

**Minutes
of Fleet & District U3A AGM held on
Wednesday 15th November 2023
held at The Harlington**

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

John welcomed 200 members to the AGM which means we are quorate for the meeting to go ahead.

Apologies were received from Adrian Van Klaveren, Jackie Creswell, Clive and Christine Stokes.

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 16th November 2023

A copy of the Minutes of last years' AGM had been sent out to all members and could also be viewed on the Fleet U3A website. Members were asked if there were any comments, there being none the Chairman asked the membership present to approve the minutes and there was a unanimous vote in favour.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes, these were then signed by John Gawthorpe, Chairman Fleet U3A.

4. Chairman's Report

John Gawthorpe presented his report:

Good morning and welcome to our Annual General Meeting, the second of the three I shall be chairing.

The fact that so many of you are here demonstrates that you did indeed 'get the email'. Fleet U3A communicates with you mainly via email, to minimise postal costs and ensure timely information. You receive our local Fleet U3A Newsletter and the National Third Age Trust newsletters, details of upcoming visits from the Visits Team, news of Monthly Meetings and other U3A events plus any important information we believe our members should see. We do not provide email addresses to any other organisations; your email address will only be used by Fleet U3A to provide you with information related to U3A activities. We have a small number of legacy members, less than 2.5% of

the total, who have not yet set up email, or found a family member or friend to be their 'email buddy'. Can I please ask you all to look out for them: with your help we might be able to get them more connected. The costs of paper, printing and postage for such a tiny number are disproportionate, hence some other local U3As have moved to an 'email only' regime. While I understand their reasons, I would deeply regret taking similar action. Can you please help us bridge the gap?

The hub of our Membership administration is in South Gloucestershire – an area notorious for poor postal service – where Fiona Godfrey continues to run a brilliantly efficient operation. She reports that despite the fact that we are still down on pre-pandemic figures, membership is currently rising, and we are ahead of last year's figure at this time of year. The number of new members is encouraging, and it is hoped that this trend will continue. Fiona famously has a very effective 'nagging hat'. Wearing that, she adds: It is still surprising the number of people who "haven't heard of the U3A" so the best thing is word of mouth, so the task you are being set for the coming year is to 'spread the word'.

The first contact many members have with our U3A is over the phone to Jenny Teagle, Enquiries Secretary, who cheerfully and carefully responds to all manner of queries. Her wish list is simple: an inexhaustible supply of venues and infinitely expandable groups, so nobody is left disappointed. Group members and group leadership teams should be aware that in many cases, demand exceeds our ability to meet it. Tactfully managing group membership and creating opportunities for newcomers is a sensitive but necessary skill. The of our whole U3A will dwindle over time if we cannot enable new members to take part. The 'word' we wish to spread is 'you're welcome' not 'they're full'.

In her Outreach role, Jenny reports that, following the interest shown on Enrolment Morning she has been contacted to discuss with local U3As the ethos behind Strollers and Rollers, which are not "disabled groups." They are the "shop front" to promote Fleet u3a: Equality, Diversity & Inclusion through inclusive activities. The message is spreading, our members and those beyond are engaging positively, a definite sign of progress. She tells me that more people speak to her at the monthly meetings, smiley and relaxed. The wheelchair is disappearing gradually!

Alan Jones our excellent Secretary puts in the hard work to ensure communication with the Third Age Trust and the Fleet U3A membership. Other regular tasks are preparing contracts for paid tutors and checking their Public Liability insurance. Preparation for this AGM has taken a lot of time, the results are clear to see. Alan has represented Fleet U3A at the Fleet Town Council Residents' meeting, the online T-A-T AGM and at Remembrance Day. Alan is also our 'Beacon' expert. The necessary change to the email and password for Beacon logon affected us all. Luckily Alan was able to unpick any knots, so that during this year 2023 renewals more than 1240 (about 72%) of our members renewed online using Beacon.

Online renewal saved the Treasurer and Membership Secretary a huge amount of work and reduced our costs significantly by not having to process cheques, etc. We encourage all members to register for Beacon ready for renewal in 2024. If members need any help registering, they can contact Alan as Beacon Administrator via

beacon@fleetu3a.org.uk. 65 Group Leaders are now using Beacon to administer their groups: thank you, we are sure you will find it useful.

Picking up on the work undertaken by Beverley Carpenter (thank you Beverley, you did the hard yards), Alan and Mike Brown have been helping revise the GL Handbook, now in the hands of Leadership Teams. When Beverley stood down, we were very fortunate that former Events Secretary Mike Brown was ready, willing and able to step into the role of Group Leadership Liaison Secretary. It is great to have him back on the committee. He and I were delighted that at last Friday's Members' Coffee Morning, firm proposals for two new groups were drawn up. I won't steal any thunder now, just to say keep a close eye on the Newsletter for details.

The six - step process for setting up a new group is:

1. Decide on the subject.
2. Ask does it clash with an existing group?
3. Find out how popular the group will be.
4. Decide the meeting frequency and duration.
5. Select a type of venue: rented hall or private house?
6. Will there be any costs other than venue fees?

Barbara Jones is our Venue Secretary. We know there is not an inexhaustible supply of suitable venues in the area. Barbara knows all of the 34 we currently use. And as of Friday, there are two new groups looking for venues.

Can I add a reminder that we get charged for the extra time before and after meetings, mostly 15 minutes either side of the time advertised in the programme. I request all groups to ponder: do we really need this amount of time?

We are trying to control our costs, as are the managers of the venues, so please ensure you let the venue secretary know when changing or cancelling meetings. Finally, in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis and higher energy costs, it falls to all of us to make doubly sure that everything is switched off when leaving a venue.

Barbara is also our long-standing Minutes Secretary, a post she is keen to hand on today.

Pam Openshaw has had a busy year as Events Secretary. The Enrolment Day held at the Church on the Heath went well, with over 200 members attending. She has helped revive our members coffee mornings, where new members, existing members and committee members can chat informally. With the help of Peter Murray and the marvellous Catering Team, we have held a lunch for Group Leaders and provided a cream tea at the Quiz.

Tickets for the next event – a Christmas Lunch on 1st December, are on sale today, at £8. It almost goes without saying that the winning quiz team was led by Caroline Noad, not least because earlier in the year our team from Fleet had won the Inter U3A quiz as well.

Please note the date of our next Open Morning, Wednesday 17th April, right here.

Also at the Harlington are our fascinating Monthly Meetings. Now back to pre-Covid-19 popularity, we regularly have about 200 members turning up at the Harlington. The pre-talk coffee and chat in the small hall is very well attended and members say they appreciate the visiting stalls supporting local charities or advertising our own U3A groups. Paddy and her Monthly Meeting Team are to be congratulated for all their hard work. The team set up the small hall and pack away each month with a smile. The jigsaw and book swap table are always popular. The team ensures new members and guests

are greeted and have someone to talk with if they are alone. They help visiting stall holders set up and feel welcomed. They answer questions and generally make everything run smoothly.

We have a full programme booked until June 2024, but we are always on the lookout for speakers for future meetings. Please let Paddy know if you have a recommendation.

Sandy Redman's work on our Newsletter has attracted attention and praise from other U3As in the region. Were this football, I'd be worried about the transfer market! She would want me to add that essentially any newsletter is only as good as the contributions received by the Editor. Consider yourselves reminded. Stephen Grosvenor has quite a task on his hands as Webmaster. He has successfully seen off phony signups to our Facebook page and is currently in the process of a major revision to the site. One unwelcome discovery was that the website is at its best on a PC, but when it comes to a tablet or smartphone what you see is not always what was intended. Watch those spaces!

The bright new publicity leaflet is the work of our Publicity Secretary Adrian van Klaveren. He is also on the board of the Third Age Matters magazine: if you opted out of receiving it through the post, please reconsider. It's a very good read. We wish Adrian a speedy return to full health.

In all innocence last year I managed to steal all of our Treasurer's best lines from his report. So, suffice it to say that Neil Morley is as hardworking, responsive and careful as anyone would wish a Treasurer to be. I do hope we will be successful in voting in an Assistant Treasurer to join the team. Glyn Powell has done sterling service as Examiner of Accounts, so I am delighted to propose him for the role for 2023 – 24.

I hand over to Neil shortly, but before I do, one important request. The list of officers shows a single Vice Chair post, but in the constitution, we can have two.

Looking ahead it would make a great deal of sense to elect a second Vice Chair, as Chair –

Elect. By so doing this meeting will have ensured that the transfer at the end of my three years is a smooth one, not a cliff edge.

5. Financial Report

Neil Morley presented his report:

The accounts are as you see on the sheet which has been given out to members present at the AGM.

There is more in the Gold account as the interest rate is higher and I have been moving money in and around more this year.

Venue hire costs and Tutor payments are the most significant changes. Venue fees have increased. I estimate we will take £2/3,000 out of our reserve to cover this year's venue fees. The Tutor fee changes are due to the different method of payment whereby some Tutor Groups are paid direct and some via U3A account.

The Visits account is dependent on what trips are imminent. E.g.: since these accounts were closed the Potters trip took place and a coach load of refunds had to be made due

to cancellation. On that note if you have not received your payment let me have your details asap.

Note: A member of the audience had not received her refund as she does not have email, so Neil gave her his address and she is sending her bank details to him.

I expect expenditure to increase this year because of the increase of TAT fees, postage and some of our computers/laptops need replacing as they are not Windows 11 compliant.

I would like to thank Glyn Powell who came forward at last years' AGM to act as examiner. I am delighted to say he has agreed to continue to examine the accounts for 2024. In addition to examining the accounts he also did some of the background work on the format in front of you whilst I was on holiday.

Thanks also go to Ann Guerin who does all the banking for me, which actually means visiting the Fleet Post Office which has been currently closed so has had to go further afield.

A thank you gift was given to both Glyn and Ann.

Any questions: A member asked what the Tree Copse item was, Neil explained and then another question was asked about what Unrestricted funds meant, Neil explained that restricted funds were given for a specific purpose and can only be used for that one purpose e.g., Visits.

There being no further questions Neil asked for a Proposer and Secunder for the approval of the accounts.

Proposed: Paddy Powell Secunder: Peter Dunkerley

The meeting then approved the accounts.

6. Resolution 1: - To elect the Committee members and Officers for academic year 2023/2024

This was put to the members and the vote was unanimous in favour.

John asked if anyone present was willing to volunteer for Vice Chairman and Minutes Secretary, no-one came forward. John asked the meeting if members would consider the request after the meeting and hoped people would come forward to help.

7. Resolution 2: - To appoint the Account Examiner for the financial year 2023/2024

The vote of those present was unanimous to re-appoint Glyn Powell.

8. Resolution 3: - Starting Autumn term 2024 to increase the Venue Contribution (to cover increasing venue costs) as follows:

Up to 1 hour - £1, up to 2 hours - £2, 2.5 Hours £2.50, 3 Hours - £3

A show of hands of members present resulted in this resolution being passed.

9. Resolution 4: - to adopt the following on Life Membership into our Fleet U3A Constitution.

“Honorary Life Membership is defined as follows: A member whose voluntary contribution to Fleet and District U3A, other than financial contribution, has been both exceptional and sustained over a period of years, whether that contribution has been by way of Interest Group leadership, administration, or management, may, on the recommendation of the Committee, be awarded Honorary Life Membership by a majority vote at a Committee meeting. Beginning at the start of the next membership year after the vote, the recipient will receive free annual membership of Fleet and District U3A. For the avoidance of doubt Venue Contribution and any Paid Tutor fees are payable by all classes of membership, including Honorary Life members.”

A show of hands of members present resulted in this resolution being passed.

10. Business declared urgent by the Chair.

There being no further business the AGM was closed at 11.22 am.

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John Gawthorpe, Chairman

Date: 13th November 2024

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Fleet and District U3A
Registered charity number 1055104

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31st August 2023

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of Fleet and District U3A you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act")

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's account carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than those disclosed below) in connection with the examination which give me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the act, or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting record

Recognising the particular circumstances of a large voluntary organization processing high numbers of relatively small transactions, I make the following points for consideration by the Trustees:

1. In a number of cases, individual receipts from members were covered by the same accounting record without individual names being recorded. It is doubtful whether such records meet the requirements of section 130 of the act set out above.
2. The practice of collecting individual cash payments from members over an extended period of time and forwarding them to the Treasurer as a single payment via personal bank accounts puts those monies belonging to the charity at risk(excluding individual dishonesty)
3. Consideration should be given to using Charity Commission recommended procedures and forms for all aspects concerning finance and governance of the charity.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed



Date 10/11/2023

Name

David Glyn Powell

cc162022final

	Year ending 31st August 2023			Total Funds Last year
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	
RECEIPTS				
Membership fees	24,976		24,976	23,450
Tax reclaim	6,751		6,751	2,937
Members venue contributions	52,036		52,036	44,324
Tutor fees paid by members		10,098	10,098	29,389
Other member events	4,255		4,255	4,498
Bank interest	678		678	31
Miscellaneous income	544		544	233
Tree copse				1,434
Visits		26,537	26,537	55,497
Total receipts	89,240	36,635	125,875	161,793
PAYMENTS				
Third Age Trust - Beacon	1,691		1,691	1,662
Third Age Trust - Capitation	6,760		6,760	6,684
Third Age Trust - Magazine	2,651		2,651	2,974
Venue Hire Costs	49,131		49,131	40,588
Tutor fee payments		10,574	10,574	29,749
Monthly Meeting expenses	1,880		1,880	1,510
Other Member Events	4,170		4,170	4,147
Administration	4,479		4,479	2,296
Printing and Postage	2,863		2,863	2,666
Bank charges	1,587		1,587	1,358
Equipment	440		440	954
Tree copse		50	50	1,382
Visits		26,042	26,042	54,250
Total payments	75,652	36,666	112,318	150,220
Net	13,588	-31	13,557	11,573
Cash funds last year end			73,657	62,084
Cash funds this year end			87,214	73,657

Cash Assets at 31st August 2023

CAF 6405			1,367	869
HSBC			2,526	3,989
Hsbc credit card				
CAF GOLD			74,869	59,179
PAYPAL				1,789
TREE COPSE				51
PETTY CASH			27	334
CAF VISITS			8,425	7,446
TOTAL ASSETS			87,214	73,657

The format of these accounts follows Charity Commission recommendation CC16a and have been drawn up following Charity Commission Guidelines CC16(b) See over for Independent Examiners Report

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee

John Gawthorpe Chairman Date 8/11/23

Neil Morley Treasurer Date 8/11/23

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John Gawthorpe Chairman Date 8/11/23

Neil Morley Treasurer Date 8/11/23