

U3A THAMES VALLEY NETWORK

Representatives' meeting held at the Sports Hall, Watlington, courtesy of Ridgeway U3A, on Friday 23rd January 2015

Mike welcomed all to the meeting and gave particular thanks to the members of Ridgeway who were serving teas and lunches as well as attending to Registration.

Present: Committee – Mike Price Chairman (Greater Thame), Agnes Budagowska Treasurer (Swindon), Anne Marie Lord Secretary (Chinnor & District), and Len Smith (Wokingham). Pam Jones (Third Age Trust)

Reps. Norman and Esme Dutton (Banbury), Theresa Doherty (Bracknell Forest), Ian Wright (Carterton), Eric Magson (Chess Valley), Tim Layfield and Peter Metcalf (Chiltern), Tony Parrott and George Hunter (Chinnor & District), Carole Campo and David Harverson (Greater Thame), Ruth Waddle and Anne Partridge (Headington), Mike Davies and Brian Humphrey (Marlow), John Taylor (Newbury), Geraint James (Princes Risborough), Jane Sellwood (Reading), Cindy Halligan, June Waterson, Shirley Jones and Nina Stoneham (Ridgeway-catering and registration), David Tippins (South Bucks), Glenys Bettley (Swindon), Peggy Miles and Derek Randall (Thame and District), Neil Kelly (Thameside), Margaret Edmondson (Wallingford), George Goldsmith and Joan Ford (Wantage and Grove), Margaret Sherrington and Rosemary Spivey (West Oxford), Jane Clarke and Valerie Palmer (Witney), Patsy Thornton (Wokingham), Lesley Summers (Woodstock).

1 Apologies: Committee – Anthony Burdall (Faringdon), Susie Berry Vice-Chairman (Ridgeway), Avis Furness (Reading), Gillian Le Du (Henley).

Hilvary Robinson – Trustee South East Region.

Reps: Fay Sinai (Abingdon), Meryll Coe, Geoff Young (Aylesbury Vale), John Haywood (Banbury), Dorrie Oliver (Chinnor & District), Roy Coates (Chipping Norton), Anne Hales (Didcot & District), Ann Walsh (Goring Gap), Elaine Parkes and Ruth Pimm (Haddenham), Margaret Graham (High Wycombe), Gill Pittock (Thatcham), John Wiggins (Windsor)

2 Minutes of the last meeting (03/10/2014) These were agreed and signed.

3.0 Matters arising None.

4.0 Chairman's Report.

Mike reported that the Network was going well and thanked everyone for their support throughout the year and particularly to those who organised the Events and the Network Experience day. Events are going well and are well supported. The Committee was also thanked for their support.

Mike reminded the meeting that affiliation fees will be due as of the AGM on 1st May. He will send out a formal request for the fee of 10p per member to the U3A contacts.

There was a short discussion about numbers of members declared to the Third Age Trust for Capitation purposes. Reps were advised that U3As should declare the highest number of paid up members registered in the previous financial year to 31st March. This figure should also be used for the TVN affiliation fee.

5.0 Treasurer's report

Agnes circulated copies of the TVN Account Summaries for November 2014, December 2014 and for the period 1st Jan – 31st December 2014. Administration costs are down. Catering costs have not been split due to the invoice from Rewley House. It is anticipated that this will be possible in the future. Total income for the year was £10551.00 with a surplus of £355.34. Monies in the bank total £3161.83.

The accounts 1st Jan – 31st Dec 2014 need to be approved at the AGM on 1st May.

It was confirmed that Agnes banks all cheques for Study Days, she was thanked for preparing the accounts and for all the work she does as Treasurer.

The Committee were asked how long should detailed records of Study Days be kept by the organiser. Pam will check this out. It was agreed that Agnes should keep financial records/ accounts for 6 years. **PAM**

6.0 Report from Regional Trustee

Hilvary Robinson's report was presented by Pam Jones, Third Age Trust Vice Chairman.

The following points were made:

- i the House of Lords Event was a huge success. This was the eighth time the chamber had been opened for a public event and the third time an Intergenerational Debate had been held. The U3A took part in the first and third. It was uplifting to hear young people speaking about “Parliament 2.0: in a digital society, is politics for politicians or is everyone a decision maker?”
- ii if any U3A/ Network is undertaking a particularly exciting Event please let Hilvary know so that it can be used for publicity purposes. U3A is such a marvellous organisation, it should not be the “best kept secret” in the UK.
- iii when our founders set up the Third Age Trust 33 years ago they envisaged several strands emanating from it, one was individual U3As, another was a television channel – this is now on the agenda of the Communications Committee.
- iv we are a “bottom up” movement and it should be understood that the Third Age Trust and the National Office are there to offer advice and to respond to U3As when they ask for support. We do not have a Head Office but we do have a National Office.
- v an advice sheet will be available regarding paid tutors before the end of the month. We are a Charity and adhere to the Charity Commission Regulations. It may be a good time to have another look at “The Essential Trustee”. Every Committee member should have a copy of this document to read as it says that they should ensure compliance, have a duty of prudence and a duty of care to their U3A. (Go to the Charity Commission website and look at “The Essential Trustee – what you need to know.”)
- vi please send any feedback on the “Going forward” document to Hilvary.
- vii please explore Resources at National Office; MMOCs- www.futurelearn.com (Massive Open Online Courses – offered by universities, free of charge); enrichment websites www.bbc.co.uk/learning/adults; Royal Institution www.richannel.org.uk; Open University www.open.edu/openlearn; TED free on the internet – 20-minute talks on a vast range of subjects; pod casts – there are 50 educational podcasts to check; Aps – history, Shakespeare, astronomy, art galleries/birds/trees/butterflies etc.; the Magna Carta website www.magnacarta800th.com
- viii it would be great to see more shared learning groups in our region there are two on the SE Region website www.u3asites.org.uk/south-east
- ix there is a leaflet describing the Benefits and Services to U3As, Mike will scan this and forward to all TVN Contacts.

7.0 Network Activities In Anthony’s absence Mike commented on Network Events

7.1 Events Team Report on 2014

The Events in 2014 had been very good. Comments following the Photographic Study day were that there was information overload as speakers spoke for a long time. It was noted that regular breaks are needed throughout Study days and an hour is about the maximum for people to gain the most from a talk.

The TVN Committee had also discussed the suggestion that Event organisers could facilitate car sharing and agreed that Event organisers have enough administration in organising an Event. It is the responsibility of each U3A to try to put their members in touch. It was pointed out that larger U3As may have more of a problem with this. Patsy Thornton said that car sharing had been arranged when the Wellington College weekend was arranged at the end of the River Thames project.

Following discussion it was not thought possible for Event Organisers to send a complete list of delegates to each U3A two weeks before the Event.

A breakdown of the number of members attending Events from each U3A may be possible and Mike will send this information out after the Event if it can be collected from the organiser.

It was noted that the Third Age Trust had run an excellent Study day at the National Gallery.

It was reaffirmed that members of all TVN U3As have the opportunity to attend Study days but it is up to each U3A to disseminate information to its members. Network Experience Days are funded and therefore free to delegates, places are specifically reserved for each U3A.

7.2 Programme for 2015 :

Cosmology (4th March) still has places available

English painting (14th April) is fully booked

Saving the Nation's heritage (14th May) is almost full and a second date is being explored.

The Work of the Bodleian Library (June) and other Events are not currently advertised.

There is no planned Event to celebrate the Magna Carta. Bracknell Forest are hoping to organise a summer event. There is a £200 grant from the Third Age Trust available for these events. Advertising can be sent via the Contacts list if U3As want to open an event up to TVN.

7.2i Mike will ask organisers to let him know when a Study day is full so that he can let all TVN contacts know.

7.2ii He will also ask organisers of popular Study days to arrange a second day or pass details on to another volunteer organiser.

7.2iii Flyers and application forms are available on the website as soon as possible after they are sent out by e-mail.

7.2iv About two weeks after the first e-mailing Anthony circulates flyers and application forms to previous attendees.

7.3 Historic Pathways This is the final year for the project. A residential event has been arranged for Monday 19th and Tuesday 20th October at Wellington College. The programme will include an exhibition, talks and various activities. Lunch and Dinner will be available on Monday, Breakfast and Lunch on Tuesday with tea and coffee available throughout. The cost will be £90 residential and £75 for day delegates. A flyer will be ready within the next two to three weeks and the Event will initially be open to TVN members.

Many walks are planned through this year including another walk around Windsor Great Park. There is to be a Study day on 29th April at Watlington Sports Pavilion. The programme of walks also includes a walk from Donnington castle in Newbury, a walk near Broadmoor and another at Henley. On Thursday 7th May there will be a walk following part of the drovers route from Henley to Worcester... meet at the Fox and Hounds on Christmas Common near Watlington.

7.4 Network Experience Day A Network workshop was suggested: i for convenors, ii offering general training for Committee members especially as they have legal responsibilities as trustees, iii as a forum for committees covering set topics. Half a day could be for Convenors and half day for Committee members. These suggestions and options will be considered.

7.5 Ideas for 2016/2017 There is a list of proposed Study days for 2016 some of which have organisers in place. Please let Anthony know of any members who could organise or help with any of these events. Likewise with the proposed Study topics for 2017.

8.0 Network Information

8.1 Contacts List Please ensure that Mike knows of any changes in your U3A contacts and include the name of your U3A. An up-dated list is circulated after each Reps' Meeting. Your designated "Contact" members should ensure that any information from TVN is passed on within your U3A. It was noted that "dedicated" e-mail addresses are useful.

8.2 Speaker's Database Avis will up-date this as soon as possible.

8.3 Network Website Hits have fluctuated with 402 in November, 238 in December and 308 to date in January. Links are now correct and up-to-date. Len advised that members "refresh" the page every now and again. The website is the best place to find up-dates on the walks calendar for the Historic Pathways project. www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk

9.0 Open forum *No specific time was used for this agenda item but the following were raised and discussed within the meeting and seem best recorded here.*

1 Pam thanked Chilton and other local U3As who have helped promote a new U3A in Chalfont St Peter. A launch meeting is to take place soon.

2 With 2 large U3As in our Network and others that are growing Pam said that the National Office organises a “growth workshop” which is primarily aimed at U3As that are growing rapidly. She is also aware of a need for something similar for U3As that are struggling to grow.

3 The Meeting was asked to share how we advertise U3A. This is achieved through articles/reports of activities in local papers, posters, open house/fresher’s fair open to members and non-members with interest groups displaying/presenting their activities. Members can be encouraged to start new groups through such events. (NB there is a £200 grant available from the Third Age Trust for this type of event). It was suggested that U3As have a publicity officer. National Office has up-dated its publicity materials.

10 AOB 1 Mike had previously asked if any U3A sent out newsletters solely by e-mail. None do as there is still a need to cater for members not on e-mail. A problem was raised about sending newsletters en bloc via e-mail. “Mail chimp” was suggested and alternative suggestions were to put the newsletter on the website, and send a message to members giving a link to the website, or include the newsletter as an attachment to the e-mail.

2 Advice regarding hire of halls is that this is the responsibility of the Committee not the Group leaders. Trustee Liability cover is available from the Third Age Trust.

3 Pam pointed out that there are no barriers for Networks when Banbury (at the far north of our Network) said that they have agreed to involvement of members between their U3A and a U3A in a neighbouring Region.

4 The document “More Time to Learn” provides an opportunity for U3As to look at groups and how they are organised. It is important to maintain contact with Group Leaders. New U3As are now encouraged to have 2 group co-ordinators.

Mike closed the meeting with thanks to all Reps.

Date of next meeting AGM on Friday 1st May at Benson Parish Hall. 10am for 10.30am

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

Further meetings 31st July and 30th October 2015 at the Sports Hall, Watlington

date

Chairman

29/01/15