

**U3A THAMES VALLEY NETWORK AGM/Representatives' Meeting**  
**held at Benson Parish Hall, OX10 6LZ**  
**on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015**

**Present:**

**Committee:** Mike Price, Chairman (Greater Thame); Susie Berry, Vice-Chairman (Ridgeway); Agnes Budagowska, Treasurer (Swindon); Len Smith (Wokingham); Anthony Burdall (Faringdon); Avis Furness (Reading), Gillian Le Du (Henley).

Pam Jones (Witney) Third Age Trust

**Representatives:** Joan Nesbitt, Fay Sinai (Abingdon), Peggy Penfold (Bicester), Pam Palmer (Bracknell Forest), Tim Layfield, Peter Metcalf (Chiltern), Dorrie Oliver, Tony Parrott (Chinnor & District), Chris Jones, Shirley Rouse (Didcot and District), Ann Walsh (Goring Gap), Carole Campo (Greater Thame), Kevin Nash (Haddenham), Sheila Allcock, Anne Partridge (Headington), Jean Myhill, Bill Teasdale (Maidenhead), Brian Humphrey, Sue Trett (Marlow & District), Derek Child (Newbury), Gill Wilkinson (Princes Risborough), Jane Sellwood (Reading), Margaret Wiggall (Ridgeway), Colin O'Rourke (South Bucks), Drusilla Attwood and Glenys Bettley (Swindon), Peggy Miles, Derek Randall (Thame & District), Margaret Edmondson, Mike Morfey, Jill Procter (Wallingford), Joan Ford, George Goldsmith, Liz Woolven (Wantage and Grove), Margaret Sherrington (West Oxford), John Wiggins (Windsor), Valerie Palmer (Witney), Patsy Thornton (Wokingham).

**1. Welcome and Apologies:**

The Chairman welcomed all present.

Apologies had been received from: Anne Marie Lord, Secretary (Chinnor & District), Meryll Coe, Geoff Young (Aylesbury Vale), Theresa Doherty (Bracknell Forest), Ian Wright (Carterton), Eric Magson (Chess Valley), Peter Foot (Faringdon), Elaine Parkes (Haddenham), Helen Glover (Marlow), Mike Davies (Marlow), David Tippins (South Bucks), Gill Pittock (Thatcham)

**2. Minutes of the AGM of 9<sup>th</sup> May 2014 (these are available on the website):**

The Meeting approved the Minutes which were duly signed by the Chairman.

**3. Matters Arising:**

There were no matters arising.

**4. Chairman's Report:**

Mike welcomed all the Representatives and thanked them for coming.

He thanked all the Committee members for their support and help. He wished to thank the Secretary, Anne Marie Lord, who was unable to be at the meeting, and also thanked Avis Furness for taking the minutes on this occasion. Thanks were also due to Anthony Burdall for organising events, Anne Hales who was retiring from the Committee, and to Susie Berry and her helpers for the lunch and coffee.

Mike congratulated Witney U3A on celebrating their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

Anthony would be stepping down from organising events, and Patsy Thornton would be taking over. There had been a few problems with study days this year and Mike asked Representatives to be tolerant and bear in mind that the organisers were volunteers who were doing their best. Mike concluded by asking Representatives to let the Committee know of any ideas for future events.

**5. Treasurer's Report:**

Agnes Budagowska circulated copies of the **TVN Account Summary** for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013. This had been presented at the Representatives' meeting in January.

The income from events for the year had been £9,878.23. Administrative expenditure was down from previous years. Outgoings included the cost of venues and speakers. Some venues were not willing to itemise costs, but Agnes was endeavouring to get them to do so, so that the costs of hire and refreshments were clear.

A surplus of £355.34 was realised by the Study Days. At the end of December the balance was £3161.83. There are no accounts outstanding.

Agnes reminded Representatives that she is now collecting the agreed affiliation fee of 10p per head - she had so far received cheques from 18 U3As and would appreciate a prompt response from the others. This should take the Network through very comfortably and would enable any losses on Events which did not attract a large number of participants - we should be able to run Study Days on less popular subjects. It is necessary to keep £2,000 in hand for contingencies, and £1,000 for running costs.

In response to a question as to whether affiliation fees would be necessary in future years, Agnes said that it was not possible to say at this stage.

The representative from Chinnor proposed that the Treasurer's Report and Accounts be accepted; the representative from Wallingford seconded this proposal which was agreed unanimously.

**6. Election of Committee:**

The Committee for 2014-2015 was as follows:

Chairman Mike Price (Greater Thame); Vice-Chairman Susie Berry (Ridgeway); Treasurer Agnes Budagovska (Swindon); Secretary Anne Marie Lord (Chinnor & District); Events Team Anthony Burdall (Faringdon); Anne Hales Didcot), Avis Furness (Reading); Gillian Le Du (Henley); Len Smith (Wokingham).

Anthony Burdall and Anne Hales had resigned from the Committee. It was proposed that Patsy Thornton should replace Anthony, leaving one vacancy.

Mike asked those present to consider volunteering, or recommending someone, to join the Committee, as new people and new ideas were always needed.

The proposal to elect Patsy Thornton to the committee was seconded by the representative from Didcot, and was agreed unanimously.

**7. Resolutions:**

None received

**8. AOB:**

The date of the next Representatives' Meeting would be July 31<sup>st</sup>, at Watlington.

The AGM closed at 10.50 a.m.

Chairman..... Date .....

## **U3A THAMES VALLEY NETWORK Representatives' Meeting held at Benson Parish Hall, OX10 6LZ on Friday 1<sup>ST</sup> May 2015**

*For those present and for apologies please refer to the Minutes of the AGM held prior to this meeting*

1. The minutes of the last Representatives meeting were agreed to - proposed by Patsy Thornton (Wokingham) and seconded by Dorrie Oliver (Chinnor).

There were no matters arising.

### **2. Network Activities**

#### **2.1 Events Team Report/Programme for 2015**

Anthony Burdall reflected that he had been involved with the network for around nine years, and the very first study day on Family History, and since then there had been 28 Study Days.

There was no shortage of ideas but there was a shortage of people to organise the events and to help in finding speakers and Anthony appealed for people to volunteer to help.

The Cosmology event at Didcot had gone very well, and there were five more events to come this year. A repeat of the Waddesdon study day had been organised and that was now also fully booked. There might be a third such event in the future. Two study days had fallen by the wayside for various reasons - the Bodleian Library and Children's Literature. The Gardening study day at Waddesdon was fully booked. Information on the Forensic Science day at Culham had been circulated and there would be an Opera day in November.

There would also be an interactive committee workshop on 4<sup>th</sup> November at Benson - this would require input from U3As beforehand.

For 2016, there was a range of ideas for Study Days, but helpers would be needed and any offers would be gratefully appreciated.

In the last two years there had been ten study days. Lessons had been learned - some days were booked up very quickly. There had been some issues regarding communication between organisers and participants, and a small minority of people were not always appreciative of the hard work of the organisers.

Anthony then handed over to Patsy Thornton, who thanked him for his work, and commented on his mastery of publicity and communication. It took a lot of work to put on a study day and it could be stressful. Patsy also appealed for help with ideas for subjects and venues, and pointed out that if members had an idea for a study day but lacked experience in organising one, help would be made available.

In response to a query about another day at Waddesdon Manor, Gill Le Du said that it was hoped to arrange this in 2016, if someone would volunteer to organise it. There was a discussion concerning how applications for popular study days were handled; Mike said that "first come, first served" was the only fair way to deal with applications. A question was asked about the mailing list and it was noted that Anthony's list contained more than 1,000 people - most people appreciated being on the list and members could opt out if they wished. Representatives were encouraged to find ways of ensuring that those members who do not use email were informed about study days.

It was hoped to organise a study day on William Morris, to be held at Kelmscott Manor, and Gill asked for help to organise this, and ideas for contacts, speakers, etc.

#### **2.2 Historic Pathways**

Patsy had written an article for Third Age Matters, which should appear in the next edition.

People from many U3As were researching pathways and organising walks and she encouraged members to look at the TVN website for the Walks Calendar and the Blog.

A Study Day was to take place on 16<sup>th</sup> September at the River and Rowing Museum in Henley about the Civil War in Henley - this would include the opportunity to go by boat past Phyllis Court and Fawley Court.

Information on the Wellington College residential event was circulated; Patsy outlined the programme.

### **3. Network Information**

#### **3.1 Contacts List**

Mike said that an updated contacts list had recently been sent out and asked Representatives to check that details were correct and that everyone who should be on the list was in fact included.

#### **3.2 Database of Speakers.**

An updated Speakers List had recently been sent out. Avis asked that Representatives send feedback on speakers that they had used and also any suggestions for corrections or additions to the list.

The issue of U3A members charging for speaking to U3A groups was raised; Pam Jones pointed out that this must not happen - no U3A member must charge for any service given to their own or another U3A, and speakers should be asked if they are U3A members. Charity Commission rules state that one charity cannot give to another and if a U3A wishes to contribute to a charity of a speaker's choice, this must be done separately, for instance by using a charity box. It was suggested that it would be useful if an article clarifying this matter were to be published in TAM and Pam agreed to look into this idea.

There had been some issues with the format in which the list had been sent out, which Mike was looking into.

### 3.3 Network Website

The number of “hits” on the website for the previous month had been 326 - down on the last two months but up on the same month last year. Len encouraged Representatives to use the website and mentioned that there was an online form for suggestions for study days.

In the Historic Pathways section of the website there was now a form to fill in provided by the “What’s in a Name?” subgroup, to provide information about the history and meaning of names of places, roads and pathways.

There was a discussion on sending newsletters by email. Some U3As were trying to move towards sending as many as possible by this method but there were concerns about sidelining those members without email facilities, which tended to be the older members. Mike asked for ideas for discussion at the next Representatives Meeting.

### 4. Regional Report

Pam spoke on behalf of Hilvary Robinson, our regional trustee.

Hilvary sent her thanks to everyone for volunteering and working hard for the U3A. She now has three assistants who can attend meetings on her behalf and will liaise with networks. She would like U3As to let her know what is happening and to email her their newsletters. An awareness campaign was being run - a company has been employed and information has been sent to doctors, etc. and any subsequent enquiries will be fed back to the relevant local U3As. Most U3As are now part of a network.

There is always a need for people to assist with launching new U3As.

The national conference would be in Nottingham from 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> August, and U3As were encouraged to send delegates. A new chairman would be elected this year and it was hoped that more U3As would use their vote.

In the future there would be a reorganisation of the NEC and a possible reorganisation of regions to address the current disparity in the size of the regions.

Articles had been appearing in some newspapers (Times, Guardian, Mail) about the U3A as part of a campaign to publicise the U3A.

Pam reminded Representatives that there is a grant of up to £200 available for U3As wishing to organise an Open Day or a Showcase Day, to inform the general public about their activities.

### 5. AOB

South Bucks now has a racquet ball group, which is proving successful, and they would like to organise a competition with any other U3As who have a similar group.

Bracknell would like to hear from any U3A who has a written role or job description for an events organiser.

In response to a query about discounts for U3A members, Pam said that there were discounts for groups from English Heritage and the Royal Horticultural Society, but no discounts for individual members. Chiltern said that they had negotiated some discounts locally; Pam said that this was for individual U3As to do if they wished.

Patsy asked members to assist with a questionnaire about how many people used U3A websites.

Flyers for the Chiltern U3A JazzFest were circulated.

Mike asked Representatives if they could bring 30 examples of their newsletters to the next Reps Meeting to share ideas among the member U3As. If their newsletter was available for anyone to read on their website, Representatives could just bring 30 copies of a note of the website address.

**Date of next Meeting** 31<sup>st</sup> July at the Sports Hall, Watlington.

NB Please ensure that you book lunch in advance with Susie Berry. ...See Agenda when issued

The Meeting was closed at 12.45 p.m.

Chairman.....

Date .....