

**MINUTES OF THE THIRTY FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF HARROW U3A
HELD AT 10am TUESDAY 14 MARCH 2023 AT HARROW ARTS CENTRE & ZOOM
(Members who attended via zoom are marked ***)**

Present: Anne Gerrard (Chair); Georgina Butcher*** (Vice Chair); Krutsna Buddhdev (Hon.Treasurer); Lynne Dorff (Hon.Secretary); Howard Greenwood (Membership); Alison Tanna (Premises Officer); Susan Field (Member Liaison Officer); Sheilah Lowe***(Enquiries Officer); Tony Kaye (Webmaster); Stephen Dorff (Newsletter Editor) + 63 in attendance and 40 on zoom.

1. **APOLOGIES:** Kathy Westhead, Aiden McManus, Helen West, Maria Landau, Subhash Malhotra, Carol D'Souza, Steve & Anne Russell, John Southall, Mary Morgan, Pauline Barnes, Ruth Gordon, Pam Gonsal, Matthew Barnett.

2. **Minutes of the 30th Annual General Meeting – agreed. Acceptance of Minutes proposed by Tony Clayden and seconded by Stephen Dorff.**

3. **Matters Arising:**

Phil Ryan raised the issue, (also raised at last year's AGM) regarding online banking and general IT which proved problematical for some older people. Would u3a be able to offer any assistance in how to manage these issues? Anne Gerrard said it would be discussed at the next committee meeting.

4. **Receiving and approving the Accountant's Report and Examined Accounts for year ended 30 September 2022.**

It was noted that a breakdown of the Tours & Visits accounts and expenses had not been circulated, but copies were available at the meeting.

Krutsna Buddhdev thanked Jeremy Harrod for helping him through his first year as Treasurer.

He summarised as follows:

Room hire costs at HAC had been lower during Covid but were now starting to rise again due to a return to live meetings. However, membership was still lower than before the pandemic and stood at 765. He stressed the need to increase membership. He also urged members to pay their subscription online and for those Group Leaders who were using Zoom, to send him their invoices every three months (instead of monthly). He thanked Howard Greenwood for his help regarding subscriptions and Alison Tanna for her help regarding HAC room hire.

Questions:

Ann Banks asked about the difference in subscriptions from £40,000 to £27,000. The answer was the drop in membership during Covid; that 2021 was an anomaly and the deficit was likely to remain the same but subscriptions would not be increased.

Tony Clayden responded that raising subs could result in fewer members.

It was agreed that subs would remain the same for 1-2 years.

Eric Silver asked why membership of Harrow was one of the most expensive. *Anne Gerrard* replied that it was one of the few which was all inclusive and was also fortunate to have HAC as a base. *Mike Allen* said he has taught at Barnet and they charge extra for all meetings. *Sheilah Lowe* explained she had taken part in a Shared Learning Project which researched all u3as and found the majority also have to pay for each class. *Viv Spiteri**** belongs to Kenton u3a who charge an all-inclusive £40. They also have a large venue.

Acceptance of Examined Accounts & Appointment of Independent Accounts Examiner proposed by Joyce Davis and seconded by Jack Kushner.

5. **Chairman's Report**

I will begin with all the tremendous thanks that are so well deserved. I've got a list to make sure all are remembered First of course is the committee, consisting of Lynne, Howard, Tony, Susan, Krutsna, Alison, Helen, Kathy, Stephen, Sheilah and Georgina, who give their time and enthusiasm to keep Harrow u3a thriving. Next of course are the wonderful Group Leaders and their assistants, of whom we do need more. Please do support your group leader by considering helping with the register or contacting absent members, don't wait to be asked.

This brings me to a rant that I feel obliged to air. When we hear in the national news about awards for amazing volunteers, those who "Make a Difference" and we learn of how so many social support schemes are dependent on these wonderful people I do wonder where they go when we get down to the level of specific organisations. Does it mean that when one joins a group it is assumed will all be done by others? Although we do have a team of committed workers; when a call for help goes out it often goes unheeded. I know we are not the only group to suffer

this problem, but it means that too much is done by too few, and they get worn out too quickly. We need an apprenticeship scheme, that was so successful in the wider world in the past, so that someone is waiting in the wings to help when needed. Don't forget that learning a new skill is the best way to keep your mind active and healthy. "Cast your bread upon the waters, as you sow so shall you reap, you get out more than you give in" Right --sermon over but please do consider these thoughts.

As to our present situation. The number of members did of course fall for obvious reasons, but they are building up again steadily and we hope to hold a New Members Meeting soon to greet them in person. Please make sure you keep a copy of our leaflet about you to hand to any enquiry, word of mouth is our greatest publicity. Our splendidly revamped website should attract new members and hopefully younger ones with fresh ideas and approaches.

We are committed to continuing Zoom and hybrid meetings to cater to those who cannot attend physically but please don't take the easy option, u3a is about social interaction as well as learning which is so important for mental health.

We are very pleased that we have some new groups; Ukulele, Our Musical Backdrop, The Aeneid, and Karaoke; we had hoped to get bridge going as well so watch this space. Lynne has worked hard with Harrow's Everyone Active programme which has resulted in a new badminton group.

The Arts Centre, or HAC as it has come to be known has had its heating and space problems which the staff and our Premises Officer work hard to resolve. Please be patient as it often takes a while. The parking situation remains the same, we are able to use Morrisons with no time limit as in the past. There seems to be no movement or decision, we will let you know as soon as we hear anything.

The Knitting and Crochet group have their latest group project of a blanket on display that they hope will generate donations for the earthquake victims, please give generously. We hope to see it in HAC as well for the same purpose.

Please make good use of your newsletter and make a contribution if you can. Do check the website as well, thank you for attending and we hope you continue to enjoy all the benefits of Harrow u3a.

Chairman's Report proposed by Toni Waxman and seconded by Maureen Robson.

Questions:

Toni Waxman asked why two parking spaces had been designated for the Mayor of Harrow.

This was due to the closure of the Town Hall, and the Goby Room at HAC being used as the Mayor's Parlour prior to moving to the new building.

John Aggar raised the issue of the restricted parking proposals at Morrisons. Still no decision.

He also asked what would happen to the blanket and maybe it could be auctioned for charity.

6. Tours & Visits Report

Jack Kushner, Chairman of T&V reported that after many years of problems recruiting people to join their committee, he was grateful to Theresa Murray-Bates and Alison Harvey who had recently joined. Jack felt they had coped well during Covid and the finances were stable. During 2022 there were 16 outings involving 459 members. For this year there will be more concerts, theatre outings and day trips, a 3-night stay in Buxton for the Gilbert & Sullivan festival, and a cruise to Croatia in October.

T&V Report proposed by Toni Waxman and seconded by Tony Clayden

7. Election of Officers

The election of Tricia Sillifant to the role of Study Group Co-ordinator was unanimously approved.

8. Resolutions – none received.

9. Any Other Business

Jayshree Pillaye raised the issue of new members not always being introduced when attending a group for the first time. Suggested members could wear ID labels or lanyards.

Mary Salinsky offered a vote of thanks to Anne Gerrard.

*Morris Levitt**** questioned why Kenton had its own u3a. It was pointed that that u3a National Office encourage new groups even when in the same borough. There is also one in Stanmore.

Tony Kaye expressed thanks to the people who had volunteered to help with the website. He also offered thanks to Tony Clayden for his help with the IT equipment.

*Marion Bloom**** expressed her thanks to all the new members on zoom and how she has made many new friends.