

## U3A THAMES VALLEY NETWORK

### Representatives' meeting held at the Sports Hall, Watlington, courtesy of Ridgeway U3A, on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2015

Mike welcomed all to the meeting.

**Present: Committee** – Mike Price Chairman (Greater Thame), Susie Berry Vice Chairman (Ridgeway), Agnes Budagowska Treasurer (Swindon), Anne Marie Lord Secretary (Chinnor & District), Avis Furness (Reading), Gillian Le Du (Henley) and Len Smith (Wokingham).

**Third Age Trust** Pam Jones (Witney) Third Age Trust, Hilvary Robinson SE Region Trustee

**Representatives.** Joan Nesbitt and Fay Sinai (Abingdon), Geoff and Val Young (Aylesbury Vale), Norman and Esme Dutton (Banbury), Maurice Alston and Pam Palmer (Bracknell Forest), Ian and Josephine Wright (Carterton), Tony Darbyshire and Geoff Glover (Chalfonts), Eric Magson (Chess Valley), Tim Layfield (Chiltern), Dorrie Oliver (Chinnor & District), Chris Jones and Shirley Rouse (Didcot), Peter Foot (Faringdon), David Harverson (Greater Thame), Jean Myhill and Bill Teasdale (Maidenhead), Mike Davies and Brian Humphrey (Marlow), Derek Child (Newbury), Geraint James (Princes Risborough), Jane Sellwood (Reading), Colin O'Rourke and David Tippins (South Bucks), Glenys Bettley and Drusilla Attwood (Swindon), Peggy Miles and Derek Randall (Thame and District), Margaret Edmondson and Jill Proctor (Wallingford), Joan Ford and Liz Woollven (Wantage), John Wiggins (Windsor and District), Pauline Martin and Margaret Sherrington (West Oxford).

**1 Apologies: Committee** – Patsy Thornton (Wokingham)

**Representatives:** Ray Thomas (Bicester), Peter Metcalf (Chiltern), Tony Parrott (Chinnor), Anne Hales (Didcot & District), Anne Partridge (Headington), Helen Glover (Marlow), Ann Fisher (Thame and District), Gill Pittock (Thatcham), Susie Brigden (Witney), Pamela Hares (Wokingham), Clare McKinley and Lesley Summers (Woodstock)

**2 Minutes of the last meeting (01/05/2015)** These were agreed and signed.

A query was raised regarding newsletters under AOB, the suggestion regarding sharing newsletters was either in hardcopy or via e-mail, a list of links to U3A websites is also available. (Where names/details of members are listed for U3As these will not be given and representatives were asked to respect confidentiality and not distribute newsletters from other U3As among their members.)

**3.0 Matters arising** None.

#### **4.0 Chairman's Report.**

Mike thanked everyone for coming, there being more representatives attending than expected he suggested that Benson be considered as an alternative venue in future. Dates for meetings will also need to be considered. Mike welcomed Pam Jones (Third Age Trust) and Hilvary Robinson (SE region Trustee) Mike extended a warm welcome to "The Chalfonts", the newest U3A in TVN. Set up in March it now has around 400 members.

Mike went on to say that the value of these meetings is that they enable U3As to exchange views, share concerns and offer support. He thanked those who help set up the venue, supervise the register, serve refreshments and particularly thanked Susie for the lunches that she provides.

#### **5.0 Treasurer's report**

Agnes circulated copies of the TVN Account Summaries for July 2015. She explained that if one or two study days have made a surplus they offset those that show a deficit. The two study days at Waddesdon and Gardening in the Thames Valley had all shown a surplus. Income through the collection of Affiliation fees amounted to £1502.80. A further £2282.20 is also included for events/study days that have been subscribed to by delegates but where no outgoings have yet been paid. Expenses have been low in July but more are expected to be claimed in August and the deposit for the Residential event at Wellington College is also due in August.

It was noted that High Wycombe has opted out of affiliation, consequently its members will be required to pay a non-affiliated delegate's fee for any TVN event that they attend.

Affiliation fees will be discussed at the next TVN Committee meeting and reported on at the next Reps' meeting.

## **6.0 SE Region Trustee's Report**

Hilvary was then invited to speak as Trustee for the Region.

Hilvary began by thanking all of us for volunteering within our U3As and within TVN as their successful operation depends on volunteers.

**6.1** The National Executive Committee is considering how re-organisation can be achieved to address the imbalance of Trustees to Regions. The SE Region has the largest number of U3As and only one Regional Trustee.

There is also the question of how to attract NEC members with the type of expertise needed to run a large charity. People with Governance and Accountancy expertise are needed as well as expertise in Education, Communication and Development.

**6.2** The SE Region Support Team has now been formed and all Network chairmen have been invited.

Hilvary is proposing that the 9 Networks within the SE Region join together, currently the SE Forum represents the 3 Networks of Kent, Sussex and Surrey. Her proposal would create a Forum that is truly representative of the SE Region. This will be discussed at the second meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> September.

**6.3** As a result of Ian Funnell's research it was established that Slough and Swale (Kent) were two places in the SE Region with no U3A. A launch meeting took place at Slough on 8<sup>th</sup> July and an inaugural meeting is scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> September.

John Russell, the Development Co-ordinator in Kent is working on forming a U3A in Faversham, Kent.

**6.4** Barbara Lewis is promoting the "Awareness Campaign" to raise the profile of U3A in the UK in her final year as Chairman of the Trust. An Awareness pack has been sent out to U3As. The following 5 articles have been published to date, Ian Nash, NEC journalist has taken over from Francis Beckett (Frances remains as editor of TAM):

"College that truly stretches the grey matter" The Times 7<sup>th</sup> April

"In praise of..... U3A" The Guardian 11<sup>th</sup> April

"Britain's most inspiring university" The Daily Mail 11<sup>th</sup> May

Times Educational supplement- "Bringing a Great Idea out of retirement" 29<sup>th</sup> May

Mature times "U3A takes on extreme sports challenge" June 2015

Eric Midwinter has noted a reference to Bath U3A in the thriller "Tainted Ground" by Margaret Duffy. He commented that you know you've arrived when you are mentioned in a novel but it was a pity the author did not get the Bath Philosophy Group to solve the murder!

Hilvary asked us all to let her know of anything of interest that our U3As are doing so that Ian Nash can be kept informed of possible publicity opportunities. Also to consider what each U3A is doing to raise awareness in its area.

**6.5 An important recommendation to all Committees:** Get all trustees to sign "**The Code of Conduct for U3A Trustees in England and Wales**" (This is in compliance with Charity law, duty of care, duty of prudence, solvency), a copy has been sent to every U3A and it is available on the National website. Should a Committee experience any problems then the Code of Conduct can be referred to. Hilvary and Pam Jones can also offer help and support if problems arise. She also promoted two other papers: "**A Summary of Trustees Duties and Responsibilities**" and "**Procedure to be followed in the case of a breach of the agreed Code of Conduct.**"

**6.6** In response to a question on media coverage of loneliness in the elderly and what is U3A doing about this Hilvary suggested that the publication/media be contacted and informed about U3A. The message is that people do not have to be lonely, they can join a U3A as they are open to all. There is also the virtual U3A.

Some representatives had experienced a negative response to advertising/promoting U3As in Surgeries and in the NHS while others have been asked to speak to local doctors. Avis said that she had attended a conference of doctors at the John Radcliffe to discuss care of older people and how non-medical support can be offered to treat depression and loneliness. She found that the young doctors in particular have little idea of the impact of bereavement or retirement (for example) where some structure is removed from our lives. Another Representative said he had been invited to talk to the Macmillan nurses in Hampshire. Making contact with patient Participation groups was strongly recommended.

It was clear from the discussion that care and support for the elderly depends on locality, in some places it is co-ordinated but in many co-ordination is needed.

It also needs to be made clear that U3A is not a service provider or user. Streetlife is an e-mail based set up which can be used for social interaction.

Avis said she had been interviewed about U3A for her local on-line newspaper.

The National Conference will be held on 26<sup>th</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> August in Nottingham .

**7.0 Network Activities** - This report was given by Jane Sellwood in Patsy's absence.

### **7.1 Events Team Report on 2015**

Both events at Waddesdon were fully booked and oversubscribed as was the Gardens day event at Waterperry.

The following events are planned:

Wallingford Day on 21<sup>st</sup> August – fully booked

Henley – Civil War in September – fully booked

Forensic Science day 30<sup>th</sup> September – fully booked

Network day focussing on Committee membership and the Constitution 4<sup>th</sup> November at Benson

It is hoped that at least one representative from each U3A will attend , preferably more as the day will cover the responsibilities of the Committee and aims to help and support committee members. A free lunch will be provided.

History of opera on 24<sup>th</sup> November – 20 places remaining (at date of this meeting).

### **7.2 Programme for 2016 :**

The following events are planned but no dates are available:

A railway based day

William Morris (Kelmescott)

Social History of the Thames valley.

Wine tasting

Classical music

Natural history

Children's Literature

all of the above have facilitators

a Family History day will be planned once a facilitator is found. Hilvary said that Ash U3A has run a study day on family history. Hilvary has followed this up with the name of the organiser at Ash....Heather Hicks. Her e-mail address will be passed to Patsy.

Marlow & district are hoping to help plan a Gilbert and Sullivan day on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday in June. (Currently being discussed.)

There is an open invitation for anyone with ideas or willing to put in time to join the Events Team in Nettlebed for a get-together on 7<sup>th</sup> October.

**7.3 Historic Pathways** A residential event has been arranged for Monday 19<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> October at Wellington College. The cost will be £90 residential and £75 for day delegates. All details are on the website.

Other activities include:

18<sup>th</sup> August walk at Shabbington arranged by Brian Fisher

19<sup>th</sup> August walk at Nettlebed

2<sup>nd</sup> October walk at Upton Nervit (E of Newbury)

? walk at Swallowfield date to be confirmed

A repeated request from U3As is how many of their members attend each event/study day. Mike is planning to provide these details for end of year report.

## **8.0 Network Information**

**8.1 Contacts List** This will be up-dated in August and sent to the designated contacts at each U3A.

Thanks were expressed for the information that is sent out. Information stating that events are fully subscribed would be appreciated. Mike will send this to the designated contacts and Len will add this

information to the website and remove the application form. Patsy will monitor this aspect of communication regarding events.

**8.2 Speaker's Database** This has been up-dated. Avis thanked all who had helped with up-dates and information.

A list of the groups in the U3As in TVN is available. It can be sorted and searched using Exel. Avis has used the U3A websites in TVN for her base.

The issue of U3A members requesting payment when they have been speakers was raised. Current policy is that members cannot be paid but they can claim expenses. Avis will try to add this to the Speaker's list.

**8.3 Network Website** Len reported that there were 401 hits in June 2015 exactly the same number as in June 2014. There were 214 in July and he hoped these would be higher by the end of the day as representatives log on following this meeting! He clarified that he maintains a walks calendar and an Events programme with fully booked events shown in red with the application form removed.  
www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk

## 9.0 Open forum

**i Reading U3A** holds a Convenors' lunch at which they are invited to let the Committee know what they want from the Committee plus any ideas regarding publicising their U3A. This is a good way to get feedback and to up-date group Convenors on filling in forms or requirements on issues such as Health and Safety. This has proved to be a good way to disseminate information and discuss issues while thanking them for all that they contribute to their U3A.

**ii Chalfonts** asked how U3As encourage and keep their members. Encouragingly the response was that generally there are usually sufficient numbers of people wishing to join to offset those who choose not to renew membership. It was suggested that direct contact with members who do not renew could be helpful especially if the number is large.

**iii Windsor** recommend Convenors' meetings and new members meetings which they find useful. They also have a geo-caching group. Several representatives thanked Windsor for the very informative and enjoyable "Magna Carta" day which took place in July.

**iv Sending links** was raised as we were asked how communication is managed with members who are not interested in being on-line. A buddy system can work where a computer-literate member is paired with a member with no on-line access.

## 10 AOB

**1** Avis represented TVN at the funeral of Bob Jones. Bob had helped set up the TVN in its current form and had been Treasurer. He had been Trustee of the SE Region and was the Jazz Co-ordinator for the Third Age Trust.

**2** The Beacon Membership Management system will be rolled out in January.

**3** W Oxford are considering arranging a Hearing Study day.

**4** Witney are suggesting a TVN Study day on crafts, please let Patsy Thornton know if this is of interest.

**5** The concept of a network of interest groups is being considered. Subject co-ordinators are listed in Third Age Matters.

**6** It was agreed that the Reps' meeting will move to Benson and that it will be held on the last Friday of the designated month unless that coincides with a Bank Holiday weekend.

Mike closed the meeting with thanks to all Reps.

**Date of next meeting** Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2015 at Benson Parish Hall. 10am for 10.30am

date .....

Chairman .....

10/08/15

NB Avis has sent a link for her on-line interview. As a result of the interview she was approached by BBC Radio Berkshire and was interviewed during the Anne Diamond programme on 4<sup>th</sup> August. Please find both links below :

**on-line interview** <http://www.getreading.co.uk/news/reading-berkshire-news/getlearning-university-third-age-helping-9777492>

**to hear 4<sup>th</sup> August interview go to** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02xkchp#play> from 1h7m to 1h 42m available to end August.