

Ivybridge u3a

MINUTES OF THE 2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, the banning of gatherings meant that the Annual General Meeting scheduled for 19 October 2020 could not take place. Because of the absence of reference to the use of electronic methods of participation from our Constitution, and the limitations of the technical expertise available, the delayed business of the 2020 A.G.M. was carried out in the spring of 2021 with the permission of the Charity Commission entirely by post.

Notice of this having been given in December 2020, in mid-February all the information necessary for the A.G.M. had been mailed to every member. Votes on the resolutions received by the deadline of 13 March were then collated and counted by the Chairman and Secretary and the results recorded by the retiring Committee on 15 March 2021.

Participants

By a count of voting papers and proxy votes received there were 195 participants, establishing the process/meeting as quorate. Papers had been numbered for monitoring purposes but the votes were anonymous.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting (21 October 2019)

There were 187 votes for the motion, 0 against, 8 abstentions. The minutes of the previous annual general meeting were therefore agreed.

2. Chairman's Annual Report

This was quite an unusual Chairman's report, as it was provided by two Chairmen - Bea Naylor, who retired on 31 December 2020 and Val Carmichael, who had taken up office from 1 January 2021.

In the written documents that were circulated, they said that the past eighteen months since our last A.G.M. in October 2019 had been an unprecedented and difficult time for all of us. We had however ended 2019 with a very enjoyable Christmas party and continued to hold three General meetings at the beginning of 2020, before going in lockdown in late March. It had been good to see that although some of our groups have been able to meet online, no physical meetings were taking place and yet our membership has increased.

We should have been celebrating our 10th Anniversary in September last year, but unfortunately we had been unable to go ahead because of the COVID-19 situation. Fingers crossed that we would celebrate that milestone in September 2021!

Our thanks were due to our group leaders who had done such a marvellous job keeping in touch with their group members and encouraging their group, where possible, to meet online. Without our group leaders we could not have become such a successful u3a, so, thanks, once again. And to the stewards who helped at every general meeting, including the coffee and tea at the end of each meeting: we could not do without them. Thanks were also owed to the 'back room crew', the

Committee, who had steered our u3a through the past difficult months, meeting every month online to ensure that we keep in touch with our members through newsletters, keeping in touch with our National office to ensure we were up to date with the COVID-19 situation and to organise this 'Postal AGM'. The Committee was indeed the backbone of Ivybridge u3a and each and every member of the Committee played an important part. Our sincere thanks, too, were offered to the members for their support and patience at this time.

We were all eager to get back to our groups and activities and meet up with the friends we had made through the U3A, and hopefully we would be able to do that as soon as possible.

3. Annual financial report and accounts

The Honorary Treasurer, Christine Smith, reported that it had been an extraordinary year and that was reflected in our accounts. Last year many people had renewed their membership before the end of the previous financial year, thereby inflating the membership income figure. The accounts for 2019-20 showed in effect the rump of renewals that fell due in October 20, and no renewals for 2019/20 due to the extension of the membership year until 31 March 2021.

From February 2020 there had been much reduced activity in all areas specific to Ivybridge u3a and this was evident in the accounts. Only national commitments such as Third Age Trust membership and TAM magazine mailing costs had remained at previous levels. Sundry Costs included Committee expenses, a thank-you event for all Group Leaders and helpers, a wreath for Remembrance Day and the cost of holding new members' coffee mornings.

The membership fee for 2021/22 would remain unchanged. An increase in fees would be proposed for next year to cover the costs of adopting the Beacon Management System, to cover a previously introduced increase to direct mailing costs for the TAM magazine, and a rise in Third Age Trust membership scheduled to take effect in 2022.

Finally, the intention was to change the financial year to bring us more in line with the fiscal year. That would mean that the next accounts would cover 1 September 2020 to 31 March 2022.

Comments/Queries

One question had been received about the cost of the General Meetings, which had been resolved to the member's satisfaction).

4. Appointment of Stephen Woodcock as independent examiner

There were 189 votes for this resolution, 0 against, and 6 abstentions. The motion was therefore carried.

5 The inclusion in the Constitution of new clauses providing for the possibility of using electronic methods of participation for General Meetings if required

The text of the proposed new clauses and the reason for this resolution had been detailed in the papers circulated. In order for there to be a change to the Constitution, at least two-thirds of those voting at a quorate meeting had to be in favour.

There were 182 votes for the motion, 1 against, and 12 abstentions. The motion was therefore carried and the Constitution would be amended accordingly.

6. Election of Cliff Bennett as Honorary President for 2021

There were 190 votes for the motion, 0 against and 5 abstentions. The motion was therefore carried.

7. Election of the Executive Committee for 2020-21

Members had been given the option either to cast their vote for all 10 nominees, or to cast their vote for each candidate individually. Of the 195 members voting, 190 chose the first option. Among the remaining five members no-one voted against any of the candidates, although in 11 cases they abstained.

The new Committee for 2020-21 would therefore comprise:-

Val Carmichael
John Deacon
Stephen Harvey
Averil Heaton
Paul Jones
Sylvia Rutley
Christine Smith
Philippa Swain
Michael Swinson.
Ray Waudby

Comments/Queries

Comments had been received to the effect that the opportunity of increased involvement offered by the postal process had been appreciated.

It was also noted that the number of people taking part (by submitting voting preferences) represented more than a 50% increase on those normally attending an A.G.M. in person, although some of this may have been due to the fact that membership renewal forms could be sent in at the same time.

The Secretary was asked to produce minutes for the A.G.M. from the above information and the Chairman would inform and congratulate the new members of the Committee.

Confirmation that the 2020 Annual General Meeting had been satisfactorily completed was proposed by Ray Waudby, seconded by John Deacon and agreed unanimously by the retiring Committee.