

EXETER U3A ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

26 May 2022 10.45am at the Mint

1 Welcome

Vivienne Watson (Chair) welcomed all members present at the meeting or watching proceedings via live stream. She also thanked all members who had voted in advance by post, e-mail or via the on-line Google Form.

Following the changes made to the Constitution in 2021 the quorum needed for the meeting is 10% of members. All members voting in advance or on the day count towards the quorum.

On the 26 May we had 567 paid up members so needed 57 to meet our 10% quorum.

Actual figures were as follows

Attending and voting on the day	88
Voting in advance	71
Total votes cast	159

The meeting was declared to be quorate.

2 Apologies

Committee members Minna Egan, Anne Staley, Julie Crichton-Smith and Lesley Churchill-Birch sent their apologies as they were away on holiday. The 71 members who did not attend the meeting but voted in advance are regarded as having sent their apologies. A further 3 members sent their apologies but did not register any votes in advance.

3 Minutes of the last AGM

The Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 22 April 2021 had been circulated in advance of the meeting and no comments or corrections has been received.

Voting figures were as follows

For	150
Against	0
Abstain	9
Total votes cast	159

The minutes were accepted as a true and fair record of the Meeting.

4 Matters arising

None

5 Annual Report and Accounts

The Annual Report and Accounts for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Several contributors to the Report gave verbal reports.

Chair - Vivienne Watson

Vivienne talked about the history and development of the U3A movement resulting in more than 1,000 U3As with more than 450,000 members across the UK today. She drew attention to the objects of Exeter U3A set out in our constitution and the guiding principles of the Third Age Trust which were set out in the Annual Report. We are an organisation run by the members for the members and there is an expectation that all members will step up to share the work and offer support when needed as well as enjoying the activities on offer.

She thanked all the volunteers who have contributed to Exeter U3A in any way during the year including committee members, other named post holders, group convenors and all those who help in other ways behind the scenes. She particularly thanked members standing down at the AGM - Anne Staley, who had been Membership Secretary and General Secretary prior to that; Lesley Churchill-Birch who was standing down as Minutes Secretary but continuing in her role organising the bi-monthly Convenors Café and Jan Rolfe who left the committee in 2021 but had continued acting as Speaker Secretary for another year.

University Liaison – Carol McCullough

Carol spoke about the origins of the group and its activities during the year (often via Zoom) as detailed in the Annual Report. She emphasised that it is not a separate group but is open to all Exeter U3A members who benefit from the research and expertise of a variety of interesting speakers. In turn the speakers enjoy an audience who are not there to gain qualifications but who are genuinely interested in the talk and ask lots of questions. This is a mutually beneficial relationship and members are often asked to take part in research projects where our life experience is valued. There are also opportunities to link up with International Students through the Conversation Café.

Live events are starting to happen again, the most recent being a talk on 4 May by Dr Kirsty Martin about Depictions of Happiness in Literature. In July there will be seminars on Critically Interpreting Data and Misinformation in the Modern World.

Newsletter Editor – Trudi Learmouth

Trudi spoke about production of the Newsletter during the past year as detailed in the Newsletter. She thanked everyone who had sent in group reports and photos when few groups were running and contributed articles to the Members Miscellany. This meant the Newsletter kept going with interesting content when many members felt very isolated during the covid pandemic. Now that most members receive the Newsletter electronically there are fewer constraints on the length of the Newsletter or the number of photos that can be included so she encouraged group convenors to keep sending in reports and photos of their activities and any other members to send in interesting articles and anecdotes to include in Members Miscellany.

Trudi has been Newsletter Editor for ten years now and is happy to continue but is not possessive and would welcome anyone who may have more up to date IT skills and would be interested in taking over from her.

Treasurer – Steph Ward

Steph presented a simplified Receipts and Payments Account to the meeting which summarised the more detailed information included in the Annual Report and Accounts. She explained that our income is mostly received in advance as members renew early at the discounted rate before the beginning of the membership year but our expenditure is spread out over the year. This results in the bank balance at the year end always looking high.

The main source of income is Membership fees but Gift Aid income is also significant. She encouraged all members who are UK taxpayers to gift aid their annual subscription as this does not cost them anything but the income received allows us to keep membership fees as low as possible.

The main cost incurred relates to room hire which is increasing significantly as more and more groups are meeting in person again. The PFV fees paid by members made a significant contribution to these costs but doesn't cover them completely. Almost 200 members currently attend meetings in paid for venues and Steph thanked the huge majority who paid their PFV fees promptly when requested.

Steph noted that this was her first full year as Treasurer but she had benefited from working closely with the previous Treasurer, Keith Shaw, prior to that and this made for a very smooth handover. She hopes to do the same for her successor and invited anyone who might be interested in becoming Treasurer in future to get in touch.

Questions on the accounts were taken from the floor as follows:

Roy Coster noted that the bank balance was very high at the year end and asked if we earn income on that money. Steph replied that it was difficult to find an interest-bearing account for a small charity like ours. The reserves at the year-end were particularly high as room hire had only started to pick up again in the second half of 2021/22. We have set a deficit budget for 2022/23 to bring the bank balance back down to a more reasonable level.

Rose Gander asked if members could opt out of receiving the Third Age Matters Magazine if they didn't want to receive it. Steph replied that Exeter U3A membership entitled members to receive one copy of the magazine per household. If they did not wish to receive it they were welcome to contact Steph to opt out - it would not reduce their membership fee but would save Exeter U3A the postage cost. Hilary Noakes felt that this was unfair and that members who did not receive the magazine or couples who only received one copy between them should pay a reduced membership. Steph replied that this would require setting up and administering more classes of membership and this was not being considered at the moment.

Ruth Sanders asked if the committee would consider sharing financial budgets with members at future AGMs. Steph said she would ask the committee to discuss this possibility.

Rachel Schaufeld thanked Steph for producing the simplified accounts which were very easy to understand and asked for confirmation that they showed an excess of income over expenditure in the year of forty-three pounds. Steph said this was correct.

Trudi Learmouth asked if we expected room hire costs to go up significantly now that more groups were meeting face to face again. Steph agreed that this was the case and we have budgeted for that and to substantially subsidise the cost of room hire. We have been fortunate that the Mint has not put up its hire rates this year and other venues have only asked for modest increases. At the moment members only pay £1 per session to attend any group in a paid for venue and we are encouraging existing groups to start up again and new

groups to start even if they have low numbers initially as the various group activities are at the heart of Exeter U3A.

6 Committee Elections

Details of nominated committee member with their proposers and seconders had been circulated in advance of the meeting. As we had not received nominations for all committee posts we extended the deadline and made a new request for nominations. This resulted in Bill Cross being nominated as Minutes Secretary after many members had already submitted their votes in advance. In the interests of fairness those members who had already voted were contacted to ask if they were happy to also vote for Bill.

Final Voting figures were are follows	For	Against	Abstain	Total
Vivienne Watson – Chair	155	0	4	159
Frances Berry – Vice Chair	152	0	7	159
Minna Egan – Secretary	154	0	5	159
Steph Ward – Treasurer	154	0	5	159
Julia Crichton-Smith – Groups Co-ordinator	152	0	7	159
Bill Cross – Minutes Secretary	158	0	1	159
Dave Parsons – Beacon Administrator	153	0	6	159
Liz Batten – Committee Member	151	0	1	159
Rachel Schaufeld – Committee Member	151	0	8	159

All nominated committee members were elected.

7 Any other business

The new Tai Chi Group, convened by Dave Parsons, is in need of new members. The group meets monthly on a Tuesday morning in the Wesley Room at the Mint.

The next meeting of the Canoe Club would be the following day - Friday 27 May. Anyone interested should contact Sue Kidd to book a place.

The Gardening Group are running a Plant Sale in the courtyard next to the reception area. The sale continues after the AGM with all plants on sale at 50p.

Rose Gander proposed a vote of thanks to the committee for their hard work during the year. She also reminded us how hard it is for new members to come to a meeting where everyone else seemed to know each other and asked us all to keep a look out for members and welcome them. Vivienne invited everyone present to speak to their neighbour.

8 Any questions

No written questions had been received in advance of the meeting.

Vivienne closed the meeting at 11.40am by thanking everyone for attending and wishing us all a fantastic and vibrant forthcoming year.