



North London U3A

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Monday 9 October 2023 at St Margaret's Church, Finchley

Present: 75 members, including from the committee:

Michael Johns – Chair

Edmond Cohen – Vice Chair

Roy Seger – Treasurer

Ruth Silver – Business and Acting Membership Secretary

Henrietta Cohen – Groups Organiser

Michael Lewin – Publicity

Susan Watt – Website Editor

plus 11 proxy votes.

29 apologies for absence received, including Marion Fitzpatrick, Events Organiser.

1. Talk

Stuart Maugham gave a talk about the musical *Showboat*, illustrated by slides and music.

2. Minutes of previous AGM held on 10 October 2022

The minutes were circulated to members prior to the meeting and no requests for amendments were received. A resolution to accept the minutes was put to the vote.

Proposer: Edmond Cohen

Seconder: Michael Johns

Result: the motion was carried by a show of hands with no votes against and with 4 abstentions.

3. Chair's report

The Chair's report was circulated to members prior to the meeting. Michael Johns invited questions but none were received.

4. Treasurer's report

The Treasurer's report and the accounts were circulated to members prior to the meeting. Roy Seger invited questions. David Lewis asked whether there was a budget for the organisation. Roy confirmed that there was and said that, because it was planned to change the financial year to a calendar year basis, there was one budget up to 31 December 2023 and there would be a new one for the calendar year 2024.

A resolution to note the accounts was put to the vote.

Proposer: Roy Seger Second: Michael Johns

Result: the motion was carried by a show of hands with no votes against and with 7 abstentions.

Roy Seger explained that although NLU3A's turnover had been below the amount at which accounts examination was required by the Charity Commission, Brian Solomons had conducted an examination and, with the increase in membership, an examination was likely to be required in future years.

A resolution to elect Brian Solomons as Accounts Examiner was put to the vote.

Proposer: Roy Seger Second: Michael Johns

Result: the motion was carried by a show of hands with no votes against and with 3 abstentions.

5. Elections of committee members and officers for 2023-24

Michael Johns explained that all the existing committee members and officers had agreed to stand again for election and that no new nominations had been received. He invited the meeting to save time by taking a single vote on all the committee members and officers and this was accepted by the meeting with no disagreement.

A resolution to elect the following members as committee members and officers was put to the vote.

Committee members

Michael Johns

Proposer: Edmond Cohen Second: Ruth Silver

Edmond Cohen

Proposer: Michael Johns Second: Ruth Silver

Roy Seger

Proposer: Michael Johns Second: Ruth Silver

Ruth Silver

Proposer: Michael Johns Second: Edmond Cohen

Henrietta Cohen

Proposer: Michael Johns Second: Ruth Silver

Marion Fitzpatrick

Proposer: Michael Johns Second: Ruth Silver

Michael Lewin

Proposer: Michael Johns Second: Ruth Silver

Susan Watt

Proposer: Michael Johns	Seconded: Ruth Silver
<u>Officers</u>	
Chair – Michael Johns	
Proposer: Edmond Cohen	Seconded: Ruth Silver
Vice Chair – Edmond Cohen	
Proposer: Michael Johns	Seconded: Ruth Silver
Treasurer – Roy Seger	
Proposer: Michael Johns	Seconded: Ruth Silver
Business Secretary – Ruth Silver	
Proposer: Michael Johns	Seconded: Edmond Cohen

Result: All the above committee members and officers were elected by a show of hands with no votes against and 2 abstentions.

6. **Proposal that membership fees for 2024 should be £40**

Roy Seger explained that the proposed fee of £40 was in line with many of the other u3as in the area and was affordable given the level of reserves. David Lewis asked whether it was high enough to break even. Roy said that there was likely to be a small continuing deficit, but it was hoped this would be eliminated over the next year or two by the committee's actions to restrict spending on venues. It was consistent with the agreed reserves policy outlined in his report of keeping reserves of two thirds of subscription income. Frank Fisher asked whether the reserves were shown on the accounts and whether the policy was to keep these to two thirds of turnover. Roy confirmed that the amount at the bank was the NLU3A's reserves, though when he was calculating the level against the reserves policy, he would exclude any subscriptions received for the next financial year. The target was two thirds of subscription income, not two thirds of total turnover. Some members asked if the subscription could afford to pay for better roving microphones. Roy explained that the microphones were part of the overall contract for use of the premises, but the committee would investigate whether any improvement was possible. One member suggested the problem was not any technical deficiency in the microphones but that speakers were not holding them correctly.

A resolution to set membership fees for 2024 at £40 was put to the vote.

Result: the motion was passed by a show of hands with 2 votes against and 4 abstentions.

7. **Proposal about honorary membership**

Mary Callaghan proposed the following resolution:

NLU3A does not have any rule in the NLU3A constitution on Lifetime membership/Honorary Membership. Many u3as offer honorary memberships to individuals who have given exceptional service to the U3A. Even for example Barnsley u3a's new honorary member Dickie Bird.

Therefore we propose that NLU3A add to its constitution the provision to bestow honorary/Lifetime membership to individuals who have given exceptional contribution of service to the NLU3A.

Nominations for Honorary Membership, supported by at least two members, may be submitted to the Committee for its consideration (Constitution 4.3). In addition to the proposer the nomination must be supported by two other members. Nominations may only be submitted or supported by current members or Honorary Members of North London U3A.

Mary said that many u3as had provision in their constitutions for giving honorary membership to members who had contributed exemplary service and she thought NLU3A should follow their example as a way of honouring members with particularly notable achievements. She proposed that any two members could make a nomination to the committee to consider. Miriam David, seconding the motion, agreed with Mary and clarified that only a small number of people should be honoured in this way, at the decision of the committee. Michael Johns, speaking on behalf of the committee, said that they agreed that there should be provision for honorary members, that any members could nominate and that the decision was for the committee. However, there was no need for an amendment to the constitution to achieve this. The committee and its predecessors had always interpreted the constitution as permitting honorary members and there were indeed four at the moment – Keith Richards, Patricia Isaacs, Mike Christie and Ruth Silver. Article 31 of the constitution gave powers to the committee to write rules about membership, which could be changed or removed at a general meeting of members and he suggested the position should be clarified by introducing rules on the lines proposed. A change in the constitution itself was unnecessary and would involve bureaucracy in seeking approval from the Third Age Trust and the Charity Commission. In response to a question, he promised to share the draft text of the rule with members and consider any comments before introducing it. On the strength of this assurance, Mary Callaghan withdrew the resolution.

8. Proposal about membership year

Jeff Duckett proposed the following resolution:

NLU3A 'academic year' starts in September each year. Before classes resume NLU3A holds an open day to seek new members and to advertise its courses to both new and existing members. Since the Covid19 pandemic impacted on NLU3A finances, with closure of rented accommodation, acquisition of Zoom licences and fewer courses, the committee agreed to change the membership year to start in January. This has created an administrative problem which needs to be rectified. The membership year and the academic year are no longer the same.

We propose that the academic year and membership year run in parallel again. This should take effect from 1st September 2024 instead of January 2024.

Jeff said that the membership year had been changed because of the pandemic, but it now meant that members who joined in the autumn had to pay a full year's subscription for only a term's benefit. He thought this was unfair and the membership year should be aligned with the academic year. Michael Johns said that this was not accurate as members who joined in the second half of the calendar year paid a reduced subscription of £24. [Note – there is also provision for someone who joins in the last two months of the year to pay a single year's subscription through to the end of the succeeding year.] Miriam David, seconding the motion said it was still unfair, because someone who joined at the main recruitment event of the Open Morning would have to pay the part year fee plus a whole year's subscription to get a single year in NLU3A. Michael Johns, speaking on behalf of the committee, accepted that the change of date was introduced when low expenditure because of Covid meant that a free period of membership was appropriate. However, the renewal period involved a lot of work for the membership secretary, which was easier to cope with in the winter than in the summer. No-one had come forward to share the work and it would be impracticable to go back to a September year end. Ruth Silver explained that if she had to administer renewals in the summer and early autumn, she would be unable to take any time off for herself at the peak holiday season. Henrietta Cohen said that the Open Morning was far from being the only recruitment occasion and new members joined all through the year. Michael Johns said the concept of an academic year had little meaning to most interest groups and it would be extremely rare for a member to join just for a year from September to September. Miriam David said that venues were booked from September to September; Henrietta explained that bookings were actually term by term, even if for simplicity she asked group co-ordinators their plans for a longer period.

The resolution was put to the vote. It was rejected by a show of hands with 9 votes in support and a small number of abstentions.

9. Any other business

Michael Johns invited questions and comments on NLU3A's activities. Elsa Ramsey said that the catering team was desperately short of volunteers and we would not be able to continue with events involving catering unless more members came forward ready to do some cooking. Michael Johns reinforced her plea and said that a request had been included in the latest newsletter.

David Jones thanked the committee for all that they did for members.

There being no other questions or comments, Michael Johns thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting at 12.45pm.