

**Minutes of South Lakes u3a(Slu3a) AGM
held on Wednesday 21st May 2025 in Castle Street Centre, Kendal.**

1. **Chair's welcome:** Samantha Ridgway welcomed the 36 members present. All the papers for the AGM have been available on the website and distributed to those members with no email address. Voting has been conducted electronically and by post in advance. The chair noted that the 'post - it' stickers available on entry today for comments and suggestions would be collated and discussed at committee level. A visual presentation included photos of the 30th anniversary last year and some group activities.

2. **Apologies:** Apologies from Chris Brooksbank (assistant secretary) and from the following 31 members- Janet Antrobus, Robert Barnes, Sandra Bathgate, M Burke, J Burke, Alvene Costello, Julia Dunlop, Colin Edwards, Kath Edwards, Amanda Harcourt, Susan Heyes, Yvonne Houfe, Patricia Jardine, Wendy Jones, Jane King, Richard King, Terry Lambert, Angie Leonard, Alan Lovett, Angela Lovett, Maura Machin, Gail Morgan, Brian Meakin, Joan Meakin, Klaus Panther, Jane Panton, Marilyn Robinson, Linda Thornburg, Jane Willis, Betty Wood, Paul Woods.

3. **Minutes of 2024 AGM :** approved.

4. **Matters arising:** Nil

5. **Chair's annual report:** Has been available on the website.
It's the middle of April – hedgerows bursting with daffodils, blossom and nesting birds; all nurtured by a wonderful clear blue sky. Rain is on the menu again, keeping farmers happy, alas not sun-lovers. But rain will never dampen our enthusiasm which keeps the sun shining in our u3a. Now that I have completed one year as chair, I look forward to the warmth from our members over this next year.
After celebrating our thirtieth anniversary since becoming a registered charity last year, we are still going strong. Membership is growing month-on month, to 1,400. We achieved this through our innovative and dedicated group coordinators who collectively provided around 21,800 individual experiences for our members over the year, and with our committee, who utilised their diverse range of skills and knowledge to uphold our constitution, and from our network of other volunteers who work tirelessly in the background. Without these volunteers, SLu3a would not survive. Added to this, were the increases in subscription fees, voted in favour by our members at last year's AGM, to £15.00 plus £2.00 meeting fees, means that we are financially viable.
We are all aware that communication is paramount in every organisation. This year we have increased the number of volunteers who reach out to our members and help promote our u3a across the south lakes area. They have provided new leaflets, posters, our Annual Handbook and liaise with other organisations by attending meetings and giving talks. Volunteers also distribute information to our members who do not have email addresses. This helps to keep everyone in the loop and informs our external stakeholders. Our new website, designed and managed by our webmaster, is now up and running. When people access this, they will find it easy to navigate and gain the information they need. This is because it is dynamic, eye catching and user friendly, with news added as it occurs. Thanks to our website manager, we now have a Facebook page. Here, our website manager can

download information, photographs and the activities we provide, for inclusion on our Facebook page.

During the year we have updated many documents including the coordinators' guidelines, job descriptions for committee members, and our Safeguarding policy. Other policies are currently being reviewed. We also provided first aid workshops for members.

In December I celebrated my eightieth birthday, Down Under with my extended family. When leaving Sydney, the temperature was 35 degrees, England; minus 6 degrees. A shock to the system, and a shock to accept that I'm in my fifth age¹, as many of us are. We need new people to steer our u3a in the right direction. Volunteering and helping is the key to our success. This occurs when members ask, 'what can I do for the u3a.'²) A culture built on sharing skills, knowledge and experience makes our journey smooth, enjoyable and enhances our social wellbeing. With enthusiasm, and perhaps a little luck around the corner, we can reach our future goals.

Around eleven percent (11%) of our members' volunteer. However, we do not have a magic wand that attracts volunteers. Instead, we were assertive, we developed succession plans, and we asked for help. We value all our volunteers, so when someone new comes forward we nurture and support them into roles they are more than capable of fulfilling but may be a little apprehensive in doing. We are never complacent, so to lighten the work of others, we still need more volunteers. Volunteers to fill vacancies on the committee, to help run/support our groups, to keep us refreshed at meetings and to help whenever possible.

I realise that we all have commitments, and that health issues and circumstances affect our life and time balance. Whatever the circumstances, it's great to see our members attending interest and activity groups, general meetings and open mornings, sometimes in poor weather. Their presence is vital in keeping these events active, enabling all of us to 'learn, laugh and live'.

Thank you to everyone who supported our u3a during the last year. To all who help at meetings, provide refreshments, stack chairs and clear away tables. To members who attend meetings and activity and interest groups, all of whom help to positively steer our organisation, and makes these groups viable. Finally, to our coordinators and committee, who mutually support each other, who volunteer in other roles and keep our ship moving forward.

Kind regards Samantha Ridgway, BA.

6. **Treasurer's report:** Has been available on the website and also circulated to members in advance.

Jeff Hickin thanked the coordinators for paying in promptly as it makes his job so much easier, and mentioned that more members may be taxpayers (since the freezing of tax allowances) and encouraged members to sign up for gift aid. The financial situation is much more stable now, and the reserve fund of £13,000.00 is now closer to the expected reserve of around £25,000.00 (50% of annual outgoings) as per u3a guidelines.

March and Year End 2025 Financial Report This year the surplus is £10,952. This is technically overstated as £8,000 was transferred to reserves on 15th October which appears as an asset. To understand more about the accounting please note: - • In changing from accrual to cash basis, it is necessary to adjust for rental invoices not yet received but

¹ W Shakespeare; As You Like It

² Part of J.F. Kennedy's inaugural speech as President of the USA, 1961.

covering this financial year to avoid overstating the balance of payments. See the Provision for Rent list below that I have used in the accounts, being from invoices received after 31st March.

- Standard South Lakes u3a practice had been to transfer money from the reserves (COIF) to cover cashflow. This is not the purpose of reserves and has ceased. This was enabled by the increase in the subscription to £15.
- The net impact of provision for rental is £3,932 as shown above under Payments as "Transfer to Reserves/ Provision".
- Subscriptions are substantially ahead of last year in excess of forecast as the net number of members has increased. More attrition was anticipated.
- Surplus funds were transferred to reserves on 15th October. Reserves now stand at £13,000 and should be at a level to cover circa 50% of expenses or £25,000. As at the current financial year this means a shortfall of £12,000.
- We expected to see an uplift from the increase in Group Income of 33% due to the increase from £1.50 to £2.00. This has been the case such that Group Income has managed to stay ahead of Group Rents.
- The rental increases that we had been notified of have now fully fed through into the accounts. Rental increased by just over £5k to £30.5k.
- The final Third Age Matters (TAM) magazine bill was £556.56 which was paid on 8th April 2024.

Provision for Rent Abbot Hall £2,556.00; Natland £1,376.10 total £3932.10
The end result is an unaudited balance of receipts over payments of £10,952 which I believe to be a true and fair view of the Financial Year. The previous Financial Year was a surplus of £247.47 therefore we have made good progress. Turning to our current and next year's financial position. The main expense we have is rent. As this point in time, Castle Street has notified us of a minimal rent increase for 2025/26. Abbot Hall rents are under negotiation. Contributions such as increased annual subscriptions and gift aid combined with the increase in group income to just give us our surplus.
Last financial year the reserves fell by £5,000 to £5,000. The major achievement this year is that is that we have increased the reserves by £8,000. This now looks to be stable and I expect it to rise towards the u3a recommended level of 50% of payments over the next few years.

Please note that the accounts are fully balanced but provisional.
Next year? We are in a sound financial position. I am particularly pleased that the co-ordinators heeded my request to pay in more regularly and I do not anticipate a repeat of last year's dire cashflow problems.

There were several questions from members present;

Will we be able to put money into the reserve account this coming financial year? Answer - yes probably approximately £8,000,00 after memberships have been collected.

Is the reserve account interest earning? Answer - yes, (but it is safer practice to keep the reserve fund undisturbed and not put all excess money in in order to gain interest, only to withdraw it later in the year.)

Are rents likely to increase again necessitating another subs increase? Answer – not significantly, but some groups who are not managing to cover the cost of rent may be advised of cheaper venues as necessary; and no there is no planned subscription increase.

The accounts were accepted by those members present.

7. **Independent examiner:** Steve Parr is the independent examiner for these accounts and for next year.

8. **Election of officers:** there were 68 electronic votes and 2 postal votes.

61 approved minutes, 1 abstention

66 approved finances, 4 abstentions

63 block and 5 individual votes for committee positions, with 68 or 69 votes for committee nominees, and 1 or 2 abstentions, nil against.

No nominations received for the vacant posts of vice chair, assistant secretary or publicity officer.

The chair thanked the outgoing committee members Mavis Crawford (secretary) and Derek Ridgway (assistant treasurer) and Pam Priestley (vice chair-resigned due to health reasons in 2024)

9. **AOB:** 1 member stated it was not possible to attend all her groups as time clashes; the chair agreed that would happen.

1 member asked again if the subs are to increase, again reassured that they would stay the same.

1 member noted that the editor was not mentioned as a member of the committee- the editor, webmaster and beacon team are co-opted to the committee.

AGM finished 11.15.

The recorder group of 13 players was introduced by coordinator Jane Tawn, and George Thorp and Sue David conducted the group in a variety of different musical styles.