

Draft Minutes of Annual General Meeting U3A in Scotland June 20th 2011

1. Welcome

Chairman Graham Clark welcomed members to the AGM and introduced the Committee Executive and Morag our NEC Representative.

Members attending.

Voting Delegates

Aberdeen, Morag Tamisari; Biggar and District, Jennifer Whyte; Cupar, Joyce Kennedy; Dumfries, Ted Murray; Dundee, Pat Garland; East Berwickshire, Louise Goldsack; East Kilbride, Tom Berney; East Lothian, Anne Etherington; Edinburgh, Dianne Fraser; Fife, Jill Marshall; Forth Valley, Doreen Robinson; Four Border abbeys, Janice Still; Grantown-on-Spey, Joan Steele; Hamilton & District, John Graham; Inverness & Black Isle, Graham Clark; Lochaber, Norma Callison; Oban, Joan Kemp; Penicuik & District, Margot Daru-Elliott; Perth, Ed Link; The Three Brethren, Brian Pudner; Tweeddale, Dorothy Douglas.

Observers

East Lothian, Yvonne Jenkins; Edinburgh, Meryl Kempster; Forth Valley, Deirdre Sprunt; Four Border Abbeys, Lizi Irvine; Biggar and District, Jo Ferris; Fife, Anne Heddle; Oban, Peter Kemp; Grantown-on-Spey, Hazel Blake; Cupar, Margaret Graham; East Berwickshire, Ian Goldsack; Penicuik & District, Fiona Begg; Lochaber, Julia Moore; Dundee, Morag Cargill; Dumfries, Eileen Toolis; East Kilbride, Jim Stewart.

Invited Guests

Education Development Contacts (EDCs) Linda Clark, Robina Hutton, Joyce Kennedy (also attending as Cupar Delegate), NEC Trustee and Representative for Scotland Morag Tamisari (also attending as Aberdeen delegate), Francis Beckett U3A News Editor invited speaker.

2. Apologies

Pitlochry; Shetland; Isle of Coll; West Galloway; Stewartry; Nairn; Orkney; Kintyre; Wigtownshire; East Renfrewshire; West Lothian; Skye; Arbroath; Forfar; Lenzie; Mid Argyll.

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings

Minutes of the last AGM held on 12th June 2010.

Acceptance proposed by Dorothy Douglas and seconded by Doreen Robinson. These minutes were approved unanimously.

Minutes of the last U3A in Scotland Committee Meeting held in Edinburgh on February 21st 2011.

Acceptance proposed by Jill Marshall and seconded by Anne Etherington. These minutes were approved unanimously.

4. Reports from –

Chair – Graham Clark Inverness and U3A

Report attached as Appendix 1.

Scottish Regional TAT Trustee Morag Tamisari Aberdeen U3A

Report TBA attached as Appendix 2.

The following comments were made and questions asked.

Meryl Kempster noted the following for information to other U3As. In an effort to achieve efficient working a stipulation was made that members wishing to stand for the Committee should be computer literate. A question was received over the legality of such a potentially discriminatory proviso under the new Equalities Act. On consulting legal advice it was noted that such a restriction was not unreasonable under the Equalities Act. However assistance should be offered to people who may not be able to use a computer through some disability. Meryl asked Morag if Bromley would provide advice on other areas of the Equalities Act that may impact U3As. See the following link for more information on the Equalities Act. http://www.equalities.gov.uk/pdf/401727_EDF_Disability_acc.pdf

Morag confirmed that she would request this information from Bromley. Morag also noted that the TAT is going to produce model constitutions for Scotland, both for charities and non-charities as TAT wished to ensure that all U3As have Constitutions fit for purpose.

Peter Kemp welcomed Morag's statement that the TAT was going to produce model constitutions to try and regularise constitutions across the whole of the UK U3A movement. However he wishes to ask that three points were considered by the TAT and appropriate action taken.

First. Can the TAT advise on whether a U3A qualifies as a charity under Scottish Law and guidance on whether U3As should apply for charitable status if they do qualify? (Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) 2005 Act)

Second. Should U3As already reconsidering their constitutions wait for the new model constitutions. That is when will they be available?

Third. The Oban constitution is based on the model constitution provided by Bromley which contains a clause that says the constitution cannot be altered but yet it appears not to be fit for purpose under Scottish Law. Thus if Bromley are producing new model constitutions can they please ensure that competent Scottish lawyers are consulted?

Ian Goldsack echoed the point about consulting competent Scottish lawyers. He also observed that Office of the Scottish Charity Regulators (OSCR) is very helpful.

Morag confirmed that she would ensure that the TAT took these points on board.

Joan Kemp asked what did the TAT spend the capitation on?

In the discussion that followed it was observed that there are a number of services to members such as the Resource Centre, insurance and a 24 by 7 legal Help Line. The National Office also employ a number of administrative staff necessary for a large and growing network of U3As. As Morag pointed out Regional bodies are also being assisted in various activities through direct funding. (Note U3A members are urged to visit the national

website www.u3a.org.uk. where they will be asked to register to gain full access to the site and details of the various services available.)

Graham brought the discussion to an end in the interests of the business that had to be completed. He also thanked Morag for all her hard work in taking on what was an increasingly difficult and challenging but necessary role.

5. Finance – Report from the Treasurer

Graham apologised on behalf of the Executive for not circulating a copy of the accounts beforehand. Copies were subsequently circulated to the members present.

Dianne summarised the position and the accounts had been inspected and signed off by an independent examiner. Dianne noted that given the healthy closing balance and the fact that the TAT now funded certain activities in Scotland the Executive are proposing to reduce the regional capitation from 15p to 10p.

Dorothy Douglas asked when the reduction would take place from. **From 1st April 2012**

Robina Hutton asked if all U3As in Scotland paid the regional capitation. Dianne replied that they did.

Ted Murray asked when the accounting period ended. **1st April to 31st March**

After circulating copies of the accounts Graham asked for the meeting to adopt them.

Pat Garland proposed adoption, seconded by Louise Goldsack. The accounts were adopted unanimously together with the proposed reduction in the local capitation.

6. Appointment of Vice Chair

There was only one nomination for the post of Vice Chair as a member of the Executive.

Tom Berney East Kilbride nominated by Graham Clark and seconded by Ed Link. The meeting unanimously approved the appointment of Tom.

7. Report on 2011 Study Days

Natural History Study Day – Fiona Begg

Fiona reported that the event had gone ahead although in a revised smaller form. 14 people attended. Evaluation forms show that the members who attended had a very enjoyable day. The event did return a small loss of £35 but the event would be repeated next year starting at a later time of 11:00. Though the Zoological Society had much publicised problems this was nothing to do with the Educational Department who were very supportive.

Joyce Kennedy commented that it had been an excellent day and felt sorry for the people who had not gone.

Philosophy Study Day – Ed Link

41 people attended the Study Day in Perth on 15th June to consider the life and works of David Hume on the 300th anniversary of his birth. A small charge of £5 per head to cover accommodation and coffee and biscuits. It is anticipated that a small surplus will be returned to the U3A in Scotland once the costs and expenses have been covered. Some

lively discussions were had and many people commented afterwards that had enjoyed the event. Many requested that a similar day was held next year.

The lesson learned from organising such events is that it is crucial to get the accommodation sized to the expected numbers. Booking ahead is necessary and hence an early cut off may be necessary although invariably there are a few late bookers. Approval from U3A in Scotland is essential beforehand if it is to underwrite any cost exposure.

Graham repeated the call for people to come forward with ideas for Study Days, which may include all aspects of running U3As.

8. Any Other Competent Business

Fiona Begg asked if there was any guidance on how much money a U3A should keep in reserves. Morag replied that advice to Treasurers was that reserves should not be less than six months expenses and that it was prudent to hold reserves approximately equal to one year's worth of expenses.

Morag took the opportunity to recommend the series of booklets produced by the TAT on all aspects of running a successful U3A. Anyone wishing copies should either contact Morag or the National Office.

Linda Clark, Chair of Virtual U3A brought the organisation to everybody's attention. This organisation now has an international membership and is particularly useful for people who are isolated or housebound.

Graham thanked everyone who came for their contribution. Before he closed to meeting he welcomed Francis Beckett our meeting. Francis is the editor of U3A News and a journalist and author in his own right. Francis is a Guest Speaker who will talk to us after lunch.

Close of Committee Meeting at Approximately 12:30

Ed Link
Secretary, U3A in Scotland

Graham Clark
Chair, U3A in Scotland.

Appendix 1 Chair's Report

A new U3A in Scotland executive was elected at the AGM held in Edinburgh in June 2010. They are:

Chairman	Graham Clark (Inverness & Black Isle)
Vice-Chair	Vacant
Secretary	Edward Link (Perth)
Treasurer	Dianne Fraser (Edinburgh).

Also, a new Scottish Trustee (Morag Tamisari, Aberdeen) was appointed at the AGM of the Third Age Trust (TAT) in September 2010. Morag also attends the U3A in Scotland executive.

Amongst their other responsibilities as members of the National Executive Committee, TAT Trustees are responsible for the development of new U3As in their regions and for 'co-ordinating' the activities of appointed Educational Development Contacts (EDC), sometimes now called 'Regional Volunteers'. We now have three EDCs in Scotland: Linda Clark (Inverness & Black Isle) covering the Highlands & Islands; and Robina Hutton (Tweeddale) and Joyce Kennedy (Cupar) covering the Central Belt and South. Morag also works with Carole Millin, the Education Development Officer (EDO) for 'The North' (of the UK). The team are working with several 'putative' new U3As including Caithness, Moray Coast and Lanark. We also have renewed interest from the Western Isles – so during 2012 the number of U3As based in Scotland should continue the steady increase that we have seen in recent years (from 20 in 2008 to 37 in 2011).

Many of you will be aware that at our U3A in Scotland meeting held in February 2011 (postponed from November 2010 due to snow) a new 'development plan' for U3A in Scotland was approved. A short summary of this plan was published in the Spring 2011 issue of U3A News (page 19) - it prioritises the following initiatives and activities:

- Development of new U3As [in association with the Scottish Trustee]
- Encouragement of Study Days
- Encouragement of Shared Learning Projects
- Establishment of 'Neighbourhood Groupings'
- Establishment of a biennial Scottish Conference
- Promotion of U3A in the Scottish media and Scottish Parliament.

It is also now a responsibility of Trustees, under the new TAT governance structures, to prepare a budget to help the achievement of regional development plans. Morag has now negotiated this with TAT and will be informing us of the outcome in her Report.

In pursuit of our plan, I am delighted that various events and activities have already taken place during 2011. These have included:

- Two highly successful study days - 'The Living Forest - a celebration of the Year of the Forest' - at Edinburgh Zoo on 8 June 2011; and 'The Life and Works of David Hume, world famous Scottish Philosopher and Historian - a celebration of his 300th anniversary' - in Perth on 15 June 2011. I wish to place on record our sincere thanks to Fiona Begg (Penicuik) and Ed Link (Perth) for organising and delivering these events
- A new 'South of Scotland' Neighbourhood Group meeting organised by Eileen Woodman and Frances Hassell (Dumfries) was held in May 2011 at Gatehouse of Fleet
- Two anniversary celebrations – the 20th birthday of U3A Edinburgh celebrated with three afternoon tea parties in the City Chambers on 6, 9 and 14 June 2011; and the 10th birthday of U3A Aberdeen celebrated with a lunch in the Caledonian Thistle Hotel on 17 June 2011. All were splendid events and I can personally vouch for the quality of the birthday cakes!

We have also agreed to provide assistance to Forth Valley U3A in putting on an 'Older-age Health & Exercise' study day in the autumn of 2012. Other U3As interested in hosting neighbourhood and/or study days can be assured that U3A in Scotland has funds that can be used to help with initial set-up costs.

It is our intention that our next AGM (probably in June 2012) will be in association with a second 'All-Scotland' conference, and I am delighted that Dorothy Douglas (Tweeddale) has come forward with a proposal on behalf of her U3A to host this event. Although details

have not yet been worked out, I am sure this will be a special event to look out for next year.

I am also delighted that our 'call' for assistance to take over the management of our web-site was answered by a number of willing volunteers and that Pauline Ross (Nairn) has taken up the post of 'web-master'. She has already undertaken an 'overhaul' of the site, given it a fresh look and included several new features. Please use it to advertise your events.

I am not aware of any Shared Learning Projects (SLP) currently in progress in Scotland. A new SLP 'start-up' leaflet is about to be released and will be circulated as soon as it is available, probably in September 2011. There is also to be a feature in the autumn edition of Sources. I have taken on the role of SLP 'Co-ordinator' in Scotland and, therefore, am keen to get some projects started in Scotland. I hope that these initiatives might inspire some interest in undertaking research projects with other organisations (e.g. libraries, museums, societies). Scottish U3As considering setting up a project and wishing assistance or advice, can contact me – e.g. I know that some U3As in Northumberland have teamed up with various historical societies to undertake genealogical research for the 500th anniversary the Battle of Flodden in 2013. Any there any Scottish U3A Family History Groups interested in joining?

A number of U3As are Scottish Charities and some have been concerned about the wording of their constitutions in the light of the activities of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). In particular, it has been questioned whether U3As that are registered as charities truly are charitable organisations with regard to their social objectives. Various complex issues have also been raised concerning the affiliation requirements of TAT, which is a 'charitable organisation' adhering to (English) charitable principles. In trying to resolve the issues, the TAT National Office has now agreed to produce model constitutions for U3As in Scotland, both for those that are charities and those that are not. As soon as we get some clarity, we will issue advice to U3As in Scotland. In the meantime may I thank those members who have brought these matters to light. I hope we will be able to resolve them to everyone's satisfaction in due course.

Finally, please note that the National Conference and TAT AGM is being held on 17-19 September 2011 at the East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham University. Information Packs and Registration Forms are available via the U3A web-site. I look forward to seeing several of you there.

Graham Clark

Chairman, U3A in Scotland

June 2011

Appendix 2 Regional Representative's Report

Regional Trustee Report to U3A in Scotland AGM 20 June 2011

Since our last meeting a large part of my time has been spent in London on training days for Trustees in light of considerable changes and modifications to Regional procedures and governance agreed at recent meetings of the Development Sub Committee and the National Executive Committee.

These changes for our purposes refer mainly to the functioning of the Regional Team for which the Trustee has overall responsibility and accountability to The Third Age Trust (TAT), since our development as a “Region” should be almost totally funded by TAT, compliant with the aims and objectives of the U3A movement, according to conditions agreed at National Executive Committee (NEC).

One of the most important tasks for which training was essential was the formulation of a budget for Scotland in collaboration with the U3A in Scotland Executive Committee by 31 March 2011. The budgets were approved in May 2011.

Trustees are also tasked with ensuring that from the outset all U3As are familiar with and advised properly on all aspects of U3A, obligations, requirements, financial provisions and so on. All Trustees have undergone training in this too. The major change concerns the employment of Education and Development Officers (EDOs) which by choice some Regions will no longer have. On Scotland’s behalf I asked for this support in the absence of sufficient volunteer helpers, called Education and Development Contacts, to cover our geographical area. We will be sharing an EDO, Carole Millin, with English Regions. Planning meetings will now take place firstly with Carole, then with our EDCs Linda Clark, Robina Hutton and, we hope, Joyce Kennedy whom we welcome on board ,along the lines already mapped out with the Executive Committee.

Our main focus will be the development of new U3As where interest has already been shown in setting one up: Glasgow, Lanark, Moray Coast, Caithness/Thurso, the Uists and possibly Laurencekirk all of which need following up. Instead of one person doing everything as Robina did, we are to share the workload to the best advantage. The team would work with local U3As where possible, with, we would hope, a local volunteer in charge.

The education arm will not be neglected; we hope to have many successful Study Days in different parts of Scotland and would welcome suggestions and volunteers to carry this forward. We have just had a very successful Philosophy Day which I attended and one based in Edinburgh Zoo which has had good reports. Study Days can take many forms according to what the aims are and we would be delighted to support them through the team. Again we need you to give ideas and suggestions about what you would like to see rather than our “imposing” what we would like to happen and courting failure.

Opportunities for meeting up as U3As, sharing and learning from each other, is another aspect I believe worth fostering and promoting. Not everyone agrees of course. We have for example had the chance this year to share anniversaries: Edinburgh with 25 years, Inverness and Aberdeen with 10 and Perth with 25. Well worth commemorating. There have been some informal Neighbourhood Groups meeting despite the difficulties of distance and travel. I hope we can build on these opportunities. There is a buzz when U3As meet together.

Once we establish this different way of working I would hope to be able to help in any way possible with any aspect of U3A and see at first hand how all the U3As go about their business.

Morag Tamisari

Third Age Trust NEC Member and Trustee