



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024/25

Thursday 6 February 2025 10:30
At Christ Church, Lord Street, Southport

Charity Number: 1164448

Present: Chris Howorth, Lisa Fryer, Deborah Kerr, Dawn Oldfield, Ian Homewood, Peter Lawler, Yvonne McCulloch, Andrea Hatton, George Blanchard, Jean Stewart and 257 members.

Apologies for Absence: Apologies were received from Tracy Farrington, John Boswell, Janet and Trevor Wooding, Roger Haigh, Julie Scott, Valerie Taylor, Peter Atwood, Sian Bennet and Chris Latham.

Declaration of Interest: None

1. Welcome by the Business Secretary: Deborah Kerr called the meeting to order and described her role. She explained that as Southport u3a was a charity the Committee were all volunteers governed by our constitution and by the laws of the Charity Commission and the principles of the Third Age Trust. The meeting would be held in accordance with the Standing Orders of the Third Age Trust. Only fully paid up members of the u3a were eligible to vote at the AGM. A quorum was present.

2. Acceptance of the Minutes of the 2023/24 AGM: There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Proposed: Judith Farrell

Seconded: Jim Hay

There was one vote against acceptance of the minutes which came from Paul Carter. All others present voted by a show of hands in favour of acceptance.

There were no abstentions.

3. Chair's Report: Chris Howorth thanked members for attending on such a frosty morning. She explained that she had found stepping into Paddy's shoes eleven months ago both a challenge and an honour which had been made easier by support from the Committee, Group Leaders and members.

The year had been a difficult one for Southport with press coverage of bad events adversely affecting tourism and associated businesses. But from that had come a strong togetherness and positive air in the town particularly evident in the u3a where friendship and support of each other always an aim had been truly fulfilled.

The year had been a full one with groups out and about from Blackpool Tower Ballroom to Chatsworth House; undertaking a variety of activities such as Pickleball, archery and Chair exercise; eating out at the successful Mad Hatters Tea Party, Summer Party and Christmas Party; and exploring the heavens above in Astronomy to the WW2 bunker below in Liverpool. Bronze medals had been won by members Christine Osbaldston, Paul Walker and Lesley Radcliffe at the English National Pickleball Championships. Carole Whitehead had won the National Short Story Competition and Alison Chisholm had had her 14th book of poems published.

At the last AGM Chris had shared the Third Age Trust's objectives and now gave an update on Southport u3a's progress against those objectives. The overriding objective of the Trust was to grow u3a membership as only 5% of UK retirees are members. Chris asked members to consider whether there was anything they could do to help promote the following objectives.

To help promote a collective identity We had attended Southport's largest event which had been attended by 600 other u3a members from Glasgow to Cornwall.. over the four days the team members had spoken to 100s of people and shared the u3a message. The Trust attended and made a film about the u3a which has been shared nationally. David Fitton had done an interview on Boom radio. Positive comments had been received from Liz Thackray, Allan Walmsley, Neil Stevenson and Gill Russell. The Just One Thing group had been started to participate in volunteering in the wider community and had been involved in a number of projects from painting park railings to picking apples and helping in care homes.

To maximise benefits for members discounts had been arranged with businesses in the town.

To advance later life learning we now had around 100 interest groups. New groups had emerged due to extra demand and the support of Group Leaders. New Groups this year included Banjo - 5 strings, Geriatric and the Pacemakers, Out and About and Spanish conversation. The January newsletter highlighted groups with vacancies. Chris advised members to put their names on waiting lists. Only by doing so could demand be identified and potentially accommodated.

To collaborate with like minded organisations Chris had shared the Trust's studies on healthy ageing (produced in collaboration with various universities) with Edge Hill who were doing similar studies. The relationship with Victoria Park and the Southport Flower Show had grown year on year and Just One Thing had taken our community activity one step further. We were also becoming involved in a new initiative - Southport Learning Town. Following groundwork by a group of local people and institutions Southport was applying to be a UNESCO learning town. There would be a launch in June 2025 and a festival in 2026. Southport u3a would be involved to work towards the goal of making learning more popular and attractive.

Chris advised members to approach the Committee if they wished to be involved in any of the initiatives, or if they had suggestions for improvement or for new interest groups.

4. Treasurer's Report: The Financial Statements and Trustees Report had previously been circulated to all members. Pete Lawler confirmed that the Independent Examiner of the accounts had signed the report to the trustees as clear. Pete gave brief highlights of the report. Total income for 2024 was £242,962. Net income to 31 August 2024 was £21,775 with net income for the previous financial year £9928. The balance sheet showed a surplus of £60,173 brought forward from 2023 added to the 2024 surplus of £21,775 to give a total of £81,948 consisting of £44,786 unrestricted and £37,162 restricted funds. Restricted funds were the funds belonging to groups and not available for general expenditure. The notes to the accounts gave a breakdown of all income and expenditure.

Questions were invited and Amanda Swain asked whether the increase in funds was due to an increase in membership. Pete said that it was largely due to an increase in membership but that many groups had larger balances in August as they accrue money throughout the year to pay for activities at Christmas. The Committee had been careful with funds and had secured a grant which had covered expenditure for the Southport Flower Show. Deborah said that any Group Leaders wishing to start new groups could call on the unrestricted funds to purchase equipment needed for set up.

John Boswell had submitted a written question asking whether money could be saved on bank or PayPal charges. Pete answered that Southport u3a uses PayPal for membership and event fees. PayPal had been integrated into the membership system by the developer whereas bank payments involved a lot of work by the treasurer assigning individual payments to the correct accounts. PayPal charges 20p plus 1.4% for charities. The bank charges charities with a turnover of more than £100,000 a standard business tariff of 35p per item. There was not much scope therefore for saving money on bank charges.

5: Approval of the Examined Accounts (balance sheet)

Proposed: Brenda Jones

Seconded: Alison Ryan

Approved unanimously by a show of hands. There were no abstentions.

6: Approval of the Continued Appointment of J A Fell and Co as Examiners for the Accounts

Proposed: Jim Hay

Seconded: Helen Plowman

Agreed unanimously by a show of hands. There were no abstentions.

7. Election of Officers and Committee Members

The following had been nominated and offered themselves for election

Christine Howorth Chair

Proposed: Brian Muddiman

Seconded: Lisette Muddiman

Lisa Fryer Vice Chair &

Proposed: D Salters

Events Secretary

Seconded: Shirley Clarke

Deborah Kerr Business Secretary	Proposed: Christine Higgins Seconded: Fran Hedderly
Peter Lawler Treasurer	Proposed: Helen Bickerstaffe Seconded: Keith Bickerstaffe
Andrea Hatton Group Activities Coordinator	Proposed: Jean Stewart Seconded: Pradipkumar Sett
Ian Homewood News Editor and IT	Proposed: Derek Oldfield Seconded: Diane Fitton
Roger Haigh Membership Secretary	Proposed: Barrie Jenkins Seconded: Rosemary Vanstone
George Blanchard Committee Member	Proposed: James Hay Seconded: Karen Goddard
Yvonne McCulloch Business Networking	Proposed: Dr Richard Stubbs. Seconded: Diane Fitton

As there were no contested posts it was proposed the nominations be considered en bloc.

Proposed: Glenda Wall
Seconded: Richard Stubbs

Agreed unanimously by a show of hands. There were no abstentions.

It was proposed the members nominated be elected as Trustees of Southport U3A

Proposed: Mary Mulholland
Seconded: Shirley Clarke

Agreed unanimously by a show of hands. There were no abstentions.

Deborah introduced each of the Committee members:

Chris who keeps the Committee in order always cheerful, energetic and full of ideas;
Lisa a great organiser who gets things done with a wonderful team behind her;
Pete keeper of accounts - no mean feat- the Committee guru and fount of all knowledge;
Andrea full of energy and enthusiasm taking over from Dawn to work with Group Leaders;
Ian computer wizard delivering new inventions such as the downloadable membership card;
Roger Haigh Membership Secretary assisted by a great team of helpers;
George our National u3a magazine organiser and keep fit aficionado;
Yvonne Business negotiator - look online and see what has been negotiated

9: Chair's Closing Remarks: Chris asked members to support their Committee. She went on to thank Dawn who was standing down after six years on the Committee. During that time she had assisted in many roles before taking on the enormous task of Group Coordinator for over 100 groups. Her contribution had been amazing.

Dawn offered a big thank you to Group Leaders who allowed the u3a to offer so much. She wished Andrea good luck in taking over her role and expressed her pride and pleasure in having served on the Committee.

The formal business of the AGM closed at 11:30. The Uke-A-Ladiez provided closing entertainment.

Approved:

Date: