

Minutes of the 33rd Annual General Meeting held on Monday 7th August 2023 at the Boxmoor Playhouse, St John's Road, Hemel Hempstead.

Attendance

There were 61 members present and 166 members (165 on-line and 1 postal) had submitted proxy votes for the motions and election of trustees and officers.

Those present included the following trustees:

Pam Stonebrook	Chair
Peter Marshall	Treasurer
Ellen Duffy	Secretary
Jean Sniders	Trustee/Membership Secretary
John Dodkins	Trustee/Beacon administrator/Editor
Lee Pace	Trustee/Groups Secretary/Speakers Secretary
Terry Thirwell	Trustee/Equipment officer

Also present were the following Committee associate members:

Anne Menzies	Beacon & Wed Admin
Jane Campbell	candidate trustee

1. Welcome

1.1 Pam Stonebrook (Chair) welcomed members to the AGM of the u3a Dacorum.

2. Apologies

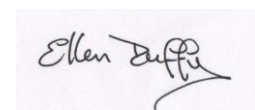
2.1 Apologies were received from the following:

Mike Sapsard	Alan Osborn
Karen Sapsard	Judy Baldwin
Michael Haylin	Margaret Taylor
Lyn Parkyns	

3. Explanation of proxy voting

3.1 Ellen Duffy said that votes can be made online or by post. 165 votes online have been received and 1 postal vote. One member had not received information about voting by post due to incorrect address details. Online voting closed at 10.45. There would be no voting from the floor on these matters.

3.2 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.



4. Approval of the Minutes of the AGM held on Monday 1st August 2022

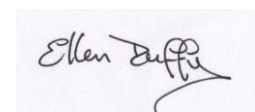
- 4.1 There were no comments on the previous minutes.
- 4.2 The following votes were registered:
Postal votes: 1 in favour of approval of the minutes,
Online votes: 165 in favour 7 abstentions,
The minutes were therefore approved by a majority vote.

5. Chair's Report – Pam Stonebrook

- 5.1 Pam Stonebrook began by saying that there were 1,228 members of Dacorum u3a, 36 of whom have joined since April. This is one of the highest memberships in the region and reflects a thriving organisation. We also are in a strong financial position, which had allowed us to make group meetings free for the first three months of this year as part of the plan to reduce the reserves.
- 5.2 Pam said that Lee Pace had become Speaker Secretary succeeding Jenny Thirlwell, as well as Groups Secretary.
- 5.3 Over the past year the Committee has developed several policies and these are published on our website.
- 5.4 John Dodkins is now the Editor of the Digest which is much appreciated.
- 5.5 As well as the trustees and officers, there are some associate Committee member, who support the work of the trustees. Pam expressed her thanks to Mike Sapsard, Alan Osborn, Margaret Taylor, Lorna Grimes, and Anne Menzies for their continuing work and support.
- 5.6 Terry Thirlwell is standing down at this AGM and Pam thanked him for his work as a Trustee. Terry will continue to help with equipment as an associate Committee member. Jean Sniders is also stepping down as a Trustee, but has kindly agreed to continue as membership Secretary.
- 5.7 We have also participated in some local events to promote our u3a and its work. But it has been hard to do more given how few Trustees there have been. .
- 5.8 Pam concluded by saying that the committee plans to hold a Special General Meeting to decide how Dacorum u3a can continue after 2024. Currently, we have insufficient trustees to run such a large and active u3a.

6. Treasurer's Report – Peter Marshall

- 6.1 The accounts cover the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. During this period there had been a reduction in the reserves from around £29,000 to £26,000. Last year, our book examiner had pointed out that the level of reserves was significantly higher than the Charities Commission guidelines. We were already planning for deficits of around £4,000-£5,000 a year over the next few years in order to achieve



reserves equivalent to 6-9 months of expenses. For 2023-24, we have reduced the membership fee by £2 a year to ensure all members benefit equally.

6.2 It is difficult to compare the figures in the last two financial years, as in 2022-23 more groups were moving to meeting in person. This means the hall hire fees are roughly £10,000 higher, while income from group meetings is £4,000 higher.

6.3 Our strong financial position reflects the decisions made by the previous Committee.

6.4 There were several questions from the floor-

6.4.1 *Can we make a contribution to another charity?*

Peter replied that our constitution only allows us to use funds for the purposes of the u3a (ie education), so we could not make a donation to another charity, unless their objectives mirrored our own.

6.4.2 *The increase in meeting fees seems to be inconsistent with the aim of reducing reserves.*

Peter said that these were two separate issues. The changes to meeting fees reflect changes to how refreshment costs are dealt with and was separate from reducing reserves.

6.4.3 Harvey Collyer said that *charging separately for refreshments was inconsistent with past history.*

Peter explained that it was necessary to make changes due to Inland Revenue rules which require receipts for expenses claims. This reflected advice from HM Revenue and Customs, the Third Age Trust and the Independent Examiner. Harvey added that several groups objected to being required to provide receipts for refreshments, as they considered it more complicated.

Harvey also pointed out that there was a typographical error in the Financial Review section of the accounts, where an extraneous 'm' implied that we had reduced membership fees by two million, rather than £2. Peter replied that he was aware of this and that the Examiner was printing and signing corrected versions.

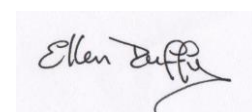
6.5.4. *John Waller suggested that payments for group meetings could be made monthly by bank transfer or cheque as banks did not like taking cash. Alternatively there could be a one-off fee to cover registration and attending group meetings.*

Peter said that the committee will look at this further.

7. Group Secretary Report – Lee Pace

7.1 Lee Pace reported that there were now 86 groups with one group recently added. There have been changes in coordinator in some groups and two groups have folded due to the lack of a coordinator

7.2 Two Coordinators meetings were held, with a total of 50 Coordinators attending. The aim of the meetings was to get the views of coordinators. The general view was that the u3a is doing a good job. The biggest issue raised was the question of refreshments.



8. Appointment of Independent Book Examiner

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

Postal vote: 1 in favour

Online votes: 145 in favour, 3 abstentions .

9. Election of New Committee Members 2023-24

The following were elected:

Name	Role	Postal Vote		Online votes		
		In favour	Abstain	In favour	Against	Abstain
Pam Stonebrook	Chair	1	0	142		2
Peter Marshall	Treasurer	1	0	140		4
Ellen Duffy	Secretary	1	0	142		2
Lee Pace	Trustee	1	0	137	1	6
John Dodkins	Trustee	1	0	139		5
Jane Campbell	Trustee	1	0	138	1	5

10. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

11. End of Official Business

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

The meeting closed at 11.05 am.

