

RINGMER U3A

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 15th May 2019 at 10.30am in the Symons Hall

There were approximately 22 members present.

(1) Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Jill Collins, Stephen Van Dulken, Bob Cairns, Anna-May Bridger, Janet Bridger, Jan Bailey, Barbara Cruttenden, Sue Clyde, Carol Hazelden and Sue Pedley.

(2) Minutes of the last meeting held on 16th May 2018

The members approved the Minutes (previously approved by the Committee on 19th March 2019) which have been available for members' perusal on our website. (Proposed by Lynne Booth and seconded by Geoff Bridger.)

(3) Matters Arising - None

(4) Chairman and Trustees' Report

Ian Loughborough presented his report for the year 2018/19 (attached) and stressed that he must step down as Chairman. He is willing, however, to continue on the committee as Vice-Chairman in the hope that someone comes forward to take on the Chairmanship.

(5) Treasurer's Report – Sue Hall

Sue Hall presented the accounts for the year to 31st March 2019, which have been checked and agreed by our Independent Examiner, Sue Tibbenham. She then gave her report (attached).

(6) Financial Proposals for 2019/20 – Sue Hall

(i) Proposal to increase the Annual Subscription to £10 (after 01/01/20 £6). Associate subscription to be set at £5. This is the first increase since 2015. Seconded by Ken Boot-Handford and carried by the meeting.

(ii) Proposal for Sue Tibbenham to be the Independent Examiner of Ringmer U3A accounts for 2019/20. This was seconded by Veronica Humphrey and carried by the meeting.

(7) Interest Groups' Report – Tim Polwart

Tim was introduced as our new Interest Groups Co-ordinator, having been co-opted onto the Committee during the course of the year, originally without portfolio. Tim then gave his report (attached).

Ian Loughborough once again expressed his thanks to those Conveners (previously mentioned in his report), who have stepped down during the course of the year,

(8) Sussex U3A Network (SUN) representative's report

In Jill's absence her previously distributed report (attached) was read by Ian Loughborough. He encouraged members to think about taking part in the various projects organised by the Network, particularly the "Sussex Myths and Spirits" event at Sussex University on Saturday 13th July from 10am – 5pm.

(9) Election of the Executive Committee

Ian reported that we have lost two committee members during the course of the year: Sue Hall is stepping down as Treasurer as from today's meeting. Stephen Van Dulken left the committee earlier this year as he is planning to move house. Ian has already taken a thank-you card and small gift to Stephen as a token of our appreciation.

(i) Sue Hall is standing down from the Committee having completed her maximum time in office. She has spent eight years in the post and done an excellent job throughout, especially in giving support to Ian when he first took over as Chairman, providing continuity. IL said that in his view the role of Treasurer is the most important job in any U3A. Thus, in many ways it is thanks to Sue that we have today such a healthy U3A in Ringmer. The Chairman presented her with a card and bouquet of flowers and the members showed their appreciation with sustained applause.

(ii) The following members were proposed for election to the 2019/20 executive committee en bloc: Ian Loughborough, Sylvia Coleman, Kay Fitzgerald, Ken Boot-Handford, Jill Collins, Keith Moore, Jon Elphick and Tim Polwart. Proposed by Sue Hall, seconded by Wendy Morgan and carried unanimously by the meeting.

This leaves four committee vacancies. Ian encouraged members to consider joining the committee. Detailed committee job descriptions are now on our website so it is possible to see the tasks involved for any of the positions. Alternatively we would appreciate a few members joining the committee without portfolio.

(10) Any Other Business

Valerie King, convener of the Out and About group, said that she and other conveners would like to have the names of committee members and their telephone numbers. Tim Polwart explained that he (as Interest Groups Co-ordinator) should be the first point of contact. Ken Boot-Handford added that all committee members can be reached by email via the Beacon website.

The Chairman reminded the members of two planned events: a coach trip to Kew Gardens and the National Archives on 12th June and the SUN Summer School at Sussex University on 13th July.

On behalf of the members, Geoff Bridger thanked the committee for all their hard work during the past year.

The meeting closed at 11.13am.

Ian Loughborough, Vice-Chairman

Kay Fitzgerald, Hon. Secretary

Chairman's Report 2018/19

Once again it falls to me as your Chairman to give an Annual Report on behalf of the Executive Committee. This will be my last, despite the fact that we have yet to find a successor. Not only have I reached, indeed exceeded, the number of years stated in our constitution, but also I have exhausted all the ideas that I feel I can bring to the job.

Once again this has been a good year for Ringmer U3A although we did start off losing a few Activity Groups and our numbers have dipped slightly. That said we still have 181 members and 16 Activity Groups. You will hear more on our Groups later although I know that you will all be fully aware of what we have done this year as you are avid readers of Jon's excellent Newsletter and of Keith's and Martin's informative website. We have made big advances with the latter this year and I am most grateful to them both for this.

Running a voluntary organisation just seems to get more and more complicated and your committee has been busy making sure that we stay legal. This year we have been fully utilising U3A Beacon, which has been a great help. This is becoming more popular throughout the U3A nationally and there is currently a waiting list for groups that wish to join. We have also had to produce a Data Protection Policy and a Privacy Policy and both of these are on the web. Another document that we have recently agreed is our Committee Job Descriptions. This is also on the web and will enable members to see the tasks and commitment for each appointment on the committee. We continue to be involved with the Sussex U3A Network (SUN) and our Secretary, Kay, and I also attended a national workshop. Finally, we regularly review our Governance Procedures and Practices document and this will be put on the web after our next committee meeting. Hopefully that will be it for a while.

It has therefore been a busy year for your committee, but I feel that we are now in a good position to consolidate our U3A. Next year will be our 30th Anniversary. It seems no time at all since we celebrated our 25th. Do let us know what we could do to mark this occasion. As we approach our Open Day and Enrolment in August please consider carefully what you could do for Ringmer U3A next year. Could you help out on the committee or could you start up a new Activity Group? Activity Groups are the core of our U3A and you will hear more from Tim on this. However, I would like to place on record my thanks for the work of those Convenors who have had to step down this last year. They include Janet Beirne (Readers Circle), Elsie Bowler (Poetry), Ray & Jacquie Churchill (Theatre Club), Denise Hadley (French) and Julia Middleton (Scrabble). Julia of course continues with Mah-Jong.

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to thank all those members who currently help to make our U3A so successful. I am most grateful to you all. I have thoroughly enjoyed my years as Chairman and this has been mainly due to the support that I have received from committee members and Convenors. Thank you all.

Ian Loughborough
Chairman

Treasurer's Report to AGM 15th May 2019

Sue Tibbenham, our Independent Examiner of Accounts, has checked and agreed the Statement of Accounts before you for the year April 2018 – March 2019 and the signed statement is on file.

Our main income is our annual subscriptions which are received each August. However, every year our major annual expenditures are in the following April & May, namely the National U3A subscription fees, Direct Mail charge & Beacon subscription. Our financial year ends on 31st March and hence the figures presented at that time do not show the payment of our major outgoings due later in the year. Allowing for this, however, there is still a healthy balance in our bank account.

We have, however, been notified recently of increased charges for some of our major outgoings such as the Direct Mail and Beacon Subscription. Also it is anticipated that the National U3A subscription may be increased as this has not been raised for several years. To ensure that our financial state remains in a healthy position, I would like to propose that our annual subscription fee for 2019-2020 be increased from £8.00 to £10.00 and £6.00 for any new members joining us from 1st January 2020. I also propose that the fees for Associate members from other U3A Groups, such as Lewes, remain at half our annual subscription, namely £5.00. This will be the first increase of subscriptions since 2015.

This will be my last AGM as Treasurer as I have decided to stand down. I have enjoyed my time on the committee and would like to thank members and fellow committee members for the support and help they have given me over the past eight years. Particular thanks go to our Chairman, Ian Loughborough, and his predecessor, Bob Cairns, who were a delight to work with.

Sylvia Coleman has taken on the post of Treasurer and I have every confidence that your money is in safe and competent hands.

Finally, I would like to propose that Sue Tibbenham is elected as our Independent Examiner of Accounts for the year April 2019 to March 2020.

Sue Hall
May 2019

Interest Groups Report

Group	Conv'nr	#	Comment
Astronomy	Brian Wignall	17	This group has now finished its meetings for the summer and will start again in September. During the year their observations have included Uranus, the Orion Nebula and the Eskimo Nebula. There are two vacancies for anyone interested.
Computer Group	Sylvia Coleman	36	The Computer group covers all aspects of information technology and how it interacts with everyday life. The use of computers, tablets, and mobile phones, for emails, storage and documents and the pitfalls that can occur with staying safe online. The group is run by a small planning group with extensive knowledge of different aspects of information technology. With this combined experience, we are able to help with various problems or issues that members raise. The computer group has had a successful year, which it is hoped will continue. The group is very much interactive and new members with different ideas would be welcome.

Knit One, Chat One	Sue Hall	9	This year the group has been well attended and members have produced a variety of knitted and stitched items. In December they met with members of Knit and Natter and the then newly formed Creative Crafters. They will be holding another joint meeting with these two groups in July.
Knit & Natter	Margaret Eggleton; Linda Perrott	7	
Creative Crafters	Julie Terry	5	
Family History	Bob Cairns	55	This is the largest Ringmer group with 54 members and another interesting year's programme has seen an average of 80% attendance. Many of their meetings have featured presentations by their own members on a range of research topics and family stories. They've also had three guest speakers. Dr Graham Mayhew helped with researching people who fought in World War 1 using his own experiences in researching those listed on the Lewes War Memorial. This was reinforced by Ringmer's own noted WW1 historian Geoff Bridger who went through the techniques of Great War research which he uses to such good effect. In February Jayne Shrimpton, well known nationally as a fashion historian and contributor to family history magazines and 'Who Do You Think You Are?' TV series, helped date our family photographs from 1840 - 1940. On 15 April an additional meeting was held joined by friends from Uckfield, Burgess Hill and Crowborough U3As and had Martin McDowell from Belfast give 'A Beginner's Guide to DNA'. It was excellent and more than 30 of the group are now awaiting the results of their DNA analyses. The group meetings are lively and good fun which is the best environment in which to learn. Many thanks to the planning group of five who arrange and deliver such an interesting and diverse programme.
French Conversation	Bridget Cross	6	
Gardening Club	Jenny West; Joan Wignall	18	
2 Garden	Rita Price; Marie-Claude Pullen	16	They would gladly increase membership to 20 active persons.
Mahjong	Julia Middleton	9	
Out & About	Valerie King	41	This Group continues to enjoy activities suggested and arranged by members. Eating out is popular and they have recently enjoyed a Cinema visit with a classic film followed by a cream tea. Other visits included Fishbourne Roman Villa and Brighton Pavilion for the amazing exhibition of hats by Stephen Jones. New members are welcome.
Photography	Martin Whitlock	31	

Short Walks	Jon Elphick	21	The Short Walks Group continues to meet twice a month for a leisurely stroll around the footpaths of Ringmer. Numbers have been on the low side in recent months – often only one or two and rarely more than four. A few more active participants and a <u>new convenor are sought</u> .
Spanish Conversation	Conchita Wigley	9	
Walking	Lynne Booth	24	The group has walked throughout the year, in all weathers and over differing terrain, from the back streets of Lewes, over the Downs and as far afield as Shoreham. They enjoyed coffee in the Art Deco style of Shoreham Airport Building. Thanks to everyone who leads walks: you have made our year so enjoyable and interesting.
What the Papers Say	Sue Wilkins	6	Nothing to report really - this little group always has plenty of subjects to talk about. They don't always agree but that leads to interesting discussions and certainly keeps the brain ticking over! Being a small number enables each member to air their view which is always respected. There is a waiting list being kept and the next person on that list will be informed if a place becomes vacant.

SUN REPORT

The Sussex U3A Network (SUN) committee meets four times a year to highlight any national changes and to encourage local U3As to join together to share experiences. The SUN study days (which cost £8 and are always on a Saturday) are very popular and have included subjects as diverse as “Music for the Movies” and “A Brief History of Mathematics”.

Workshops have been arranged, including Ian’s Desktop publishing event in February and two sessions of Beacon training within the county.

SUN has a very comprehensive website with links to both National and local events including the South East Forum conference which was held in East Grinstead in April. At this event the Third Age Trust Chairman, Ian McCannan, explained that there were many developments proposed at national level to improve public awareness (particularly improvements to the website) which could result in a rise to the capitation fee of £3.50. This has remained unchanged for the last 10 years.

The Chichester Summer School is fully booked for this year, with 180 students spending four days on a variety of subjects from cycling and falconry to maths and psychology.

The “Sussex Myths and Spirit” event at Sussex University on Saturday 13th July from 10-5pm will show how at least 12 Sussex U3As have interpreted this topic, particularly about their local area. This should be very interesting and worth a visit. Full details are on the SUN website.

Jill Collins

RINGMER U3A

Accounts for period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019

INCOME	£	EXPENDITURE	£
Members Subscriptions	1365.00	Membership Fees	698.40
		Branch Hire of Rooms	50.30
Group Room hire receipts	681.30	Group Room Hire	707.10
Diaries	62.50	Diaries	62.50
		Direct Mail	368.82
		Photocopying	24.80
		Miscellaneous	327.40
		Purchase of Projector	<u>349.99</u>
	<u>£2,108.80</u>		<u>£2,589.31</u>

	£
Balance at 31.3.18	2,541.85
+ Income	2,108.80
	<u>4,650.65</u>
— Expenditure	2,589.31
	<u>£ 2,061.34</u>

Assets	
Cash at Bank 31.3.19	£2,227.79
- Liabilities	
Unpresented cheques	166.45
	<u>£2,061.34</u>

Examiner's report: It is my opinion that the above Statement of Accounts gives a true and fair view of the income, expenditure and assets as at 31 March 2019.

Signed *Sue Hall*
 Sue Hall
 Treasurer
 Date: 16th April 2019

Signed *Susan Tibbenham*
 Sue Tibbenham
 Examiner
 Date: 16 April 2019,