

Minutes of the Chelmsford u3a 32nd Annual General Meeting

held at Christ Church, 164 New London Road, Chelmsford CM2 0AW

on Thursday 13 February 2025 at 2pm.

Present: Chelmsford u3a committee and members.

1. Welcome and Commencement of meeting.

The meeting was chaired by Lesley Wood who welcomed everyone to the meeting.

a. Apologies for absence: Richard Pusey, Hazel Hughes, Cathy Trevaldwyn, Glen Shaw, Heidi Robinson, Rita Eden, Peter Graves, Jackie Large, Janet Stuart, Penny Savill, Peter Flint, Evelyn Flint, Margaret Kirkham, Diane Read.

b. Eddie Wood confirmed that a quorum of 10% of the membership had been achieved.

2. To approve the Minutes of the AGM held on 8th February 2024.

1. Matters Arising: None

2. Lesley Stapleton proposed and Jenny Barnes seconded the acceptance of the minutes.

3. **The Motion was carried unopposed.**

3. Chairman's Annual Report for year ending 31st December 2024 (Lesley Wood)

Introduction

This is my 4th annual report as Chair. It has been a privilege to lead the board of Trustees (i.e. committee) and to ensure that Chelmsford U3A continues to thrive and achieve its charitable objective, namely the advancement of education of older people in Chelmsford and the surrounding district.

Committee

- At the beginning of the reporting year the committee consisted of 12 elected Trustees and 2 new co-opted trustees. This allowed us the flexibility to make changes to existing role holders and the creation of 3 new roles in Marketing and Recruitment.
- Throughout the year, the committee experienced several changes, including the unexpected death of our Vice Chair David Sweeney, resignations due to health reasons, and members stepping down after long service.
- Following the passing of David Sweeney, Alan Caddy agreed to taking over the role of Vice Chair, whilst it fell to me to take on the role of Beacon Administrator as well as Chair and Group's Coordinator.
- In September Allan Goldsmith had to resign his post due to ill health. We wish Allan a speedy recovery and hope that one day soon he will rejoin the committee.
- In January Nick Bailey decided to resign from the committee. Nick had served on the committee in various roles for 4 years, and his contribution is much appreciated.

- Marie Neale and David Marsh are stepping down from the committee having both served the maximum number of years allowed by our constitution. We thank them both for their endurance and considerable contribution to the smooth running of Chelmsford u3a.
- Diane Read, has recently announced her decision to retire from the committee due to health reasons. Diane has served for 3 years and has been our Membership secretary for the last 2 years. We send Diane our best wishes, thank her for her valued contribution and trust she will make a speedy recovery.

Membership

The membership has grown significantly with 125 new members joining us since March 2024, bringing the total to 643. In addition there 15 visitor members. This is a new subscription free category that was introduced last year for members of other u3a's who wish to join a particular Chelmsford Interest Group. Whilst these members do not contribute to our general fund they have supported our Groups and enabled them to remain viable.

Groups

- Chelmsford u3a has 42 active Interest Groups, with five new groups formed and some put on hold or closed due to various reasons
- When Andy Moir's Book Group became oversubscribed he set up a waiting list and this was used as the basis of a similar group, named Bookworms.
- Following the amazing success of the Pickleball Group, Alan Mayo assisted Jayne Hughes to set up a 2nd group, at the same venue but on a different day.
- Lyndsay Whitehouse, persuaded his deputy, David Gout, to take over the Spanish Conversation Group whilst he turned his attention to setting up the Wonder of Words Group.
- The Cycling for Fun group was proposed by Tony Cox. Prior to contacting me Tony had contacted the u3a subject adviser for Cycling via the national website and had downloaded some useful start-up guidance.
- Regrettably, the Amateur Dramatics Group is on temporary hold due to insufficient interest.
- The Craft Workshops group is also paused at the moment due to the need to find alternative premises to hold their meetings.
- The Live Arts Group has unfortunately closed due to the retirement of John Heathcote and there being no volunteers to take the group forward. John has been advising me as to ways this group might possibly be reformed.
- A Group Leaders Meeting was held on 24th May. Wendy Hubbard demonstrated various aspects of the Beacon system and answered questions about Group Finances. Our web manager, Andy Moir, demonstrated our recently launched Site Works website and urged Group Leaders to submit more images to improve the appearance of the site.

Monthly Meetings

Monthly meetings featured a variety of speakers who spoke on a diverse selection of topics. Many thanks to Eddie Wood for providing such a varied program and ensuring the smooth operation of our meetings. Thanks also to our volunteers for setting up the hall and helping in the kitchen.

Newsletters

The monthly newsletters continue to be well received by our members, and are used to publicise our monthly meetings, social events, and group activities. Many thanks to Andy Moir for his initiative and talents in producing the newsletters.

Website

The website was successfully migrated to the new u3a Site Works platform, resulting in a modern, user-friendly site, that conforms to the u3a brand guidelines. It is hosted and managed by the Third Age Trust but is maintained locally by our web manager, Andy Moir. Our aim is to encourage Group Leaders to help with the day to day maintenance of the site.

Outings and Holidays

The newly formed Coach Outings Group organised three trips, and the Travel Group arranged two holidays, all well-attended and enjoyed by members. Thanks go to the organisers, Anne Brereton, Malcolm Lonsdale and Eddie Wood for their efforts

Social Events

The Easter Social event was devised and organised by David and Jane Sweeney who put a great deal of effort into making it so memorable. 120 members attended and activities included an Easter Bonnet parade, a painted egg competition, raffle and quiz..

Our Summer Social event was another sell out, with a quiz and a traditional cream tea. A 'Meet the Groups' session resulted in a number of groups signing up new members.

In September, an evening concert featuring a local male voice quartet called Song Cycle was held to mark 'u3a Day'. Spare seats were offered to Baddow & Galleywood u3a members. In total there were over 100 attendees. Favourable feedback was received and we are hoping to arrange something similar this coming summer.

In December we held two identical Christmas events, to ensure that as many members as possible could attend. We were entertained by Tony Harris who came in the guise of King Henry VIII. There were two table quizzes, raffles and seasonal refreshments. Thanks go to Eddie Wood for managing both events, and various volunteer helpers.

Publicity

Efforts to increase publicity included attending two outreach events, one at Boreham and the other at Chelmsford Cathedral, and the creation of some new promotional materials. This has contributed to our organisation's visibility in the community. Currently most new members hear about us via word of mouth, therefore, more work is planned for the coming year to spread awareness of our organisation.

Conclusion

There has been only one new nomination to join the committee this year, that is from Janet Parsons. Janet has agreed to take over the Secretary Role from Marie Neale.

Therefore, only 9 members are standing for election this year and this is bound to result in a number of vacant posts on the committee. I therefore urge members to respond to any vacancies we may advertise over the coming weeks so that we can continue to provide the same level of learning opportunities and social activities as we did in the last 12 months.

Lesley Wood

4. Treasurer's Report (Wendy Hubbard).

- A copy of the Treasurer's Report and the Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2023 were posted on the notice board and appeared in the January newsletter.
 - Wendy said that during this last year we changed our bank to the Cooperative Bank. In 2024 our income from membership subscriptions has continued to increase.
 - Two years of Gift Aid has been received within this accounting year (the previous year's was not received in time for the 2023 accounts).
 - Donations came through members taking holidays with Riviera Travel.
 - Expenditure has also increased. The Capitation fee that we pay to the Third Age Trust (TAT) and the cost of Third Age Matters are higher because our membership numbers are higher. This coming year we should not have bank charges as the Cooperative Bank do not currently make charges to charities for processing cash or cheques. This year we bought a card payment machine in order to offer the flexibility of different methods for members to make payments. It was also necessary to buy a new batch of membership cards.
 - We continue to support spending on three social meetings in the year (Easter, Summer and Christmas). There was similar spending at Christmas in 2023 and 2024, however this year it covered the costs associated with two dates: hall hire and expenditure on the entertainer/speaker.
 - We have increased our support to Interest Groups this year: one group that was struggling with numbers (but has now stabilised by changing location), a decision to support the Information Technology group so that it is available for all as drop-in support, and a new group. We also held a Group Leader's lunch meeting.
 - Expenditure has exceeded income for the year, by £1,377.60.
 - We have healthy reserves, currently £9,855.88, which the Committee considers should be sufficient to cover any unforeseen eventualities.
 - For the coming year we will be able to both maintain the current rates of subscription and continue to offer support to some of the Specialist Interest Groups, particularly new groups.
 - I would like to thank the Examiner, Maurice Van Mellaerts, for checking the accounts in an efficient and timely manner.
 - I would also like to thank the Treasurers of our Special Interest Groups for their cooperation throughout the year.
- a) Alan Mayo proposed and David Marsh seconded to receive and adopt the examined accounts and Financial Statement for the year ending 31st December 2024.
- b) **The motion was carried unopposed.**

5. Appointment of the Independent Examiner of Accounts.

- a. Eddie Wood proposed and Joan Mayo seconded to appoint Maurice Van Mellaerts as Independent Examiner for the year ending 31st December 2025.
- b. **The Motion was carried unopposed.**

6. **Election of Trustees/Committee Members for the coming year**

a. To elect Janet Parsons as a trustee, already proposed and seconded to the committee:

The motion was carried unopposed.

b. Those standing for re-election:

- i. Lesley Wood
- ii. Alan Caddy
- iii. Wendy Hubbard
- iv. Eddie Wood
- v. Ann Bell
- vi. Lynn Regan
- vii Brian Littlechild
- ix. Peter Anderton

c. **The Motion to elect these members who have already been proposed and seconded was carried unopposed.**

7. Any other business. Chris Bellamy proposed a vote of thanks to the committee and Brian Littlechild said how Lesley does a sterling job as Chair while at the same time is Groups Coordinator and runs the Family History Group.

a. Vote of thanks and close of Annual General Meeting.

Lesley thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting was formally closed.

Signed...*Marie Neale*

Dated...21 February 2025

Marie Neale Secretary Chelmsford u3a