



# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023/24

Thursday 7 March 2024 10:30  
At Christ Church, Lord Street, Southport

**Charity Number: 1164448**

**Present:** Paddy McNeish, Chris Howorth, Brian Muddiman, Jim Hay, Dawn Oldfield, Ian Homewood, Peter Lawler, Lisa Fryer, Roger Haigh, Yvonne McCulloch, George Blanchard, Deborah Kerr, Jean Stewart

**Apologies for Absence:** Apologies were received from Janet and Trevor Wooding

**Declaration of Interest:** None

**1. Welcome by the Business Secretary and the Chair:** Brian Muddiman called the meeting to order and explained that the meeting format would follow our constitution, the laws of the Charity Commission and the principles of the National u3a. With over 256 members attending a quorum had been achieved. Paddy McNeish ran through the fire drill. There followed a thank you to the retiring Chair with a performance by the Fabulous Uke-A-Ladies.

**2. Acceptance of the Minutes of the 2022/23 AGM:**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Proposed: Brenda Wall

Seconded: Alison Ryan

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

**3. Chair's Report:** Paddy McNeish recalled that three years previously at her appointment Southport u3a had been on the point of closure with no Chair or Vice Chair in position. Having accepted the post her focus at the first committee meeting had been to move the u3a forward. Her vision had been overwhelmingly embraced by committee members and many new initiatives had been undertaken. The Chair expressed her pleasure at working with such dedicated and loyal people. She also thanked the membership for their contributions explaining that it was through working in partnership with them the Committee was able to develop the ideas to deliver their needs. Paddy continued by offering tribute to Jim Hay - who had been the one who initially proposed her- for his long and efficient service; and to Christine Howorth for her kindness and patience, hard work and enduring sense of humour. She wished the Committee all the best for their future continued success.

Brian Muddiman took the opportunity to say a few words about existing committee members who were offering themselves for re-election starting with Ian Homewood who had done such a wonderful job in transforming the accounting system from the use of an excel

spreadsheet and payment by cash and cheques two years ago to Simple software and online payments and accounting. Working with the software developers he had ensured the system was tailored to our needs. Added to that he had managed the website, newsletter and the quarterly magazine. Feedback had shown that we are the envy of other u3as.

The Secretary then introduced Christine Howorth, the current Vice-Chair, who had been nominated as new Chair. He explained that from a marketing background she was very much an ideas' person who put inordinate time and effort into the job. He advised the meeting that going forward they were very lucky to have her at the helm.

Christine Howorth gave the Vice Chair's report. She drew attention to the number of clever and talented members we have advising all to make use of the u3a and enjoy the wealth of what it has to offer including:

Learning - various languages; astronomy; photography; bridge; and jewellery making etc.

Exploring- walking, cycling and bird watching etc.

Experiencing- trips to places of interest etc.

Creating- quilting, crocheting, writing and performing plays, and Joy of Writing's Harry and Alice's Big Adventures etc.

Keeping Fit - yoga, pickleball, pilates and chair exercise etc.

Entertainment- with the choir, four ukulele groups and Jazz group which had been so well run by Geoff Matthews.

Chris was sorry that some members were not happy with the growth in size of Southport u3a showing a slide depicting growth since 2017. She pointed out that Southport was a busy town with the largest over 65 population in the UK and felt that everything should be done to welcome them. Chris thought that to support the growth in membership numbers it was not just new groups that were needed (which would be supported by continuance of Spring into Action) but also management of existing groups looking at size and popularity. Dawn Oldfield was working hard to support groups but some, due to lack of sufficient interest or commercial viability, had folded. As demand changed new groups had been formed such as Pickleball.

Chris recommended that everybody make use of waiting lists for groups they wished to join. It was through identifying interest via waiting lists that additional groups could be set up to fulfil need. Yoga had gone from one to four groups because of numbers on the waiting list while numbers on the waiting list for coach trips had led to duplication of an event.

There had been a number of large open events over the past year including the Coronation Tea Party attended by 250 and u3a's got Talent which had filled the Little Theatre. Christmas Lunch had nearly doubled its attendees over the previous year. Attendance at monthly meetings was monitored and data managed. This had led to the identification of the need to run two Christmas parties last year to accommodate numbers. Better ways to support new members and assist new Group Leaders were being explored - especially as most new members were joining online. New members' and Group Leaders' meetings were being held. New interest groups had been added throughout the year - some new and some duplications - including Local History 2, Pickleball and extra Yoga groups with the biggest new group - Out and About- overseen by Jim Hay having 30 events planned. Events this year would include a Mad Hatter's Tea Party and Dance and a show garden at the Southport Flower Show. The design for the garden had so impressed the organisers of the Flower Show that it was to be

placed in a focal position. This year the event would be opened up to all to volunteer their help. Party in the Park was expected to be a splendid event this year.

Dawn had prepared an analysis which showed that 48.6% of group leaders volunteered in the first 18 months after joining. Without new members these energetic people would be lost. New blood keeps the u3a fresh and afloat. But Chris emphasised we are all volunteers and there is a great reward in getting involved. She thanked Group Leaders and all who help out in various ways. We were lucky to be part of a special organisation of which she was proud to be a member. She thanked everyone for what they gave to make it all work.

Brian invited questions from the floor. He advised that one motion had been received from Paul Carter seconded by David North which read as follows-

That Southport u3a suspend the addition of new members with the exception of partners or careers for existing members.

The Committee had discussed this at length with the legal department at u3a National who had advised that as a charity we must be open to all who wish to join. Closing the doors was not an option. Brian asked the meeting for their thoughts on this or for any questions. Alison Ryan said that she had joined Southport u3a recently having retired and been widowed. She had found it tremendously helpful for making new friends and finding things to do. She would be very disappointed in any member wishing to take away that opportunity from people such as herself. Paul Carter was offered the opportunity to respond to Alison Ryan's statement but declined.

There were no further comments or questions.

Brian introduced Pete Lawler who had joined the Committee 18 months previously after being in Southport for a few weeks. He had inherited the old labour intensive financial system and had worked alongside Ian on the design and implementation of Simple. It was thanks to his work we now had a modern and efficient treasury and accounting system.

**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 following approval by the Committee. A full audit was not required for income below £1m. This year a distinction had been made between restricted and unrestricted funds. Restricted funds were those hypothecated to groups and not available for general spending. Pete gave a summary of the accounts explaining that the surplus for the year of £9928 consisted of £7527 unrestricted and £2401 restricted funds. The previous year's surplus had been £5197. A breakdown was included in the notes to the financial statements. The balance sheet was positive at year end with a carry forward figure of £60,173 consisting of £34,909 unrestricted and £25,264 restricted funds.

#### **5: Approval of the Examined Accounts ( balance sheet)**

Proposed: Ilush Bricknell

Seconded: Derek Kershaw

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

Brian introduced Dawn Oldfield praising her encyclopaedic knowledge of all the groups, leaders, venues and issues. Always available with a helping hand she impressed with her calm approach, ability to identify and create new opportunities and manage a large workload.

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

Proposed: Derek Kershaw

Seconded: Yvonne McCulloch

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

Brian introduced Lisa Fryer not only Gardening Group leader but also Events organiser who worked efficiently with a small team. She had managed many successful and impressive events and had more planned for the future.

## **7. Election of Officers and Committee Members**

The following had been nominated and offered themselves for election

Christine Howorth as Chair-

Proposed: Brenda Jones

Seconded: Robert Jones

Lisa Fryer as Vice Chair &  
Events Secretary.

Proposed: Diane Fitton

Seconded: Sue Tyrer

Peter Lawler as Treasurer -

Proposed: Neil McMillan

Seconded: Christine McMillan

Dawn Oldfield as Group Activities  
Coordinator

Proposed: Ilush Bricknell

Seconded: Roberta Homewood

Ian Homewood News Editor and IT.

Proposed: Sharon Partington

Seconded: Brian Tyler

The following had been nominated as new Committee members

Roger Haigh as Membership Secretary

Proposed: Neil McMillan

Seconded: Sallie McBride

George Blanchard as Committee Member

Proposed: Stephen Birchall

Seconded: Karen Goddard

Yvonne McCulloch - Business.

Proposed: Jean Stewart

Seconded: Linda Wardle

In addition Deborah Kerr had been co-opted onto the Committee as Business Secretary. Her application had come outside the timeframe to circulate in due time for formal application notice. She had been proposed by Richard Stubbs and seconded by David McCone.

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

Proposed: Alison Ryan

Seconded: Ron Tate

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: Yvette Muddiman

Seconded: Chris Lathom

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

**9: Chair's Closing Remarks:** Chris offered thanks to Paddy who had helped to establish and support many important changes over the past three years; to Jim Hay for his 7 years as Membership Secretary singlehandedly managing administration and also for his work with Ian on production of the magazine; and to Brian who had been a tremendous asset demonstrated by his efficient running of the AGM today.

Jim Hay thanked Janet for assisting at the new members' table for the last 7 years and helping the membership team over 10 years; and Robbie, Janet's stand in in her absence.

The retiring Committee members left the stage and the new Committee members joined it.

Chris thanked the meeting for electing her as Chair and expressed her delight to have such a dynamic Committee to support her. She welcomed the new members - Roger Haigh who had been working with Jim and Ann Rushton to manage membership; Yvonne McCulloch who would take on Business Networking relationships and had already negotiated discounts for members in several local restaurants. Yvonne would also be responsible for accessibility arrangements in respect of both information and physical locations; George Blanchard who would manage the TAM magazine; and Deborah Kerr who would take on the Business Secretary role.

Chris went on to share future strategy with the meeting. Key objectives would be to support and maintain Southport u3a while strengthening and improving it. Groups would be refreshed and replenished as fashion dictated always keeping an eye to the future. The membership would be called on to question and evaluate along the way sharing their ideas. A Group Leaders' day would be held in April giving an opportunity for their feedback on potential improvements and how best they could be supported. And finally through networking and research, other opportunities would be identified sharing and learning from other u3as, charities and local companies.

The formal business of the AGM closed at 11:50. The Wayfarers Barbershop Chorus provided closing entertainment.

Approved:

Date: