

## **Report of the AGM of Penrith & North Lakes u3a held on Thursday 17 June 2021**

This meeting was held during the Covid-19 pandemic when Government regulations were in place restricting the number of people who could meet together. The Third Age Trust had advised that AGMs should be held expeditiously and not delayed if possible. The Charity Commission had advised that AGM arrangements could be varied in exceptional circumstances. In light of these matters the trustees decided unanimously at their meeting on the 8 March 2021 to hold the AGM online using the Zoom platform.

In order to ensure good governance and that all members should have the opportunity to participate in the AGM, even if they did not have internet access, all members were sent a full set of AGM documents in advance either by email or post. These consisted of: the agenda, the minutes of the last AGM held on 17 September 2020, the Chair's report, the Treasurer's report and annual accounts, the list of nominees for committee and a voting form should members wish to vote in advance. A total of 55 votes were received in advance of which 45 were proxy votes giving discretion to the Chair, and 3 to another committee member, to cast the vote as they saw fit. There were also 7 advance votes on each individual motion. All the 48 proxy votes were cast in favour of the four motions. Members were also invited in advance to raise any questions or items for Any Other Business but no such matters were raised. A total of 32 members attended the Zoom meeting. These members were advised that if they had already voted in advance they could not vote again. Members who were sharing a screen were given an opportunity to vote separately.

### **1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Val Bowen, Jennifer Smith, Kingsley Smith and Tara Wright

### **2. Minutes of the 2020 AGM**

**Motion:** the motion to adopt the minutes of the last AGM held on 17 September was carried: 73 For, 0 Against and 3 Abstentions.

### **3. Chair's report 2020-21**

We started the year during the early days of our first national lockdown due to the Covid19 pandemic, bringing all but essential services to a halt. The National U3A strapline of "Learn, Laugh & Live" saw us all suddenly concentrating on living as we tried to keep ourselves & others safe. It was not until May 11<sup>th</sup> 2020 that we saw the

first round of easing of restrictions with us being allowed to sunbathe in parks & exercise more than once a day! Groups of 6 were able to meet outside from 28<sup>th</sup> May. There was a gradual easing of other restrictions during June & July though by mid-July social gatherings were still restricted to 6 people though eventually some larger gatherings such as wedding receptions were allowed from mid-August. In an attempt to avert a second wave a 3 tier system of restrictions was introduced on 12<sup>th</sup> Oct with a second lockdown from 5<sup>th</sup> Nov to 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec, and a third lockdown imposed from 5<sup>th</sup> Jan 2021. This was amid surging cases of a new more infectious variant over the Christmas period with Cumbria & Eden being particularly badly affected. Thankfully cases have since fallen to below the national average & once more lockdown restrictions are steadily being lifted. This time though it is with the advantage of a successful vaccination programme which commenced on 8<sup>th</sup> Dec.

The first priority during the first lockdown was to ask convenors to check on any members known to be particularly vulnerable. Keeping our members safe has been an ongoing priority. The Committee held its first virtual meeting using Zoom on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020 & has continued to meet like this once a month since then. Our AGM was postponed from June 18<sup>th</sup> to Sept 17<sup>th</sup> & Mike Head our Chair & Ian Forrest our Groups' coordinator agreed to remain in post till then. By May, groups meeting virtually or using e-mail included Spanish, Italian, German, Book Circle 4, Birdwatching, Geology, Bridge, and Philosophy and Architecture 2. Groups of 6 people were able to meet outdoors as restrictions were lifted, and Cycling, Sketching, Geology, etc. took advantage of this. Groups were assisted by what advice there was available, including that from the Third Age Trust, with advice changing regularly with changing circumstances.

A virtual meeting was held on 27<sup>th</sup> August of Group Convenors to discuss future re-starting of groups. 20 convenors responded & a wide range of views expressed, with many reluctant until a vaccine & more effective treatment was available. Internet use & outdoor meetings were discussed, together with any help available, as well as considering the diverse needs, concerns & risks of members & convenors.

The committee had decided to hold the postponed AGM virtually via Zoom, because of ongoing restrictions, following guidance and to demonstrate good governance. In order that no member should be disadvantaged, all papers were circulated well in advance & opportunities given for members to vote either at the meeting or by post, e-mail or proxy.

Ian Forrest stood down after 5 years as a very able Groups Coordinator, & Mike Head after serving as a hard working Chair & in other Committee roles over 12 years. Mike is particularly to be thanked for the way he facilitated the use of virtual meetings this year, particularly for our Committee, a role which has been very ably continued by our Secretary Andrea Willett, who has gone on to host our on line U3A monthly meetings, as well as helping to facilitate other on-line meetings.

Our monthly meetings resumed on line on 15<sup>th</sup> October & have proved popular with between 40 & 70 attendees. Talks by speakers who give permission, are recorded & are available on request for anyone unable to attend on the day. Sue Tomlinson has continued to put together an interesting selection of speakers & topics & she has written informative reports about these for our Newsletter & the local C&W Herald. The planned Dec concert by Eden Baroque had to be held virtually and despite our worries about possible sound quality, it proved successful. Unfortunately the planned a trip to Bishop Auckland for our July 2020 outing had to be cancelled, as had our annual November Open Day.

The website has been enhanced thanks to Alan Beale and to groups who have contributed photos & updates. This work is ongoing. We have read through & updated our policies & formally reviewed our Data Protection and Privacy policies. We also considered the cost of our subscriptions, as reported in the Feb newsletter, but due to ongoing costs it was decided to maintain the fee at £13 per member. Denise Walker, our treasurer, is to be thanked for her ongoing work, particularly in getting the Beacon IT Finance system up & running from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020. Thanks too to Lesley Hall who manages our Data Base & is the new members' secretary & to Maggie Neale our membership renewals secretary.

Jane Stables is now our Groups' Coordinator. In March 2021 we had 519 members & 49 groups, though at least 2 groups are looking for new convenors.

We are grateful for the work of our convenors, particularly those who have been supportive of members during the past year. Sadly we lost Mike Lawson, the convenor of Indoor Bowls and our thoughts are with his wife and with others who have lost loved ones in these difficult times. Inevitably some convenors & members decide to stand down and so it is also important to continue to recruit new people into the organisation. We are grateful to Jo Laycock who is in charge of publicity & is exploring ways in which we can do this, linking in with publicity from the Third Age Trust. With this in mind the TAT have produced a new logo based on lower case "u3a" and are asking affiliated organisations to use this. A new logo has been produced by Peter Koch-Osborne from the sketching group which we hope you like and presents a more unified image with that of the TAT while maintaining our individuality.

We continue to be indebted to Chris Wilkinson & Robin Acland for editing our Newsletter and helping to keep members in touch, particularly those who are not on-line.

We look forward to better times in the coming year & hope that groups will be able to resume some of their old activities and friendships. Thank you to everyone for your support.

*Josie Dunlop, Chair*

#### **4. Financial Report 2020-21**

Due to the coronavirus pandemic this financial year has been very quiet. Our annual income to the Main account at HSBC bank was **£6,841** and the total expenditure was **£6,949**, giving a deficit of **£108** for the year. The income from membership subscriptions, which remains at £13 per year, totalled **£6,784** which was received from 522 members. The monthly meetings were not able to use Penrith Players this year, but we were able to meet on the internet via Zoom, which was also used by some groups. This facility has cost us just £173 for the year. The committee were all agreed that we should fund the Italian and German groups with the purchases of DVDs and magazine subscriptions, costing £134 altogether. As usual, the postage costs were high, totalling £746, averaging £124 every two months due mainly to the postage of newsletters. Lastly, by far the largest expenditure was the costs to the Third Age Trust of **£4000**, which includes the amount due to the Trust for capitation fees, a contribution to the Third Age Matters magazine and the Beacon licence fee.

The Groups account at HSBC bank has hardly been used this year, with expenses totalling £183 and an income of £82 giving a deficit of £101.

Finally, the balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, for both accounts stand at: Main account **£6,009** and the Groups account at **£3,072**. Adding these amounts to the cash invested at Penrith Building Society (**£10,257**) and the petty cash sum of **£219**, this will total **£19,557**. This gives an overall deficit for the year of **£152**.

These figures show that our reserves are still in a healthy position and can cover any expenses, without generating income, for the foreseeable future.

*Denise Walker, Treasurer*

A question was raised about the capitation fee paid to the Third Age Trust and it was clarified that this is a per member charge based on the numbers of members on 31 March each year; the invoice being received in April. Subscriptions for Penrith & North Lakes u3a are due on 1 April each year. This means that any fall in the number of members (and therefore subscriptions) will be reflected in the Third Age Trust invoice received the following year.

**Motion:** The motion that the accounts for 2020-2021 be adopted was carried: 75 votes For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

#### **5. Appointment of an Independent Financial Examiner**

The Chair explained that the Independent Financial Examiner checked the annual accounts and provided any necessary advice to the Treasurer. A question was raised about the advice and it was clarified that the only advice received was in relation to accountancy matters, it was not financial advice.

**Motion:** The motion that Saint & co be appointed as Independent Financial Examiner was carried: 72 For, 0 Against and 1 Abstention.

## **6. Election of Committee**

The following nominations for committee had been received: Alan Beale, Josie Dunlop, Lesley Hall, Margaret Irving, Jo Laycock, Maggie Neale, Sue Tomlinson, Denise Walker , Jane Stables

**Motion** The motion that the nominees for committee be appointed en bloc was carried: 75 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions

## **7. Any Other Business**

No items were raised by the membership. The Chair offered her formal thanks to Andrea Willett who is resigning from the committee after eight years, during which time she has been the Minutes Secretary and at times also the Vice-Chair and Secretary as well as helping with the equipment and as a representative at the Cumbria and North Cumbria Networks. Andrea Willett thanked the Chair for her remarks and added that it had been a pleasure to work with the Chair and other committee members who were all very helpful and supportive to each other in carrying out their roles.

## **8. Date of next AGM**

Thursday 16 June 2022 was confirmed as the date of the next AGM