

York u3a AGM March 2023 Minutes

1. Confirmation of quorum (40 members)

The meeting was confirmed as being quorate.

2. Welcome

Those present, both in person and on line, were welcomed by the Chair to the York u3a AGM for the year ending July 2022.

Apologies were recorded from Hilary Davies, Catherine M Hanson, Brian Parkin and Elizabeth Swinbank.

3. Voting procedure

The Chair indicated that when it came to voting all members, whether present in person or on line, should vote by holding up their hands and waiting to be counted.

4. Receive and approve the Minutes of the 2021 AGM held in March 2022. (These had been posted in good time on the York u3a website at <https://yorku3a.files.wordpress.com/2022/12/2021-agm-minutes.pdf>).

The meeting voted to approve the minutes of the March 2022 AGM.

5. Receive and approve the Chair's Report

The Chair's report was read out and is quoted verbatim below:

"The past year is probably best characterised as a year of convalescence, of a gradual return to normality after the disruption occasioned by Covid. Our membership numbers, now watched over very closely by our Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee, continue their steady recovery after their Covid-induced fall, but we are still roughly 8% down on our April 2019 peak. One of the very few benign legacies of Covid is that 'normality' now encompasses Zoom, so members can participate in many of our interest groups and attend Saturday talks without having to brave the weather or risk the still plentiful supply of infections in circulation.

Developments on the u3a national and regional fronts have been rather more significant. A major rethink in terms of both structure and approach is going on in the Third Age Trust, the u3a's parent body at the national level, following an AGM at which both resolutions and all 19 amendments relating to an increase in the capitation fee we pay TAT for each of our members were voted down. Apart from maintaining the fee at its current level this has little direct or immediate bearing on our u3a, as all u3a branches are independent self-standing charities in their own right. It has, however resulted in a very substantial increase in communication to all u3as from TAT and in a flurry of regional meetings.

Where the regions are concerned, there is a strong push for individual u3as to join mutually supportive sub-regional networks, which are of particular advantage to smaller u3as without the critical mass in terms of membership and interest groups of the larger ones like ours. In our case this process is being overseen by the Yorkshire and Humber Region and it is very useful in these circumstances that a member of your committee, Nick David, sits on the YAHR committee.

I attended one of the inaugural meetings of the Central Yorkshire Network of u3as in Garforth some weeks ago which goes by the acronym CYGNET, not to be confused with the Cygnet branch of the u3a in the Huon Valley in Tasmania, which is what you will find if you try to Google it. Your

committee has decided not to join CYGNET which would involve regular in-person meetings four times a year as far afield as Leeds and Wakefield, to little easily discernible purpose for us beyond amicable interaction. We have, however, decided to explore the possibility of a looser and less formalised relationship – so much lighter-touch as not to merit the term ‘network’ – with the u3as of Easingwold, Tadcaster and Haxby and Wigginton, with all of whom we share some members in common. I have a Zoom meeting with their Chairs arranged for next week. We had already initiated regular meetings with Haxby before Covid struck. I am also, rather more exotically, in the process of setting up a Zoom meeting (in English) with representatives from our u3a equivalent in Dijon who approached me for a meeting as a spin-off from York’s wider relationship with Dijon with a view to possible joint activities. The outcomes of both initiatives will be reported in Newsmail in due course.

Two other developments over the past year are worthy of brief mention. The first is the introduction of additional Saturday morning events at the Meeting House on the fourth Saturday of each month as a supplement to our Saturday morning talks. These, overseen by Anna Baldwin, have gone down very well. The second has been our collaboration with the Friends to offer a warm space in the Meeting House one afternoon a week through the winter.

Where the future is concerned, we are drawing towards the end of our current ten-year lease with the Friends Meeting House, which was generously extended by a year as we couldn’t make significant use of the Meeting House during lock-down. The coming year will accordingly see a good deal of financial planning on our part as we explore different scenarios in relation to annual subscription costs, the costs of potential alternative accommodation, and targeted increases both in our membership numbers and the number of special interest groups needed to accommodate them. We need to have a very clear picture of the different possible scenarios before we try to negotiate another long-term lease agreement with the Friends. We appreciate how fortunate we are relative to most other u3as to have such good and appropriate city-centre accommodation in the FMH, and to have such a good relationship with the Friends as our landlords, and we would like, if at all possible, to continue to base ourselves at the Friends Meeting House.

As we plan for the future, the one feature of our current operation that particularly concerns me is the need for more of our members to come forward to initiate new interest groups. We currently have 119 groups, which gives us a ratio of almost exactly one group for every 14 members. The ideal ratio appears, from discussions with other u3a Chairs, to be around 1:12; our membership numbers aren’t back to their pre-Covid level yet; and if we are to keep our subscriptions down to anywhere close to our present level, we will almost certainly be looking in the future to increase our numbers. Our current Group Leaders are doing an excellent job, and we are seeing interesting new groups starting up – Fly-Tying and Fishing, and Drone Swarms come to mind – but if we are going to cater adequately for our existing membership numbers, and any significant growth in future, we are going to need more Group Leaders to come forward. If you have any hobby or special interest, no matter how niche – from writing limericks to one-handed-basket-weaving – that you think others might like to share, we would love to hear about it.

By way of conclusion, as I reflect on the past year, I again feel very privileged to have been able to play a role with so many exceptional people in what is, I think, an outstandingly worthwhile organisation. I’d like to express my thanks to all the volunteers who enable our branch of the u3a to keep going: our Saturday morning front of house team; our audio-visual technical team, which has grown as the technology has become more complex; our Friends Meeting House catering team; our Office Volunteers; our gardeners; our Travel organisers; and, not least, our Group Leaders, without whom we would have no interest groups and no u3a worthy of the name. Particular thanks are due to the members of our committee for their commitment and all the work they have done for us over the past year. I am very pleased to say that the committee has been joined this year by Philip Firth and Michael Wajdner as joint Minutes Secretaries; Sue and Nick Tompkins who have taken over as Newsletter Editors from Nick David, who, I’m very pleased to say remains on the committee as Regional Representative; Karen Sawyer, initially as our Office Coordinator, now taking over as Secretary from Mike Barnard, who, I am pleased to say is remaining on the committee as a Trustee; and, most recently, by Samantha Triggs. Samantha is taking over from Rosemary Royds Tree as our Groups Coordinator, the only committee member who is standing down from the committee at this AGM. We owe a huge debt to Rosemary for her diligent and good-

humoured handling of what was undoubtedly the most onerous of all our portfolios during the Covid pandemic, what with the stop-start functioning, virtually or in-person, of all the different interest groups with their various health and safety complexities, which frequently changed and had to be monitored and approved at every different level of lockdown. Thank you, Rosemary – it has been a pleasure working with you.

It remains only to thank Ian Atherton and Chris from the Central Methodist Church, and Tracey from the Friends Meeting House, for their help and cooperation over the course of the year. And, finally, thanks very much to you all for your attendance at this AGM, both in person and virtually. I will be very happy to try to answer any questions.”

Questions:

I can't always get to the office. Can we send the Newsmail by post?

In order to keep costs down the Newsmail is sent out electronically, however, there are circumstances where posting it can be arranged.

How do we get more people involved in running the u3a?

The short answer is: I don't know. This is a challenge shared by all u3a branches. After spending many years working, it is understandable that members should feel they have done their bit. We are more fortunate than many u3as in this regard, some of which have had to close down because not enough volunteers were coming forward.

What is the link to Dijon?

We have been approached by representatives from OPAD in Dijon – an organisation for people over 55 years-old – for a discussion about how we might collaborate on shared activities. Dijon has had a partnership with York for many years, mainly via the Alliance Francaise and the City Council, and is interested in extending it to u3a.

The Chair's report was approved by the meeting.

- 6. Receive and approve the Treasurer's Report and the Annual Accounts for the year ending 31 July 2022. The full Annual Report to the Charity Commission can be viewed on our website at <https://yorku3a.files.wordpress.com/2022/12/2021-agm-minutes.pdf>.**

Ren Buss, our Treasurer, reported as follows:

This report relates to the accounts for our last completed Financial Year which covered the year from 1 August 2021 to the end of last July 2022.

When this financial period started in August 2021, we were only just emerging from Covid Lockdown.

Lockdown had a fundamental impact. Before, our membership levels were steady at around 1,800 members who were paying an annual membership subscription of £17. Our reported income, including the majority of our active Group's activities, was circa £180k

Annual Accounts 2020/21			Annual Accounts 2021/22		
1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021			1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022		
General Fund	Group Accounts	Total	General Fund	Group Accounts	Total
£	£	£	£	£	£
1,518			Headcount at 31 July	1,614	
£10			£ Annual Subscription	£15	
			RECEIPTS		
			Subscriptions 21/22	23,875	23,875
			Subscriptions 22/23	13,575	13,575
15,313		15,313	Subscriptions	37,450	0
			TAM Magazine Income	771	771
2,548		2,548	Gift Aid	4,139	4,139
		0	Donations	1,064	1,064
127	3,666	3,793	Income from groups	6,381	61,638
		0	Saturday meetings	1,119	1,119
46		46	Bank Interest	52	52
18,033	3,666	21,699	Total	50,976	61,638
				112,614	

NB Lockdown 26 March 2020 to 1 July 2021

Balance Sheet as at 31 July 2022			
	£	£	£
Balance brought forward	68,375	10,800	79,175
In year surplus / (spend)	18,413	2,104	20,517
Balance carried forward	86,788	12,904	99,692
Cash Balance	86,788	12,904	99,692

The first slide shows an extract of the circulated accounts, focusing on our bank balances at the start and end of the year and our income and net spend for the year.

During lockdown our membership fell significantly to 1,518 (that's down 15%) even though the annual subscription was set at £10. Also nearly all Groups had to cease their activities. Revenues for the year to 31 July 2021 fell to only £21k as reported at our last AGM.

In the year to last July (2022) we were in a period of recovery. We all remember how slow things were to get back to anything approaching normal but we ended the year in July 2022 with an improved headcount of 1,614 members paying a £15 subscription and total revenues also having partially recovered at £112k.

We started the year at the start of August 2021 with £68k in our central bank account and ended it with £87k at 31 July 2022, having reported a surplus of £18k for the year, i.e. more income received than sums spent.

At first glance this position looks a lot better than it actually is because, as a small organisation, we prepare accounts on what is called a "cash" basis rather than the more normal and complex "accruals" basis most businesses adopt.

This means that the numbers presented are based entirely on what is in the bank (the cash we have) and we do not make adjustments to reflect any future income or costs even if we have obligations to pay out in the future.

However, at the end of the year we are looking at, the committee made a decision to start the annual subscription renewal process for the year we are now in (Aug 2022/ July 2023) in July 2022. In the past we have always waited until we were in the year that the subscription monies "belonged" to. This was a fundamental change, and it meant we collected an extra £13.6k of monies before the end of July 2022 year- end that would previously not have shown up in our bank until the following financial year had started. So both our revenue or income numbers and bank balances to 31 July 2022 looked much healthier than we expected them to.

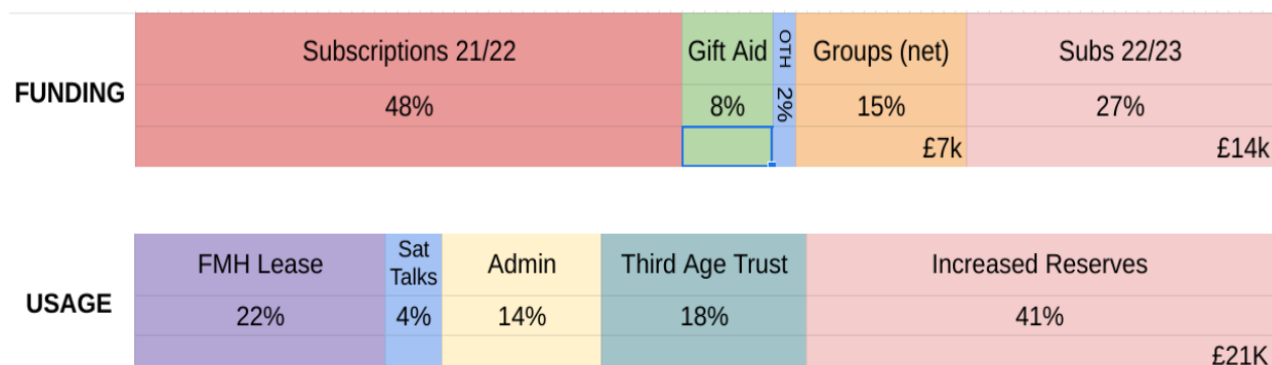
Overall in the Lockdown year to July 2021, we reported at the last AGM that we spent £4k more than the monies we collected and that we had to draw on our reserves.

At the end of July 2022 we had actually increased total reserves/ cash balances by £20k, but the majority of that increase was down to the fact we had recorded that £13.6k membership subscription income “belonging” to this our current year (2022/23) earlier than normal.

Operationally we generated enough income to cover both our costs for the year to July 2022 and to repay the £4k we had to draw from reserves in the previous year. Plus we had the extra £13.6k of subscription income belonging to the year we are now in in the bank.



YEAR 21/22 – Funding & usage



The second slide will help to clarify.

It shows that the monies we received related mainly to Subscriptions for 21/22 and the £13.6k re subscriptions paid early for this year. That is 75% of the total reported income.

Income benefitted from Groups getting back into action, and therefore paying for their use of the Fell and Woolman rooms at the Friends Meeting House. Also, from monies collected at restarted Saturday meetings.

On the other side of the equation is our spend.

For the year we are looking at to July 2022 we spent £11k on Lease costs. However, we are committed to significant increases in our rental payments for our remaining lease term which now runs to end August 2025. So, this year that we are now in I expect to pay out £16k, and that will rise further to over £20k for the following two years to July 2024 and July 2025.

That is a significant commitment when annual subscriptions currently only bring in around £24k.

I also want to highlight how much we paid over to the National u3a organisation – just under £10k per annum for membership fees, TAM Magazine, and use of the Beacon membership system in the 2021/22 year. We took steps to reduce that at our last AGM when we agreed that Members who wanted to receive the National u3a magazine, *Third Age Matters*, would contribute to the costs we are charged.

Even so, how do we manage with Subscription income of £24k and committed spend on the lease, and to Third Age Trust, of almost that sum?

You will see for the year to July 2022 our income covered our committed costs, but that we managed a very significant £21k increase to overall reserves. This was because of that extra £13.6k advance subscription income, plus reactivated Groups once more using the rooms in the Friends Meeting House and collecting the £2 per head contribution to our lease cost commitment.

However, we are also intending to pass on in full the increased charges from the Third Age Trust to those members who wish to receive a copy of the National *Third Age Matters* magazine. Costs are rising to £3.60 per annum for 5 magazines.

Questions:

Are any funds still available from the Henry Mills Bequest?

As reported at the last AGM, we have now used up the funds made available by the bequest. However, I have no doubt that the bequest is part of the reason that we are in such a strong financial position. We now stress that all Groups should aim to be self-financing. However, there are still funds available to help start up new Groups and we are trying to invest to support expanding our Group network. For example, we have recently purchased a new keyboard and hope there will be more Groups set up to make use of it. We have also recently purchased the cards required by the newly established Play Canasta Group.

I am still receiving the National *Third Age Matters* Magazine when I opted not to on the York u3a renewal form. Does this mean that the York u3a is paying?

We get charged based on the number of copies dispatched to our members as per a list of names we generate. We need to check to make sure our database is correct. If it is, then we need to query why the magazine has been sent – presumably we have been charged. Questioner has given name so that we can check. If you also have this problem, please contact the membership secretary, Brian Parkin.

The Treasurer’s report was approved by the meeting.

7. Election of Committee members

As required by the new constitution, the following Trustees were standing for re-election, proposed, and seconded by other members of the committee.

First Name	Family Name	Role
Mike	Barnard	Without Portfolio
Ren	Buss	Treasurer
David	Maughan Brown	Chair
Brian	Parkin	Membership Secretary
Mo	Sandland	Assist. Membership Secretary
Karen	Sawyer	Secretary
Quinn	Smith	Equipment Manager
Liz	Swinbank	Talks Secretary

The meeting elected the Trustees.

The following people are not Trustees but have been invited to attend committee meetings and undertake the roles listed:

First Name	Family Name	Role
Lorrae	Atkins	Web Manager
Ann	Baldwin	Social Secretary
Nick	David	Regional Representative
Hilary	Davies	Travel Group Representative
Philip	Firth	Minutes Secretary (Joint)
Nick & Sue	Tompkin	Editor(s)
Samantha	Triggs	Groups Coordinator
Michael	Wajdner	Minutes Secretary (Joint)

8. Appointment of Examiner of Accounts

The committee proposed the re-appointment of Hunter Gee Holroyd as the Examiner of Accounts.

The meeting approved the appointment.

9. Any other business

No other business was raised.

The meeting was closed at 12.20pm.