

Minutes of the 32nd Annual General Meeting held on Monday 1st August 2022 at Box Moor Playhouse, St John's Road, Hemel Hempstead.

Attendance

There were 67 members present and 145 members (143 on-line and 2 postal) had submitted proxy votes for the motions and election of trustees and officers.

Those present included the following trustees:

Pam Stonebrook	Chair
Peter Bolton	Vice-Chair
Peter Marshall	Treasurer
Ellen Duffy	Secretary
Jean Sniders	Trustee/Membership Secretary
Jenny Thirwell	Trustee/Speakers Secretary
John Dodkins	Trustee/Beacon administrator
Terry Thirwell	Trustee/Equipment officer

Also present were the following Committee associate members:

Mike Sapsard	Web Admin
Anne Menzies	Beacon & Wed Admin

1. Welcome

Pam Stonebrook (Chair) welcomed members to the AGM of the u3a Dacorum and welcomed the Mayor, Councillor John Birnie.

2. Address by the Mayor, Councillor John Birnie

Councillor John Birnie thanked Pam Stonebrook for the invitation to the AGM. He said that he was delighted to attend. He said that he had not realised that as Mayor he was President of u3a Dacorum. He very much approved the u3a movement motto of 'Learn, Laugh, Live'. As a former lecturer in linguistics, he was always keen on learning and he was always up for a good laugh, as well as living. He was continuing to learn as he was researching for a book on slavery, which he hoped to publish. He wished u3a Dacorum well.

3. Apologies

Apologies were received from the following:

Tony Gottlieb	Ros Ridout
Lorna Grimes	John Waller
Tony Lenten	Chris Watson
Judith Murdoch	

4. Explanation of proxy voting

Mike Sapsard said that proxy voting had been set up using Lime Survey, as used for the last AGM, which had been via zoom. Members could vote individually before the AGM or during it. Those without internet access had been provided with postal forms. There had been two sets of postal votes and 143 members had voted on-line for the motions on the agenda and the election of trustees. There would be no voting from the floor on these matters.

If a new motion was raised from the floor, then it would be subject to a vote by a show of hands at the meeting.

5. Approval of the Minutes of the AGM held on Monday 2nd August 2021

There were no comments on the previous minutes.

The following votes were registered:

Postal votes: 1 in favour of approval of the minutes, 1 abstention

Online votes: 132 in favour 7 abstentions, no vote 4

The minutes were therefore approved by a majority vote.

6. Approval of the Special General Meeting on 6th December 2021

There were no comments on the minutes of the Special General Meeting.

The following votes were registered:

Postal votes: 1 in favour of approval of the minutes, 1 abstention

Online votes: 130 in favour 9 abstentions, no vote 4

The minutes were therefore approved by a majority vote.

7. Chair's Report, including Group Secretary's report – Pam Stonebrook

Pam Stonebrook began by thanking her fellow trustees who have made this such an exciting and interesting year. We had started in very uncertain circumstances with most groups meeting using Zoom for a large proportion of the year. Last year we were unsure what impact, if any, the on-going pandemic and new waves of infection might have on our events. We currently have 1,247 members.

In early 2022, groups have slowly started meeting face-to-face. We currently have 89 active groups, including new groups for badminton and mathematics. There has been interest in resurrecting a couple of others, but unfortunately, we have not found leaders for each of them.

Alan Osborn has continued to distribute to members information on each groups' meetings.

We decided to go out into the community to remind the public who we are and how to find us. We had two new banners printed and took stands at a Craft Fair at St Mary's, Hemel Hempstead and then Leverstock Green Fete. Both were very successful and attracted interest in u3a Dacorum.

Behind the scenes, there has been significant work led by Peter Bolton (Vice Chair) on updating the organisation's policy and procedures and these are added to the website once completed.

We have resumed publishing the Digest and intend to do so four times a year. We have already published two - Spring and Summer editions - an autumn edition is scheduled for September. The Digest needs regular contributions from everyone about the activities of groups, including photographs, etc. My thanks go to Barbara Eggesfield, our Editor, who is now standing down after many years of hard work.

However, three trustees, Jenny Thirlwell, Barbara Eggesfield and Margaret Taylor are standing down at this AGM and I would like to thank them for all their hard work. Earlier this year Tim Thompson, our Group Secretary, resigned and he too had contributed greatly towards our success.

After this AGM, we will be down to seven Trustees from twelve in 2021-22. Our constitution provides for between five and fifteen trustees, and we need this number to keep the show on the road. Trustees now need to be elected each year. My aim is to continue not only the good work that has been completed over the last few years, but also to keep all our groups running, but in order to achieve this we really do need members to come forward to volunteer. This is our u3a – let's work together to keep it strong. The trustees Committee works well together and the roles are designed to be manageable. We work well together and listen to each other's suggestions. You all have experience and wisdom to draw on. Please come forward and enjoy the ride.

8. Treasurer's Report – Peter Marshall

The accounts cover the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 and had been accessed 96 times. Overall, our income in 2021-22 was around £31k and expenditure was nearly £21k. There was an income of around £19k generated from subscriptions with a further £2k from gift aid on subscriptions. There was £10k income generated by groups which balanced the costs of halls and refreshments. Other expenditure, included affiliation fee to Third Age Trust of nearly £5k, and other expenses of running the organisation (eg Beacon membership system, postage, publishing the Digest). Our balance sheet shows reserves of £29k, which is much higher than Charity Commission Guidelines.

Our strong financial position reflects the diligent cost savings exercise that the previous committee put together two years ago in the expectation of a significantly reduced membership, which has not happened. The Committee is now considering how to plan to reduce the surplus and reserve in a way that will benefit all members. This might mean generating an operational loss to allow the reserve to be managed down. However, these are still not normal times with uncertainties in relation further Covid outbreaks, energy costs impacting hall hire and other costs and we need to take these factors into account.

Peter Marshall thanked the Book Examiner, Jane Seymour, for her work, advice and reassurance that she had provided for the 2021-22 accounts. Her report had stated that no matter had come to attention that led her to believe that the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 had not been met, and that the accounts were in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standards (FRS 102).

Thank you to fellow trustees for their support and advice.

Harvey Collier was concerned at the level of reserves and suggested that it could be brought down by reducing subscription and hall fees. Peter Marshall responded that there were options that

were being considered, and we needed to be clear why we are doing what we are doing and what the implications would be. The fee for monthly meetings had been removed until the end of 2022.

Another member from the floor noted that the surplus had accrued over a time when many meetings were over zoom and so few hall meetings. As meetings return to pre-Covid levels of being held in hall, the costs could quickly eat into the surplus and so reduce the reserve quite quickly. Peter Marshall responded that the trustees understood the need for caution and we not intending to quickly reduce reserve until sure about what was a sensible level and the likely level of expenses, etc for the next few years.

9. Appointment of Independent Book Examiner

Appointment of Jane Seymour as Book Examiner was passed with the following votes:

Postal votes: 2 in favour

Online votes: 135 in favour, 4 abstentions and 4 no answer.

10. Election of New Committee Members 2022-23

The following were elected:

Name	Role	Postal Vote		Online votes	
		In favour	Abstain	In favour	Abstain
Peter Bolton	Vice Chair	1	1	136	2
Ellen Duffy	Secretary	1	1	136	2
John Dodkins	Trustee	1	1	137	1
Jean Sniders	Trustee	1	1	138	0

11. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

12. End of Official Business

The AGM was formally ended. Thanks were given to those members of the Committee who were retiring.

The meeting closed at 11.03 am.