Kent u3a network

AGM 7th July 2022

Minutes

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **U3a**  | **Representative** | ***Apologies***  |
| Ashford, Wye and District |  | *Barry Andrews* |
| Bearsted and district  | Kevin WillisSteve West  |  |
| Canterbury |  | *Robin Terry and Ian Agnew* |
| Cranbrook |  |  |
| Dartford |  |  |
| East Medway |  |  |
| Edenbridge  |  |  |
| Faversham  | Jenny GurneyJacquie Dabnor | *Babs Stone* |
| Goudhurst and District  |  |  |
| Gravesend | Alan Scott  | *Sandra Parker* |
| Hawkhurst  |  |  |
| Isle of Sheppey | Heather Thomas-PughLinda Jones Sally Charnock |  |
| Kings Hill and District  |  | *clashes with their meeting*  |
| Knole | Jean Zariffis | *Magda Sweetland* |
| Maidstone  |  | *Stephen Bush* |
| Maidstone Invicta  |  |  |
| Malling District  | Chrys Short ZOOM |  |
| Medway | Angela Howe |  |
| Meopham |  | *Lionel Patterson* |
| Orpington  |  | *Pauline Dobson* |
| Paddock Wood  | Michele Sinclair ZOOM |  |
| Pembury | Michael Cartwright  |  |
| Saxon Shore  |  |  |
| Sevenoaks | Amanda Birch | *Beryl Mansell*  |
| Shepway and District  |  |  |
| Swanley and District  |  |  |
| Tenterden |  | *Jenny Stevens* |
| Thanet  | Adrian EverixDick SymondsMeg Harvey |  |
| Tonbridge | Frani Hoskins  |  |
| Tunbridge Wells  | Eryll FabianLindsey Hassell |  |
| Westerham |  |  |
| White Cliffs Country  | Sue Edwards, ZOOM |  |
| Regional Trustee | Susie Berry ZOOM  |  |
| Plus Committee  | Carole Dickenson, chair  |  |
|  | Sue Brimlow, vice-chair |  |
|  | John Russell, volunteer  |  |
|  | Eleanor Brooks, secretary John Russell, committee member  |  |

1. Carole welcomed everyone to the meeting and acknowledged apologies, recorded in the attendance table.

1. Death of Sue David-Sur, our previous Treasurer

Carole paid tribute to Sue and reported that her funeral had been held yesterday. Carole has written to Sue’s husband to say how much we appreciated what Sue had done for the Kent Network. Carole thanked Angela for stepping back into the role of Treasurer at short notice.

1. Minutes of the last AGM were proposed by Michael Cartwright of Pembury u3a and seconded by Kevin Willis of Bearsted u3a, and were agreed as accurate.
2. Chairs report

Carole thanks everyone for their support over the last 3 years and highlighted what exceptional times her term of office had included, given a pandemic and lockdown. She felt we are now in a time of rebuilding and have a chance to benefit from our new skills.

Carole reported that she has represented us at the South East Forum and been part of the support team for our Trustee. She has been part of the recruitment and retention project and thanked the u3as who trialed the materials.

Carole reported that the national website is becoming easier to access and urged us to get our members to sign up to the national newsletter. She pointed us to subject advisors and subject networks on the website. The Brand Centre now looks professional.

In terms of training there are workshops that last about 2 hours on zoom that your committee members can book onto, or alternatively a u3a can request a bespoke session. The toolkit also gives valuable information to support committees and the best way to find it is to search for “u3a toolkit”. It is not designed to be read, just dip into the bit that interests you when you want it.

She thanks Angela for stepping back in as Treasurer at short notice, Jenny Stephens for managing the speakers list and Rob White for volunteering to cover publicity. Carole welcomed Eleanor as the new secretary and particularly thanked John and Sue for all they had done.

1. Treasurer’s report

The balance sheet had been circulated by email before the meeting.

Angela reported that as our transactions have been minimal in the last year, our main outgoings had been bank charges, and that she would welcome suggestions for free accounts. Nat West and Barclays were mentioned by members. We have £3261.11 in the current account, including £1500 from the closure of Weald u3a which is planned for supporting new u3as. Angela remains as a signatory and our new committee will need to decide who to add, as cheques need two signatures. We continue to approve the use of internet banking. We have paid £140 for a pro Zoom account which is available for any u3a to use. Our income has traditionally come from study days. At the moment there is no need to ask u3as for a subscription as there is money in our account to cover our planned costs. The accounts were proposed by Frani Hoskins and seconded by Eryll Fabian and accepted.

We ask our Treasurer to add the new chair and new secretary to the list of signatories.

1.    Report from Regional Trustee

a)    Susie Berry thanked Carole for all she has done for the network over the last 3 years. She will be a hard act to follow.  Susie is delighted that Carole will remain a member of her Support Team.

b)    The Trust AGM on 6th October is hybrid so we can either go to Kents Hill Conference Centre in Milton Keynes or attend via zoom. There is no Trustee election for SE Region this year but we are eligible to vote for the vice-chair. Michaela Moody is retiring and there is only one nomination, Allan Wormsley but we still need to hold the election and we could show support by voting.

c)    There are spare copies of the latest edition of TAM available if anyone needs them (free) for publicity events. Please contact Susie immediately.

d)    U3a Trust hopes that a new All Party Parliamentary Group will be formed for ‘informal learning’ in which case the secretariat will be provided from u3a Office. This could be a good way to get our name known more widely.

e)    U3a is still suffering from a drop in membership over the time of the pandemic. This is estimated at 84,000 UK wide although the SE Region is doing better than most.  At the moment the focus is on helping u3as to rebuild and Susie encouraged us to get potential new members to join their closest u3a rather than targeting the formation of new u3as. There are not many gaps in the region although we are happy to form new u3as if the need is there. We are encouraged to use Rob White who has agreed to take on publicity across Kent.  Please keep him informed about any special events or success stories. Terry Bevis from Maidstone u3a is considering becoming PRA for the whole region.

f)      U3a day has been changed to u3a week 18-24 September and there are grants available for any events we wish to hold providing they are open to the public.

g)    The website has been updated to make it easier to use.  The search engine now works much better and improvements are ongoing.  Charles Tomlinson is only part time in the u3a Office but he is responsive to requests and suggestions.

h)    The Trust is rationalizing its committee structure. One big change is that all vacancies will be advertised to the whole membership, mainly in the newsletter. Please make your members aware of the opportunities.

i) The South East Region Autumn Gathering will be held on Thursday, 17th November, probably exclusively on Zoom, and will focus on the next 40 years.  What improvements can we make to keep the movement vibrant and fit for purpose?  Please encourage all your u3as to participate.  This is the chance to have a real influence.

1. Elections

The following nominations have been received:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Chair  | Chrys Short  |
| Vice-Chair  | Frani Hoskins |
| Secretary  | Eleanor Brooks |
| Treasurer  | Angela Howe |
| Committee members  | Carole Dickenson |
|  | John Russell  |
|  | Val Johnson |
|  | Jenny Akehurst  |

As no position is contested, Amanda Birch of Sevenoaks u3a proposed these names and Michael Cartwright of Pembury seconded them as a block, and all were agreed.

After a break for refreshments, members met in groups to discuss what was going well and what their challenges were. Results were fed back and common challenges included:

* Recruitment of volunteers
* Succession planning for the committee
* Becoming better known across the wider community
* Attracting group leaders
* Recruiting younger members
* The name “university of the third age”
* Getting people to use Beacon
* Having too many groups full
* Banking and the changing role of treasurer

The committee will focus on the feedback, both given verbally at the meeting and recorded on sheets to create this year’s programme.