

Minutes of the Midhurst u3a AGM, Tuesday 20 May 2025, Midhurst Methodist Church Hall

Present: Odette Marshall (chairman), Sue Edwards, Jeannine Murphy, Jenny Peters, Peter Moss (business secretary), John White, Ian Woodhams, Ruth Bonner (minutes).

1. Apologies received: Sue Austen, Isabel Fraser, Denise & Allen Skinner, Carol Brinson, Diane Ponting, Jillie Moss, Ted Liddle, Denise Barre, Jenny Holland-Smith, Jean Farguson, Alison Highton, William & Judith Brownlee.

2. Minutes of the 2024 AGM: Minutes of 2024 AGM held 21.5.24 had been circulated to members; there were no matters arising. Proposed: Pauline Guppy; seconded: Marie-Helene Lopez. Accepted via a show of hands.

3. Chairman's Annual Report 2024/2025 – Odette Marshall: In my first report as chairman of Midhurst u3a I thank the committee and members for their support and guidance over the year. Committee members were: Sue Edwards - Vice-Chairman/ Groups Coordinator, Jeannine Murphy - Membership Secretary, Denise Barre - Speaker's Secretary, Ian Woodhams - social events organiser, John White – Treasurer, Peter Moss - Business Secretary, Jenny Peters - RUG Group Coordinator, Ruth Bonner - Minutes Secretary. We need more committee members to spread the load and this is something that we are addressing. The u3a is run by the members, for the members and so I urge every one of you to think how you could make a contribution. Come and join us, we will give the help and guidance you might need, and we are a friendly and fun bunch of people.

Many thanks to all of the people who have helped run our events in the past year including Fran, Bruce, Val, Pete, Ted and Peter and those who have helped with refreshments at the monthly meetings.

During the covid pandemic our membership fell dramatically from 420 before recovering to 401 at the year end. For this year, 304 have renewed or joined Midhurst u3a since 1.4.25. To expand our numbers we must look at the number/range of the groups we offer; we have several fairly new groups but what else could we offer? Could you start a group in collaboration with a friend, and share tasks between you? You don't have to be an expert - some groups, eg. Local History, are a gathering of likeminded people investigating a topic that interests them. Yes, there is a 'leader' who coordinates dates and times and provides refreshments, but that person is a fellow traveller on the journey of discovery they have all embarked on. Groups do not have to be eternal – a group might have a shelf life of six months or so while it explores a particular interest.

I thank all of our Group Leaders who work hard organising their groups and also to all the members who kindly open their homes as a venue for these activities. Some groups meet in external venues (hire of which is paid by the group members). I would like to mention in particular Bernard Allen who has recently stopped his Art Appreciation and Art History groups after very many years. Previously he has run both opera and art outings, organised art holidays, and served on the committee in various roles including Chairman more than once. Thank you, Bernard for all you have done. We held a thank-you tea in September for Group leaders and regular helpers who keep our organisation running smoothly.

At the Committee's annual Away Day we looked at the way we do things and how to improve things. We also discussed finances and fees and I set this out in a letter to you all earlier in the year.

For all of September, we were featured in the Midhurst Museum, celebrating our 30th anniversary attracting many visitors. Thanks to anyone who contributed to the displays and to Peter and Gill Nightingale for hosting the exhibition.

Thanks to the outings sub-committee Christine Musgrove, Tricia Stephens and Judy Fowler who organised trips to Shoreham Airport and the Royal Pavilion in Brighton, an Evening with Tim Rice, a theatre trip to see Filomena and an outing to Winchester Cathedral Christmas Market. We can still look forward to theatre trips to A Government Inspector, Marie and Rosetta and Top Hat, and a possible trip to Hever Castle (details follow). Could you organise one outing a year? Yes? Then do please contact one of the sub-committee members who would be willing to discuss further.

Socially we enjoyed both a well-attended Christmas Lunch and a Spring Lunch at The Unicorn, Heyshott. In October Ian organised a quiz with fish & chip supper that was warmly received and will be repeated in September.

Thank you once again to David Earley for examining the accounts.

We held our u3a Open Day in September at the Old Library and this year we will be here in the hall for that event. This day is a very good opportunity to show to the uninitiated what we are all about; groups will be asked to come along and encourage prospective new members to join. We were also present at the Midhurst Rother College Community Day in May, and a council run initiative earlier in the year. To further help boost our membership everyone can play their part by encouraging friends/neighbours to come along to a Tuesday meeting and find out what we are all about. Together we can keep Midhurst u3a the thriving, friendly organisation it is.

4. Treasurer's Annual Report 2024/2025 – John White: The Treasurer presented his report – there were no comments from the floor. David Earley, accounts examiner, was thanked for his guidance and help over the last year. Proposed: Margaret Stratford; Seconded: Penny Holland. Accepted via a show of hands.

5. Working Party ref Membership Fees: The Chairman confirmed the annual membership fee has risen to £15.00. Proposed: Ian Peters; Seconded: Andrea Fox. Accepted via a show of hands.

6. To Re-Appoint David Earley as independent examiner of accounts for 2025-26: Proposed: Penny Holland; Seconded: David Barlow. Accepted via a show of hands.

7. Election of Committee for 2025-26: No nominations having been received, the existing members were automatically re-elected. Proposed: Ian Peters; seconded: Marie-Helene Lopez. Accepted via a show of hands.

8. Any Other Business: A rhododendron was presented to Penny Holland on stepping down from the committee. She was thanked by the chairman for her help and continuing contribution over many years both as a committee member and group leader. There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting before introducing the speaker Maggie Barlow who talked on Farming & Diversity.