

U3A THAMES VALLEY NETWORK

Representatives' meeting held at the Sports Hall, Watlington, courtesy of Ridgeway U3A,
on Friday 4th October 2013

Present:

Committee – Mike Price Chairman (Greater Thame), Susie Berry Vice-Chairman (Ridgeway), Agnes Budagowska Treasurer (Swindon), Anthony Burdall (Faringdon), Avis Furness (Reading), Anne Gould (Abingdon), Anne Marie Lord Secretary (Chinnor & District), Martin McBride (Carterton), Len Smith (Wokingham)
Pam Jones – Trustee South East Region, (Witney U3A)

Reps. Geoff and Val Young (Aylesbury Vale), Liz Bush and Theresa Doherty (Bracknell Forest), Eric Magson (Chess Valley), Peter Metcalf and Tim Layfield (Chiltern), Molly Milner and Dorrie Oliver (Chinnor & District), Roy Coates (Chipping Norton), Liz Sweet (Didcot & District), Fred May (Faringdon), Pam Feltbower (Greater Thame), John Brandis and Carol Mason (Haddenham), Ruth Waddle (Headington), Barbel Cheesewright, Nadia Ellis, Sylvia and Ian Chadwick (High Wycombe), Harry Burnham (Maidenhead), Mike Davies and Brian Humphrey (Marlow), Malcolm Barker (Princes Risborough), Pat Fewell, Angela Jacob and Nina Stonham (Ridgeway), Colin O'Rourke and Annie Burkitt (South Bucks), Glenys Bettley, Jeanie Dickie (Swindon), Peggy Miles and Derek Randall (Thame and District), Neil Kelly (Thameside), Gill Pittock (Thatcham), Margaret Edmondson (Wallingford), Margaret Sherrington (West Oxford), Valerie Palmer (Witney), Barry Byrne, Patsy Thornton and Edward Miles (Wokingham).

1.0 Apologies:

Committee –

Reps: Pauline Nuttall (Abingdon), Shirley Stokes (Aylesbury Vale), Norman Dutton (Banbury), Christine Cox and Penny Penfold (Bicester), Ian Wright (Carterton), Peter Metcalf (Chiltern), George Hunter (Chinnor & District) Lesley Holmes (Henley), Margaret Gresham (High Wycombe), Mary Blake (Newbury), Thia Brereton (Wantage and Grove).

2.0 **Minutes of 10/05/13** These were agreed and signed.

3.0 **Matters arising** None.

4.0 Chairman's Report.

Susie Berry was thanked for arranging the venue and lunch.

Mike asked reps to let the Committee know of any topic that might lend itself to a short presentation by a speaker following lunch at reps. meetings.

5.0 Treasurer's report

Agnes circulated copies of the TVN Account Summary for September 2013.

Income for two Study days is included: £606.20 for the Historic Pathways project and £1289.00 for "Crushed Grapes".

Expenses in September were low but more are anticipated in October.

The present surplus is £2367.91 which covers the £2000 reserve as agreed at the AGM.

Affiliation fees will be discussed in Committee and Reps. kept informed should they need to be introduced. (Historically they were 10p per U3A member).

6.0 Report on the National Conference

Our Regional Trustee, Pam Jones, gave the following report on the Conference:

The publication "Learn, Laugh and Live" featuring the Chairman's welcome, the Trustees, the new website, the resource centre, benefits and services and international collaboration was presented by the Third Age Trust. Facilities at the venue were very good but catering was not adequate.

Disappointingly only a small number of U3As were represented by 284 delegates. It was noted that the organiser of the Memory course was attending.

There were excellent displays set up by the following Committees: Communications, Development and Education.

The Prison Reform Trust had a table and there were displays set up by every Region.

Delegates had the opportunity to take part in "break-out" groups. Pam ran two such groups. Reps from TVN U3As who attended observed that the subjects offered were interesting and useful but trained facilitators would have been welcome.

There was disappointment with the plenary sessions.

There is to be discussion about the future as there are so many members and the Trustee/Reps. for the larger Regions have problems due to high membership. The issue has been raised by the SE Region. There is also the issue of losing the ethos of U3A as a self-help organisation as membership increases.

The evening entertainment was much enjoyed with the event Ukulele and Singing groups giving performances and a ceilidh for all to join in.

Three excellent Speakers were the highlight of the event: Professor Ronald Foster spoke about our 24 hour body clock and what affects it. Sue Hennessey spoke about women in the Royal Lifeboat Institution and John Burcow spoke about "The Modern House of Commons" and proved an admirable speaker.

The AGM in 2014 will be held at Cirencester on 9th-10th September. Concern was expressed regarding the charge levied for attending the AGM but Pam thought that this may not apply to the AGM at Cirencester. Committees are encouraged to fund a delegate to represent their U3A especially as the networking aspect of the gathering is very valuable. Some U3As already do this.

The new Third Age Trust website is up and running with half a dozen Networks included. Len has requested that TVN be included, too.

A comment was made that a 4 day Conference is rather long and that 2 days may be better.

7.0 Network Activities

7.1 Events Team Report/Programme for 2013

Anthony explained that the team is endeavouring to establish a rolling programme for the next 3 years. It is anticipated that there will be 6 Study days per year plus any research projects and training days.

A short publication will be issued shortly which will clarify guidelines regarding events that are TVN Study days and those which will be run by individual U3As.

Two Study days have taken place this year: Photography and Books. Both events were very successful and a second Book study day may be run at a different venue.

November 6th Wine Tasting "Crushed Grapes" at Benson Parish hall

November 15th Benjamin Britten at Rewley House, Oxford – places are still available.

Network Training Day 25th October "Committees- Keeping them Light and efficient" Originally offered to 2 delegates per U3A this is now open for all who were registered on the waiting list and any others who may still wish to apply.

This is a free day as it is sponsored by the SE Region.

A second Historic Pathways event took place in September at the Shillingford Hotel. Patsy reported that 90 delegates representing 22 U3As attended. There were Speakers in the morning and activities in the afternoon. Ideally it is hoped that every U3A will be involved in researching a pathway, there has been strong interest in several ancient pathways including Drovers' ways. There will be a Planning meeting on Thursday 21st November at the Sports Pavillion, Watlington. It is anticipated that this will be an informal networking day.

A Pathways Newsletter will be circulated to TVN Reps and attendees of the study days within the next fortnight. The Project is planned to continue for 2 years.

The Programme for 2013 will have covered 4 Study days, the Historic Pathways Project and a Network Training day.

7.2 Programme for 2014

Six Study days are planned:

March/April Saving the Nation's Heritage – the work of the National Trust (Waddesdon)

May/June Railways, Yesterday and Tomorrow

June Gardens of the Thames Valley – still in planning stage

30th September Local History Study day at Witney

End of year Wine Study day (possible)

Network Training Day - Communications

Summer school – Anthony has spent some time investigating this. Rewley house in Oxford can provide accommodation at around £210 (excluding VAT) full board, a day rate could also be offered. VAT could be waived as this would be classed as educational. Three Seminar rooms would be available but no room available for all to meet together (this due to refurbishment). The added cost for Speakers would be likely to set the Summer school fee at around £300. Dates offered were 12-14 August 2014. Following discussion it was decided to put this idea on hold while Reps ask their Committees whether their U3A would be interested in a Residential course. Feed- back will be sought at the next Reps' meeting.

Planning for 2015 :

Five Study days, Historic Pathways project and a Network Training day:

March Book study day in Abingdon Please let Patsy Thornton (Patsy@thorntac.co.uk) and Anne Gould

(abingdonu3a@gmail.com) have offers of help from anyone prepared to lead a workshop, training will be given.

Forensic Science – Please contact Mike Price with any suitable contacts as speakers
July Agatha Christie – Wallingford and Thameside U3As asked to consider offering help. Neil Kelly will liaise with Events Team re any help.
September Ashmolean Museum
November History of Opera Study day at Rewley House
October Historic Pathways Residential gathering at Wellington College

Study days for 2016:

Modern communications and their Effects
Kelmscott – the life and work of William Morris
Earth and Life through geological time.
Empire, Industry and Nations – the making of modern Europe
History of Popular music
Poetry – the works of modern poets.

Photography

“Gardeners’ Question Time” is being investigated.. this could be held at Benson

It will be the centenary of the start of the First World War in 2014 and it was suggested that TVN could consider how that could be marked.

Anthony concluded by asking for volunteers to join the Events Team.

8.0 Network Information

8.1 Contacts List Please keep Mike up-to-date with any changes. NB include your U3A name in any e-mails.

8.2 Speaker’s Database Martin reported that 3 Speakers have been added and 2 deleted. He will now highlight any additions in yellow whenever the list is issued. The list will be reissued if there are 6 changes between Reps’ Meetings. Please send feedback/comments to Martin or to Mike. Topics are not always listed so it is up to Speaker secretaries to find out what Speakers offer. Data protection precludes the list from the website.

8.3 Website Hits have increased, possibly due to interest in the Historic Pathways project. Minutes and Agendas can be found on the website www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk
Reps commented that this was an excellent website and easy to use.

9.0 AOB

9.1 Advice was requested regarding high definition projectors... discussion concluded that they tend to emphasise the poor quality of any material but can make good photos look even better!

9.2 Charges for Study days were discussed, currently they are around £16 per head. Feed-back is sought on what is acceptable and whether an increase could be considered.

9.3 A Family History study day has been arranged by Chiltern U3A on 9th March 2014. Places are available for members of other U3As. Flyers were available at the meeting.

10 Date of next meeting ... Friday 10th January 2014 at the Sports Hall, Watlington, courtesy of Ridgeway U3A, 10am for 10.30am

There was a request that Reps’ Meetings be held on different days of the week.

date

Chairman

16/10/13