

MINUTES

Maghull & Lydiate U3A

14th Annual General Meeting,
held on Tuesday 17 May 2022 at 10:00am

Present: 207 MEMBERS

Jane Jones – Chair – Welcomed everyone to the meeting and declared the meeting open at 10.10am

- | 1 | Apologies: - | Action |
|----------|--|---------------|
| | Carol Davenport, Tony Snape, Brian Leach, Sue Quinn, Sheila Mortimer, Maureen Ward, Jenny Carter, Bernie Flemming, Shirley Kelly, Judith Wilson, Frances Campbell, Sue Hayes | |
| 2 | Minutes of last AGM held on 4 May 2021 Acceptance of Minutes - no issues of accuracy noted. | |

However, Stuart Findlay (previous Treasurer) had objections to the minutes.

Firstly, he asked if the previous year's Zoom AGM was quorate as there were only a few people who attended. It was stated to him that although there were only 24 people who attended the AGM it was classed as quorate as the previous one in 2020 (the Pandemic Year) was cancelled. This is also stated in our Constitution 15iii. SF accepted the explanation.

SF resigned as the Treasurer in October 2020 as his accounts were challenged. He stated that his accounts were passed by the Independent Examiner in August for the previous two years. SF wanted to make a very important announcement. The reason why he left was because the accounts he had produced were challenged by a member of the Committee which they are not allowed to do unless they name the person who did the job as not honest. The ones that were passed by the Independent Examiner in November of that year, there does not seem to be a report from the Independent Examiner and SF wanted to know where that was.

JJ stated that this was noted and that the Accounts were passed at the AGM last year with no objections raised at the time and stated that this is not something we can get to the bottom of at this meeting and it is something to be dealt with at a later date. Frank Mercer stated he will deal with this later in his Treasurer's report.

Other than that, the Minutes, even though there is a dispute, they will stand, can we have a proposer?

Proposed by: Marj Atlay

Seconded by: Carol Westall

3 Actions and Matters arising

Apart from above - None

4 Treasurers Report and Adoption of the Accounts

FM discussed the points raised by SF. The easiest way of explaining this is that we have two different sets of accounts which are prepared in respect of Maghull & Lydiate u3a. In the first instance there is the Statutory Form CC16A which once approved by the membership is filed in the Charity Commission. When FM became involved with M&L a few years ago he pointed out to the then Committee that those accounts whilst strictly accurate, were not particularly helpful, the reason being that the Accounts filed with the Charity Commission are essentially a statement of monies paid out and what we received in.

SF interrupted stating you are saying that the Accounts were not conducive to your figures, according to accounting practices, if the amount of £15 difference can be written off you wanted me to amend my figures which I refused to do and then you decided in your infinite wisdom to produce your own accounts. As stated before when speaking to the Treasury Chairman in Head Office, he stated there are only two circumstances when this could be done, one if I am not up to doing the Accounts and two, if I am not honest. That is a quote from Richard Teare, the treasurer at the time. So which one do you think I am? FM refused to continue with these unfortunate words which do not help and really are not appropriate for this meeting. FM stated he will continue with this report and pick up one or two of the point along the way.

These accounts have also been approved by the Independent Examiner. The second set of accounts are the Management accounts and it is those accounts that have always been produced for the AGM and these are the accounts which you all have copies of today. These accounts incorporate the statement of monies received and paid out. That section of the Accounts has been examined each year by Sefton Council for Voluntary Services and has been signed off and filed with the Charity Commission. That is why this item appears to have arisen that there are different accounts. As far as some of the issues raised by SF, that is a difference of opinion as to what represents a useful set of management accounts. SF exchanged emailed with the then Treasurer in Head Office and received a statement which he believed to support his case. FM examined those and referred back to Richard Teare who when I explained the position fully, he stated that he had misunderstood the representations made by SF and on that basis he was entirely in agreement with the way in which I had presented figures to the members and to the management. FM stated if the Committee wished to pursue this matter after the AGM he would forward his exchanges with Richard Teare.

FM then stated as far as this year's accounts are concerned, whilst you have the 2022 and 2021 figures, it is difficult to compare year on year due to the pandemic. As far as 2022 is concerned, it was only from September that M&L gradually started to get back to normal activities. The only comparative figures that I would mention at this stage is with regards to membership fees, in 2021 we had £3,500 and this year £6,000. The reason for that is that the memberships have gradually started to build up again. Also of note, as at

31.03.22 M&L carried forward £10,500 in reserve. This is quite a fall from the reserves of 3-4 years ago that there was a deliberate policy on part of the Committee to reduce the subscriptions for 2-3 years to trim that more excessive reserve and are more in line with what is justifiable and this year the subscriptions are now reverting to a more normal level.

FM discussed the Accounts you all have and discussed the breakdown of group funds.

FM asked if anyone had any questions to which SF asked why if a member is also a member of another u3a then why aren't their subscriptions reduced? FM stated that this issue has been considered by the Committee, this equates to 10 members only. As far as that is concerned, we are the only u3a who give any form of reduction. SF stated that Ormskirk and Aintree do give a reduction. However, this was disputed as incorrect.

JJ stated, as mentioned earlier, this discussion is becoming quite personal and she is happy to discuss further with FM and SF and we should now move on to the rest of the Agenda.

She asked for a proposer to accept the Accounts for 2021/2022.

Proposed by: Geoff Heaps

Seconded by: Joan Martin

VOTE:

For: all by a show of hands with one against.

FM mentioned the vacancy of a Treasurer. Not one person came forward to take over the management of the Accounts for the past 8 months. Only one person came forward and I have to say the work she did was invaluable. I want it formally placed on record the thanks of the Committee and the members to Brenda McKenzie for the work she has done over the past 8 months.

5 Appoint the Independent Examiner for the next 12 months

Accounts have since been examined and cleared by the Independent Examiner - Sefton Council for Voluntary Services who are happy to continue for the next 12 months

Proposed by: Geoff Heaps

Seconded by: Joan Martin

VOTE:

For: all by a show of hands with one against.

6 Interim Chair's report – including eulogies from Doris Cox and John Jackson

As Interim Chair I am so pleased to be able to stand here with all of you today as last February it looked as though this might not happen. Our u3a has gone through what can only be described as a rough patch with our very existence in jeopardy. For many months

we have struggled without a treasurer but this became a real in problem in February when the Charity Commission gave us a deadline to rectify the situation.

Also in February, for personal reasons, our Chair and Vice-Chair resigned from their roles which lead us to hold an emergency meeting between the Committee and the Group Leaders.

At this meeting it became clear that due to this departure we would need to find members willing to fill these roles even if only pro temp.

Nominations were received and following a committee decision, myself and Carol Westall were appointed as Interim Officers. We were also fortunate that Stuart Findlay came to our rescue, albeit on a temporary basis, and we offer our thanks for his help but we are still not out of the woods.

We're all aware that it has been a very tough couple of years but we do seem to be coming to the end of a very long tunnel which has changed our lives in many ways. It's unlikely that anybody here hasn't been touched in someway by the effects of Covid and most of us will have found our lives changed in ways we hadn't thought possible. For all of us the lockdown provided a challenge and to fill the long days we took up new hobbies we caught up with television programmes we'd been meaning to watch and we learnt the term binge watching. We took long solitary walks to keep up our fitness and found new interests so that when the lockdown ended, for some of us these interests took the place of U3A in our daily routines.

In September 2021 when our u3a you officially restarted we found that many of our members did not return. It's true to say that if you break the habit of going somewhere it's often very hard to re-establish it and this was true for so many of the friends that we had spent our Tuesdays with.

Our hard working membership team keep us in touch with the ebbs and flows of the numbers in our u3a and of course we found that there had been a decline in membership and attendance.

In September we found that some 280 members had decided for varying reasons not to renew their membership. Many had moved, found new interests, found mobility issues hampered their attendance and others found the shadow of Covid was still too close for comfort. Whatever their reason we want to wish all those who have not rejoined all the best in whatever they decide to do with their time and want to remind them they're always welcome back in the fold.

Many of our group leaders also found that the enforced absence gave them the opportunity to do new things and when it became possible to have more time to meet up with family they made the decision not to return as leaders.

Prior to the pandemic our u3a offered members an amazing range of opportunities having some sixty-five groups available to choose from, today that number is closer to forty four. On behalf of myself, the committee and all the members of U3A I want to extend our

thanks and appreciation to all those leaders for all the amazing work they've done, many of them since the inception of the u3a in 2006.

I would like to take this opportunity to mention:

David and Judith Kearney, David who ran his book club for many years and gave us so much pleasure from the newsletter that he produced and Judith who brought our attention to the latest bestsellers that they had on the book table.

Bill and Margaret Ashton who introduced us to the unlikely sport of walking netball and helped provide a way to regain our fitness for those of us who believed our running days were well and truly over and for the more energetic we thank Judith Jones for the brilliant walks she planned and lead.

Marie Bramwell who has helped so many gain a foothold in the French language; an interest which many have carried on.

Chris Otium and Lynne Marloet helped us dust off our recorders, re-visit all those tunes that we learnt at school and gave us recitals to enjoy.

Sheila Merry who for many years has taught us how to relax Chinese style with her amazing tai chi moves and Ross Leith who showed us how we could turn handwriting into the most beautiful of the arts.

Dennis Stevens and Win Taylor, who, using their wide range of eloquent speakers, enthralled us with tales of our local history and gave us an insight into the area we call home.

Sue Daniels who encouraged our appreciation of real ales, and created a group that became almost too large to manage.

We wish them and their assistants all the very best but at the same time would like to remind them that there's always a welcome if they ever want to come back to their old jobs here.

Of course not all our Group Leaders gave up their roles and to them we extend huge thanks. Some of these Leaders have been in the role, manning their desks since our u3a started but all have helped make our u3a the success it is today.

In addition on behalf of the committee and the members I would like also to thank Maghull Baptist Church for the support they have given and continue to give to our u3a.

Some groups may indeed have closed their doors but we have been lucky that just in the last month or so two new groups have started up. If you love singing but think your voice is not quite perfect, 'Singing for Fun' is looking for enthusiasts not Pavarottis and Adeles. Don't just practice your singing in the shower Brian Casson, its leader, will be thrilled to meet you.

For relaxation, improved agility and balance we now offer Gentle Yoga. This burgeoning group run by Helen Knowles offers its members an opportunity to take exercises at a more leisurely pace something I'm sure many of us will appreciate.

Along with Group Leaders we have also seen the departure of many members of our committee some whose term of office has come to an end and some who have decided that they would like to explore other avenues. On behalf of the remaining committee and the members I wish to thank them for their diligence and the help that they have given to steering our u3a over the years.

Our thanks and appreciations go to
Tony Dodd, who has given so much of his time as Chair and helper with the Computer group,
Dot Brannigan who has served as a Chair for our u3a,
Frank Mercer who has been invaluable in dealing with all our constitutional and financial matters,
Margaret Kendall who had led our successful Membership team for many year
Phil Davidson who has responsibility for our amazing website and
Ann Willox, for her tireless work as leader of our Group Support.

I would like to take this opportunity to also thank:

Our brilliant team of Peter Martin, Terry Horrobin, and Phil Davidson who each Tuesday set up the tables and chairs that many of us think appear as if by magic. Their contribution is much appreciated but I am sure they would be very happy to receive any offers of assistance. I would also like to thank the group leaders who set up their own chairs and help clear away at the end of the morning.

Our new tea-ladies – Jan Halksworth, Pat Snape, Ann Hughes, Barbara Wilson and Irene Rowe who serve us our cuppa, just when we need it.

Thanks to our Meeters and Greeters – Joan Cain and Geoff Martin who help make new members feel at ease and steer them through the maze that is a Tuesday morning.

To Maureen Lavelle who photocopies notices from the Group Leaders making sure they have them to hand when needed and to Pat Snape who keeps our online calendar up to date so we all know where we're supposed to be.

To Lill Boyle who does such an amazing job as our Welfare Officer, Lill sends cards of support condolence and thanks on your behalf to all those in need and often goes above and beyond with visits when necessary.

One other member I wish to mention is Brenda McKenzie. In September last year we were without a treasurer and as you're aware from previous comments and all the communication that's a pretty serious position to be in. Brenda with her knowledge of banking stepped in, took charge and got us back on an even keel.

She has worked tirelessly in the background turning up on Tuesdays, helping set up the new systems, sorting out monies, setting up and aiding our excellent treasury team and completing the books as and when required. Her input had been quite extraordinary and on behalf of us all I would like to express our gratitude.

We move on now to another departure, in December of last year Bill Howarth our founder succumbed to an illness and passed peacefully away at home. It would be remiss of me not to mention Bill at this meeting since from the inception of our u3a this is the first meeting that Bill has missed. I believe it fitting that I asked two close friends to come and give us their thoughts about Bill Howarth - John Jackson and Doris Cox.

6.1 John Jackson's eulogy

Bill Howarth was the right person in the right place at the right time. Maghull had several groups serving different needs in the community but Bill spotted a gap. Many people were retiring earlier but were not ready for slippers and long Johns. He saw that there was room for an organisation which would draw them together and enrich their lives through learning.

Bill did not invent the U3A. He had been a member of the Aughton branch and had seen how it could be dynamic and challenging. So he met with a few well chosen pensioners. Together they planned a public meeting to float the U3A. Expectations were not too high, maybe twenty or thirty people would be a good start, they thought. Amazingly about 200 people attended the meeting and more encouraging still was the positive enthusiasm that flowed from that meeting with many, not just willing to take part but also to take active roles in the development of third age learning.

Bill was the right man at that time to channel and direct that enthusiasm. He was a leader. As an architect he was used to planning and group working. He had in his past been involved in different community groups., the Scouts, the Baptist Church. From his long service as a governor and chair of Deyes High school he was dedicated to learning. He saw the value of learning together, sharing our knowledge and developing friendships through that sharing.

Bill was a family man, devoted husband to Shirley supported by her and devastated by her loss, but strengthened by the love of his children.

A man of many talents

Music was a life long joy. A trumpeter who loved Brass bands but could equally enjoy Mahler and Mozart.

An avid reader with very catholic taste.

His garden was his pride and joy in his later years his skill in this field he shared by planning gardens for others

Life long learning and development was his belief and reflected in his life.

Ann and I saw him just few days before his death. No way was there any lessening of his zest for life. He was enthusing about getting out, the books he was reading and what he was planning for the garden. He lived a rich life to the end. Our lives have been enriched by his presence he will live on in our memories.

6.2 Doris Cox's eulogy

She had known Bill since 1959. She was new to the area and met a very kind family from Maghull and have always stayed in touch. She spoke about his young daughter Angela who died of leukaemia. She helped him set up the M&L u3a and travelled to many groups all over. He was very sociable and was always there to get advice. His house was full of books. He was a designer, he loved sports and music. He gave lifts to people who had no transport. Brought lonely people together who had no one. Unfortunately his health deteriorated. He always welcomed visitors and always wanted to be kept up to date with what was happening.

7 Election of Honorary President, Officers and Members of the Committee

Following Bill's passing we now have a vacancy for president of our u3a. The roll of president is an honorary title it brings no power but I believe that it adds some gravitas to our organisation. Bill was the first holder of the title and I know it gave him great pleasure to know how much we appreciated all he had done. I would like to propose that we offer the Presidency this year to Doris Cox who was alongside Bill when he came up with the idea and supported him throughout those initial months of getting our u3a off the ground.

This proposal has been seconded by Marj Atlay so I would ask you please by show of hands to show your support for Doris Cox for the role of President of Maghull and Lydiate U3A.

Election of Committee members

| <u>Position</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Proposed by</u> | <u>Seconded by</u> |
|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <u>Honorary President</u> | Doris Cox | Jane Jones | Marj Atlay |
| <u>Chair</u> | Jane Jones | Jan Halksworth | Marj Atlay |
| <u>Vice Chair</u> | Carol Westall | Irene Edwards | Lynne Chappell |
| <u>Committee Member</u> | Joan Martin | Lil Boyle | Ann Willox |
| <u>Committee Member</u> | Nigel Burrows | Patrick Brown | Jennifer Carter |
| <u>Committee Member</u> | Irene Edwards | Rosina Hough | Doreen Bird |
| <u>Committee Member</u> | Kenneth Moulton | Frances Campbell | Shirley Kelly |
| <u>Committee Member</u> | Geoffrey W Heaps | Marj Atlay | Christine Fletcher |
| <u>Committee Member</u> | Christina Chua-Short | Edward Short | Jeffrey Martin |

Each of the above new members stood up at the front and gave a brief account of how many years they have been a member of the M&L u3a and what groups they attended and their current interests.

All agreed by a show of hands for the above posts. Unanimous.

JJ mentioned that it is early days but we do have a person who has shown an interest in becoming our Treasurer.

8 Date of next meeting

To be arranged

9 MEETING CLOSED at 11:15am