

## Minutes U3A in Scotland Feb 21<sup>st</sup> 2011

### 1. Welcome

The Chair, Graham Clark (Inverness and Black Isle) welcomed the following members to the meeting and introduced the Committee Officers, Secretary Ed Link (Perth) and Treasurer Dianne Fraser (Edinburgh) and also the NEC representative for Scotland and TAT Trustee Morag Tamisari (Aberdeen) and guest speaker Mike Long, National Education and Development Officer for the U3A.

#### Members attending.

Brian Pudner, Three Brethren, Treasurer; Andrew Brown, Three Brethren, Committee; Helma Purves, Forfar, Committee; Mary Pickstone, Forfar, Secretary; Julia Moore, Lochaber, Treasurer; Janice Still, Four Border Abbeys, Secretary; David Dawson, Four Border Abbeys, Chair; Fiona Begg, Penicuik and District, Committee; Jean Murray, Dundee, Member; Jean Hannan, Dundee, Chair; Henk Yserman, Forth Valley, Chair; Jill Marshall, Fife, Delegate; Ken Stirling, East Lothian, Chair; Edward Link, Perth, Delegate (Sec U3A in Scotland); Bob Payne, West Lothian, Committee; Dorothy Douglas, Tweeddale, Chair; Robina Hutton, Tweeddale, EDC; Joyce Kennedy, Cupar, Delegate; Doreen Robinson, Forth Valley, Delegate; David Felgate, Dumfries, Committee; Frances Hassall, Dumfries, Secretary; Connie Payne, West Lothian, Delegate; Peter Kent, Grantown on Spey, Treasurer; Pat Kent, Grantown on Spey, Delegate; Barry Gratton, Pitlochry, Chair; Wilma Coleman, Perth, Chair; Ann Etherington, East Lothian, Delegate; Norma Callison, Lochaber, Chair; Tom Berney, East Kilbride, Secretary; Francis Hopper, Hamilton, Delegate; Graham Clark, Inverness & Black Isle, Delegate (Chair U3A in Scotland); Dianne Fraser, Edinburgh, Treasurer (Treasurer U3A in Scotland); Maria Chester, East Berwickshire, Chair; Louise Goldsack, East Berwickshire, Delegate; Ian Goldsack, East Berwickshire, EDC; Pat McConnachie, Aberdeen, Observer; Morag Tamisari, Aberdeen, Delegate (TAT Trustee); Mike Long, TAT National Educational Development Officer. Margot Daru-Elliot, Penicuik and District, Chair.

### 2. Apologies

Biggar and District, Isle of Coll, Nairn, Oban, Orkney, Shetland, Stewartry, Wigtownshire, Linda Clark (EDC)

### 3. Reports from –

#### Chair Graham Clark, Inverness and Black Isle U3A

Graham referred to his report circulated prior to the postponed November meeting. He briefly outlined the priorities proposed for The U3A in Scotland activities. These are the organisation and support of an All Scotland Conference in 2012 for which he asked for a U3A to volunteer as host; the support for Study Days of which at least three a year are hoped for (there are currently two being offered, see below), support for U3As engaging in Shared Learning Projects SLP (Graham is the coordinator for Scotland) and to encourage U3As to work with their neighbours to form Neighbourhood Groups.

On SLPs Jill Marshall (Fife) mentioned the National Film Theatre at Silverburn Park Arts for Older people project. Dorothy Douglas (Tweeddale) mentioned a Gardening Project. Dianne

Fraser (Edinburgh) mentioned a possible project with the National Library for Scotland which had currently stalled due to lack of funding.

Henk Yserman (Forth Valley) spoke of attending a meeting of the Scottish Senior Alliance in Perth and asked if the U3A in Scotland ought to be represented at such meetings. Wilma Coleman (Perth) reported that she had also attended the meeting. Graham reported that he and Morag had had some meetings with bodies representing older people in Scotland but there was no planned programme. Ed pointed out that such national representation was not a specific part of the brief of the U3A in Scotland as understood in the current Constitution and if such a change was required it would have to be agreed by the full Committee at some future date. It is normal for individual U3As to represent their members interest directly as determined by their own U3A policy.

Ken Stirling (East Lothian) commented that as Education was a Devolved responsibility and asked if devolution from the UK national U3A movement had ever been considered. Graham responded that no such consideration had ever been given. Dianne pointed out that significant benefits were obtained by being an integral part of the wider U3A movement and the U3A in Scotland did not have the resources or infrastructure to match these, nor would ever likely to have.

**The meeting was asked to support the programme and priorities laid out in Graham's report and this was agreed unanimously.**

Treasurer, Dianne Fraser - Edinburgh U3A

Dianne reported that the balance at the end of January stood at £3,303.91. She reminded the meeting that the capitation payable to the U3A in Scotland is 15p per member.

Secretary, Edward Link -Perth U3A

Ed notified the meeting that U3A in Scotland now had a new Webmaster, Pauline Ross from Nairn and appealed for members to make sure that their own websites were up to date. He asked that requests for changes should be sent via him as Secretary so that the Webmaster is not overwhelmed by individual requests. A vote of thanks was expressed for the work undertaken by Jeffrey Screeton from Perth for his work as Webmaster in the past.

A request was also made to notify Ed of all changes to U3A officers and their contact details as soon as possible after changes have been made.

Scottish Regional TAT Trustee, Morag Tamisari - Aberdeen U3A

A written report was circulated prior to the meeting. Morag outline her role as representative of Scotland on the NEC and as Trustee of the Third Age Trust. (Scotland is one of 12 Regions as defined by the Third Age Trust governance structure.) One of the new roles of the Regional representative is to work with the Regional Committee and to put forward a budget proposal for funding direct from the Third Age Trust to support approved activities in the Region. Morag is also responsible for recruiting Education Development Contacts (EDCs) who will assist in developing new U3As. We currently only have two EDCs Linda Clark and Robina Hutton. Anyone who would like to find out more about what an EDC does should contact Morag. Morag welcomes contacts from U3As for help in any way including starting up Neighbourhood Groups.

Tom Berney (East Kilbride) requested that all correspondence also be sent to Secretaries not just to Chairpersons.

Frances Hassall (Dumfries) noted that they were keen to start a South of Scotland Neighbourhood Group and asked if any funding would be available to help pay for accommodation to help get them started. Graham confirmed that some financial assistance is possible for such things as accommodation. A formal request needs to be made to the Treasurer.

Ann Etherington (East Lothian) noted that she had been to a meeting in the Borders who were considering setting up a South of Scotland Neighbourhood Group. Ann asked if there was a Plan for such groups. Graham responded that there was no such plan proposed by the U3A in Scotland Executive and that whilst the formation of such groups is encouraged it is a matter for U3As themselves to organise them. Ed commented that where such groups were being proposed it would make sense for those involved to agree names to avoid confusion and the Executive could help in this.

Mary Pickstone (Forfar) reported that members from a neighbouring U3A had signed up for groups in Forfar which was blocking availability for their own members and asked what could be done about this.

Ed explained the U3A movement is a federation of individual and autonomous U3As. Members are only members of a local U3A with rights accordingly. There is no automatic right to attend any other U3A's group activity. It is possible to join more than one U3A and in such cases the capitation component (£3.50 for the UK U3A and 15p for The U3A in Scotland) is only required to be paid once. However local rules will apply on whether and where this is charged. It is a matter for each U3A to determine the attendance rules within their own U3A, subject of course to the overall openness policy of the national movement. However there are certain activities where a wider participation may be beneficial.

Jean Hannan (Dundee) asked if there was such a thing as an Associate Member. Ed replied that there is no universal Associate Member, but the policy on membership of their U3A is a matter for each U3A Committee as has just been outlined.

#### **4. Appointment of Acting Vice Chair**

Graham reported that Morag had been co-opted to the post of Acting Vice Chair in the absence of a nomination at the AGM. But in view of Morag taking on the role of TAT Trustee, she withdrew from the role as a possible conflict of interests. The post of Vice Chair is now open and Graham invited volunteers to act in this capacity. It is important that the Executive of The U3A in Scotland is up to strength and as representative as possible.

#### **5. Constitutional amendments**

A copy of the proposed changes and explanatory note was circulated to members for comment in November 2010. The only comment received was from the previous Chair, Ian Goldsack who supported the changes. Graham asked for comments from the floor. David Dawson (Forfar) asked where the results of a postal/email ballot would be published if one was necessary. Ed responded that results would be sent to each U3A and posted on the Website.

There being no other questions or comments Graham asked the meeting to support the changes in their entirety.

**The changes were accepted unanimously.**

Action : The revised constitution will be made available on the website and circulated to all members. EDL

## **6. Privacy Policy**

The proposed Privacy Policy was circulated to members for comment in November 2010. Ed outlined the policy and the reasons for it. Graham asked for comment from the floor. After a number of questions seeking clarification he asked for support for the policy as defined.

### **The changes were accepted unanimously**

Action: The policy to be promulgated and a directory of contacts constructed in line with this policy. EDL

## **7. U3A News and the 2010 All Scotland Conference**

Graham explained the reason for this item. That is that the All Scotland Conference report was submitted to U3A News and it had apparently been ignored. It transpired that this was not the case but a filing mistake had been made by the U3A News editor, who has apologised and the report was printed in a subsequent issue. This matter is therefore closed.

## **8. 2011 Study Days**

Natural History Study Day – Fiona Begg

Fiona summarised what would be available at Edinburgh Zoo on this Study Day on 8<sup>th</sup> June. An 'early bird' booking discount of £4 will be available. A proportion of places will be reserved for members of Science Groups.

Morag Tamisari (Aberdeen) asked why it was so expensive at £40. Fiona explained that it was in fact good value, as is £14 entrance to the Zoo and there will be talks by subject experts and visits led by keepers. This also includes a lunch voucher. Fiona maintains that by comparison with the charges for U3A Summer Schools this is excellent value.

Philosophy Study Day – Ed Link

Ed summarised the day being planned in Perth on 15<sup>th</sup> June to celebrate the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of David Hume the world renowned Scots philosopher and historian. The day is open to all members although there may be a limit on places subject to restrictions of the venue.

Graham made a plea for U3As and individuals to bring up more ideas for Study Days.

## **9. AOCB**

Margot Daru – Elliot (Penicuik and District) asked if the U3A was doing anything about the withdrawal of cheques, which is causing a lot of anxiety amongst members. Jill Marshall (Fife) asked if the U3A in Scotland should be lobbying on members behalf.

Dianne said that she believed cheques would not be withdrawn till 2018 and that she thought an acceptable replacement would be introduced. Mike Long confirmed that Third Age Trust (TAT) is lobbying on behalf of the U3A movement.

Morag reported the TAT would contribute financially towards a Regional Newsletter if one was thought necessary. Jill Marshall (Fife) thought such a thing might be useful but asked

who would be prepared to edit and distribute it. Wilma Coleman (Perth) wondered if it would be overkill when we already have local Newsletters and UK National publication. Tom Berney (East Kilbride) thought more use should be made of the U3A in Scotland Website.

Peter Kent (Grantown on Spey) asked what advice did the TAT provide for U3As that are not charities. Ed said that a model constitution is available for such circumstances. (A copy has been sent to Peter). Mike Long noted that even though U3As are not registered charities they are still covered by Charity Law as 'charity like organisations' and required to exercise proper governance.

Mary Pickstone (Forfar) asked if consideration has been given to dropping the term 'University' from the organisation's name. Mike Long noted that whilst this question is asked repeatedly it doesn't have universal support and it is part of our registered name and the consequences of trying to change the name would be difficult and is therefore not being considered.

Graham rounded up the meeting and thanked everybody for coming and making it a successful meeting. It was noted that whilst the venue was easy to get to and provided lunch on site the acoustics left much to be desired and an alternative venue would be sought for the next meeting.

#### **That being the end of The U3A in Scotland's General Meeting.**

Mike Long National Education and Development Officer – Guest Speaker, spoke on the benefits of being part of the larger U3A organisation and detailed the many services that were available to members.

After lunch Marianne Dee, University of Dundee spoke about the government funded research project known as Social Inclusion Through Digital Economy project (SiDE). Marianne is a Research Assistant and her duties include building up a pool of volunteers to provide input into the research programme.

14:30 Approximately the meeting closed.

Ed Link  
Secretary U3A in Scotland

Graham Clark  
Chair, U3A in Scotland