

## **MINUTES OF FRINTON, WALTON AND DISTRICT u3a**

### **FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 10am in the McGrigor Hall

#### **Attendance:**

57 votes received by post / handed in / electronically

51 members attended (12 of whom had already voted)

= total votes received 96 (quorum was 21.3) = 45% of membership

#### **1. Welcome and Apologies:**

Karen Woolley, Kim Shaw, Gillian Manning, Kay Carswell, Maggie Sandell, Mo Collins, Gillian Knight.

#### **2. Minutes and Matters Arising.**

None as this is our first AGM.

#### **3. Chair's Report:**

The past year has been exciting, busy and sometimes a little fraught, but it has been I think, more than worthwhile. After years of negotiation, the final stages of our separation from Tendring District u3a and the formation of a new independent u3a began in October. The Steering Committee, many of whom had been on board from the start, have worked closely with the Third Age Trust to ensure all requirements are in place and to do this we have focussed on 7 key elements.

Firstly, a formal Steering Committee was put into place which was mostly made up from those standing down from Tendring District u3a Committee. This meant that TD's committee was almost entirely new to the role so as well as getting our own u3a off the ground, we agreed to provide support to Tendring Committee members and help them find their feet and I am pleased to say we have done this and will continue to do so for as long as is necessary. For our own committee, we did have to appoint a Business Secretary and we were delighted when Kim Shaw volunteered for the role. She has very quickly become an invaluable member of our team.

Secondly, there has been a handover to Tendring District u3a of all available documentation and equipment. A few resources have been shared between the two u3as but Tendring wanted a complete archive of records in order to progress. Not all of these records were under the remit of the Steering Committee but nevertheless every effort to locate them has been made. Sadly, some have not been found and this has proved to be a sticking point for Tendring u3a.

Thirdly, as well as continuing to provide a programme of activities for our members, we had agreed to share and develop our groups, and social activities with Tendring District for the benefit of the members of both u3as. This we have done and will continue to do so under the exceptional leadership of Karen Riley our groups and social co-ordinator. Karen Woolley our Speaker Co-ordinator has also undertaken, for the short term, to arrange the speakers

for both u3a monthly meetings and I think you will agree she has arranged a wide range of excellent talks for us.

Fourthly, the Third Age Trust requires us to have a plethora of documentation in place. These documents have mostly been compiled and placed on the website. We continue to work on how we can ensure they are implemented appropriately and this will be a task for the coming year.

Fifthly, under the expertise of Mark Riley we have been developing our communication processes both through a brilliant new website and the development of the Third Age Trust Data program Beacon. We have also been providing our members with informative monthly bulletins produced by the versatile Phyllis Deer who also acts as my wing woman and she endeavours to ensure I make as few mistakes as possible. In addition, we have also started to make use of social media and local printed publications to make people aware of our presence.

Sixth, we held the required inaugural meeting to both launch our u3a and to encourage membership. We did this in March with unmitigated success and the Third Age Trust responded by providing us with a certificate of endorsement as being a u3a in its own right. This was followed up in June, with a very successful new members meeting capably led by Maddy Deason. As a result our membership continues to grow and I thank all those who worked hard to achieve this particularly Elaine Bloomfield our Membership Secretary who meticulously maintains our membership records and expedites membership renewals.

Lastly but not least, Finance. We received a grant from the Third Age Trust to fund the launch and this has been boosted by membership fees and social events. Our proficient treasurers, Kate Collins initially and more recently her successor Gillian Manning have worked hard to ensure that our finances are managed appropriately. However, the sharing of monies agreed by the membership of Tendring District u3a at their 2022 AGM has yet to be realised.

For the forthcoming year the Committee will seek to build on the solid foundations that have already been laid particularly in the areas of growth, member involvement, governance and publicity.

As well as the people already mentioned I would like to thank the Meet and Greet team who welcome people to our meetings with a smile and to Liz Wall for her tireless efforts in providing refreshments at meetings. I would also like to thank the members for their support particularly group leaders and group hosts who put in a lot of effort to keep us learning, laughing and living. Remember the u3a is about the sharing of skills and I want to emphasise sharing. All of us should be considering what our own particular skills are and how we can put them to good use for the benefit of our u3a. Thank you for listening.

Resolution to accept: Proposer: Val Duncan Seconder: Stephen Fry: carried.

4. **Resolution: To formally adopt the constitution of Frinton, Walton and District u3a as published:** Proposer: Roger Potter, Seconder: Ian Duncan: carried.

5. **Adoption of Reports:**  
**Membership Report**

We started enrolling Members to the u3a for Frinton Walton and District (FWDu3a) at the beginning of January 2023. FWDu3a now have 210 Current Members – an excellent result. We welcome those former members of TDu3a who have transferred to FWDu3a and we have enrolled many new members too. We have had two very successful meetings to which members of the public have been invited – the Inaugural Meeting in March and the New Members Meeting in July. Both of these were promoted through the local Gazette, Look magazine, posters in public venues and neighbourhood Facebook sites. Word of mouth is always highly valuable in attracting new members to our organisation so be sure to tell your friends and neighbours about us.

Elaine Bloomfield, Membership Secretary

**Groups Co-ordinator's Report**

We currently have 18 open groups covering a wide diversity of subjects and activities. Some are thriving very well including “How Does It Work” and “Gadabouts” but a few are still low on numbers and are regularly promoted at monthly meetings, newsletters and where possible. My thanks go to all the Group Leaders for their commitment and work during the last year.

Karen Riley, Groups Co-ordinator.

**Social Events Co-ordinator**

During 2023, the Social Team hosted a very successful Rock ‘n’ Roll Evening in April with entertainment being provided by the live band, “Reloaded” playing 50/60’s music and with 51 tickets sold. A sausages and chips supper delivered to McGrigor Hall by Tollgate Fisheries was included and everyone had a fantastic time with many asking for a repeat evening in 2024. We are currently looking into this. Most attendees danced the night away with a music quiz during the interval with a prize of Frinton “Rock”, of course. I also took a full coach to Audley End, Essex to see the BBC Gardener’s World Autumn Fair on 2 September. The response to this was amazing and there was even a waiting list! Coach Trips are proving very popular. Our next planned event will be a Halloween Quiz on 28 October at McGrigor Hall where a Halloween themed supper will be provided. Thanks to all the team who support me – Phyllis Deer, Elaine Bloomfield, Val Duncan.

Karen Riley, Social Team Co-ordinator,

**Speaker Secretary's Report**

JANUARY. It was most unfortunate that Peter Mockford (Lost Skills and Trades) was unable to attend due to illness. We wish him well and would be delighted to see him maybe next year. However, the morning was very successful as the members were given information about FWD. Questions were answered and the responses provided the audience with a most satisfactory insight into the new u3a-Frinton, Walton and District.

FEBRUARY. Nicola Matthews, a local writer, talked about the ghost said to haunt The Bell pub at Thorpe le Soken. Kitty Canham was the daughter of a local farmer born in 1720 who moved to London. Rumours of risqué behaviour and bigamy resulting in her early and mysterious death in Tendring. Nicola discussed her well known family, her childhood as the daughter of a film star and their bohemian lifestyle.

MARCH. Lindsay Whitehouse recalled his life as a Prison Governor in Chelmsford. His interactive talk included the hierarchy of the jobs for prisoners, the attitude and treatment of 'lifers'. He included some 'gems' about a well known prisoner -Jeffrey Archer! He told us the worth of mobile phones and drugs in the prison environment and the risks the prisoners take to get these items. Certainly not a cushy place!

MAY. A tour around the area of Spitalfields, London. The history of immigrants including Huguenots, Jews and many others escaping from persecution in Europe. David Williams a blue badge guide, showed us photos of buildings and industries that have populated this part of the East End. He discussed the transient nature of immigrants for example the Jewish moving out to North and West London. Finally, he likened the similarities with today's immigrants still fleeing despair and corruption to live in a much safer country.

JUNE. Due to a great response to the first part of his talk Roger Hance returned to us with the second part of Wildflowers of the Countryside- the poisonous and the dangerous ones. His impressive knowledge kept the audience interested and informed, as we are now well aware of the dangers of Lily of the Valley!

JULY. Roy Tyzack gave a fascinating talk and slide show entitled A Story on every Street Corner. We had a large turnout of members who were greatly entertained by taking a virtual stroll from Bow to Whitechapel in London. He identified places and characters of historic interest including the infamous Kray Twins!

SEPTEMBER Alain Chissel spoke on Myths and Legends of the Great War. Unfortunately, due to member illness, his talk was cut short. We will repeat the talk at a later date. (The member subsequently recovered well.) Karen Woolley, Speaker Secretary

### **Treasurer's Report.**

Usually the Treasurer's report is centred on the Annual Accounts of the previous year. This being the first year of Frinton Walton and District u3a (FWD u3a), this is not possible. I will therefore give you a taste of the year so far and the outlook. Clearly finance touches other areas and some of this information, therefore is contained in the reports of others. FWD u3a had the enormous benefit of a ready-made cohort of members from day one. The membership by the end of January was already over 100 and over 130 by the time of our inaugural meeting at the beginning of March. The inaugural meeting was very successful and by the end of March we had nearly 180 members. The u3a has limited chance of income beyond the membership fees so this rapid uptake of membership was crucial to the stability of the u3a from the outset. Membership now stands at 210, further helped by the New Members meeting (thanks to Maddie Deason for organising this) which generated a few more. The membership fees have set against them: membership subscription to Third Age Trust, our umbrella body; payment for Third Age Matters, the magazine of the Trust; payment to Beacon, the computer system which enables us to email all of you securely. We received a start up grant from the Third Age Trust as a new u3a. Thereafter we need to pay for the hall, speakers and refreshments each month; committee expenses, publicity and the website (we are very proud of the website which is a real asset, maintained by Mark on a very regular basis (and worth visiting regularly)), and we will have to pay to have the accounts checked at the end of the year. Speakers often don't come cheap, but this is one of the major benefits of your FWD membership. If you aren't a 'Groups' or a 'Socials' person, this is what you join for. Karen W has arranged our speakers throughout the year and has

given us a wonderful programme. We are blessed with an excellent committee and the success of the social events is testament to the expertise of the Social Committee under Karen R to judge what the membership will enjoy, and to organise and run the events as they have done. Social events are not run for a profit, but have been so successful this year that there has been a slight surplus which was able to provide a buffer for the next event, and so on. So, overall, we are doing quite well given that it is the first year, and expect to more than break even at the end of the year. We have the advantage that our speakers usually go on to Tendring District u3a who therefore pay half of the costs. We had hoped that we would receive a 'pro-rata by memberships' donation from Tendring District u3a – as agreed at the 2022 Tendring District AGM. Unfortunately, this hasn't happened. Please continue to tell your friends, neighbours, people on the bus, in the supermarket, how much you enjoy the speaker meetings, the social events, which group(s) you have joined and what a warm welcome they will have at meetings. You will be doing them a huge favour, as well as us. FWD u3a is an ideal organisation for 'social prescribing'. People feel so much better with social interaction, and our meetings and groups are the perfect place. The higher the membership numbers the more secure we are in arranging events going forward. Equally welcome are people from other ethnic backgrounds who may be reluctant to 'give us a try', please assure them that they will be welcome and, with us, make sure they are, when they come in. We are considering a scheme of badges for all new members and potential members, at the monthly meetings, so that we can be sure they are getting a special welcome. We don't underestimate how difficult it is to make that first step. (This is why we have our wonderful 'Meet and Greeters'.) First year's report: Excellent work; carry on. This is almost my final duty as treasurer. I am delighted to hand over to Gillian Manning as treasurer going forward. Many thanks to Gillian for volunteering for this important position. Kate Collins Treasurer for Steering Group

Resolution to accept reports: Proposer: Mark Riley Seconder: Keith Ashman. Carried.

6. **Election of Independent Financial Examiner for 2023 accounts: Tony Bullock.** Proposer: Angela Hillier Seconder: Mark Riley. Carried.

7. **Election of New Committee:**

Chair: Lorry Greenall

Vice=Chair: Phyllis Deer

Treasurer: Gillian Manning

Secretary: Kim Shaw

Committee Members: Karen Riley, Elaine Bloomfield, Karen Woolley, Mark Riley, Kate Collins.

Proposer: Val Duncan Seconder: Hilary Russell

8. **AOB:**

Penny Potter asked why the promised donation from Tendring u3a had not been received. The Committee responded that despite it not being a condition of the donation, Tendring had made requests which FW&D had done their utmost to meet. The situation was still ongoing. This provoked some discussion.

Penny Potter gave a vote of thanks to the Committee.

9. **Meeting closed** at 10.25 followed by a series of monologues given by FWDu3a member Pauline Pattison and refreshments.

