

Ferndown & District U3A



Ferndown and District University of the Third Age

Registered Charity Number 1073206

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Monday 14th December 2015 at 2.15pm at Ferndown Village Hall

Committee members present: Brian Williams, Bob Reeve, John Mullett, Jenny Bass, Gerry Lewis, Richard Tucker, Judith Hodges, Maggie Shew, Doreen Kinnear, Derek Holden and Glyn Bosanko

The Minutes of the AGM held on Monday 15th December 2014 were proposed by Les Brand, seconded by Jan Walker and agreed by all present.

Chairman's Report: **Brian Williams** welcomed all to this AGM and reminded everyone that after the proceedings, as outlined in the Agenda to be found on the seats, there would be refreshments followed by a talk on India by Jan Gransden. He reminded everyone of the unique position of U3A as a learning and enjoying environment which is essentially a self-help group, and emphasised the spread of the groups and the value for money. U3A is so successful that it is about to open its one thousandth branch. 2015 had been a successful year for our U3A. We were financially viable and John would give us details of the accounts later. For the second year running we had managed an increase in membership which now stood at five hundred and twenty. Increased regulation and external bureaucracy made the relationship between members, volunteers, course leaders and the committee harder to maintain. Sometimes regulation conflicted with course ambition and a disappointing decision had to be made. Attracting committee members was difficult and as a consequence, we had only enough committee members to run the essential functions of the organisation. Brian mentioned two particular committee members: **Betty Ford** and **Derek Holden**. Betty had been a committee member for five years and during that time she had undertaken two main roles; one as Accommodation Officer and the other as Group Co-ordinator.

Recently she had been playing a vital role organising the refreshment activities at various functions. Both her skills and experience would be greatly missed and we appreciated the job she had done for us. Derek who took over as Accommodation Officer last year walked into a major crisis. The Barrington Centre, our main source of accommodation, had been forced to relinquish two of its rooms to the Town Council, thus depriving us of thirty per cent of the available space for our classes. Derek then had the unenviable task of filling this space gap at a time when we were increasing the number of the courses available to members. He successfully fulfilled this task with suitable accommodation. In October the flooding of the Studio room at the Barrington caused a further two months disruption to eight of our classes. Yet no course lost time due to lack of appropriate accommodation. Indeed, with our new locations at St Mary's Church, the United Church and West Moors School, we have accommodation which will be very useful in the future. Ill health had meant that Derek had had to stand down from the Committee, and Brian thanked him for all his hard work, and presented him with a gift from FU3A. He hoped he might return to a less onerous position within the Committee at a later stage. Brian then expressed appreciation to all the Committee members for their effort and commitment and proceeded to introduce them, inviting them to speak if they so desired. **Maggie Shew**, our website co-ordinator emphasised what the website was and what it stood for. She encouraged everyone to access it and to help with news, photos, descriptions of events etc. for the Noticeboard, and the News Roundup section. She told members that the database was the first place they could see their allocations and they could contact her via the Contacts page. **Jenny Bass** was our Bridge Co-ordinator. **Richard Tucker** was the Membership Secretary and Database keeper; he asked that members kept him up to date with all personal changes, e.g. address, email address etc. He assured everyone that the database was kept secure twenty-four-seven. **Doreen Kinnear**, our Marketing Officer told members that this was her first year on the stage. She had promotional material for U3A including coasters, car stickers and book markers, and these were available. She hoped to promote a scheme for keeping in touch with elderly lonely people. Perhaps if each member brought one person to the coffee mornings then we might increase our membership as well as helping that lonely person. **Bob Reeve** our Group Co-ordinator wanted to reiterate last year's minutes and to thank all the Group Leaders for their enthusiasm and commitment. He would be writing to existing leaders regarding next year and hoped that we might have some new leaders and groups.

He wondered whether we might be able to create umbrella groups where groups of people organised the class, rather than just one leader. He mentioned Judith's 'Discovering Dorset', Barry Wise's History Group and Bob's own 'Enjoying the Performance'. All these groups involved people other than just the leader in order to run successfully. He looked forward to every member of Ferndown U3A doing something for the organisation. **Gerry Lewis** our Social Secretary was introduced as was **Glyn Bosanko** the Minutes Secretary. **Judith Hodges**, our Public Relations and Newsletter Editor told us that she was trying to make it just that – a Newsletter, but that it was still one-sided and she would like information from the members. The 'Members of the Month' feature would connect with ordinary members, but for now it was featuring Committee members so that the membership got to know them a little more. Next year's Brochure was already in the mix and any feedback would be welcome. Judith also asked that if anyone knew of the death of a member that she could be informed, thus avoiding potentially embarrassing situations. Brian told the members that running parallel with the Committee is the other very important group necessary for the efficient running of our organisation, namely our seventy group leaders and tutor. Without them we would have no courses. Their services are given in a most professional manner free of charge. He thanked them all for the wonderful job they did, especially the leaders who ran courses from their own homes, ensuring comfortable accommodation and saving us money. As a self-help group, for the regular classes to function smoothly, we need those enthusiastic groups of volunteers in each class who make tea, coffee and wash up and help clear and prepare rooms for each group. He thanked these people and hoped that they would continue with the good work. Apart from the class learning and entertainment, it was important that our physical well-being was maintained as we move into our Third Age. To this end, Brian told the membership that we offered courses such as Table Tennis, Badminton and multiple Dance Classes. We also offered extra-curriculum activities. Every month Richard and Ian led their three and five-mile walks. This year we have added Nature Walks to our repertoire and Brian thanked Julia Lockwood for leading these interesting forays into the woods. Thanks were also given to Margaret Thomas, who not only ran three classes but supplemented those activities with social events. This year we had the History of Dance in March, the Garden Party in June and a Barn Dance in October. All three events were well-attended and enjoyed by all present. Betty led a Fungus Foray in September and Judith led a tour to The Ancient Technology Centre in Cranbourne, as part of Discovering Dorset.

Thanks were given to Barbara Brown for the use of her garden for the Strawberry Tea in June which was organised by John Mullett with help from a number of members. Thanks also went to Pat O’Riordan for the Singles Lunch, Brenda Baldry for the Skittles and Les Brand for the purpose-built course for his Boules group to show off their skills. Gerry Lewis continued to work tirelessly to organise various events. The Fish and Chip Supper went well, as did the Christmas Lunch, both being well-attended with food up to its normal high standard. The Christmas Show was now a regular event on our calendar and those attending this year’s show are in for an enjoyable afternoon. The Review is written by Peter Hunt and directed by Rita Burke and will be acted by a group of very enthusiastic actors. This year the format for the First Friday coffee morning changed. For a start entry is free and all refreshments are paid for out of funds. After this, members hear from the Committee and are brought up-to-date with information on current events and problems. It is an opportunity for members to meet with the Committee and bring up any problems they may have. The meetings finish with a talk, normally from an outside speaker. To date all talks have been interesting and enjoyable, and if any member knew of a good speaker would they please contact Bob Reeve. The Open Day is when we are able to take the opportunity to show off our skills to the people of Ferndown. Our various groups take stands to display their course work and detail their activities. Entertainment is offered and our groups display their abilities. Brian thanked Judith, Derek and Bob for their Herculean effort, ensuring that we had next year’s Brochure and course details available for distribution at the Open Day, with existing members having their copies the week before. Despite the huge amount of time and commitment, Open Day is well worthwhile. It helps boost our membership and emphasises to the community our importance to the local environment. Many of the out-of-course activities need assistance to prepare and operate the event. It would be useful to the Committee if we could call on a core of volunteers to help with the running of such events. Brian asked that any willing members contact Gerry. Brian mentioned that there was a crisis last year when Edward Whittingdale stood down after many years in the position of Examiner of Accounts. As this function is mandatory for us to exist as a Charity we asked at last year’s AGM if there was a member who could perform this function. Fortunately, Ian Burr, a course leader of many years’ standing stepped forward to fill this position. He has done a splendid job and the detailed examination passed this year’s accounts. Brian thanked him for all his work and for helping in our hour of need.

The Committee would like to see an increase in the outside social programme. Brian had contacted other U3As to see how they tackled this subject and in all cases the initiative came from membership not Committee. If a member fancied a day trip for example, they only had to look into it regarding viability, costs, dates, numbers interested, refreshments etc, and contact the designated Committee member who would then be able to help further. Ferndown U3A could offer publicity via the website and Newsletter, help with contacting transport companies and even collect money for the trip. In addition, by making it a U3A activity, we would be able to offer U3A Public Liability Insurance. The original member would still claim ownership of the project and run it, but with the confidence of administrative help being available. Brian told the members that because of the twenty per cent take up of the increase from four to eight courses at no extra charge offered this last year, we would be able to continue with this benefit. He hoped that more members would take up this option. He also announced that despite the expected increase in accommodation charges this year, we were holding the fees at the existing cost. Lastly, Brian thanked all the members who contribute so greatly to the success we enjoy as an organisation, and he looked forward to next year being even more successful.

Treasurer's Report: **John Mullett** presented his report to all members present, and told members that they could see a copy after the meeting and could download it from the website should they desire. A copy of the last three years' comparative figures for the Accounts is attached to this set of minutes. The main points were that Subscriptions had risen by £1,247 and Gift Aid also had risen by £782. John had managed to reclaim some £4,951 from Her Majesty's Customs and Excise. This figure represented seventeen per cent of our total income. The balance of our income came from interest on our Investment Fund amounting to £150. A separate account had to be kept for the social side of FU3A and this, too, had been audited and was available to view. Expenditure consisted of Capitation Fees – a charge of £3.50 per person – and amounted to £1,753.50, over thirty-seven members' subscriptions. Equipment expenses amounted to £692.12 and comprised a new Laptop and a PA system; Printing and Stationery totalled £1,050.73 and covered things such as paper, envelopes, printer ink and the cost of printing the Brochures: Sundry items consisted of things like refreshments e.g. for today, replacing items for the Bridge classes and the telephone we need for FU3A: Accommodation costs rose by nearly £2,500 but we are constantly reviewing this and seeking to make savings wherever possible. At the end of the year our reserves stood at £29,313.35 ensuring a healthy Balance Sheet.

Adoption of Annual Accounts: Ron Ellis proposed that the Accounts be adopted and Alan Bass seconded the motion. It was agreed by all present.

Election of the Committee: Betty Ford and Derek Holden were standing down from the Committee and were thanked for the enormous amount of work put in for FU3A. Jean Stone and Clare Clayton were standing as members thus replacing those standing down. The Election of these two members and the rest of the existing Committee members was proposed by Olwen Reeve and seconded by Jim Cooke and agreed unanimously by all members present.

Election of Honorary Accounts Examiner: As previously mentioned by the Chairman, Ian Burr was nominated as the Accounts Examiner. This was proposed by Edward Whittingham, seconded by Rodger Pettengell and agreed unanimously by all members present.

Any Other Business: There being no Other Business, the Annual General Meeting closed at 3.25pm.

The next meeting of the Committee is on **Friday 18th December 2015** in the Village Hall Noisy Room at **10am**.