

**North London University of the Third Age**  
**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held via Zoom**  
**on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020 at 10.30am**

**Present:** 67 members, including:

Edmond Cohen – Chair  
Ann Dugdale – Vice Chair and Minutes Secretary  
Roy Seger – Treasurer  
Henrietta Cohen – Groups Organiser  
Michael Johns – Business Secretary  
Martin Goldman – Website and Zoom Organiser  
Ruth Silver – outgoing Membership Secretary  
Gill Caplin – incoming Membership Secretary  
Marion Fitzpatrick – Events Organiser

In addition, there were 20 members who provided proxy votes in advance of the meeting.

1. Edmond welcomed everyone to the meeting and referred to the paperwork sent out beforehand. He reminded everyone that they were muted and asked everyone to keep their video and audio turned off unless they were invited to speak, in order to make it easier for everyone to hear the proceedings clearly. He added that, if anyone wished to ask a question at any stage, they must use the Chat function to do so, ensure their name was shown and send it to all.

**2. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2019**

Ann said that to make things simpler and save time on-line the committee had acted as proposers and seconders of most of the main items. She then referred to the minutes of 2019 AGM that were sent out prior to the meeting, saying that there had been no requests for amendments but there was one correction. Under item 2 the minutes of the previous meeting had been typed as 2017 when this should have read 2018. She then asked for a vote on accepting the minutes of the 2019 AGM.

Proposed by: Michael Johns      Seconded by: Ruth Silver

**Results: 71 in favour      0 against      16 abstentions** (NB: these totals include 20 proxy votes, and 9 people present at the AGM who did not vote and are therefore counted as abstentions). Carried by majority vote.

**3. Chairman's report**

Edmond referred to his report sent out in advance and asked for any factual questions relating to the report. He said it was essential that any questions be kept brief and to the point via the Chat function, that Gill would read out the questions or summarise any duplicate questions and anyone invited to speak should unmute themselves and turn on their video whilst speaking.

Kathy Kyriakides asked if the meeting was quorate. Michael replied that the National Office guidance was that as we had postponed the earlier AGM date, due to Covid restrictions, we would be deemed quorate however many attended. Martin said that there were 67 members attending the Zoom meeting and Ann added that there had been 20 proxy votes received, taking the total voting membership at the meeting to 87, which represented 12% of our membership.

Edmond then explained that due to the serious and ongoing illness of Roy Seager, Michael would be presenting the Treasurer's report, although Roy was present and would try to answer any questions arising.

#### **4. Treasurer's report**

Michael summarised the main points of Roy's report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. He added that, due to Covid restrictions it had not yet been possible to get the 2019/20 Accounts audited by Brian Solomon but it was hoped this could be effected soon. He said that the issue of membership fees mentioned in the report had been overtaken by the proposal submitted by Phyllis Ellis and would be discussed under item 5.

Janet Leifer asked what the estimated outgoings were for 2020/2021. Michael replied that fixed costs could be estimated based on this year's figures but anything else, such as venue costs, were extremely difficult to forecast as no-one knew what the future held with regard to Covid restrictions, etc.

Robin Vickery asked about our reserves. Michael explained that sufficient funds had to be maintained to cover fixed costs if there was a period with no income and for a couple of years previously our reserves had dropped significantly, hence last year's increase in membership fees to address this. Although our finances were now quite comfortable, the future was very uncertain.

Dee Kushlick-Williams asked why database costs seemed to have doubled. Mike Christie took this question and explained that the costs offcharged from National Office to U3As for the Beacon membership system had risen from 50p per member to £1, plus at the time this occurred we had over 800 members so the cost should be less this year. However, there was a replacement to Beacon being planned and this might affect costs in the future.

Kathy Kyriakides asked why the membership year had been changed. Roy replied that this was partly due to the free term this Autumn but mainly because having the membership renewals over the Summer made it difficult to find someone free to do this during the holiday period so to facilitate the recruitment of a new Membership Secretary, the Committee had decided to make this a permanent change. Frank Kellsall said he opposed this change. Several people said they thought having three different years (academic, financial and membership) was confusing. Roy said that, once he was well enough to reassume his role as Treasurer, the financial year could easily be changed if necessary.

Ann said that before we got too embroiled in related issues a vote should be taken on the Accounts and the proposed re-election of Brian Solomon as Accounts Examiner.

#### **Proposal to accept the Accounts**

Proposed by Marion Fitzpatrick      Seconded by Ann Dugdale

**Results: 69 in favour      4 against      14 abstentions** (NB: includes 20 proxy votes, and 6 people present at the AGM who did not vote and are counted as abstentions). Carried by majority vote.

#### **Proposal to re-elect Brian Solomon as Accounts Examiner**

Proposed by Roy Seger      Seconded by Edmond Cohen

**Results: 72 in favour      1 against      14 abstentions** (NB: includes 20 proxy votes, and 7 people present at the AGM who did not vote and are counted as abstentions). Carried by majority vote.

## 5. Proposal to reduce the membership fees by 50%

Edmond asked Phyllis Ellis to speak about her proposal. She explained that she had been prompted to do this as she also belonged to Hampstead Garden Suburb U3A and they had reduced their fees by 50%. She was concerned that if we continued to charge £50 per member, we would lose a lot more members than we already had done when the fees were put up last year. Sheila Stacey confirmed that she agreed with Phyllis and supported this proposal wholeheartedly.

Edmond said that prior to receiving Phyllis's proposal the committee had already been considering reducing membership fees in the light of ongoing Covid restrictions and that the Committee supported this proposal on that basis but reserved the right to revisit it depending on future events or changes.

There ensued a lot of discussion about whether this was a good idea or not, whether there were alternatives and whether the £25 would cover the whole calendar year. Some members felt it would be unfair to increase fees part way through the year if circumstances changed. After some discussion Kathy Kiriakides made a request to amend the proposal made by Phyllis but this was denied as she had not previously formally submitted this request. Kathy said that she had been told she did not need to submit this in advance but none of the committee had been asked about this. It was confirmed by John Bent (LR Trustee) that the proposal as put could not be changed at this stage. It was therefore confirmed that the proposal was to cover membership fees from 1 January to 31 December 2021. Ann also confirmed that there would be an AGM in 2021 before the next membership year, at which any proposed changes for 2022 could be voted upon. She then asked for the vote on the proposal as put.

### **Resolution: to reduce membership fees to £25pa wef 1 January 2021**

Proposer: Phyllis Ellis

Seconder: Sheila Stacey

**Results: 53 in favour 18 against 16 abstentions** (NB: includes proxy votes, plus 8 people present at the AGM who did not vote and are counted as abstentions). Carried by majority vote.

## 6. Committee Elections

Ann referred to the summary of nominations and resolutions sent out and asked for votes to take place on these.

### **Marion Fitzpatrick**

Proposed by: Ruth Silver

Seconded by Henrietta Cohen

**Results: 67 in favour 0 against 20 abstentions** (includes 20 proxy votes and 9 who did not vote on the day, as above)

### **Gill Caplin**

Proposed by: Henrietta Cohen

Seconded by: Edmond Cohen

**Results: 70 in favour 0 against 17 abstentions** (includes 20 proxy votes and 8 who did not vote on the day, as above).

## 7. AOB

### **a) London Region Trustee**

Edmond introduced John Bent and congratulated him on his recent re-election. John said it was a difficult year with unclear messages from the government and

sometimes from National Office on what can and cannot be done. He said that London Region and his own U3A (Barnet) had benefited greatly from Zoom and he was glad to see we were using it to keep meetings and groups going too. He said that nationwide, U3A growth had slowed and was down about 4%. The Third Age Trust's 3-year plan was being reviewed to see what could still be done during this difficult time. All 18 head office staff were working from home. There were currently healthy reserves but it was inevitable that the movement would lose a lot of members. It was important, therefore, to concentrate on future use of systems, and how to raise the profile and recruit new members, whilst still providing support to existing members, issuing TAM and providing legal and other essential advice and training. He spoke about the new on-line U3A (TrustU3A) for people who had no local access or where nothing was happening and said that he thought Zoom had been a lifesaver for the U3A. He said that LR network now had the super Pro-Zoom and were sharing that with other London U3As via a diary system. As a result of all this he believed that the U3A movement was in a good position to move forward after restrictions were eased and there were likely to be more retired people around. In response to a question from Keith Richard and his concerns about the increasing use of on-line access, John confirmed that there was no lower age limit on joining a U3A. He emphasised that he considered on-line access was beneficial, especially for people who were less able to get about, and for larger meetings where the on-line costs were much less than travelling to larger meetings.

**b) Any other questions**

Keith Richard expressed concern about the confusion over the proposal by Phyllis Ellis. He said he had not received a copy of that in advance and had found the conflict between that and the mention of £50 fees in Roy's report and apparent changes of mind about what the proposal was to be voted on so confusing he had abstained. Ann replied that the proposal had formed part of the paperwork sent out in advance and posted to those without email and was also on the website. Roy said that Edmond had explained why the Committee had changed their mind about the level of fees to be charged and supported Phyllis's proposal instead. Edmond apologised if the discussion had been confusing but he felt that it had been clarified immediately prior to the vote.

As there were no other questions Edmond declared the meeting closed.