

U3A THAMES VALLEY NETWORK
Representatives' meeting held at the Sports Hall, Watlington, courtesy of Ridgeway U3A,
on Friday 3rd October 2014

Present:

Committee – Mike Price Chairman (Greater Thame), Susie Berry Vice-Chairman (Ridgeway), Agnes Budagowska Treasurer (Swindon), Avis Furness (Reading), Gillian Le Du (Henley), Anne Marie Lord Secretary (Chinnor & District), Len Smith (Wokingham)
Hilvary Robinson – Trustee South East Region.

Reps. Fay Sinai, Joan Nesbitt (Abingdon), Norman and Esme Dutton (Banbury), Hazel Jones and Sandie Stevenson (Bicester), Eric Magson (Chess Valley), Peter Metcalf (Chiltern), Dorrie Oliver and Tony Parrott (Chinnor & District), Roy Coates (Chipping Norton), Anne Hales and Liz Sweet (Didcot & District), Ann Walsh (Goring Gap), Pam Feltbower (Greater Thame), Ruth Pimm (Haddenham), Val Ryan (Headington), Mike Davies and Brian Humphrey (Marlow), Margaret Lipscomb (Oxford), Jane Sellwood (Reading), Margaret Wiggall (Ridgeway), David Tippins and Colin O'Rourke (South Bucks), Glenys Bettley (Swindon), Neil Kelly (Thameside), Mike Morphy and Hermione Whitehouse (Wallingford), Margaret Sherrington and Rosemary Spivey (West Oxford), Jane Clarke and Valerie Palmer (Witney), Patsy Thornton, Barry Byrne (Wokingham). Jill Proctor

1 Apologies:

Committee – Anthony Burdall (Faringdon),

Reps: Geoff Young (Aylesbury Vale), Theresa Doherty (Bracknell Forest), Martin McBride and Ian Wright (Carterton), Elaine Parkes (Haddenham), Mary Blake (Newbury), Pam Lee (Oxford), Malcolm Barker (Princes Risborough), Peter Grout, Peggy Miles and Derek Randall (Thame and District), Margaret Edmondson (Wallingford), Thia Brereton (Wantage and Grove), Jane Standley and John Wiggins (Windsor), John Turvey, Leslie Summers and Clare McKinley (Woodstock)

2 Minutes of the last meeting (25/07/2014) The year was amended to read 2014, the Minutes were then agreed and signed.

3.0 Matters arising None.

It was noted that some Reps had not received the Minutes or that they were late.

Minutes are written as soon as possible after a meeting and forwarded to the Chairman for distribution.

(Please wait a few weeks as often I am travelling away soon after a meeting and/or Mike is away. However, do e-mail Mike if you think you may have missed a mailing)

4.0 Chairman's Report.

Mike thanked all who had organised events/study days. The "Historic Pathways" project has grown and many U3As are now involved. He stressed that help is still needed with organising Study days especially next year. U3A is all about sharing experience and ideas, he would like members to come forward with ideas for future events and study days. They may not wish to lead an event but their ideas and interests can be the starting point.

5.0 Treasurer's report

Agnes circulated copies of the TVN Account Summary for August and September 2014 and for the period 1st Jan – 30th September 2014.

There has been little movement of funds. Catering and Venues are now listed separately

A small surplus had accrued by the end of September and £3633.70 was held in the bank. Of this £1569.20 was being held for Events leaving an available surplus of £2064.50.

The affiliation fee will need to be re-instated.

Several points were raised by Reps.:

1 A schedule of events was requested to explain the breakdown figures.

2 The cost of catering and of the venue was requested for each event in order to see which venues are cheaper.

Comparison of catering would be difficult given that some are in-house, others are not, some are simply tea/coffee refreshments. For all events the cost of catering is covered within the fee paid by each member attending. Events costings are provided at the end of each year.

3 A data base of venues was requested. This already exists on the website. It is felt that it is a good idea to use venues around the Network.

4 What is the maximum liability for an event should it need to be cancelled last minute? The total exposure for Events is around £1000 which is why we try to keep a surplus of £2000+. It was suggested that insurance cover should be set up to cover the risk of cancellation. Currently TVN does not expose itself to any commitment that would be greater than the money in hand.

Any useful suggestions regarding record keeping would be welcome, please send them to Mike Price.

6.0 Report from Regional Trustee

Hilvary Robinson was introduced and warmly welcomed as our new Regional Trustee.

In response Hilvary said that she was delighted to be with us and that this was only the second Network that she had visited. She thanked TVN for inviting her and would be pleased to hear from anyone who would like to assist her in her role as Regional Trustee. She also congratulated Pam Jones on becoming Vice-Chairman of the Third Age Trust.

Hilvary reported on the 2014 Conference and AGM when two new booklets were introduced: "More Time to Learn", dedicated to Subject advisers and supporting the Group Convenor (NB a copy has been sent to all Chairmen), and "Going Forward" a consultation document for Committees based on the results of a consultation with Chairmen in May 2014 and is the first Three Year Plan. There is a Vision Statement for the first time (Our Vision is to make lifelong learning, through the experience of U3A, a reality for all third agers), a Mission Statement declaring the objectives of our organisation and the standards by which we weigh our actions and decisions and the Principles of the U3A movement (who we are, what we do, how we do it and what we believe). There are new publicity materials available including a booklet called "Learn Laugh and Live" and a leaflet "U3A and Me". The Third Age Trust is challenging members to "share our pride in our U3A" by publicising the movement all over the country, posters are available. These can be ordered and pre-printed with the name of individual U3As.

The question of paid tutors is on the "Agenda" again. Eric Midwinter points out that paid tutors are for the Second Age as they are a "traditional" approach to learning. He has written to Barbara Lewis offering a 5-step programme to deal with this issue. Hilvary will report further when information is available.

The U3A has been invited to take part in the House of Lords debate "In a digital society, is politics for politicians or is everyone a decision maker?" "Talking Days" have been organised, our nearest one is at Birkbeck College, University of London on 25th October and the actual event takes place on 28th November. Expenses for the Event will be paid for those who have attended the "Talking Days". It was also pointed out that there is a "Talking Day" at the University of Warwick on 18th October.

Reps. commented that mailings to Chairmen from the Trust seem to be sent rather late, they do need to be sent as early as possible.

There were several comments regarding the document "Going Forward" which can be ordered through the online shop. These included "an excellent first page", "difficult to read and not very useful" and that it was better to have a discussion document than nothing at all.

It was pointed out that the posters are on the National Website but access to them is via the Shop and that postage is required when ordering copies of "More Time to Learn".

Mike asked Hilvary to take to Committee that TVN would appreciate having all documents/information by e-mail and then to be followed by the documents being sent by post. He also requested that e-mails be sent notifying U3As that mailings had been sent. It was noted that the Third Age Trust needs to consider sending one file to one designated person at each U3A for distribution and that U3As should have a second designated person with appropriate e-mail access in case of holidays etc.

7.0 Network Activities

7.1 Events Team Report and Programme for 2014

The Poetry day is full with 90 attendees and a waiting list, Digital photography is also full as is the Technology Network day. The Local History study day at Witney was brilliant!

Historic Pathways: A short paragraph about the project is available for U3A newsletters. The Henley day was very well supported and highly commended, Drove roads are part of the research and members are researching the history of their local areas. There is an escorted walk around Windsor Great Park on 15th October and a meeting at the Berkshire records office on Monday 3rd November for researchers who need to know what to take on and how to proceed. A Planning day is to be held to plan how best to take the project forward.

A leaflet is now available covering the research at Aston Rowant.

7.2 Programme for 2015 :

This has been circulated and all events are progressing in their planning.

7.3 Many ideas have been put forward for 2016 but organisers are needed to help move them forward.

A request was made that those attending events could be put in touch to enable car sharing. It was agreed that when events are advertised each U3A TVN Contact rep. should encourage their own members to find others who are also booking in order to car share. "Willing to offer a lift"/ "Need a lift" could also be added to application forms. Mike will send further information with these minutes.

MIKE

8.0 Network Information

8.1 Contacts List There are at least one or two contacts for each U3A, they are sent all e-mailings from the Network. It is then up to each U3A to disseminate the information .

8.2 Speaker's Database This will be up-dated ASAP and sent out.

Avis also reported that she has produced a list of the Interest groups in all the U3As in TVN which she will e-mail to Reps if they would like it. It was suggested that it is put on the website.

8.3 Website Len reported that Events can be found on the website. There is also a "blog" which he will refresh as requested to keep it up-to-date. A pdf will be appended with these Minutes. (*I hope!*) Hits are going up.

www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk

9.0 Open forum

9.1 How do other U3As find out what talents/interests their members have? The question is asked on the application/renewal form for some U3As; this information is gathered informally in the interest groups, in 1:1 discussion between members, with committee members or at new members meetings. Some U3As hold a "members afternoon" where members can speak for about

10 minutes about what interests them. These are usually well supported and it is important to make use of information in running the U3A.

9.2 Avis has sent out some information about quizzes that she can provide. She will produce a list of the rounds of questions that are available, this will also be on the website. They will be dated and up-dated as necessary. To contact Avis use akfurness@aol.com

9.3 Feedback was requested regarding a 2-tier system of membership. There was concern about the £3.50 capitation fee where members belong to 2 U3As. Some U3As reduce their membership fee accordingly when dual membership is known. An associate fee could be paid if the member wishes to join an interest group within a second U3A. Group Leaders in some U3As accept members from other U3As at their discretion and without requiring membership of the second U3A. Some U3As reduce their membership fee for those joining half way through their membership year.

It should be noted that Conference has directed that any agreements especially regarding membership between U3As should be minuted.

9.4 Haddenham jazz appreciation group was successful when it submitted a request for music to be broadcast recently.

9.5 AGE UK has distributed a booklet covering activities available for older people, it was noted that U3As are not included. Hilvary will be asked to follow this up.

9.6 Some U3As promote the U3A at preparation for retirement courses.

9.7 Thanks to Banbury U3A for the following quotes: "The U3A ethos is 'self-help' not 'help yourself!'" "Don't 'expect' of U3a; contribute , in any way you can!" "Members of U3A: all equal, all different!"

10 AOB

Date of next meeting Friday 23rd Jan. 2015 at the Sports Hall, Watlington

Mike thanked all for coming and thanked Susie for providing lunch.

Dates of meetings 2015: Representatives meetings 10am for 10.30am

AGM on Friday 1st May.

Further meetings 31st July and 30th October 2015.

date

Chairman

02/10/14

Please note that Hilvary Robinson has e-mailed me and acknowledged remarks re "Going Forward" and access to information electronically so that it can be forwarded easily, the issue with the posters and postage required for "More Time to Learn". She will bring these issues up with Lin Jonas.

To contact Hilvary Robinson e-mail trusteesregion@gmail.com

