



Registered Charity No. 1097214

Minutes of 2024 Annual General Meeting
2.00 p.m. 22nd July 2024

Held at St Peter's Community Centre, Church St, Bexhill TN40 2HE

88 members attended the meeting, which was therefore quorate.

1. Welcome

The Chair of Hastings & Rother u3a, Derek Hussey, welcomed members to the meeting and introduced the current committee members.

2. Apologies for Absence

The Minutes Secretary had received 7 proxy forms from members unable to attend, and 6 additional apologies had been received.

3. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the AGM held on 24th July 2023, which were on the website, and were provided in printed form at this meeting, were presented as a true record of the 2023 AGM. The motion to accept the minutes was proposed by Anne Andersen, seconded by Carole Benton, and carried unanimously by a show of hands.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Treasurer's Report & Accounts

Josephine Noyce presented a report on the past year. As reported at the last AGM, it had been decided to align the membership year with the financial year, in order to make budgeting and financial reporting clearer and simpler. This has taken place and both membership year and financial year now run from 1st May to 30th April. (*Note: the financial year was previously reported as running from 1st April-31st March – this was incorrect.*)

In January 2024 a SumUp card machine was purchased with the aim of providing an additional method for members to pay subscriptions by card. This was trialed at St Peter's Community Centre, the DLWP and the White Rock. It works well at St Peter's but there have been occasional connection problems at the other venues.

There have been just over 500 membership payments so far. Josephine noted that online bank transfer is the easiest payment method for the u3a and members are increasingly using this method, although a number of members still use cheques (cash is no longer an option). Cheques have been dealt with by the Assistant Treasurer, who has mastered the bank's mobile app. This involves photographing the front and back of the cheque, so members are asked to put their name, membership number and date on the back of cheques. Using the app saves multiple trips to the bank, or (when the Bexhill branch closes in September), to the Post Office, which offers a limited service whereby cheques can be

paid in and cash withdrawn using a debit card. Josephine noted that there will still be a few other banks and ATMs in Bexhill.

Josephine stated that the u3a will continue to monitor rising costs. Postal charges are now quite high, so where possible, email will be the preferred system for communication. Josephine then reminded people of the importance of staying safe online.

There were no questions or comments. A motion to accept the accounts and report was proposed by David Slim, seconded by Richard Collisson, and carried unanimously by a show of hands.

6. Chair's Report

Derek commented that he had made it to the end of his first year as Chair, and it had been very much a learning curve. He had overseen changes to the membership year, which threw up some unexpected challenges, but from May 1st 2024 both membership and financial years are the same. He was happy that 75% of membership renewals came through the bank transfer system, which made the renewal process much easier, and thanked members for increasingly adopting this system, although cheques do remain as an option.

Unfortunately, the card payment machine was not as successful as first envisaged due to the need to have a suitable strength of signal at the locations where we hoped to have the facility available. Perhaps some further thought is needed on this method.

Derek reported that at the present time our membership numbers are around the 500 mark, a little down from the previous year, which was 583 – the reasons for this are not clear. The financial position is positive, but we do need to keep the membership numbers closer to the 600 mark to maintain the income.

We now have a total of 75 groups running, with a wide variety of subject matter. Groups do close, through lack of interest or convenors unable to continue, which was the case with 5 groups, but on the positive side 11 new groups were formed. Derek commented that groups are very much the lifeblood of the u3a, so we need to keep them going.

Derek stated that the committee, and volunteers, are very dedicated to the task of running our U3a, and whilst he was very much the new boy on the block, he was indebted to each of them for getting him through his first year. Members might remember that he was relatively new to any u3a organisation, never mind being in the Chair - he didn't really know how it all happened, but 'here we are!' Our organisation always needs new committee members and volunteers to operate successfully, so the committee will give some thought to how we can promote this to the membership in the coming months.

At the AGM last year, we asked for some ideas on what members would like to see, which included more social events. There was a "Jive" Dance held at Manor Barn which was very well supported and enjoyed, and next the committee is organising a Barn Dance, to be held at St Peter's Community Centre on 8th November, to celebrate the 35th anniversary of our u3a. Ken Saunders and the Spinning Jenny band will be providing the music and directing the dancing, and it will be fun.

Derek said that David and Deborah Slim, and Robert and Heather Hadland need a special mention for the coach trips organised, particularly the trip to Hampton Court which was very successful.

Recognition must also go to Richard Collisson, Ginny Edwards and Carole Benton for their great work in establishing our u3a into the East Sussex East Network. This all started back in 2022 with a cluster of 5 u3as, but has now grown to 10, namely Hastings & Rother, Battle, Crowborough, Eastbourne (4 groups), Heathfield, Hailsham and Mayfield. The initial goal was to work together to share information and resources for the benefit of all members. Network u3as now circulate lists of popular speakers, offer suggestions for publicity materials, and advertise any vacancies on each other's trips. A major step forward will be on 20th September when there will be a Singing Workshop in Hailsham, led by a professional singer, which is open to the first 100 members from all the network u3as (flyers were on the tables at this meeting). Particular thanks go to Carole Benton, who has helped to develop this event.

It only remained for Derek to mention the superb organisation of today's cream tea by Robert and Heather and the Strollers group, without whose help this would not have been possible, and to thank the registration team of Richard, Tony, Angie and Bob.

7. Election of committee 2024

Note: The Constitution states that Trustees (all committee members are Trustees of the charity) serve for 3 years, and apart from Chair and Vice Chair, can then stand for re-election. There is currently no Vice Chair, and the Minutes Secretary and a Committee Member are retiring at this AGM. The Business Secretary, having served for 3 years, is standing for re-election, but for one year only. The Membership Secretary and Database Administrator were appointed to fill posts that became vacant earlier in 2024, and are now standing for election at the AGM. Since the main work of renewals has been taken over by the Treasurer team, the work of Initial Enquiries has now become part of the Membership Secretary role, so no longer exists as a separate role.

Nominations – election or re-election required

Vice Chair (Officer)	<i>No nominations</i>
Business Secretary	Virginia Edwards
Minutes Secretary	<i>No nominations</i>
Membership Secretary	Sue Shilstone
Database Administrator	Dave Benton
Committee Member	<i>No nominations</i>

Existing Committee Members continuing – no election required

Chair	Derek Hussey
Treasurer (Officer)	Josephine Noyce
Assistant Treasurer	Ewa Goulding
Groups Co-ordinator	Lynda Wood
Newsletter	John Goodwin

Non-Committee Roles – no election required

Speakers Secretary	Pandora Bastian (for one more year only)
Risk Assessment Coordinator	April Yasamee
Regional Coordinator	Carole Benton
Website Administrator	Brian Gould (replacement needed soon)
IT Administrator	Richard Collisson (replacement needed soon)

The Business Secretary made the point that without Derek Hussey taking on the role of Chair last year, the u3a could have closed. She expressed disappointment at the lack of nominations for Vice Chair, Minutes Secretary and a general committee member, and reminded members that she herself was only prepared to continue as Business Secretary for one more year. She then proposed that those standing for election should be elected in a block rather than individually. There were no objections. Carole Benton proposed that all those standing should be elected, David Slim seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously by a show of hands.

8. Any Other Business

Presentations were made to Heather Hadland in thanks for organising the cream tea, and to retiring Minutes Secretary Jenny Meteyard in thanks for her work and support over the past 6 years. Jenny expressed thanks for this, but disappointment that nobody had stepped forward to take on this role, and reminded members that the job description was available on the tables!

10. Date of the next Annual General Meeting

This is likely to be Monday 28th July 2025 – to be confirmed.

Signed

Date

The meeting closed at 2.24 p.m. Minutes were taken by Jenny Meteyard.

DRAFT