

U3A THAMES VALLEY NETWORK

Representatives' meeting held at Benson Parish Hall on Friday 28th October 2016

Susie warmly welcomed all to the meeting and introduced Pam Jones, Chairman of Third Age Trust and Hilvary Robinson, Trustee for the SE Region. She also welcomed Brian Lowe, BedsPlus webmaster and Jeff Riggs from Hungerford where it is hoped that a U3A will soon be established.

Present: Committee –Susie Berry Chairman (Ridgeway), Avis Furness Vice Chairman (Reading), Agnes Budagowska Treasurer (Swindon), Anne Marie Lord Secretary (Chinnor & District), Gillian Le Du (Henley), Patsy Thornton (Wokingham), Derek Randall (Thame & District).

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

Representatives from: Abingdon, Aylesbury Vale, Banbury, Bracknell Forest, Carterton, Chalfonts, Chinnor & Didcot, Didcot & District, Farringdon, Goring Gap, Greater Thame, Haddenham, Headington, Henley-on-Thames, Maidenhead, Marlow & District, Milton Keynes, Newbury, Oxford, Princes Risborough, Reading, Ridgeway, Slough, South Bucks, Swindon, Thame & District, Thameside, Wallingford, Wantage & Grove, West Oxford, Witney, Wokingham and Woodstock.

In Attendance: Hungerford U3A (in development) Beds Plus Network.

1 Apologies: Committee Len Smith website support (Wokingham), U3As Chiltern, Tring and Wendover.

2 Minutes of the last meeting (28/07/2016). These were agreed as a correct record.

3.0 Matters arising. None that would not be dealt with on the agenda for this meeting.

4.0 Chairman's report.

A Report on the U3A Conference and AGM 2016 for TVN Reps had been sent out separately ahead of this meeting. Susie has been invited to the 25th anniversary of Newbury U3A and Slough U3A has held its first AGM.

5.0 Treasurer's report

Agnes had circulated copies of the TVN Financial statement to 30th September 2016. The total balance to date £10612.45, with accounts for two events to be finalised and a further event still to run.

Agnes thanked Derek Randall for his help in producing the statement.

6.0 SE Region Trustee's Report 28/10/2016

6.1 Hilvary reminded the meeting that she comes to the end of her 3 years as Trustee in August 2017, she asked us to let her know if there is anyone who might be interested.

6.2 A Regional Volunteer is also urgently needed for the TVN area, the role would include helping to set up new u3as and supporting other U3As where needed.

6.3 The Third Age Trust has initiated a consultation process regarding the governance of the Trust. Networks have been asked to get involved in the "Consultation on the Future Structure of the Third Age Trust". Hilvary has written to each Network inviting them to take part and it has been suggested that Networks join together to assist the working party (Ian McCannah, Graham Clark and Michaela Moody). The Survey Questionnaire is now available in hard copy, all members are encouraged to be involved and the co-operation of all Reps is sought in publicising this.

6.4 Please send any ideas for inclusion in the "Committee Reference File" to Hilvary.

6.5 A series of "Handy Hints" postcards is being put together; the first, "Handy Hints for new Chairmen" was launched at the National Conference (it is available on request from National office), the series will include Vice Chairmen, Secretaries, Treasurers, Membership Secretaries and Group Co-ordinators. The idea is that when a member takes over a new role and is unsure of the priorities then the Postcard acts as a guide. Hilvary would welcome any tips that those in these roles could give, please send via e-mail.

6.6 National Workshops are now available by request. They are funded by the Third Age Trust and can be arranged between several U3As so that 30-40 delegates can be guaranteed, a venue also needs to be found. On offer are: "Participative Learning", "Managing your U3A" and "Planning for the Future".

6.7 Much work has been undertaken so that U3A members can be involved in research if they wish. A leaflet "Get inspired, do some research" is being printed and a booklet "Getting involved in research" will soon be published. Hilvary commended the Citizens' 800 Project.

6.8 A Research Conference for the SE Region aimed at encouraging U3As to take part in Research projects is being organised for 5th July 2017 at Royal Holloway College, Egham. Details will be advised as and when available.

6.9 There is to be a celebration in London marking the founding of the 1000th U3A in the UK.

7.0 Network Activities

7.1 Events Team Report 2016

Patsy thanked all our volunteers who organise the events for TVN. She reported that the Children's Literature day and the Wine tasting day were both excellent.

Some U3As appear to disseminate information regarding TVN Events to their members efficiently. An analysis of numbers of attendees per U3A who attend events will be sent with these Minutes.

23rd November "Robotics" day at Oxford Brookes university currently has 5 places remaining.

7.2 Outline plans for 2017

These will be on the website shortly

March 22nd A Glimpse of the Social history of the Thames Valley at the River and Rowing Museum, Henley. Flyer out in a week – ten days.

April 12th Heritage Crafts and industries Wokingham

June 15th Kelmscott Manor (3rd visit)

Other Events: Archaeology day, Piano Masterclass, the interaction of art and medicine, healthy aging, photography.

Patsy appealed for more people to volunteer to join the Events team and lead an event, there are plenty of people who can help. New people may well extend the range of events that are offered.

7.3 Citizens 800 Project- a shared learning project with Royal Holloway College. This Project celebrates 800 years of people fighting for their rights (as per Magna Carta). The aim is to create a website for use by schools, it will specifically support a course followed at 'A' level. Currently 11 TVN U3As are represented by 20 members who will be researching the stories of local people who campaigned or fought for people's rights. There will be a briefing meeting on 11th November at Watlington Sports Pavilion 10.15am for 10.30am.

7.4 It was agreed that Study/events days will be referred to simply by their title.

8.0 Network Information

8.1 Speaker's Database Avis thanked everyone for the up-dates they have sent a revised version will be sent in a week or so. Avis will consider whether to compile a list of Speaker Secretaries.

8.2 TVN Contacts List This is maintained by the Chairman. While recognising that it is useful to have a generic e-mail (chairman@...U3A) Susie still needs to have a name and can monitor those proposing to attend TVN meetings if the response includes a full name and the name of the U3A.

8.3 Events Contact List Maintained by Mike Price the list covers all delegates who have attended Events unless they have requested not to be included. Some e-mails sent out have not been received, please let Mike know if you are aware that you have not received an e-mail. Please also let him know if you wish to come off the list.

8.4 Website In Len's absence there was no detailed report but it was noted that the Events page had been up-dated. www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk

9 The Way ahead – the possible restructure of the Third Age Trust.

9.1 Norman Dutton and Susie have been invited to a meeting with the Working Group in London on Wednesday 2nd November. The members of this working group will be attending the next TVN Reps meeting. They will have 15 similar meetings around the country and will report to the NEC in March.

9.2 Susie had sent out a short overview about this Consultation prior to this meeting.

The question was raised as to what is being addressed. Is our charity fit for purpose? It has increased in size, has Regions with widely varying numbers of U3As within them but only 1 Trustee per Region regardless of how many U3As are represented, there is a large Board (around 17 Trustees) which can impede decision making, Trustee skills in some sectors eg governance, IT and finance need to be addressed, what is the role of Networks could they be included in the management structure or should they remain informal? The Consultation is looking at the structure of the Trust. It was also pointed out that communication is key and a system is needed whereby U3As can communicate effectively with the Trust.

In discussion the following points were made: there is confusion over the existing structure; there is value in being part of TVN as it reflects an area of growing U3As; a centralised, interventionist organisation would not be acceptable; the expertise of members of U3As is a resource the NEC should draw upon; do Regional Reps need to be Trustees.

Susie pointed out that the Chairman of the NEC is elected annually over a maximum of three years, she suggested that the Chairman be elected for the full term of tenure and that this be proposed at the next Third Age Trust AGM. It was also suggested that it was not necessary to have 2 Vice-Chairmen.

The work of sub-committees and working parties was also discussed as it was felt there was a lack of communication with U3As and members. The findings of the committees are published in TAM but it was felt that more information could be put on the website. Members need to know the scope, objectives, timescale and achievement to date.

A vision for the future (strategic plan) is already under consideration. It was felt that U3As should be contributing to this and the Plan should then be put forward as a proposal to members.

Reps are encouraged to consider what is needed and issues that need to be raised in preparation for the next TVN Reps meeting which members of the Working Group will be attending.

The following proposals were put forward and agreed:

- i. For the future the Chairman and one Vice-Chairman be elected for the full term of office not required to re-stand each year.
- ii. Regional Trustees should be eligible for re-election for a second term if they so wish. Regional Trustees are elected for a Term of Office of 3 years
- iii. Networks should not be a formal layer in the Governance of the Third Age Trust.
- iv. The voting power of Regional Trustees at the NEC should be dependent on the number of U3As that each Trustee represents.

9.3 Susie and Norman will report on the meeting with the Working Group which they will attend on 2nd Nov.

10 AOB i. The leaflet on U3A –Learn, laugh and live is free from National office and should be given to all new members as it re-inforces the principal that U3A involves interaction between members.

ii. Leaflets were made available for Aylesbury Theatre and also for Long Crendon Film Club (Railway film on 18th Nov.)

iii 12th November at Didcot- St Giles Orchestra Concert

iv Mike Price requested U3A member contact details from anyone who can advise /help set up a day (in Sept 2017) on the effect of climate change on crop growth and food production.

v Witney U3A have set up a display of a quilt representing all the groups in their U3A.

Susie closed the meeting with thanks to all Reps. and also to the representatives from BedsPlus Network who thanked TVN for their welcome. The flexibility of Networks is highlighted here as Milton Keynes U3A is a member of both networks.

Date of next meeting **NOTE change of date** Tuesday, 7th February 2017 at Benson Parish Hall. 10am for 10.30am followed by lunch if pre- booked.

A request was received from Princes Risborough that TVN Reps meeting dates avoid half term holidays if possible, consideration will be given in future.

date

Chairman

04/11/16