have two completely new groups, walking football and the brewing appreciation study group.

I would like to thank all the group leaders. Including the deputies, we now have 125. These are the foundation of our organisation, they make it all possible.

#### **Activities**

I think it's good that our U3A offers such a wide range of activities. There are some which provide mental stimulation, and if these are too sedentary, there are others focusing on physical exercise to keep us fit.

Along with this, there are the social events for everyone to enjoy.

We have: Shopping trips, parties, theatre trips, barn dances, city trips, various outings and of course, very good value and enjoyable holidays.

The following are the members of our social committee:

- For theatre trips it's: Alice Holmes, Barbara Rogers, Pauline Holt
- For day trips: Mal Austin, Jenny Rowlands, Kate Croydon
- For holidays: Mo & John Page
- Doreen Hebden produces the tickets, and Don Joy the posters.

- Special thanks to Alice Holmes as main contact and coordinator.

There is another member of the social team, that's Val Williams. Val organises our Members' Mornings and guest speakers and we have had some fascinating talks this year.

Val is retiring from the role of Members' Morning Organiser and would like to thank her for her hard work.

We had two very good and very popular quizzes organised by Bill Dowell, Keith & Jan Poynton, Liz Alcock and Kevin Dean.

But on a much sadder note, we lost Geoff Miller earlier this year. Geoff used to keep the quiz scores but some years ago he was U3A Treasurer. He also ran a beginners' computer group and showed me the ropes when I volunteered to run a similar group. In later years he always offered help and support and indeed he will be sadly missed.

### **New Website and On-Line System - SWISH**

'Swish' stands for Sandbach Web Integrated Support & Help, which is what we are calling our new on-line facility and it's about to happen.

SWISH will provide:

- On-line joining, and renewal with safe on-line card payments.
- More information – for example, which groups have vacancies.
- Members will be able to apply to join groups or trips, where there are vacancies, by just clicking a button.
- It will have facilities to help group leaders; to make their life easier, while they remain in full control.
- Lots of benefits for the organisers, communications, finance and especially membership administration.
- And it will work on all our devices: computers, iPhones, iPads and Androids.

The Swish team are: Kevin Dean, Louise Adams, Geoff Coldwell, Barry Hacking, Linda Richardson, and myself.

We will keep the off-line system in operation for those who need it. But we are working very hard to make the new system as clear and as simple to use as possible, hopefully an ideal springboard for those wishing to take the plunge and gently surf the internet!

You will start to see changes very soon when our new website goes-live. At first it will simply be informative but gradually the new features, like being able to apply to join groups, will be introduced. It may well take a year before all the features are available, but rather than hurry we want this system to work well, to be something that members appreciate and that we are all proud of.

### **More Thanks**

I would like to thank the following:

- Those in the Group Development project who helped establish new groups. They are currently resting, but ready to spring back into action when needed.
- The people who have joined our volunteers list and are helping in many ways with stewarding, library duty, admin tasks and organising group sign-up day.
- The postal distribution network of people who stride out to deliver our mailings and save us large sums of money
- The tea and coffee ladies who we can always rely on to provide good refreshments with a smile. They are: Alice Holmes; Brenda Wayman; Sheila Jessup; Sheila Mellin and Diane Hasprey.

Many thanks to them all

Finally, I would like to thank Alan Butler our vice-chairman for all his help and support. Alan is nominated to take over as chairman and I'm sure under his leadership our U3A will continue in all its success.

In addition to me, there are three other committee members standing down these are Peter Doughty and Linda Richardson. Linda has served a full three years and has worked tirelessly on the website, on data analysis and helping to organising events such as group sign up.

The third person is someone who deserves very special thanks. The job is probably the most difficult but Louise Adams, has been an excellent treasurer, an excellent committee member and someone who's opinion is always the first to be sought.

### **New Committee Members**

At the AGM we appoint and welcomed our new committee members, and it is important for our organisers to change. It is a requirement of our constitution but also it is important that we take advantage of the experience and abilities throughout our membership, and to help bring us all together to achieve our main objective which is *to thoroughly enjoy ourselves*.

**4. Treasurer's Report:** Louise Adams, Treasurer, presented the year end accounts to the meeting. Louise began by thanking Linda Richardson and Peter Doughty for their assistance with various financial tasks over the year and also John Page who had again audited our accounts for his help and advice.

Louise went on to highlight some points on the accounts for members' interest and information. She was pleased to report that the excellent control of the social account by Alice Holmes had led to us being in profit this year as opposed to last year's slight deficit.

The increase in subscriptions received reflects the growth in our U3A although it is not an indication of exact membership numbers as group leaders are offered free membership albeit some leaders do choose to pay a subscription. The Third Age Trust per capita charge and the charge for the quarterly magazine has gone up slightly so that out of the £8 subscription we pay £3.50 to U3A, £2.40 for the magazine and that leaves just £2.10 per member for our use.

The significant change has been the increase in venue costs and this is likely to continue year on year. We have more groups coming on stream and therefore new venues have to be found.

Gift Aid income is also up on last year and members are encouraged to tick this box on their membership renewal as it gives us useful income.

Net worth of our U3A is down on last year but we have maintained a healthy reserve in our savings account to cushion us with six months' worth of expenditure as recommended by the Charities Commission.

Louise thanked those volunteers who had come forward to help with various aspects of financial record keeping etc and felt confident in the knowledge that this will be of great help to the in-coming Treasurer.

In closing Louise thanked everyone for their support over the past 3 years when she has been doing a role which she has greatly enjoyed. Louise added that the prime objective of

the U3A movement is one of it being a mutual aid organisation of life long learning and she hoped that Sandbach U3A would continue to keep this at the forefront of all that we do.

There were no questions on the accounts.

The Chairman asked for the accounts to be adopted. Proposed by Sandy Boyle and seconded by Ann Macaulay. Vote – carried.

- 5. Appointment of Auditor:** As mentioned earlier, John Page had kindly audited our accounts for the past year and has agreed to do so again. The Chairman asked for the meeting's agreement. Proposed by Lu Burnand and seconded by John Adams. Vote – carried.
- 6. Election of Committee Members for 2017/18 en bloc:** The Chairman asked the meeting to agree to the election of new Committee members en bloc and announced that the following members were nominated:
- a. Arnie Laing
  - b. Sandy Boyle
  - c. Paula Reilly-Cooper
  - d. Don Rickards
  - e. Alice Holmes – serving for 4<sup>th</sup> year on Committee

Proposed by John Page and seconded by Ian Richardson. Vote – carried.

- 7. Election of Officers for 2017/18:** The existing Committee has nominated the following people to be Officers for the coming year and the Chairman asked for the meeting to agree these nominations:
- a. Alan Butler – Chairman, currently Vice Chairman
  - b. Arnie Laing – Vice Chairman
  - c. Geoff Coldwell – Treasurer

Proposed by Paul Hebden and seconded by Paul Billington. Vote – carried.

- 8. Questions from the floor:** No questions were raised.
- 9. Any Other Business:** On behalf of all present, John Page thanked Alan Casey for his thoughtful and hard working Chairmanship over the past three years.

The Chairman then handed over to Alan Butler who said he was honoured to take over the Chairmanship and looked forward to moving Sandbach U3A forward for the benefit of all.

The meeting closed at 10.30am.

Signed: ..... Chairman

Date: .....