

**MINUTES OF 20TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
MAIDENHEAD U3A HELD ON TUESDAY 13TH FEBRUARY 2018**

Present:	Nigel Roper	Chairman
	John Twydale	Treasurer
	Ian Ross	Group Co-Ordinator
	Mo Wright	Secretary
	Jean Myhill	Speakers
	Cynthia Wood	Events Co-ordinator

Quorum of Maidenhead U3A Members

1. Welcome by Chairman **Nigel Roper**

2. Apologies for Absence **Nigel Roper**

Carol Cameron, Hilary Brodie, Vreny Beadon and Maggie Kearney sent their apologies.

3. Minutes of 2017 Annual General Meeting. **Nigel Roper**

The Minutes of the 2017 AGM were distributed beforehand. Proposal to approve given by Shirley Ford and seconded by Pam Teasdale. Members voted in favour of accepting the minutes.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Chairman's Report **Nigel Roper**

Last August I went to the National U3A Conference and AGM in Nottingham. Attended by over 400 delegates from 238 U3As, the Annual Conference is an excellent opportunity to benchmark Maidenhead U3A against other U3As, compare notes and pickup ideas. We represent a typical size U3A, with a comparable annual fee and an above average ratio of Groups to members. Several Chairmen I spoke to were quite envious of the large number of language groups we run; by contrast, some are unable to offer even basic French. We also stand out by having a strong core of Group Convenors, many of whom run multiple Groups. Again, there are U3As who find it difficult to find volunteers to run a Group.

The following month, I was holidaying in Keswick and took the opportunity to go along to the annual open morning, run by Skiddaw U3A, which happened to be taking place that week. This once a year event provides prospective and established members an opportunity to come along, pay their membership fees, chat to Convenors, view exhibits laid on by various Groups and meet the Committee. I was heartened to see the tide of members dropping in, enjoying cake and coffee; and chatting to fellow members – there was a real buzz and excitement in the air.

Nearer home, two of our Committee members attend the bi-monthly Thames Valley Network meetings, bringing back details of Study Days and learnings from other U3As in the Thames Valley.

We are part of a National organisation bonded by a set of values and principles and can all learn from other U3As by speaking to friends, browsing publications like Third Age Matters and reaching out to other U3As. The Committee will always have a listening ear for fresh ideas whether it's a new Group or a speaker for a Monthly Meeting.

The Third Age Trust are putting an emphasis on new technology and encouraging members to embrace social media. To this end, the National office have updated their website, giving it a modern feel, and have both a Facebook and a Twitter presence. Media such as the web, email, Facebook and Twitter enable us to bring opportunities to our members in a timely fashion; such as the TVN Study Days. Alongside our updated website, which has been up and running for a year, there is now a Maidenhead U3A Twitter page. Technology is a means of joining-the-dots and of course should never replace face-to-face gatherings. We must also not forget that 12% of our members are not on email and are possibly averse to personal computing.

Our membership for the past 3 years has hovered around the 620 mark. Although 92 members joined in 2017, with similar numbers joining during each of the previous 2 years; we lose around 30% of each year's intake for various reasons – members are unable to join the group of their choice, decide U3A is not for them or move out of the area. We assist newcomers by offering two 'New Members' meetings every year and a monthly Coffee Morning at Maidenhead Library. Of course, as individuals we all have a responsibility to look out for new faces and make newcomers welcome.

Maidenhead U3A, like other U3As, could not function without the dedication of our many Convenors for which Ian will say more. We are also indebted to others, like Pam Teasdale who provides us with tea at our monthly meetings; and also, to the many helpers who assist at our Christmas party.

During the months of April through October our Outings team, consisting of Jenny Cooper, Maura McGinley and Cynthia Wood, organised 7 well attended coach outings to various locations in the South West and South East of England. New to 2017 was the introduction of Theatre Trips, organised by our Secretary, Mo Wright; taking in 9 productions at our 2 local theatres at Windsor and High Wycombe. Booking seats, choosing the right size coach, hoping for take-up and balancing the books requires a lot of hard work and tenacity. We should all be grateful to the work done by these members in enriching our programme.

I have been a member of Maidenhead U3A for 4 years and have served on the Committee for all of these 4 years having been drawn in by the charms of Harry Burnham at my first Monthly Meeting in 2013. Having acted as Speaker Organiser, Groups Co-ordinator, Vice-Chairman and finally as Chairman I have completed my maximum term and need to step down from the Committee. In many ways my final role as Chairman has been the least demanding with the main responsibilities being to chair our monthly Committee meetings and write the Chairman's Report for the Monthly Newsletter. My role has been made easy by being surrounded by a great team (in no particular order)

... Ian Ross, our Groups Co-ordinator, who has been instrumental in setting up new Groups and keeping the wheels turning for established Groups.

... Mo Wright, our Secretary, for minuting our meetings, handling publicity and still finding time to run the Creative Writing Group and, as mentioned, organising the Theatre trips.

... John Twydle, our Treasurer and newest recruit to the Committee, for keeping our books in order and still finding time to run the Science Group.

... Jean Myhill, our Speaker Organiser, who goes to great lengths to select interesting and varied speakers. Jean also acts as our catering go-to person at the Convenor and Christmas parties.

... Cynthia Wood, our Events Co-ordinator, who liaises between Events organisers and the Committee.

... Finally, Carol Cameron, our Membership Secretary, who unfortunately can't be with us today. Carol is also our Newsletter Editor and is responsible for gathering Convenor input, editing and publishing the Newsletter on the first of each month. To add to this, Carol now runs a second Family History Group.

I shall miss my colleagues on the Committee, but I will continue to look after our website, so will be keeping in touch. I wish the new Committee every success for the coming year.

Thank You.

6. Treasurer's Report (See separate documents)

John Twydle

As in the last couple of years, we have once again sent out the accounts with the February Newsletter, so you will all have had a few days to look at them and consider any queries which you would address at this meeting.

Firstly, the Statement of Assets, the simpler of the two pages, which simply shows how much cash we hold at the bank and equates it to the surpluses which we have accumulated over the years since our inception in 1998. You will note that the cash at bank has increased by some £1,004 during the year and this represents a surplus of income over expenditure for 2017. Significantly less than 2016, when a surplus of £1,817 was achieved. The difference between the 2 years is largely due to increased expenditure during 2017.

The report, as ever has been audited and signed by John Tryon, our independent examiner. We propose that John is re-elected to this honorary position, later in the meeting.

Now to page 2, the receipts and payments account, and the reasons behind the surplus for the year. I should emphasise that the Committee does not set out to achieve a surplus, but we do have to ensure that we do not incur a deficit. The trip and Theatre visits both incurred a small loss, you will appreciate that it is exceedingly difficult to cost these events, and one cannot emphasise the importance of planning and budgeting required for this aspect of our activities.

Membership was strong with additional income from subscriptions and Gift aid.

In 2016 we had an unexpectedly low charge from the Third Age Trust for their quarterly news distribution. In 2017 this charge rose to the level anticipated by Bill last year. The Capitation fee will also higher in 2017, as it is based on membership at December 2016.

Conference expenses, Nigel attended the National conference in 2017 hence the additional costs there.

Newsletter – Unfortunately, as postal costs continue to rise, so does the cost of producing the printed newsletter delivery

Group Expenses – these will continue to increase as some of the larger groups find suitable accommodation. The committee also offers support for groups who require literature or photocopying.

Provisions for general meetings. Largely stable

Speakers – Monthly meetings. While these costs are rising generally we reduced cost in 2017 by having some U3A speakers.

Recruitment –decreased from £734 in 2016 down to £206 largely as we use up stock.

Yuletide – represents the deficit incurred on the Christmas Party

Bill Teasdale mentioned that when John Tyndale took over from him, within a few months the systems he handed over broke down and John was forced to learn other systems. I send my congratulations to him.

7. Treasurer's Report

Acceptance of the Treasurer's Report was proposed by Bill Teasdale and seconded by Brian Jones. Members voted in favour of accepting the Treasurer's report.

8. Audited Accounts

John Twydle reported that John Tryon offered to continue in this role for the next year. The acceptance of John Tryon for the next year was proposed by Moira McGinley and seconded by June Spiers.

9. Group Co-ordinator's Report

Ian Ross

For our membership of over 600 we have 72 interest groups, at the last count. If I try to classify them, we have 15 language groups (and counting), 14 games groups, 9 arts, crafts and music, 9 literature, 5 maths, science and technology, 5 history, 3 current affairs and 12 others. But they all have their own unique character. The majority of groups meet in members' houses, but we also use a number of established venues for the largest groups.

I would like to pay tribute first to all the conveners and members of the 60 groups which existed a year ago and, in most cases, have kept going for many years. You obviously enjoy what you do, we rarely hear from you and you carry on month after month and year after year. I would like to mention all the conveners by name, but it would sound like a roll call.

At last year's AGM we invited suggestions for new groups and the responses we received included Bridge and Beginners' French. We now have two additional bridge groups, making six in all, which have been led by Susanna Jones. Marie- Christine Geary, a French national and former teacher, has just offered to lead a French beginners' and near beginners' group and we will hold a start-up meeting this month for the 12 members who have asked to join.

It is great when new members come to our U3A with ideas for new groups and offer to lead them. This has happened at the last two new members meetings. Mark Davis joined us from another U3a and has set up the History of Medicine Group which is already very well attended. Mick Stringer who recently completed a PhD in Classics after a financial career has just started up an Ancient Literature group (meaning Homer, Virgil, Ovid and the like). One of our established conveners, Pat Cairney, is starting up an Italian group, as advertised in the newsletter, and 12 people have applied, so we may need two! And Philip Ratcliffe is trying to get an investment group off the ground.

Some of our groups prove so popular that they cannot accommodate everyone who wants to join. Family History is a good example, so we have set up a second Family History group led by Carol Cameron and the two additional bridge groups are another example.

Inevitably we occasionally lose conveners. Susan Scorer decided to stand down after many years, as did Betty Carter and Iris McMenamin and sadly Pat Roberts has passed away. I am pleased to report that new conveners have come forward : Hilary Brodie to lead the scrabble group, Marie Krag the Relaxation and Self-Healing group and Betty Lowe the Maths group, while Susan's members have mostly transferred to other French groups.

In September the annual conveners party was held at the Cookham Parish Hall and we invited them beforehand to raise any issues or suggestions, which they wanted to discuss with the committee and their fellow conveners. No issues were raised. They just wanted to have a good party, and it was very well deserved. But we must not become complacent and we are always pleased to hear from members with any suggestions for new groups or any other issues they wish to raise.

10. COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The following standing Committee members were elected for 2018-19

Ian Ross (Chairman)

Proposed by Mo Wright and seconded by Carol Cameron.

Jean Myhill (Speaker Organiser)

Proposed by John Twydle and seconded by Nigel Roper.

Cynthia Webb (Group Co-ordinator)

Proposed by John Twydle and seconded by Jean Myhill

John Twydle (Treasure)

Proposed by Mo Wright and seconded by Cynthia Woodhouse

Carol Cameron (Membership Secretary)

Proposed by Mo Wright and seconded by Jean Myhill

Mo Wright (Secretary)

Proposed by John Twydle and seconded by Carol Cameron

Nigel Roper proposed to accept the new Committee en-bloc which was seconded by Bill Teasdale.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Finally, Ian Ross expressed his thanks to Nigel for all his contributions. Not only has Nigel served us well over the last four years as Speakers Organiser, Groups Coordinator and Chairman, but he has done a lot to move our U3A forward by masterminding the introduction of the Beacon database developing our new website and networking extensively with other U3As.

The 21st AGM will be held on the 12th February 2019.

The meeting was closed