

# **U3A Dacorum**

## **Minutes of the 27th Annual General Meeting**

### **Monday 7th August 2017**

#### **at the Town Hall, Berkhamsted**

#### **1 Welcome**

David Eastham (Chairman) welcomed members to the meeting and thanked the Berkhamsted Card Making Group for providing refreshments. He then extended a warm welcome to the Mayor, David Collins and his wife Elaine and his attendants. He invited the Mayor to open the meeting.

#### **2 Mayor's Address**

The Mayor began by thanking the U3A for inviting them. He said that as councillor for the Berkhamsted ward he was particularly pleased to be there and wanted to welcome everybody. He felt that the Town Hall was an appropriate venue for the meeting because the building had once been the Mechanical Institute and the only source of learning in the town. He was happy to accept the role of President of the U3A for the year and said that his door was always open to anyone who might need his help. He said that the range of group activities provided by the U3A was truly inspiring and he was glad to see that the U3A was continuing to grow.

The Mayor said that his charity for the year was the Hospice of St Francis, which is celebrating its the10th anniversary and its new building. The Hospice has around 1,000 volunteers and is expanding its remit to include more support for carers. The target is £5 million. There is to be a fund raising Teddy Bears' tea party at Shendish, all welcome.

#### **3 U3A Members on Stage**

Committee members present on the stage were David Eastham, Alan Osborn and Judy Baldwin. Minutes were taken by Lorna Grimes.

#### **4 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Harvey Collyer and Gillian Howard.

#### **5 Appointment of Tellers**

Chris Watson and Sally Merrison were appointed as tellers.

## **6 Approval of the Minutes of the 26th Annual General Meeting held on 1st August 2016**

The chairman asked the members if the minutes were a true record of the AGM held on 1st August 2016.

Adoption of the minutes was proposed by Laura Rouse and seconded by Jenny Thirlwell and passed unanimously.

## **7 Chairman's Report**

David Eastham, Chairman, reported as follows: 2016 – 2017 has been another successful year for U3A Dacorum with numbers reaching 1600, and over 100 new members joining since the beginning of the year. We now seem to average about 1500 or so members each year with the numbers leaving being balanced by those joining.

The number of interest groups still remains at about 120, which inevitably includes some duplicates. However, groups come and go so that the range of subjects covered does vary from year to year. I am impressed that there are 14 language groups. The groups vary considerably across the organisation. Some are purely social, others are outdoor activities, while more academic groups vary from co-operative learning to the didactic approach. We have styles to suit all needs.

I should like to thank all the co-ordinators for the excellent work that they do in running their groups. All U3As depend on the commitment of their volunteers, and without that none could succeed. Of course we always have groups that cease to exist when a co-ordinator decides to retire from the post, and I should like to give especial thanks to those who have retired after in some cases many years of service.

We have three members of the Committee who are standing for re-election. These are Judy Baldwin (Membership Secretary), Harvey Collyer (Treasurer) and Gill Fountain (Halls Co-ordinator).

However, as you are all aware I am now standing down as Chairman after spending four years in the role, plus time as vice-chairman, and a couple of years or so as editor. I have taken on other responsibilities for a professional institute, and as meetings for this are almost always in Birmingham it is beginning to take up more of my time. I did raise this two years ago with the Committee, and said that I would carry on for a further two years before re-assessing the situation. Now is the time to move on.

I now come to one of the most critical positions on the Committee, namely that of Secretary. Judy Baldwin has carried on doing this role for the last two years under increasingly difficult circumstances, but fortunately we now do have someone who is prepared to take on that responsibility. I should particularly like to thank Judy for her support and efforts doing both the Secretary and Membership Secretary under quite difficult

circumstances.

I should now like to conclude by thanking ALL the members of the Committee for their support during the last year which has at times been particularly trying. It is perhaps worth reminding ourselves that the objectives of U3A Dacorum as a Charity are to advance the education of the public and in particular the education of older and middle-aged people who are not in full-time gainful employment in Dacorum and its surrounding locality. In addition U3A Dacorum, in line with guidelines of the Third Age Trust, is open to all irrespective of gender, creed or ethnicity, and does not countenance any instances of discrimination.

So finally thank you all for your help during the year, but remember that our U3A relies on all its members to run this organisation, and without volunteers it would cease to exist. So – step forward and do something to keep it a vibrant and challenging group. The more you put in, the more you'll get out.

## **8 Treasurer's Report**

Harvey Collyer, Treasurer, provided the following report:

First of all, I must apologise to you all for not being here; 18 months ago I booked a holiday for a family event and I didn't at the time think that it would clash with today's AGM.

I have presented a number of reports to you at AGMs over the past years. I have explained the processes and procedures your Committee has in place to conform to Third Age Trust guidelines which are to have a level of reserves equivalent to around six months subscriptions. I have reported the Committee's decisions about charges and subscriptions when it has been necessary to make amendments so that we keep broadly to those levels. What we do as a Committee is to look at the results for the year and see what, if anything, needs to be done.

You will recall that last year I mentioned two things; firstly that there would be no increase in subscription levels but secondly that the Committee had decided that some groups with meetings in halls which returned large deficits would need to charge more per member at each meeting. At the last AGM I said this would be from January 2017, but in the event the Committee deferred the start of these higher charges until April 2017. So the income figures you see include none of these higher charges.

What you have are the two main parts of the Accounts – the statement of financial activities, which sets out the income and expenditure for the year, and the balance sheet.

On the sheet headed "Statement of Financial Activities" there are two blocks of figures. The first is entitled "Incoming Resources" and sets out

where the income comes from – subscriptions, group activities etc. The second block entitled “Resources Expended” shows what the resources have been spent on.

As you can see from this income and expenditure sheet, we completed the year with a surplus (that is higher income than expenditure) of just over £2,100. This is a little down from the previous year. There is a further decrease in the “Trips” category, in both income and expenditure. The main reason for this is cessation of the Away-a-Day outings, and Theatre trips not generally including transport. The Short Day trips continue to be very well supported. Hall hire charges have again risen, which we see as something to expect year on year.

Overall with reserves now at £14,000, on behalf of the Committee I can confirm that there will be no increase in subscriptions and that in the next year there will be no further increases in charges for members attending meetings in halls. However, you will understand that this is something we must continue to monitor.

If you wish, you can get a copy of the full accounts; please contact the Secretary, or get them in due course from the Charity Commission website where they will be lodged.

In conclusion, I must thank all the coordinators for their efforts; they collect and send me the money, they run the groups and give the members the enjoyment that we all get from participating in our many and various group activities.

Again, please accept my apologies for not being here today but if you do have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you.

## **9 Report on Group Study Activities**

Alan Osborn, Group Liaison Officer, presented his report as follows:

Over the year the number of activities available to members has remained fairly constant at around 120 groups, It is disappointing that we have been unable to get volunteers to restart old favourite groups such as Religion and General History or but we keep trying. –

This year Group News email list has settled down with around 1300 subscribed members.

Our coordinators have complete freedom in how they run their group in all but finance. Of course, Harvey keeps an eye on that part.

We are very dependent on the commitment and time our coordinators give to their groups. All coordinators do a good job, but I would like to mention our Military History Group, which is unusual in that the coordinators have published a meeting and speaker plan running through to the end of 2018.

Ideas for new groups trickle in, but as always finding leaders continues to be a problem. Volunteers are always welcome.

Some U3As take the University part of our name seriously but I believe our U3A is really about social learning. We cater for the needs of most members with a good mix of subjects and a range of activities.

Group visits continue to be organised and throughout the year there have been regular trips by Garden Appreciation, Exploring London, Railways, Bus Trippers, Theatre group, Exploring Towns and Villages as well as the occasional specialist visits organised by groups such as Industrial History and Military History.

The rising cost of halls is a concern to your Committee, we realise many groups can only meet in a hall and some groups need a lot of space. But to be fair to the rest of the membership, we try to work on the idea that groups pay for what they use.

Hall groups are not expected to make a surplus and it is welcome if they get near break-even. Your Committee monitors the income and expenditure of all groups, and only increase the group meeting fees reluctantly. Sometimes it is not that a hall is too expensive, rather that there are not enough members attending.

I believe that even with the recent group fee increases our groups are a bargain.

It is interesting that the home meeting fee of 50p has been unchanged since 1990 when our U3A started – at that time the annual membership fee was £3.00 a year.

I would like to thank our absent “bean counter” Harvey for the detailed analysis he provides on group income and expenditure.

Your committee continue to support groups by giving grants for books, speakers etc. and, subsidising the start-up costs of new groups. Leaders have only to ask – after all it’s your money!!

I would like to thank those members who have given their support over the past year, by suggesting and volunteering to start new groups - like all volunteers we aim to do our best for the membership as a whole.

Finally on behalf of the committee and all members I would like to thank the Co-ordinators, their deputies, our Tutors and helpers for their time and efforts on your behalf.

Without you we would have no groups and no U3A Dacorum

Thank you.

## **10 Appointment of Book Examiner**

Jane Seymour is happy to continue as Book Examiner. She was proposed

by Laura Rouse and seconded by Mike Sapsard and elected unanimously.

## **11 Election of Committee 2017-2018**

### **11.1 Honorary Members**

Chair: Tina Howard	Proposer	Sheila Philpot
	Seconded	Helen Curtis
Treasurer: Harvey Collyer	Proposer	David Munn
	Seconded	Gill Bailey
Secretary: Michael Sapsard	Proposer	Peter Emery
	Seconded	E.M. Emery

### **11.2 Non-Honorary Members**

Judy Baldwin:	Proposer	Robert Chamberlain
	Seconded	Paul Simmons
Gill Fountain:	Proposer	Mary Chafer
	Seconded	Beth Palfrey
John Waller:	Proposer	Alan Osborn
	Seconded	Fred Palfrey

The above were all elected unanimously.

### **11.3 Committee Members completing their 2 year term**

Alan Osborn

Jenny Thirlwell

Peter Bushill

Chris Watson

Laura Rouse

## **12 End of Official Business**

Tina Howard thanked David for his contribution as Chairman and said he had made a great difference to the Committee and had visited many of the groups during his tenure. She wished him the best of luck in his new responsibilities.

The Mayor then made a presentation to David Eastham and thanked him for all the hard work he has done for the U3A.

The meeting closed at 11am.