

Draft MINUTES of the 5th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on 20th April 2023 at Union Church, N8 9PX

1. WELCOME

The Chair of the Executive Committee, Sally Whitaker, welcomed all those present to the 5th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Crouch End & District u3a (CEDu3a)

2. CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM

The Secretary, Jackie Langford, confirmed that the required quorum of 91 members attending had been surpassed, with a total of 102 participants recorded at the beginning of the meeting (noon). The meeting could therefore continue.

3. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS AGM MINUTES

The Chair asked participants to approve the minutes of the previous AGM, held on 14th April 2022.

The minutes were approved by the majority of participants. There were no votes to reject the minutes.

4. ELECTION OF TRUSTEES

The Secretary reminded participants that, in a letter issued to all members in the week beginning 9th January, they had been offered the opportunity to nominate replacement trustees, with each nomination requiring a proposer and a seconder. The closing date for nominations was 27th January. There were up to 9 trustee positions becoming available at this AGM and 8 nominations for these positions were received. This meant that there was no need for an election process to be undertaken, instead each nomination was put forward for adoption in the meeting.

Four of the nominations related to current trustees, either whose 3-year period of tenure was completed or a further one-year extension of tenure was completed and who had been nominated for re-election for a further year, in line with the terms of our constitution. Those seeking re-election each hold officer positions and would retain those positions if re-elected.

The 4 nominations received for new trustee positions were:

Kathy McHale (proposed by Marion Hunter, seconded by Sheila Presley),

Barry Morris (proposed by Jonathan Riddell, seconded by David Stanford),

Patricia Spungin (proposed by Adrienne Banks, seconded by Pauline Wise),

Paul Wedgbury (proposed by Roger Cowe, seconded by John Nunney)

The proposal to elect each of the above-named nominees individually was carried by the majority of participants in each case. There were no votes to reject any of the nominees.

The 4 existing trustees nominated for re-election were:

Graham Bennett, Vice Chair, (proposed by Ian Skerritt, seconded by Lindley Smith)

Jackie Langford, Secretary, (proposed by Patricia Adams, seconded by Penelope Badham)

Charles Sharp, Membership Administrator, (proposed by Clare Smallman, seconded by Rob Jackson)

Sally Whitaker, Chair, (proposed by Heather Mackinnon, seconded by Lynne Stanford)

The proposal to re-elect all of the above-named nominees was carried by the majority of participants. There were no votes to reject the nominees.

The Chair welcomed the 4 new trustees to the Executive Committee.

5. FINANCIAL REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS FOR 2021

The Treasurer, Peter Stachniewski, delivered the financial report and accounts for the year 2022. A written report, detailed accounts and the independent examiner's report to the trustees had already been circulated to all members.

Reflecting highlights from the detailed report, he outlined how annual subscriptions for 2022 were set at £25 which was still below the amount of £35 set in 2020.

During 2022 in-year expenditure grew as a result of the resumption of normal activities, following previous years' covid restrictions. The total income for 2022 was £23,766 and outgoings were £26,831, largely spent on venues for interest group activities. A small deficit of £3,064 was shown by year end, which was comfortably covered by reserves. Total accumulated reserves at year end were £22,469. Hence the annual subscription rate for 2023 had been set at £30 for existing and new members, in recognition of the level of reserves.

The Treasurer expressed his thanks to Anne Hutchings for diligently carrying out the role of book-keeper and to Paul Soper, one of our members and a qualified accountant, who had as in previous years provided an independent examination of the accounts and expressed approval for them in his report.

Participants were offered the opportunity to ask questions on his report and there was one question:

Question

Why are you no longer claiming Gift Aid?

Response

In previous years national u3a advice was that we could claim Gift Aid but, more recently, advice from HMRC is that it is no longer appropriate because of the way that members subscribe in the case of CEDu3a. We are not a 'pay as you go' organisation, as some u3a branches are, we have an annual subscription that covers any amount of membership of groups and that difference in funding defines whether Gift Aid is appropriate or not.

There were no further questions.

The proposal to approve the financial accounts was carried by the majority of participants. There were no votes to reject the proposal.

Participants were asked to approve Paul Soper being appointed as independent examiner of the 2023 accounts.

The proposal to appoint Paul Soper as independent examiner of the 2023 accounts was carried by the majority of participants. There were no votes to reject the proposal.

6. ANNUAL REPORT

Looking back at 2022

A fully detailed annual report had been circulated to all members prior to the AGM. The Chair highlighted that there had been around 90 interest groups active by the end of last year, covering a broad range of subjects, which reflected our focus on developing new interest groups and encouraging more conveners. The website had been updated to provide more accessible information for members, particularly around interest groups. She paid tribute to all of the conveners and their critical role in our successful u3a and also to Julian Osley for the work he had put in to managing and updating the website.

By the end of 2022 there were over 970 members recorded. A number of social events had been held in-year including 2 summer parties, a quiz, and a barn dance and ceilidh. Monthly meetings had resumed in person after the previous years' social restrictions. In fact, the monthly meetings were now so successful that a new venue had to be sought to accommodate those who wished to attend. From next month onwards the monthly meetings will be held at the Moravian Church.

New members meetings had been providing very useful feedback. A new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) project team had been established, comprising a

membership with considerable expertise. An estimated 100 new members had signed up as members after the June Open Day. The newsletter, *news@...*, had been published three times in the year and monthly bulletins continued to be sent out. The Publicity and Recruitment Team had revised and reprinted publicity materials and a new members handbook. The Executive Committee had met every two months and the Officers and specialist teams met regularly throughout 2022.

Thanks were given to all the volunteers within CEDu3a for everything they do to contribute to the organisation. There would be no CEDu3a without them.

Priorities for 2023

The Chair commented that the priorities for 2023 and beyond were similar to those for 2022. CEDu3a now has over 100 interest groups and would continue to work hard to carry on this growth in activity, and launch new subjects, by supporting and encouraging new and existing conveners. Some new groups had recently been developed – Polymer Art, Social Running, Film at the Arthouse, Acoustic Singing, London Walks, Japan Interests, Cycling for Fun and Fitness, Art Appreciation 4 and Social Strolling. Monthly talks from expert speakers have been planned on a range of subjects.

There would be a focus on ensuring that all new members are made to feel welcome and can take advantage of what's on offer. In order to inform how we may attract more younger members in future, a younger members focus group met recently to share their thoughts.

The EDI team would focus on equality issues and increasing the diversity of our membership, through means such as outreach, local partnerships and buddying schemes.

More social events were planned, based on successes in previous years, such as quizzes, summer parties and ceilidhs.

As ever, we would commit to increasing the profile of CEDu3a and the national u3a through various means and maintain and, when appropriate, increase our membership numbers. It was noted that we are near to reaching 1000 members. The business of the organisation will continue to be run efficiently and effectively in 2023.

The Chair congratulated the 4 new trustees and welcomed them to the Executive Committee this year. She also congratulated those who had been re-elected. She emphasised that the organisation is built on its volunteers and asked all those present to think about contributing by volunteering in some way.

7. QUESTIONS

The following questions were put to the Chair by various members of the audience and the Chair responded:

Question

Why is diversity etc. still an issue - you have talked about taking action at previous AGMs and nothing has changed?

Response

We have wanted to make recruiting inroads to the east of the borough but had been advised in the past not to by the national u3a, who were mindful of the fact that there was a u3a branch already covering that area. However, that branch has now closed down for good due to declining membership and we are able to promote CEDu3a in the Wood Green and Tottenham area. The EDI Team are considering a number of initiatives which will include looking at outreach to the east of the borough.

Participants were offered the opportunity to join the group if they had any thoughts they could contribute.

Question

Won't the fact that this branch is called the Crouch End and District branch put off anyone thinking of joining from the east of the borough? Will you change your name to something like the Haringey u3a?

Response

We will have to give some consideration to what our branch is called in future and, as some other London u3as are named after their borough of location, that may be an option for us. We will discuss this issue at future Executive Committee meetings.

The comment was made by one participant that she would not travel across the borough to take part in u3a activities and preferred to keep the u3a local.

In response to a request from one member, for the Chair to ask for a show of hands to indicate the socio-economic status of participants' backgrounds, this was rejected as inappropriate. She commented that all we need to know is that our members are retired or semi-retired.

Tributes

The Chair paid tribute to the 3 trustee members of the Executive Committee who were standing down.

Liz London was thanked for her contribution as a trustee and the work that she has done organising volunteers. Although she was stepping down as a trustee, she will still be active in working with volunteers and this was welcomed.

The Chair then went on to pay tribute to Diana Pavey (who could not be present) and thanked her for the tremendous work she has done over many years within CEDu3a,

particularly providing leadership of the Groups Team. While Diana headed up the Groups Team the number of interest groups doubled to the 100 plus we have today.

The Chair also paid tribute to Andrew Sich for his significant contribution over a number of years, first as Treasurer and more recently as Vice Chair and a convener. His wise counsel and input to the Executive Committee had been particularly welcomed.

Participants showed their appreciation in a round of applause after each of the tributes.

Meeting Ended

The Chair thanked all the participants for attending and the meeting was closed at 12.40pm.

Apologies received

Jaki Airey, Kollyn Bailey, Lucy Bailey, Sheila Carrano, Angele Cauthery, Jeanette Duffield, Phil Fernandes, Angelo Gallego, Patricia Highgate, Vavi Hillel, Caroline Jones, Patricia Morris, Francis Niemczyk, Diana Pavey, Greta Sykes, Ros Townsend, Sheri Waddell.