

**MINUTES OF THE TWENTY EIGHTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF HARROW U3A
HELD AT 10am ON TUESDAY 3RD MARCH 2020 IN THE ELLIOTT HALL
HARROW ARTS CENTRE, HATCH END**

Present: Anne Gerrard (Chairman); Mike Allen (Vice Chairman) Madhu Badale (Hon. Treasurer), Lynne Dorff (Hon. Secretary) Georgina Butcher (Life President); Kathy Westhead (Jt. Membership Secretary); Frances Howard (Jt. Membership Secretary); Alison Tanna (Premises Officer); Rhoda Luer (Study Group Co-ordinator); Susan Field (Members' Liaison Officer); Helen West (Speaker Secretary); Sheilah Lowe (Enquiries Officer)

In addition 118 members were present.

1. **APOLOGIES:** Eve Porath, Jean Kenton, Maria Landau, Pam Gonsal, Kathy Lee, Kay Till, Pam Northing, Pat and Roy Rae, Tony Richardson, Ruth Gordon, Elizabeth Kotev, Anthony Scott.
2. **Minutes of the 27th Annual General Meeting – agreed.** Proposed by Stephen Dorff, Seconded by Toni Waxman.
3. **Matters arising: None**

4. **Receiving and approving the Accountant's Report and Examined Accounts for the year ended 30th September 2019.**

Madhu welcomed members to the meeting and also Jeremy Harrod, Independent Accounts Examiner. She then said she and Jeremy would be willing to answer any questions as the set-up of this year's accounts were different from previous years.

Jeremy clarified the situation regarding the inclusion of the Tours & Visits Accounts into the main HU3A accounts. This was now a requirement of the U3A National Office and in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Commission. Jeremy thanked Madhu for her extremely hard work, praised her efficiency and conscientiousness and said it was a pleasure working with her.

There followed a Q&A session:

Arren Poyser asked about the income and endowment section. Was the increase due to new members. Kathy Westhead responded: This year there were 1071 members compared to 1078 last year. Overall member numbers have hardly changed. However, more were enabling Gift Aid to be claimed.

Ian Green queried why the figures included debtors but this was not shown in last year's accounts. Jeremy explained this was due to the T&V needing some payments in advance for future events.

Accounts proposed by Javaid Kahn and seconded by Joyce Davis.

Jeremy Harrod was thanked for his work and continued help whenever needed.

5. **Chairman's Report**

Welcome and thank you for your support in attending today. As usual we have had a busy year, a productive one, owing to the dedication of our committee, some of whom are so dedicated that, although they really wish to retire; as no replacements have stepped up, they are staying on to keep us operational. As a charity we must have a complete committee to fulfil the Charity Commission's requirements. A few brave souls **have** elected to join us, Howard Greenwood is to replace Kathy Westhead and Frances Howard; the extremely hard working and committed membership secretaries who are now standing down. He will work alongside a backup team, to help share the load. Stanley Byrne has kindly offered to take on the role of Publicity Officer.. This of course assumes the elections are successful, item 8. We welcome them all but do need to mention that we need an equipment officer, no great technical expertise is required, just an extra pair of hands.

The scheme of job sharing, or teamwork is one that can be applied to most roles and we plan to promote this principle. The secretary and treasurer would be very happy to train a team so the job load would not be too onerous. Both these officers work tirelessly to keep Harrow U3A running and we are deeply indebted to them.

In thinking about succession for roles in the committee it reminds us that Group Leaders also need to keep an eye out for a likely member who could step up if needed as we are all vulnerable, to age, illness and "circumstances".

As always, we owe a great debt to the dedicated GL's who are the backbone of Harrow U3A. To show our appreciation a series of tea parties were held to enable GL's to meet each other and discuss their roles, and we were pleased that they were appreciated and plan to continue this. Some members of the committee visited several groups just to make contact between the management and the members. It's good to see what's going on elsewhere. Can we ask you please to make sure your GL has your contact details; this is important in case a class is cancelled or in case of absence to check that all is well with you. This is the area in which Beacon is most useful and we would urge its greater use, we pay for it so should use the benefits. Kathy Westhead is remaining as Beacon co-ordinator and also to try to set up PayPal, an ongoing saga.

We have started up several new groups and I don't think we've lost one, thanks to Rhoda's hard work and to the members who have come forward to offer their skills and time. Alison's first term as Premises Officer has demonstrated her skills to the full, also her efficiency.

Our monthly talks have been very popular and successful, and Helen is doing a grand job. The social care of our group is quietly and sensitively dealt with by Susan Field. Mike Allen and Georgina Butcher are both strong members of the committee, the latter keeping you all up to date with new events and activities. Mike has nobly stepped up to take the role of Chair, for which we are very grateful.

If you would like to know the details of what we discuss in our committee meetings do please contact the secretary who will be happy to supply them. You are also welcome to attend a committee meeting at any time.

This brings me to the subject of National U3A day on 3rd June. All over the country groups will be presenting a wide range of events to raise our profile so that we are met with fewer blank faces when U3A is mentioned. Out of over a thousand members only two responded to our request for ideas to celebrate and promote Harrow U3A. We shall be incorporating those suggestions into our own ideas and plan to make a significant impact on the day. We'll keep you informed.

Several of us attended a recent meeting about the future of HAC and were shown plans and drawings. The first phase, which has already started, is to refurbish three old buildings as performance spaces, art studios and classrooms. The second is to replace the present Greenhill room with a two-story building to provide more of the same, with a good sustainability plan. The demand for space has increased by 10% and the footfall is expected to grow to 270,000. We emphasised the need for more parking spaces which was acknowledged. There are more plans for the future which were described as aspirational, but the main objective is to become financially self-sufficient. Meanwhile we hope there will not be too much disruption whilst the building work is carried out.

Two more people need to be thanked for their untiring work, one of them being Stephen Dorff for the magnificent work he does on the newsletter. At which point, can I urge you to check the newsletter for details before phoning to enquire - the answer is usually there if you read carefully. We must also thank Pam Gonsal for the careful upkeep of our website, again many answers can be found there and a great deal of additional useful information.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the U3A ethos, that we are a self-help group. We can only function if members contribute, in however small a way, to the running of the individual classes and the whole group, rather than expecting others to do the organisation and the work. Finally, can I misquote an often misquoted saying, by urging you to "Think not what your U3A can do for you, but what you can do for your U3A", this will continue and build on our success.

Chairman's Report proposed by Ron Dickens and seconded by Lucille Balkin.

6. Report for Tours & Visits

Jack Kusher reported that last year the Committee lost three working members. Outings have become more expensive due to rising costs. It was now necessary to advertise some events via email as early payment was required. This was the case for an outing to Chichester in August to see "South Pacific" where payment was needed by the end of March.

It was necessary to estimate how many places could be sold and to cost accordingly. Mostly this estimate is correct but sometimes a loss is incurred. Jack said that he recently celebrated his 90th birthday and hoped to continue working for Harrow U3A but younger helpers were urgently needed.

For the year March 2019/20 there were 24 outings with 730 members compared to March 2018/19 and 29 outings for 989 members. Malvern Barnett spoke of forthcoming outings to Apsley House and the Wellington Arch and a trip to Devon.

Thanks given to the T&V Committee

Report proposed by Ellen Collins and seconded by Sylvia Ring.

7. Appointing an Independent Accounts Examiner for the financial year 2020/2021

Proposed by Valerie Bard and seconded by Joyce Davis.

8. Election of Officers

Stanley Byrne was elected as Publicity Officer: Proposed by Toni Waxman and seconded by Bill Garvey.
Alison Tanna was elected as Premises Officer: Proposed by Rhoda Luer and seconded by Georgina Butcher.
Remaining posts were elected en bloc.

The Chairman then handed over to Mike Allen

Mike Allen said that our succession plan had been for Gwen Wright to succeed Anne Gerrard as Chairman. However, Gwen had to resign for personal reasons, so, he had stepped in. He was tempted to use some movie slogans “ I’m back” and “Never say Never again”. It was an honour to be chairman
The advice of doctors for seniors was to keep active, get out, meet with people and use your brain. The U3A met all those objectives and Harrow U3A was recommended by local surgeries.

He went on to expand on Anne Gerrard’s mention of the building works at Harrow Arts Centre.
The current phase was to refurbish 3 buildings which were not in use, the old school laundry which was known better as the former café, the theatre, the Travellers studio and the boiler room.
Once these had been finished – scheduled in the summer, the Greenhill room would be pulled down and be replaced by a substantial 2 storey building.

Harrow Council had secured a £700,000 grant from the GLC and added £3.3m to it. The intention was for HAC to become self-funding and for the teaching areas to provide additional revenue. The HAC staff had put on extra events including a pantomime and had reduced the subsidy from Harrow Council by 70%.
So, there was a real prospect that HAC would become self-financing and the sword of Damocles that had been hanging over the Arts Centre for the past 6 years or so would be removed. At last the light at the end of the tunnel wasn’t the train coming the other way.

There followed a Q&A session:

Tony Kaye asked about the cost neutral position and would there be an increase in the cost of room hire.
Mike said these costs had kept in line with inflation. However, new rooms may cost more although we have not been told officially. However, the increase in membership fees last year should offset this possibility.
Tony also asked about the ratio of parking spaces for blue badge holders. Mike said this was up to HAC and not U3A but suggestions could be made. He added that an area outside the link building, which had had a very uneven surface, had now been repaired.

Eric Silver asked whether the Grimsdyke room was due for demolition. Mike replied that this was not included in the first phase but it was likely that future plans would include the demolition of all portacabins.

Mick Oliver asked about parking in the new development. As part of the Sustainability Group they were looking at improved ways of travelling to HAC and would notify the committee of their findings.

Edgar Ring asked whether HAC would be self-sufficient. As Harrow Council would be saving money eventually, would they consider funding an educational budget. Mike said he did not know of any such plans but he would make enquiries.

Frances Howard asked what proportion of income HU3A gave to Harrow Council. Mike did not have specific figures but said that HU3A were the biggest user. Madhu replied that the income and expenditure item in the accounts showed between £40-45,000 for room hire.

9. Any Other Business

Stephen Dorff asked members for articles and/or photos for the next Newsletter.

The meeting closed at 11.10am.