

## Balsall Common U3A Annual General Meeting

Thursday June 1st at 2pm – St Peter’s Hall, Holly Lane, Balsall Common

**Please bring this agenda and its appendices with you to the AGM**

*A quorum of 20% of our present membership (approx 313) is required*

### AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the AGM held 25 April 2016 - Appendix 1
3. Matters arising from these minutes
4. Chairman’s review - Appendix 2  
Questions arising from the review  
Report approval
5. Groups Coordinator’s report - Appendix 3  
Questions arising from the report  
Report approval
6. Treasurer’s report – Appendix 4  
Presentation of accounts  
Questions arising  
Proposal to adopt accounts  
Determination of annual membership fee
7. Appointment of Accounts Scrutineer
8. Election of Executive Committee
9. Motions for discussion
10. Vote of thanks to outgoing committee members

*After the AGM Anne Danks, from the Trussell Trust, will be speaking on “Food Banks”.*

## Balsall Common U3A

**Minutes of the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting held on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016 in the Village Hall at 2pm**

There were 87 members present. Jim Melville chaired the meeting.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from 19 members.

**2. Minutes of the AGM held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2015**

The minutes had been circulated in advance of the AGM and were agreed as a correct record. Proposed Peter Driffield, seconded Martin Richards

**Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising

**3. Chairman's Review**

Jim Melville reported that since last April, 45 new members have joined this U3A which increased our membership by one fifth to 278 members of which there are 171 ladies & 107 men. There are now 28 groups which offer a wide variety of activities in the U3A spirit of learning for pleasure and there are ample opportunities for you to "Learn, Laugh & Live". This year three new groups have started. The Mahjong group was formed in January following a very positive response to a taster session last November. Most members were complete novices but have quickly become very competent and competitive. There are some lively discussions of the various mahjong hands and scoring. Thanks to a generous donation from the committee it is now well equipped and would welcome new members looking for gentle brain stretching every Tuesday afternoon.

Walking football – This provides an interesting but gentle physical workout twice a month. I must say that it is tempting to run after the ball but that's against the rules. The better weather should encourage more members to give it a try.

The Big Band started as a project to involve U3A members from the West Midlands. It came to fruition last month when 12 jazz musicians from 6 local U3As met to create the big sound with much success. As a result, they continue to meet twice a month. Hopefully we can enjoy their music later this year.

Bridge and French continue to hold their weekly meetings. Bridge carries on in its established style in accordance with Peter Westlake's concept of "playing bridge *and enjoying it.*" French has now found another French speaker to replace Pat Sisk who left Balsall Common and they continue to converse and study the language.

Three diverse groups meet twice a month – Ramblers, Pétanque & French Conversation. This year the Ramblers had to cope with some muddy walks thanks to the heavy rains, but around twenty fellows ramble for two hours across the local countryside ending up in a pub for lunch. Pétanque, on the other hand, stays put on the pistes in Hampton in Arden throwing heavy steel balls at a little cochonnet. Take it from me it is great fun. It's a popular activity within the U3A which has organised a weekend of Pétanque in September. At home French Conversation discusses, entirely in French, subjects like politics and literature.

Apart from Out & About and the Theatre groups which meet on an 'ad hoc' basis the remaining groups meet once a month. An interesting variety of visits were arranged for Out & About which included Bath, a coffin museum, a bell foundry, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Leicester Cathedral and a fire station. To tickle your taste buds a visit to Hook Norton brewery is planned for next month. Theatregoers made six trips last year including to the Symphony Hall & just recently to The Priory to see "*Cash on Delivery*".

Members continue to provide hospitality for many of the monthly groups meetings. Book group 1 has read and reviewed "*Falling Angels*" by Tracy Chevalier and "*Bring Up The Bodies*" by Hilary Mantel, whilst Book group 2 will soon be discussing Jane Smiley's "*A Thousand Acres*" then Jessie Burton's "*The Miniaturist*". Jazz Appreciation members have obviously been doing

just that by listening to and discussing a selection of members' choices and they recently viewed the film "*Jazz on a Summer's Day*".

The Philosophy group, whilst none are professionally qualified in the subject, nevertheless enjoy 'thinking about thinking', for example discussing the philosophies of Descartes and Epicurus and considering issues such as forgiveness and cosmopolitanism. Current Affairs has covered diverse topics ranging from Climate Change, Obesity, Refugees, the EU, to Donald Trump and Christmas jumpers. With many important decisions due to be made in the public realm in 2016, they look forward to another year of thought-provoking discussion.

To mark the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare, the Poetry group selected passages from his work to read out this month. Music Appreciation has listened to a wide selection of classical music including Bach & Beethoven as well as lesser known composers such as Wagenseil and Finzi. Diplomacy, described as a "dice free" board game involving political intrigue, exercises its members' skills in diplomacy (strangely enough), strategy & negotiations.

Other groups met in the Westlake Room or Village Hall. The Film Study group view films suggested by members. These included classics such as "The Third Man", "Psycho" and "High Noon", more modern films including "Philomena" and "The Life of Pi" plus a couple of foreign language films from France and Korea. Many of you will have seen the Photography group's work exhibited at the core meetings in January and July, which then transfers to the local library for the week. It now enjoys a two page spread of photographs in the quarterly "Bugle". Recent field trips have included Coventry Transport Museum & Stratford upon Avon. Future visits include Prescott Hill Climb & Baddesley Clinton (before it's open to the public).

Social and Political History Group has engaged in lively discussions, whilst broadening and deepening their knowledge on topics such as The Magna Carta, the History of Immigration, Hadrian's Wall and the Jacobite Rebellions. The Art group members enjoy helping each other learn and explore the pleasure of using various media, especially watercolour. Meanwhile Craft members have led sessions on making cards, quilling and ribbon weaving. Later this year they will be making items for the Samaritan Purse boxes.

Further afield, so to speak, Haig's Hotel provides a friendly service to the Lunch group as well as the Coffee & Chat members. The latter provides an ideal opportunity for new members to meet their fellows in a relaxed small group. Last but by no means least the boys and girls in the Swimming group continue to stay afloat in what is usually warm water. They enjoy the pool to themselves as well the Jacuzzi. Why not take the plunge?

Jim gave his thanks to all the co-ordinators, the many helpers for all their unseen work and those who serve refreshments each month. He suggested that if anyone did have a burning desire or even the spark of an idea to start up a new group, any committee member would be happy to talk to them and offer advice. The committee may also approve the provision of start-up funds for any group.

This year our core meeting speakers have covered a diverse range of topics including Berkswell cheese, Far East prisoners of war, Birmingham Royal Ballet, stained glass & Mt Everest

Jim reminded members that we celebrated our 100<sup>th</sup> core meeting in the Village Hall last May. Inevitably, as membership increases, so does the attendance at these meetings. For a while now the executive committee has been concerned about the consequent lack of space. Therefore, in the best interests of the members' safety and comfort it resolved to find an alternative venue which has now been found at St Peter's Hall. So, the last core meeting to be held at the Village Hall will be Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> May. The committee will be sorry to leave this venue, but look forward to the additional space and the opportunity to increase our membership.

There will be no core meeting in June and we will then move to St Peter's Hall for the core meeting on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> July. Unfortunately, the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month was not available, only the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday. Any complication this may cause to anyone is regretted. However, the seating capacity in St Peter's Hall is 175, which is 55 more than the Village Hall can accommodate, so the advantage for our future needs is obvious.

Following this meeting a Newsletter will be circulated giving notice to this effect, together with the revised dates of the core meetings (and hopefully the speakers, who have also had to be

re-arranged). This information will also be posted on our website which is averaging 950 hits a month and keeps our webmaster, Peter Calver, extremely busy.

The core meeting in September, now Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September, will be used to mark the tenth anniversary of the first meeting of Balsall Common U3A. This will be held at the Lake at Barston Restaurant in the West Midlands Golf Club from 2pm. The guest speaker will be Kathy Lloyd-Roberts, the lady vicar at Temple Balsall. As it is a special core meeting, an afternoon tea is to be served at a much reduced price of £5 per person. The committee would be delighted to see as many members attending as possible as there is no limit on numbers. Further details about this event will also be contained in the newsletter.

#### **4. Treasurer's Report and Accounts**

Alan reminded those who may not be so familiar with our financial arrangements, we have two accounts.

**Number 1 Account** covers those activities that affect all members. It is the account through which we put membership subscriptions and pay our bills.

The cash book shows a balance of £4253.99. This figure is sound and healthy, arguably too healthy in some ways. We like to think it is the result of careful financial management. We have to say also that it has been enhanced in the past by the contribution made by Gift Aid. Through the good offices of Peter Driffield, who was also the first secretary of U3A, we have in a number of years successfully applied for Gift Aid. This entitles us to reclaim 25% of membership subs. However, this source of funding will no longer be available to us for several reasons. The U3A Trust has strongly advised that if we have sizeable reserves we should not apply for funding. Also, the application process has become increasingly stringent and demanding and there are now severe limitations on how the money can be used. The Committee has decided for the present, therefore, not to apply for Gift Aid. This decision could be reviewed in the future.

We must ensure, of course, that we can continue to cover our regular costs. These include capitation fees (we pay £3.50 for every member to U3A Trust), hall hire, speakers, the website and U3A magazines. These costs alone account for about 85% of our income from membership subs – and it is these subs that represent the vast majority of our total income. We also need to be sure that we have funds available to meet other expenses (and these totalled some £680 over the past year) and to replace or purchase new capital equipment, much of which was purchased in the early years of U3A's establishment and may be nearing the end of its useful life.

**Number 2 Account** has two main elements.

First, receipts and expenses for those groups that deal in large sums of money and/or who use the village hall or need to pay other external bodies such as theatres (for the Theatre Group) and museums and places of interest (for the Out and About Group). These groups must put their finances through the Treasurer.

The second element is a reserve that was built up mainly from tea money paid at core meetings in the past. This was designed to help in the establishment of new groups and to fund large capital expense, for instance. We have funded a number of projects from this reserve over the past year, including the purchase of new display boards and a grant and loan to the Mahjong Group.

We now have in this account cash attributable to groups of £1133.53 and reserves of £516.63. Considering all the above factors, the Committee has decided that our reserves are sufficient to enable us to maintain annual membership subs at the previous level – that is £16 for new members and £10 for existing members. Members of other U3As who join us as affiliate members will pay £6.50. Details on how this should be paid will be put on the website or circulated by pony express. The final date for payment will be 31<sup>st</sup> May.

Alan expressed thanks to Steve Procter for scrutinizing the accounts.

These accounts will be lodged on the website and Alan had hard copies and all supporting documentation, if people wished to see it.

#### **5. Appointment of Accounts Scrutineer**

The meeting appointed Steve Procter as Scrutineer.

## 6. Amendments to the Constitution

The following proposed amendments in red had been circulated before the AGM

### Item 3. Membership

3.1 Membership is subject to the approval of the Executive Committee and payment of the appropriate subscription

3.1 Membership is subject to payment of the appropriate subscription.

### Item 4. The Annual General Meeting

4.1 A quorum shall be 30% of members as registered with the Secretary.

4.1 A quorum shall be 20% of members as registered with the Secretary.

### Item 5. Special General Meetings

5.2 A quorum shall be when 30% of members are present.

5.3 A quorum shall be when 20% of members are present.

5.3 Accidental omission to give notice to any member shall not invalidate the proceedings of any general meeting.

Amend numbering to 5.4

### Item 6. The Executive Committee

6.4 All officers and Committee members shall normally serve for a maximum of four years.

6.4 All officers and Committee members shall normally serve for a maximum of five years.

### Item 7. Finances

7.1 Withdrawals shall be made on the signatures of any two of the three office-holders (or other Executive Committee members as the Committee sees fit).

7.1 Withdrawals shall be made on the signatories of any **two of the four** office-holders or other Executive Committee members as the Committee sees fit

NB The current constitution can be viewed in the Members' Area on our website

[www.balsallcommonu3a.org](http://www.balsallcommonu3a.org)

These amendments were proposed by Sandra Heard, seconded by Mary Dawson and approved by the meeting

## 7. New Committee

Margaret Burleigh reported that the following nominations, duly proposed and seconded, had been received:

Chairman      Jim Melville  
Treasurer     Richard Drake  
Secretary     Margaret Burleigh

Six further committee members: Jan Baylis, Lynn Brinkworth, Alan Buckland, Peter Calver, Mary Dawson, Martin Richards

The duly nominated and seconded individuals were elected by the meeting to the Executive Committee, without opposition.

## 8. Motions for Discussion

No motions had been put forward for discussion.

## 9. Other Business

Sandra Heard, the outgoing Speaker Secretary thanked Members for the support she had had over her term of office and introduced Lynn Brinkworth as the new Speaker Secretary.

Sue Simms, the Mahjong co-ordinator thanked the Committee for their support in setting up the new Mahjong Group

## 10. Vote of thanks to the outgoing committee

Jim Melville thanked the outgoing committee.

### Chairman's Review

This is my second Chairman's review for Balsall Common U3A at its eleventh Annual General Meeting. I am pleased to report that we have had a very successful year.

At the time of writing, 56 new members have joined since our last AGM on 25 April 2016 which brings our total membership to 313 (an increase of 22%). This makes us the second largest U3A within the Solihull Cluster of fifteen U3As.

As our membership continued to increase, the Executive Committee decided to relocate our monthly core meeting from the Village Hall to St Peter's Hall starting in August 2016. This gives us more space and plenty of room to expand our membership. We were sorry to leave the Village Hall, but it had served us extremely well during our first ten years.

Since moving here we had been entertained to talks including "Live Birds of Prey", "Birmingham's Back To Backs", "Bus Across the Andes" and "Round The World Clipper Race". Lynn Brinkworth, our Speakers' Secretary, is busy preparing next year's programme.

Later this year, it is planned to install a public address system with an induction loop in St Peter's Hall for the benefit of all users. As we are the largest group using the hall we will be providing some financial assistance.

As you will hear from Mary Dawson, the group's coordinator, we now have over thirty groups which are all prospering. I would just like to mention the new groups which have started since the last AGM - Current Affairs 2 and Gardening. A Shorter Walks group had two trial walks in April & May. As several groups are now full there is a need to form either a duplicate group or better still a totally new group. The Executive Committee, on behalf of its members, is always happy to help anyone wishing to start up a new or second group.

Richard Drake, our treasurer, will explain our healthy financial situation and without wishing to pre-empt him, I understand that he has some good news regarding the annual subscription. Members have already enjoyed a two months "holiday" this financial year.

Last September 133 members celebrated our tenth anniversary with afternoon tea at the Lake in Barston when two of our original members, Jill Westlake and Peter Driffield, cut into the cake baked especially for the occasion.

In November 62 members enjoyed a Quiz night in the Village Hall and it is hoped to repeat this later on in the year.

Finally, I would like to thank all those members who give of their time to provide their expertise to make Balsall Common U3A the success it is today, enabling the members to follow the U3A ethos of "Live, Laugh and Learn". I include in my thanks all those on the Executive Committee, all the group coordinators, the refreshment coordinators and their helpers and those too numerous to mention who helped out in so many ways.

Jim Melville  
Chairman

18<sup>th</sup> April 2017

## GROUP COORDINATOR'S REPORT

A.G.M. 2016 – 2017

The new members' coffee morning was attended by thirty-five members who were able to meet and discuss the various activities of Balsall Common U3A. with relevant coordinators.

The group coordinator's report is as follows:

- BIG BAND – SWING DIVISION. Now has 21 participants with an average of 15 per week, rehearsing alternate Tuesdays at 1400 hrs in the Catholic church hall. Rehearsals are in full swing for the first concert/gig in May.
- BOOK GROUP 1. Is a lively well attended group taking turns to host/choose a diverse selection of books.
- BRIDGE. Continues to meet every Friday morning and enjoys outbidding the opposition.
- COFFEE AND CHAT Approximately fifteen people have welcomed new members who are able to meet fellow members in a smaller environment than at the core meeting.
- CURRENT AFFAIRS GROUP 1. Has now moved to a room at the Saracen's Head due to difficulties accommodating the 12 members at home. Group 2 was encouraged. "Starter topics" and news items are discussed. A lunch was held in April.
- CURRENT AFFAIRS GROUP 2 This new group will now meet at The White Horse and its format is similar to that of CA 1. Topics covered include tax on private education; N.T.'s omission of "Easter" and badger culling. There is a vacancy for a new member.
- DIPLOMACY. Eight members meet and are still exploring new scenarios how to play! This is a game of intrigue, negotiation and bluff trying to outwit control of Europe.
- FILM STUDY Twenty five members meet in the Westlake room to view films and discuss those issued from various periods – 1950 – present day. Films are selected from suggestions by members.
- FRENCH Conversation and working from a French text book is lightened by a summer and Christmas lunch.
- GARDENING Seeds have been sown and will be nurtured to flourish.
- JAZZ APPRECIATION Presentations of styles of jazz and personalities have resulted in enjoyable and informative sessions.
- LUNCHEON GROUP – Is far too successful – a large group which presents difficulties to chat! Suggestions for future meetings to be discussed.
- MAHJONG Now well established and loan repaid! The original six members and the level of challenge to the average group of twelve – sixteen is thriving.
- MUSIC APPRECIATION Meets monthly to discuss and listen to music by various composers. Demonstration and talk by a member clarinettist has been enjoyed.
- OUT AND ABOUT A number of trips to places of interest have been very well received, these have included the Richard III exhibition at Leicester, Hook Norton Brewery, Kenilworth castle, a Heritage walk round Coventry and Birmingham Symphony hall.
- PHILOSOPHY Eight members meet to discuss the writings of philosophers or broader philosophical concepts including "What does it mean to be free" and "The meaning of Life!"

- PHOTOGRAPHY Now averaging twenty-five members meet to view and judge that month's photo topic-e.g. portrait, stained glass, graffiti and something blue. Every three months a judge will comment and advise. Field trips are also arranged e.g. Aston Martin showroom, Packwood House and Tyseley Loco works .
- POETRY Now ten years old past topics have included Shakespeare, Ted Hughes and themes ranging from the War Poets, American poets, snow summer and food.
- RAMBLERS A very successful year taking twenty three walks and a Christmas Lunch. New volunteers have come forward to organise walks. The number is now so great it is posing a problem which hopefully will soon be resolved. A new "Short Walk" group for "older" – i.e. less fit members will hopefully get off the ground.
- SOCIAL AND POLITICAL HISTORY Topics for discussion are determined by the group – averaging twenty – have included the Rise of Money, the Reivers, Indian partition, Independence to the Knights Templar and History of the Potteries. Discussions are lively and members learn in an informal and friendly setting.
- SWIMMING Interest is increasing with nine – eleven swimmers at each session on the first and second Monday on the month.
- THEATRE GROUP Membership continues to grow to approximately fifty - not all attend each event – usually eighteen to twenty. Visits have included "Cash on Delivery," "The Hollow," Packwood House to see an open air production of "Much Ado about Nothing," and Victoria Law Courts to hear Mozart's Requiem.
- WALKING FOOTBALL Ten regular members have enjoyed a competitive game. The group has been running / walking for a year and hopes to encourage new members – male and female.

Other thriving groups -- include CRAFT, PAINTING, SCRABBLE and PETANQUE.

Mary Dawson. April 2017.

**Balsall Common U3A  
Treasurer's Report 2016-17 Financial Year**

We divide our finances between 2 accounts (both held with NatWest, now in Knowle):

**No 1 Account:**

This is used for the activities that affect all members. It is the account your subscriptions go into and from which we meet our running costs.

The cash book continues to show a healthy balance of £4,401.29. This remains healthy although we have this year used some of it to subsidise the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tea that was open to all and to purchase new equipment.

The surplus has built over several years due to careful management and, in the past, through Gift Aid. Based on advice from the U3A Trust we no longer claim this (although there is no suggestion that we were wrong to in the past).

Our main costs being the U3A capitation fee (currently £3.50 per member), the U3A magazine, our website and, of course, the speakers and hall hire for our monthly core meetings.

We also ran a Quiz that made a small surplus despite repaying entry fees for some cancellations that were too late for us to fill the spaces. (Perhaps we can afford better prizes next time!).

During 2017 your Committee will review the level of our reserves and agree a policy on their treatment for future years. We do need to maintain sufficient reserves to pay our annual capitation fee in advance of collecting subscriptions, to renew equipment as necessary and meet any unexpected costs (we are not empowered to borrow money or have an overdraft).

**No 2 Account:**

This accounts for the receipts and expenses of those groups that have material expenses and/or need to pay external bodies (e.g. for use of the Village Hall or for visits//theatre trips). These groups must put their finances through the Treasurer (although smaller/simpler groups arrange their own finances).

We also have a Reserve (built up mainly from "tea money" collected at Core meetings in the past). This is used to help establish and support new and existing groups.

As at 5<sup>th</sup> April 2017 we have £ 1,411.89 attributable to Groups and £452.29 in Reserve.

Based on this your committee will be proposing a small reduction in the membership renewal fee for 2017/18. (This will be a separate item at the AGM).

Many thanks to Steve Procter for scrutinising the accounts.

These accounts will be lodged on the website and I am happy to share any information requested.

Richard Drake  
Treasurer