

Minutes of the 2023 Pembury U3A AGM held on Tuesday 4 July 2023 in the Village Hall

1 The Chairman welcomed everyone.

Apologies for absence were received from:

Marion Pink, Sally Sturke, Jenny Izzard, Lily Dunk

2 The minutes of the 2022 AGM were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

3 Management Committee Reports

a) Chairman's Report 2023

In 2022 we were fairly new to Pembury and very new to this u3a but we were given a warm welcome by both and we were eager to become involved in village life in some way. A whole year has passed since I took on the post of Chair and what an eventful year it has been!

Last July, soon after the AGM, Graham and I were about to go to Italy for our Summer holiday, but suddenly he became very seriously ill with Shingles and so instead of basking by Lake Garda he was admitted to Pembury hospital. He was there for 15 days and remained quite ill for several months. As you can see, he's now much better!

In addition to me being new, several members of your Committee are new and we have definitely lived up to the Learn part of the u3a principle – Learn, Laugh, Live! Training for Committee members is offered by the Kent u3a Network and several of us of us have attended Zoom meetings in our homes and also Day courses . These courses are very useful and it's helpful to meet with others and to discuss u3a matters.

Members of the Committee work very hard in supporting this u3a and in building on to the firm foundations already laid by previous committees. We are all volunteers and I would like to give them a huge Thank You for all that they are doing on your behalf.

I've read through lots of reports from previous years and there have been as many as 71 Interest Groups in the past. The Pandemic caused a drop in both membership numbers and Interest Groups and so I'm really pleased that we now match pre-Pandemic numbers. We have 71 Interest Groups now and I'd like to publicly

recognise and thank the group co-ordinators/leaders for sharing their enthusiasm. Without them we would not have a u3a!

Our membership total is now 314! but there's always room for more! I would like to thank again those members who have stepped forward to share their interests – the Bird watchers Group is now functioning, our Christmas Lunch is safe and we have a lively group of ladies sharing the organisation of the October Quiz Night.

The u3a movement is dependent upon its members volunteering to do things, not necessarily on their own – people can work in pairs or groups. We are essentially a self help organisation.

One of the main principles of the u3a is to share our interests with others and thereby learn from and with others. If you have a particular interest in eg Cooking, Crotchet, Family History you can share this interest with two or three others and learn together. You don't have to be an expert, just interested!

It may come as a surprise that many people in the village still don't know who or what we are! There is no actual age restriction to joining a u3a. You just need to be semi-retired or wholly retired or just have some spare time. We did put posters around the village but they will need to be replaced when there is space to do so. We will have a gazebo at the Picnic in the Park and will be handing out information leaflets but the best way to publicise ourselves is by word of mouth. If you have any friends who may have expressed interest or curiosity about us, they would be welcome to come along as a guest to one or two of our monthly meetings.

September is Sign Up day ! This really is an opportunity to show what we do. It's wonderful that Tricia is now back to good health and is able to fully resume her role of Interest Group Co-ordinator. She has never really backed away, in fact she was always keen to discuss things on the phone when she was able to but now we are looking forward to our annual Thank you Lunch for Group CoOrdinators-(Leaders) One of my aims while Chair, is to visit as many Interest Groups as possible. So far I have managed to visit 3! Perhaps I need to be invited?

b) Membership Secretary Report 2023

My first year as Membership Secretary has been quite exciting. It is the first year that we, as Pembury u3a, renewed our memberships using the Beacon system and it all seems to have proceeded very smoothly. It is always a worry when you adopt a new system into any organisation and ask yourself - am I doing this right?

Well, having attended two u3a Zoom courses alongside branches from all over the country, and hearing of the various problems other branches have experienced, I can proudly say that we did get it right!

I am delighted to tell you that, with the return of post Covid confidence, we are well and truly on the up and our membership today stands at 317, a net increase of nearly 10% from this time last year.

New members have come from a mixture of those who have newly moved into the village, those who have come back to us post Covid, and some who have found themselves with more leisure time - either through retirement, semi-retirement, or just not worrying full time.

We have a surprising number of members who live outside the village boundaries, perhaps because they have heard from others how friendly we are.

For those interested in more statistics, 47% of members are from single households and 53% from joint member households. Furthermore, we are 60% female and 32% male - so we need more men to join. The other 8%, these are undeclared and so unknown.

We welcome all new members and want to increase our numbers even more. The best way to do this is by word of mouth, it's better than advertising, so please tell your friends and neighbours about the exciting opportunities and friendly reception we offer

c) Group Coordinator Report

There are currently 71 active groups, which is very good for our size of u3a.

We are always open to suggestions for new Groups. It depends on those prepared to step up to organise a group. Being run by member volunteers is how we keep our subscriptions so low.

New Groups for this year include: Birdwatching, Walking Netball, Introduction to mindfulness for 8 weeks, Military history, walking cricket, table tennis, Climate Change (which used to link up with Paddock Wood u3a), Circle dancing and Solos Together.

We are trying to be as flexible as possible with the way groups are run. Some groups have been running for many years, but it is always possible to run something for a few weeks, especially when following a published resource. Some groups, like Table Tennis just organise matches between themselves, making use of the free facilities in the park. It is still possible to create a tennis group if anyone is interested.

Use of the Beacon system has made it easier to keep Group details updated and send out emails in a GDPR compliant way. Well done to all those leaders who have embraced it. However, some groups now have second 'leader' who can manage the

Beacon administration for that group. Rick or I are always happy to help with practicalities of using Beacon.

There is now some sports equipment available for use by some of the newer Groups

Sign-up day will be 5th September We are asking groups to contribute to displays to show the variety of groups and activities on offer. Group leaders will be asking present members if they wish to continue.

We are trying to avoid having waiting lists as they can mean that new members find it hard to join a group. There are currently 11 Groups with a waiting list. If there is a practical reason for having to limit group numbers, it would be good to see if someone in existing group could start up a new group.

Again I would like to thank those who commit to lead groups.

d) Trips & Events Organiser

Since our last AGM many activities have been open to all members and most have been well supported.

Before Christmas 2022, 43 members enjoyed time away at Thorsebury Hall, Nottinghamshire for a Turkey & Tinsel break. It was so successful that within two days of advertising this year's Martini & Mistletoe at Warner's Hotel, Cricket St Thomas in Somerset, all places had gone. Thanks to Angela Cartwright, who managed to book more places and hire another coach, 73 will be enjoying November's trip.

Angela Cartwright and Valerie Marianna also organised a wonderful holiday away to Suances, Northern Spain in May, visiting Santander and Bilbao in particular, and 34 of us had a great time.

Valerie Marianni and Denise McGladdery organised a day trip to Brooklands Museum in Weybridge, where they could find out about the "pioneers of speed, flight and adventure at the birthplace of British motorsport, aviation and the home of Concord". 36 members travelled by coach and enjoyed a great day out.

The next trip is to Beaulieu and there are still places available.

Last year Valerie Marianni, Sylvia Russell and I decided to travel by coach when we arranged theatre trips, instead of going by train, which made it possible for more people to attend. 53 of us saw the Lion King at the

Lyceum Theatre, 57 went to Canterbury to see Fisherman's Friends and in June, 48 had a great time at the Aldrich theatre watching Tina the Musical.

All of us were on our feet jigging about and singing with 'Tina' at the end of the show. All the trips were a great success.

Coaches are very expensive to hire now so we rely on your support to ensure the coach is full for day trips and theatre trips in order to break even.

I'm looking forward to many more outings in the future and I hope you are as well.

4 Adoption of the Accounts for the year ended 31/03/23

The accounts have been accepted by the Management Committee. The Treasurer explained that the consolidated accounts will shortly be examined independently by Mr David Murray the Treasurer from Kings Hill u3a.

Approval and acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Trudy Donachie and seconded by Roger Gardner, and was agreed by the meeting.

5 Election of New Committee Members

The following were elected :

Treasurer (Business) Trudy Donachie

Treasurer (Activities). Graham Hall

6 Any Other Business

None

Presentation by KCC Trading Standards Officer

The Officer gave an interesting and informative talk about their work and advice on how to avoid common scams and exploitation by "door step" criminals. The talk was very well received and the Officer answered many questions from members and handed out useful advisory leaflets.

* *This talk was given prior to the meeting rather than afterwards due to time pressures on the Trading Standards officer.*

* *** At the conclusion of the formal meeting, members were able to watch a film showing highlights of the Spanish holiday.*