

## MID-BUCKS (AYLESBURY) u3a

### Minutes of the Twenty-eighth Annual General Meeting

Held at Southcourt Community Centre on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2025

Present: 52 Members.

Colin White welcomed all present and proceeded to open the business of the Annual General Meeting.

1. **Apologies for Absence** had been received from Brian and Julia Goodwin, Wendy Aplin, Alex Dunk, Solo Awadzi, Mary Evered, Allan and Brenda Horne, Jim and Gwyneth Wilding and Gill Perrottet.
2. **Minutes of the AGM held on the 16th May 2024** had been circulated with the April Newsletter and were signed as accurate.
3. **Matters arising from the Minutes.** There were no matters arising.
4. **Chairman's Report.** Colin White commenced his report by expressing our sadness at the loss of any Members in the year. Our condolences and thoughts go out to all of their relatives and friends. On a more positive note, we have been heartened to hear that our previous Chairman, Geoff Short, is making a recovery, and we continue to wish him well.  
The Branch Committee has seen a period of stability for a little while. However, that is about to change and we will be losing several members from their key roles. If these roles are not filled we will have a significantly reduced level of activity to offer both current and new Members. It would be very sad to see this happen, so I encourage you to consider volunteering where you can. New members on the Committee would clearly bring new ideas.  
Our monthly meetings continue to be held at the Southcourt Community Centre, and we are grateful to be able to do so. We continue to get about 50% of Members attending each meeting and they have been treated to a great variety of talks. This is thanks in large part to Val Blackburn's efforts.  
The Branch continues to have a good number of active groups, which is great to see. I have received some information from various Group Leaders to back this up.
  - A. **The Local History Group** continues to be one of the best attended, with an active membership of 44. Meetings regularly attract most of the membership with 38 attending the talk by Julian Hunt about Stony Stratford.
  - B. **The Gadget Group** and, of course Simon Reeks in particular, has continued to be very active with people seeking advice about replacement of computers with laptops and the navigation from Windows 10 to Windows 11. Simon reports that his knowledge of electronic gadgets is being constantly challenged. He seems to be successful in that challenge.
  - C. **The Trips Team** organised visits to the Shuttleworth Collection; Chedworth Roman Villa; Hever Castle; Portsmouth and the Cotswold Wildlife Park. The five trips attracted 161 Members, with an average of 32 attending each visit.
  - D. **Bowls Group.** The 11 regular sessions for the new Bowls Group have been attended by an average of just under 14 Members, with 148 participants in total. This is very encouraging and welcome.

Thanks must go to all organisers of Group and other activities. They are too numerous to mention, but they know who they are!

If you feel that there is a group that was previously active which ought to be resurrected, please consider taking on an organising role. We previously had groups such as French conversation, gardening, geography/travel, photography and ten pin bowling. It's a shame that these, and others, are no longer active.

The decrease in the number of active groups may be due in part to the decline in the number of Members that the Branch has experienced in the last few years. However we seem to have turned a corner in the last year. The decline seems to have arrested, and we are now attracting some new members, which may bode well for future years. If anyone has any ideas about ways to increase membership, please do let us know.

We continue to face increased costs for most things in life. The u3a is not immune to this. With reduced numbers of Members, we have faced a tightening of the purse strings. However, we have now had a number of years with the accounts being in deficit. The Committee has actively discussed this issue and has reluctantly agreed that membership fees ought to be increased, for the first time in many years. This will be put to the AGM and the subject of a vote in a little while.

Once the AGM has resolved the make-up of the Committee, we will be able to finalise the detail required for completion of Membership Cards for the 2025-26 year. These will be available to Members once renewal forms, or applications for new Membership, and payments have been received and processed. They should be available at the June monthly meeting.

Finally, I would personally like to record my thanks to the following:

- a. The rest of the Branch Committee, who are currently: Solo Awadzi; Val Blackburn; Chris Blaik; Sandra Choudhry; Wendy Russell and Michael Walden
- b. David Mummery for continuing to edit the website from afar. We are grateful for his continued input and mindful that we need to be active in seeking his replacement.
- c. Group leaders and event organisers. They continue to be the lifeblood of the Branch.
- d. The ladies of the refreshment rota, ably led previously by Alex and now by Louise.
- e. All those who help by setting up the technology (in particular Rupert Anson), chairs and tables at meetings and for putting them away afterwards. It is very much appreciated.
- f. And the William Harding Trust for their subsidy of £2,000 towards coach costs. Without this aid trips would be much more expensive and potentially unattractive.

As well as those thanks, I would also like to ensure that the Branch's gratitude is expressed for the sterling work that the Trips Team have done over the last 11 years. The current team of Michael Walden, Ann Burman, Sally Smith and Chris Blaik now need to step down. Without their efforts so many people would not have enjoyed day trips of such a wide variety over this time.

#### **5. Treasurer's Report for the period ending 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2025.**

Sandra Chaudhry thanked Cyril Parsons for once again examining the Accounts. She reported that the financial position seemed to have steadied following the loss of members post Covid, but we are still running at a loss. The figure shown is a loss of £870. This was larger than usual as we had to pay out £595 for the coach Trip to Milestones in March before the William Harding grant was received. Like for like the loss for 2024-25 is £600. The William Harding grant has been confirmed as £2,000 for the current year - £500 per trip. We had invested in a bulk order of paper cups which should last for the next 5 years or so. The Christmas Raffle had raised £160 for the Florence Nightingale Hospice. Acceptance of the Accounts was proposed by Jasmine Reeks and seconded by Tony Ashpool.

## Election of Chairman

6. **Chairman.** Colin White is happy to stand again as Chairman. Proposed by Lesley Yates and seconded by Rupert Anson. Unanimously elected.
7. **Election of Officers:**
  - Vice-Chairman.** No nominations had been received. Position vacant.
  - Secretary.** Val Blackburn is willing to continue as our named Secretary. Proposed by Colin White and seconded by Mary Bickley. Unanimously elected.
  - Treasurer.** Sandra Chaudhry is willing to stand again. Proposed by Jasmine Reeks and seconded by Ken Berry. Unanimously elected.
  - Membership Secretary.** Wendy Russell is happy to continue. Proposed by Ann Cottrell and seconded by Vi Swindlehurst. Unanimously elected.
8. **Election of Committee:**
  - Trips Team:** Michael Walden, Ann Burman, Sally Smith and Chris Blaik are standing down once the rest of the trips have finished in 2025. There are no nominations for a Trips Organiser, but Jan Paver and Val Blackburn would be willing to help. Position vacant.
  - Speaker Organiser:** Val Blackburn has arranged Speakers up until May 2026 so that they can be included in the Membership Cards, but a new Speaker Organiser(s) is required. There were no nominations.
  - Website Administrator:** Solo Awadzi has volunteered to investigate what this role entails. It is an important role as the Website needs to be kept up to date and is our window to new members.
  - Newsletter Editor:** Solo Awadzi has agreed to continue as Editor. Proposed by Pauline Noble and seconded by Ann Cottrell. Unanimously elected.
9. **Appointment of an Examiner for the Accounts 2025/26.** Cyril Parsons has agreed to stand for 2025/26, but not for following years, so a replacement will be needed next year. Cyril was proposed by Colin White and seconded by Wendy Russell. Unanimously elected.
10. **Vote of thanks to retiring Committee Members.** Colin thanked Val Blackburn, Michael Walden, Chris Blaik and David Mummery for their contributions. He also again thanked all Group Leaders and Teams. Jan Paver will be stepping down as organiser of Pub Walks at the end of 2025, so this Group will require a new organiser in 2026.
11. **To approve an increase in Annual Membership Fees for the year 2025/26 to £20.00** per person (this allows for free refreshments at monthly meetings). The proposed increase to £20 per person was approved by a show of hands with no members against.
12. **Any other Business.** Linda Gill suggested that the proceeds from the Christmas Raffle should be kept to offset our funding shortfall. This will be discussed by the Committee, including a possible summer raffle.  
Tony Ashpool proposed a vote of appreciation to Colin White for his hard work.

The Meeting closed at 2.35pm