

**Minutes
of Fleet & District U3A AGM held on
Wednesday 20th November 2024
held at The Harlington**

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Paddy Powell as Vice-Chair chaired the AGM as John Gawthorpe was in hospital. Best wishes were sent to John for a speedy recovery. Paddy welcomed 215 members to the AGM which means we are quorate for the meeting to go ahead.

Apologies were received from Tony de Vos, John Gawthorpe, Angela Littler, Christine and Clive Stokes.

Paddy explained that on the seats were the minutes and financial report as well as a survey which we encourage every member to fill in and put into the collection bags on the way out (this will be your exit visa)!

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 16th November 2023

A copy of the Minutes of last years' AGM had been sent out to all members and could also be viewed on the Fleet U3A website. Members were asked if there were any comments, there being none the Chairman asked the membership present to approve the minutes and there was a unanimous vote in favour.

Proposed: Roger Reason Seconder: Doreen Headley

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes, these were then signed by Paddy Powell, Vice- Chairman Fleet U3A.

4. Chairman's Report

Paddy read John Gawthorpe's report:

First, my apologies for not being able to present this report in person: when the NHS -

eventually – calls to offer me a new hip, ‘yes of course’ is the only answer. My thanks to my predecessor, who is left with the task of presenting what I hope will be a shorter report than last year’s.

It has been another successful year; we continue to offer a wide range of popular and well supported activities, ranging from those which work very successfully in a group leader’s sitting room to those which stretch some of our venues to capacity.

Venue space permitting, we aim to broaden the range of new groups so that new members can join their group of choice. We have had some success in this area this year - is there anybody who does not yet know what pickleball is - but we hope to do even better.

We aspire to recruiting members to reach, then exceed, pre-COVID levels. We are getting closer, but we’re not there yet. It would seem that the pandemic caused a significant shift in priorities and activities for some people. In addition, the rise in pension age has meant that there is a cohort of people still in the world of work who might well have joined our ranks by now. And then there’s the need to ‘spread the word’: only this week I found myself answering the question ‘What is the U3A?’ What I could have said was that Fleet and District U3A is all of us. We are a shared endeavour, the best sort of partnership in which everyone plays a significant part. I hope that a member attending a U3A event for the first time will get a friendly welcome and will be encouraged to become more involved.

Nothing could happen without our Group Leadership teams. I am pleased that sharing of roles and responsibilities is becoming the norm; the ‘hero model’ of a lone Group Leader quickly crumbles under the impact of family, health and life events. I am pleased to applaud and recognise the hard work which keeps the groups, and hence our U3A, thriving.

Another very special team is Carole Matthews’ Visits Team. You’ve really not experienced the best of what our U3A can offer if you’ve not been on one of their memorable and lively visits. You get a flavour of them in the Newsletter articles, but only a flavour. You will have read, in our October Newsletter, contributions from the members of the committee, the trustees of our charity, and gained an insight into their responsibilities. It has been a privilege to work with such committed, hard-working and friendly people. It is their input – not just the cake- which has made my three years in the Chair a pleasure.

On your behalf I thank them all: when we hear that neighbouring U3As have folded through an inability to recruit trustees, we are fortunate to have people ready and willing to take their turn. Over 30 years that has been one of the strengths of Fleet and District U3A: when a job needs doing, there has been somebody to step in and take it on.

We say farewell – again - and thank you to Fiona Godfrey, who returned as temporary Membership Secretary to help avoid a crisis, dedication indeed. Thanks too to Adrian van Klaveren, Publicity Secretary and to Pam Openshaw who has been running the Events team.

Barbara and Alan Jones have, it seems, done most of the jobs on the committee between them, and hence deserve the warmest of ‘thankyous’: at this AGM Barbara will just keep her Venues role, and Alan will continue to advise and coach on Beacon as well as taking on the GLLS role, so we are not losing them altogether.

In another ‘re-shuffle’, Mike Kennett- Brown, having served a term as Group Leaders’ Liaison Secretary returns to familiar pastures as Events Secretary.

Our aim remains to make our U3A as inclusive and accessible as possible, and in Jenny

Teagle we have a Trustee who is an effective champion for all who might find it a challenge to be included.

We have expanded the team working with Neil our Treasurer, whilst looking for further ways to make one of the most important - and demanding – roles for a Trustee less unmanageable. I suspect it will simplify some processes when the Treasurer and Membership Secretary can communicate across the sitting room. I am sure you will join me in stressing for them the principle that U3A work takes place during office hours, 09:00 – 17:30 ... as well as bearing it in mind ourselves when a 'quick phone call' seems the answer.

Though it may be awkward for her to read this aloud, I must also thank my predecessor as Chair and successor as Monthly Meetings Secretary, Paddy Powell. She has contributed significantly to the U3A, not just locally but across the SE Region. The Committee has placed an item on today's agenda which will allow the AGM to agree an appropriate form of recognition for her contribution.

Thank you to the members who have given such positive and constructive feedback on our activities, not least our lively and informative newsletter but also our re-modelled and attractive website. Sandy and Stephen put in the hard work, but it is you, the contributors, who keep both relevant and readable.

At this point I should draw your attention to another constitutional point: though the term of office for the Chair is three years, in 'exceptional circumstances' that can be exceeded.

Though this will be – as promised – my last AGM in the Chair, I have agreed to stay in post into 2025 when our current Webmaster, Stephen Grosvenor will take over.

Today is a Monthly Meeting Day as well as the Annual General Meeting, so I will finish here to reduce the wait to hear Mike Rance's excellent talk.

5. Financial Report

Neil Morley presented his report:

A copy of the accounts was given out to members present at the AGM.

The accounts are self-explanatory. Gift Aid is half of what it was last year as last year there were two years in the figures, and this year is one. Venue fees are on the high side at the moment as two or three groups started collecting their venue fees in August, so they have gone into last years accounts.

Bank interest is high due to the generosity of Wandsworth Council who bank a considerable sum into our bank, and it took a few months before they realised hence the higher interest.

Our income last year was roughly £17 per member and expenditure was £15 per member which keeps us on an even keel.

Neil said he was expecting price increases to come through over the next few months from the venues.

This is to let you know I am announcing that I am closing the HSBC account for BACS payments.

In CAF I can do a search by group code as shown in the programme to find any payments made by BACS. I cannot do this in HSBC and it is very difficult to find each and every payment.

In reality I will not be closing it immediately, but I need to stop members using it if I am to continue checking all the BACs that have been declared to GLs are actually being made.

In the last term at least 10% of all BACs payments had to be chased by me to ensure we received the money.

I am still awaiting a few replies from GLs for missing payments.

A number of questions were raised which Neil was able to answer to satisfy the members.

Proposer: Jean Carr Seconder: Karen Robinshaw

6. Resolution 1: - To elect the Committee members and Officers for academic year 2024/2025

This was put to the members, and the vote was unanimous in favour.

7. Resolution 2: - To appoint the Account Examiner for the financial year 2024/2025

Glyn Powell has said he is stepping down from Account Examiner. Neil asked members if anyone was willing to come forward to be the new Account Examiner.

No-one came forward but members were asked to think about coming forward.

Post Meeting Note: After the meeting John Copley offered to be the new Account Examiner.

Thanks were given to Glyn for all his work over the past years.

8. Resolution 3: - To appoint Paddy Powell as Honorary President of Fleet & District U3A

This was put to the members, and the vote was unanimous in favour.

Paddy announced the Trustees who were stepping down and as such they are able to accept a thank you gift. These were - Fiona Godfrey Membership Secretary, Pam Openshaw Events Secretary, Adrian van Klaveren Publicity Secretary.

There was a presentation of the trophy to the Quiz Team who will be going forward to represent Fleet U3A at the Inter U3A Quiz in March 2025.

9. Business declared urgent by the Chair.

There being no further business the AGM was closed at 11.22 am.

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John Gawthorpe, Chairman

Date: 19th November 2025