

**MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-NINETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF HARROW U3A
HELD AT 10AM TUESDAY 8 JUNE 2021 VIA ZOOM**

Present: Mike Allen (Chairman); Anne Gerrard (Vice-Chairman); Madhu Badale (Hon.Treasurer)
Lynne Dorff (Hon.Secretary); Georgina Butcher (Life President); Howard Greenwood (Membership);
Alison Tanna (Premises Officer); Helen West (Speaker Secretary); Sheila Lowe (Enquiries Officer)
Susan Field (Member Liaison Officer)

In addition 125 members were present.

1. **SPECIAL RESOLUTION for Postal Votes – cancelled due to none being received.**
2. **APOLOGIES:** Aaron Poyser, Maria Landau, Carol Hewitt, Hedy Gavurin, Sandra Hart, Jackie Jacobs, Stan Byrne, Gabi Otvos, Rhoda Luer (Study Group Co-ordinator).
3. **Minutes of the 28th Annual General Meeting – agreed.**
4. **Matters arising -** Mick Oliver said the travel survey which the Sustainability group had proposed conducting, would be resumed once the Covid restrictions were lifted.
5. **Receiving and approving the Accountant's Report and Examined Accounts for the year ended 30th September 2020.**

Madhu welcomed members to the meeting with the following report:

As usual the accounts have been prepared for the requirements of the Charity Commission by Grant, Harold, Leman, Davis. Jeremy Harold has kindly joined us to help me answer any questions.

I would like to thank Jeremy on behalf of the committee for all his help throughout the year.

As usual we have combined the Tours and Visits Accounts with our main accounts as advised by the Charity Commission and U3A National Office.

I am sure Mike will enlighten you as to the situation regarding classes resuming at Harrow Art Centre.

Jeremy and I will be happy to answer any questions on the accounts.

Jeremy thanked Madhu for her sterling and dedicated work and invited questions.

The Accounts were accepted and proposed by Stephen Dorff and seconded by Georgina Butcher.

6. **Appointing an Independent Accounts Examiner for the financial year 2021/22 – agreed.**

Mike Allen reported on the savings made due to the closure of HAC. He thanked those members who had renewed and those who had been able to attend classes via Zoom and other platforms. He said it would now be possible to book smaller classes at HAC.

Kathy Westhead said the International Folk Dancing group had returned to HAC.

7. **Chairman's Report**

The effect of Covid

We have had to face a very difficult situation since the spread of the virus.

Harrow Arts Centre has been closed – about 40 classes. Classes in homes have been banned – about 60 classes.

In their place we have some 34 classes using electronic means – mostly Zoom. We have to thank all those group leaders who have come to grips with Zoom.

The committee has approved group leaders being reimbursed for subscribing to Zoom Pro which means meetings do not have to stop after 45 minutes.

It has not been possible to do much to cater for those who do not have computer skills, although some have managed to get help to get on line.

We have had a loss in membership from 1100 to about 790. We hope some will return when we are able to resume classes at HAC.

Some Group Leaders have retired. We thank them all for their years of dedicated service.

We have converted our monthly meetings to Zoom and Helen West has provided an interesting and stimulating list of speakers with some help from Lynne Dorff.

We have widened our content – including a Video of Shakespeare’s London which was extremely popular. We have also spent a little more to secure a greater range of speakers.

One presenter could not cope with Zoom and one of our own members stepped in to save the day with her own presentation. I have an emergency presentation to use if such a thing happens again.

One of my students described the Zoom classes as a much needed lifeline in lockdown conditions.

Zoom for the future

Zoom presents us with new opportunities. As classes return to HAC we will have some classes that remain on Zoom and some new Zoom classes, together with some hybrid classes where there will be members in the classroom with the group leader and some present via Zoom link. This will give us the facility to cater for those of our members who can no longer attend HAC.

Kathy Westhead has been experimenting with hybrid classes and we will build on her work.

We will need to buy new equipment including a new laptop, a webcam with a zoom lens and a good microphone. I still need to do further research on this. We hope that we can do this for our monthly meeting.

Current Affairs with quite large numbers and many speakers may not be appropriate for hybrid meetings so I will be starting a new Current Affairs Zoom group in late June.

Currently groups are planning to return to HAC in June or September – providing it is safe.

The committee has decided that we will support smaller groups than usual in these special circumstances and are prepared to support former home groups who want to go to HAC.

Covid and Harrow u3a finances

Covid has affected our finances. The biggest part of our expenditure is room hire and the closure of HAC has meant substantial savings.

The committee therefore lowered the fees for 2020-21 and is proposing further lowered fees for 2021-22, both to be voted on later in this meeting.

National u3a Day

It was National u3a Day on June 3rd. We designed a new leaflet and a number of our members spent time handing them out. Thank you for your efforts. We need to take steps to build up our membership.

Vacancies

We need a Publicity Officer.

Personal

In 2020 Anne Gerrard had come to the end of her 4 year term and no one had come forward.

I stood for Chairman with a view to doing it for a maximum of 2 years. It has not proved to be the quiet term I was hoping for but it seemed inappropriate to resign early in the midst of the pandemic.

However, I will not stand again at next year’s AGM so you will need a new Chairman. I hope Anne will feel able to return.

I intend to concentrate on teaching and I have lots of projects in mind.

Mike thanked Pam Gonsal for her work as Website Editor. Tony Kaye had kindly agreed to help with this and he would have further discussions as to how to proceed. He added that the website needs to be ‘a window on what we do’.

Chairman’s Report proposed by Georgina Butcher and seconded by Anne Gerrard.

8. Tours & Visits Report

Jack Kushner said the T&V Committee were in urgent need of help and if this was not forthcoming then all outings, events etc. would cease. He reported as follows:

1. **FINANCE** - No income in and none gone out. Concerts, Theatres, Holidays and Days out postponed.

2. **FUTURE** –

- a) 15th -19th August 2021 5-day coach tour of Devon led by Pat Bays
 - b) 21st September - 75th Anniversary of Royal Philharmonic Orchestra - Gala Concert at the Royal Albert Hall. Some places remain - cheques for those booked held until COVID confirmation OK
 - c) Possible visit to FORMANS SMOKED SALMON FACTORY postponed from 2019 organised by Toni Waxman
 - d) Possible visit to DE HAVILLAND'S MUSEUM organised by David Pashley - also postponed from last year
3. **NEXT YEAR** - River Cruise Douro River Portugal 29th April 2022. A couple of Double and Single cabins available. This was also postponed from 2019.

9. **Resolution for ratifying the membership fees for year commencing 1 October 2020.** Proposed by Mike Allen, seconded by Anne Gerrard. **Agreed.**

10. **Resolution for setting the membership fees for year commencing 1 October 2021.**

The following comments were received:

Bill Garvey said the current fee structure should continue in order to enable the purchase of any necessary equipment. He thought the fees represented good value.

Michael Possener said maybe the reduction of members was partly due to the unavailability of classes.

Georgina Butcher said the retirement age had risen and referred to an article in TAM.

Deirdre Deely said many people were unaware of u3a and asked for leaflets. Lynne suggested Deirdre contact her as she had plenty.

Pat Rae said other u3a's charged a lower fee but it was pointed out that most have additional charges for room hire etc.

Murray Cohen asked about raising revenue through private donations or advertising. To be considered.

Pat Rae asked if a budget had been prepared. Mike Allen responded that we had plenty of reserves and, in the future, fees can be adjusted accordingly.

Lindsay Rough agreed with the reduction in fees and added that many in her group had not wanted to renew.

Maureen Lubert asked if there was a concession for new members. Mike Allen informed the meeting of the special offer of 15 months for the price of 12 if joined in June.

Resolution proposed by Mike Allen, seconded by Bill Garvey and agreed by all present.

11. **Election of Officers**

A new post of Assistant Treasurer had been created and was currently vacant. All existing Committee Members were willing to stand again. Motion passed. Mike Allen proposed, Barbara Turner seconded. Anne Gerrard expressed thanks to Mike for taking on the role of Chairman.

12. **Any Other Business**

1. Maureen Lubert asked to see the new leaflet. This was shown on screen. She criticised lack of diversity in the photos. Harry Hurst agreed. Mike explained the photos had been downloaded from National Office. Eve Porath said she had a very good ethnic mix in her art class. Anne Gerrard said an email had been received from National Office regarding a workshop on 'Alternative ways of running meetings'. The committee would discuss this at their next meeting.

2. Maurice Levitt commented on the rather 'rowdy behaviour' at the meeting. Also should all meetings be recorded? Mike Allen explained that the monthly meetings were not recorded according to the wishes of the speakers who owned the copyright of their talks.

3. There was a question about the new current affairs group to be held on zoom once the groups had returned to HAC. This would probably take place during the afternoon, but would not be decided until it was known who, and how many, wanted to join. A Group Leader would then be designated.

4. Bill Garvey gave a vote of thanks to Stephen Dorff on his excellent production of the Newsletter.