

Minutes of Virtual Yorkshire and Humber Region u3a Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 28th April 2021

Agenda/Programme

Welcome and commencement of meeting

The meeting commenced at 10:30 am. Chairman, Mick Richings, welcomed everyone to this second AGM by Zoom. He explained that the official business would be recorded and that attendees should switch off their video if they did not wish to be recorded. Any questions or comments could be made via Chat Box.

PRESENT: MT - Mick Richings, (Chairman), Samina Aslam (host for this meeting), Angie Grain (Workshop and Events Co-ordinator), Hazel Ward (Secretary), Janet Matthews (Treasurer), Trevor Barrowcliffe (Bulletin), Pat Collard, (Management Team member) Beryl Pemberton (Speaker Co-ordinator), Doug Hirst (Website Manager), Helen Leech (PR Adviser), Margaret Fiddes, (Trustee for Yorkshire and the Humber) Frank Bailey (Beacon),

u3as - Sue McPhee, Denise Roberts (**AWAKE**) Christine Benson, Carolyn Booth-Jones, Frances Gaskell, (**Beverley**); Lesley Tempest, Susan Tong (**Cottingham**); Penny Bell, David Kite (**Caves**); Lorraine Harding (**Cookridge and Horsforth**); Lesley Robinson, Claire Scott (**Easingwold & District**); Lynda Hall (**Garforth & Kippax**); Stella Barclay, Alison Harris, Barry Johnson, Phil Johnston (**Harrogate**); Ron Barclay, Evert Ditzel (**Howden & District**); Glenys Bailey (**Ripon & District**); Sue Whelan (**Scarborough**); John Richardson, Jan Tetley, Pauline Whitton (**Selby & District**); Les Chandler, Ian Gray, Mike Mellers (**Settle**); Brian Cave, Anna Harvey (**Sheffield**); Barry Wharton (Sherburn & Villages); Fran Rabone (Stokesley & District); Jacqueline Clark (**Tadcaster & Villages**); Hilary Fowler (**Wakefield & District**); Mike Barnard (**York**).

Please note: Because this was a Zoomed AGM, the list of people present is based upon registrations on the YAHR website combined with the participants who attended the meeting via Zoom.)

1. **Apologies:** Hugh Bevington, Chrissie Des-Forges, Sue Stokes
2. **Approval of draft minutes of the AGM held on 17th September 2020.**
Poll results: For 43%; Abstentions 57%; Against 0%
The minutes were accepted as a true record.
3. **Matters arising not covered elsewhere in the agenda.** A query via Chat from Brian Cave, Sheffield u3a who asked if the model Network constitution referred to in last AGM minutes the Chair's annual report had been actioned? MR replied that due to Covid restrictions it hasn't been progressed. When drafted it will be put to the membership for acceptance at either the AGM or at an SGM. This question is also covered in the Chairman's report.

4. To receive and approve the Chairman's report.

This had been widely circulated and has been made available in advance on the YAHR website. MR referred to the effect of the pandemic, with 2020 not being a year any of us would wish to live through again. But with the end of restrictions probably in sight, the Management Team's attention is now returning to physical activities. During lockdown, our focus has been to support u3as in whatever way we could, mainly by the use of virtual platforms.

We said farewell to our Regional Trustee Sue Stokes. MR thanked her for all her tireless work on behalf of the region, nationally as well as being an active member of Barnsley u3a. He wished her well in her new national role. She has been succeeded by Margaret Fiddes, previously Regional PR Adviser. Helen Leech has taken on the role of PR Adviser – see her introduction on the website.

The MT took the decision to return the AGM to its normal date of late April. When this was discussed and agreed, it was hoped we would be able to hold a physical meeting. Unfortunately, this was not to be, so once again it will be a virtual meeting.

The two major events postponed from 2020, the Captain Cook Experience and Summer Break with Learning were rescheduled for 2021. The good news is that the Captain Cook Experience will now go ahead in September. However due to the uncertainty at the time of planning, the Summer Break with Learning, planned for July 2021, is now postponed to 2022.

This year there have been two virtual workshops; the first one about Facebook and social media and the second on the u3a Day. In March there was a zoomed meeting “Ask the Chair” with TAT Chairman Ian McCannah. Ian gave an update on what the National Office is currently doing, followed by a Q&A session.

It is planned to hold a zoom meeting “Recruitment and Retention”, led by Paul Martinez on May 20th. Information will be circulated to the Region's Chairs and Secretaries. Registration will be available on the website.

MR confirmed that the MT will continue to concentrate on providing workshops, visits, events, and a platform to help u3as in our area.

Planning for the u3a Day is ongoing with Sue Stokes as the contact: sue.stokes@u3a.org

A newsletter will be published every two months to publicise not only YAHR activities but also activities of u3as in the region. The editor is Trevor Barrowcliffe, assisted by Helen Leech, our PR Adviser, to provide updates on activities, plus news from around the region. Copies are available on the website and are circulated to u3as around the Region's Chairs and Secretaries as well as to people who have signed up for the Newsletter.

The TAT has produced a model constitution, although our present one was approved at our 2019 AGM. As previously reported in item 4 above in “Matters Arising” it has not yet been

progressed due to Covid restrictions. When drafted a draft has been agreed, it will be put to the membership at either the AGM or at an SGM for approval.

In adopting this version, it will give us access to funding, official use of the u3a logo and we will be fully recognised by the Trust and allow YAHR to register as a charity.

Following the closure of the official business of today's AGM there will be presentations from Margaret Fiddes, Helen Leech and Frank Bailey.

The website and emails are now essential parts of the communication within the YAHR. The website provides access to documents, record of past events with links to all u3as in our area. A massive thank you goes to Neil Stevens who has decided to stand down after 6 years, during which he not only developed the website but also managed it. During this period Neil assisted with the roll out of Beacon, was Regional Trustee and a member of our MT, as well as being active in his own u3a. Again, many thanks Neil. Doug Hirst (Craven u3a) has taken over the role of webmaster.

MR issued an open invitation to anyone interested to join the YAHR MT. For more information, please contact Mick at chair@yahru3a.co.uk. We are looking for a new Treasurer. Although JM has agreed to continue as Treasurer, she would like to step down as soon as possible. MR emphasized that the role is minimal compared with that as Treasurer of an individual u3a.

The truism that you are never too old to learn new tricks has never been truer, in this case using virtual platforms. Who would ever have thought how experienced we would become in using these platforms?

MR thanked all the Management Team for their continued support of the YAHR and all their hard work over the past year, whilst still being active with their own u3as.

The report was approved; For 95%; 5% Abstentions; Against 0%

5. To receive and approve the Finance Statement.

JM reported that there had been no income since the previous report with expenditure of £840 on refunds for the Captain Cook Experience and £198 for the Zoom licence. Relating to last year's Turner Day, the accounts had been adjusted to show the reduced income of £75 and reduced expenditure of £145, plus a write back of cheque for £22.30.

The bank balance at 31/3/2021 stands at £9950.59. There were no questions, and the report was approved; For 95%; Abstentions 5%; Against 0%

The accounts have been checked and verified by Financial Independent Examiner, Colonel John Goodsir, CBE.

Approved; For 95%; Abstentions 5%; Against 0%

MR asked that if anyone is interested in taking on the role of YAHR Treasurer to contact JM at jmatthewsjanet@gmail.com, An advert will appear in the next newsletter.

6. Election of Officers and Management Team

Chairman Mick Richings, Treasurer Janet Matthews and Secretary Hazel Ward were re-elected en bloc.

For 95%; Abstentions 5%; Against 0%

Change of role for Pat Collard (Cottingham u3a) from Management Team to Vice Chair, proposed by Susan Tong and seconded by Susan Donkin. Pat will provide support to the Chair and to Samina with the Summer Break with Learning.

Approved; For 92%; Abstentions 8%; Against 0%.

Re-election of Management Team: Angie Grain (Workshops and Event Coordinator), Samina Aslam (Summer Break with Learning), Trevor Barrowcliffe (Newsletter editor), Hugh Bevington (committee member), Beryl Pemberton (Speakers' List).

All were re-elected. For 95%; 5% Abstentions; Against 0%

7. Appointment of Independent Financial Examiner.

Colonel John Goodsir CBE has agreed to continue as Financial Examiner until the 2022 AGM
For: 95%; Abstentions 5%; Against 0%. Accepted.

8. Any other business.

Frances Gaskell, Treasurer of Beverley u3a, had submitted two questions under any other business:

1. Do other u3as feel that the Capitation Fee should be collected unchanged this year?
2. How can we check that the concession would reduce National Office income on the scale estimated?

MR pointed out that the question of capitation fees to the Trust lies outside the remit of YAHR. MF responded on behalf of the Board of Trustees as follows. This response had previously been communicated:

"Firstly, let me say that the Region is not able to alter the Trust's approach to the way it calculates capitation fees. I believe from your email that you have already seen the document produced by the Finance Committee and agreed by the Trust's Board and I know that you wrote to Ian McCannah following his Ask the Chair session for YAHR in March. I am sorry because I can sense your frustration, but I am afraid that the decision has been taken. I would assure you though that the matter has been discussed more than once by the board.

As for knowing whether the trust will suffer the predicted losses, the only way to be sure of that is to look at the accounts when they are published, and they will reflect this period so in that respect it will become transparent.

It is true that each u3a is self-governing and is therefore able to decide on its own membership fees based on its expected commitments etc. However, if u3as find themselves in financial difficulty because of the covid19 situation they are encouraged to approach the Trust's Treasurer. We hope that where it's appropriate there will be support available.

I am sorry I can't offer you any different advice".

FG thanked MF for her earlier response to her query in which she pointed out that the decision had already been taken after many discussions at board level. FG felt it was insensitive of National Office to insist on collecting a capitation fee, especially from u3as which might be struggling financially.

Brian Cave expressed agreement with Frances' point of view.

In answer to the second part of the query, MF suggested that the accounts for the TAT AGM in August will show the financial situation and u3as will be able to query the financial report. Carolyn Booth-Jones of Beverley u3a felt more transparency from the Trust was needed.

MF advised that any u3a finding itself in financial difficulties because of the Covid 19 situation should be encouraged to approach the Trust's Treasurer for appropriate support. Lorraine Harding commented that the membership fee for Cookridge and Horsforth had been waived, but that the Capitation Fee still has to be paid to TAT.

MF pointed out that at the recent "Meet the Chair" event FG raised this issue to which Ian McCannah, our national u3a Chair, gave a detailed response.

To close the matter FG said she felt it is a "little bit like tilting at windmills". MR pointed out that the TAT AGM will be held in late August when there will be an opportunity to raise the matter.

The Chair pointed out any supplementary questions will be taken after the meeting has closed.

9. Vote of thanks and closure of AGM.

MR thanked Samina Aslam of Sheffield u3a for hosting the AGM, Hazel Ward for managing attendance and the Management Team for their continuing support during this last year, and everyone for attending the AGM.

The official business finished 11:15 am, and the recording ended. The recording will be made available post meeting.

A provisional date and venue for next year's AGM will be set for the end of April 2022 at St. George's Conference Centre, Leeds. (to be confirmed).

Supplementary question

Jan Tetley, Selby u3a enquired how the attendance on Zoom compared with actual AGMs, HW responded this year's attendance is 49 whereas normally it varies between 25 to 30. Sue Whelan suggested that it is more convenient to join via Zoom as no travelling is involved. MR commented there may be a place for hybrid meetings in the future. Normally the AGM would be combined with a workshop, e.g. new Trustees.

It was also pointed out that one of the advantages of meeting at a venue was the possibility for social interaction and the sharing of ideas and activities taking place in u3as across the region. It was also an opportunity to network and possibly recruit.

***Post meeting: access to the AGM recording is available on the YAHR website:
www.yahru3a.co.uk***

Non-official business

11:45am The meeting continued with reports from:

Margaret Fiddes (Regional Trustee)
Helen Leech (Regional Publicity)
Frank Bailey (Beacon)

Regional Trustee's Report

Margaret Fiddes introduced herself as the Trustee for Yorkshire and the Humber. She explained that once Covid 19 restrictions are eased, she is looking forward to getting out and about round the region to visit and meet u3as personally. For information about Hybrid Meetings, see Liz Thackray on the Sources website.

As a trustee, Margaret is also a member of the TAT board.

- She sits on a number of national working groups and committees.
- Member of the recruitment Working Group which is currently focusing on Member Links and has overseen the Pathfinders project which has assembled a Toolkit based on Recruitment and Retention.
- Together with Neil Stevenson, Trustee for the North West, from this month Margaret has become Co-Chair of CEAC (Communications and External Affairs Committee). The PR advisers come under the auspices of CEAC and MF is currently recruiting to ensure coverage across the UK. Here in YAHR we have Helen Leech who has been doing a sterling job since taking on the role.
- MF has also joined the recently formed working group for the 40th Anniversary. This group is planning celebrations for next year's anniversary.

On May 20th starting at 10:30 a.m. there will be a YAHR workshop on "Recruitment and Retention" with Paul Martinez, who has led the Pathfinders' Project featuring contributions from the region's u3as.

Merchandise with more to follow is now available from the Brand Centre. The postage costs are still under discussion.

MF thanked the Management Team for the welcome she received when she joined the team last year. She also thanked the Networks for invitations to their meetings.

In the region we have been invited to take part in Walkshire, an initiative from "Welcome to Yorkshire". This is aiming to put together 365 different walks in Yorkshire. Anyone wishing to take part or for more information, please contact Margaret.

Looking ahead to u3a day on June 2nd, Margaret is keen to find out what each u3a will be doing. Please email Margaret: margaretfiddes@u3a.org.uk and Helen Leech: hcleech@aol.com with information and photos.

From July onwards she is hoping to receive invitations from u3as to visit and to meet their committees and their members.

Please get in touch.

Presentation from Helen Leech, Regional Publicity Adviser.

Helen (Whitby Whaler u3a) has recently taken on the role of Regional Publicity Adviser. Her role is to support, where required, the region's u3as in raising their profile whilst recognizing that a number of u3as have the capacity and skills to do this without additional help. Her role also involves supporting wide press and media coverage for major events through press releases.

To assist Helen in this role she would be pleased to receive newsletters, case studies as well as activity and event information from around the region.

She ties into the network of PR Advisers nationwide, linking in with the Third Age Trust Communications Team.

Helen asks that you let her know of anything special happening in your u3a. Email: hcleech@aol.com

Alan Swann (Barnsley u3a) asked Helen if there would be a press release for the u3a day. This has been prepared and Helen will circulate it.

There was also a query about how to access free Google ads. Margaret suggested the website: Googlelead.com/grants

Frank Bailey Beacon 2

Frank reported that there have been issues between the Trust and APT, the company involved with Beacon 2. It has not fulfilled promises made in 2020 nor has it kept to the schedule planned for this year. Consequently Beacon 2 may now not go ahead. There are financial implications which are currently under discussion involving lawyers.

The Trust has engaged a consultant to advise on the way forward for the Trust digital platform upgrade and Beacon. Beacon 1 is now going to be developed via the internal Beacon Management team and Siftware, the company supporting and maintaining the Beacon code. Additional funding will be granted to ensure that Beacon 1 continues to be stable and where possible to deploy improvements.

There will be discussions relating to a website with developments involving Sitebuilder.

It is anticipated that Beacon will be offered to u3a Networks at zero cost.

Beacon 2 might be re-evaluated in the future.

Samina Aslam asked about the zero charge for Networks. FB replied that any registered network would be eligible to use Beacon free of charge to manage its network. Any u3a not on Beacon but in a network would not be excluded.

In response to a question from Alan Swann, FB reassured him that Beacon 1 would be extended and reinforced.

Mick Richings thanked Frank for all his time and effort in working towards Beacon 2 as well as regularly attending YAHR Management Team meetings, keeping all Committee members informed and up to date.

The meeting closed at 11:40 am