SHEFFIELD U3A
NOTICE OF THIRTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 30th Annual General Meeting of Sheffield U3A
will be held at 11.15am on Wednesday 18 May 2016
at the Central United Reformed Church, Norfolk Street, Sheffield

Only current 2016 members may attend and vote at the AGM. The final agenda for the AGM and 2015 minutes are published in this edition of Links. Members wishing to raise business under clause 13(viii) of the Constitution (see below) should have notified the Secretary, in writing, by 19 February 2016, so that it could have been included in the final agenda.

Clause 13(viii) reads "The agenda for the AGM shall be published in the last edition of the SU3A Newsletter to be issued to members at least 14 days before the AGM and shall include any other business notified in writing to the Secretary in sufficient time before publication".

There will also be the opportunity for informal discussion (see agenda item 8) but no decisions can be made on these items at the AGM. There will be vacancies on the Committee. The Committee meets bi-monthly, usually on the first Friday of the month.

Nominations for election to the Committee should be made on the form on page 13 and should reach the Secretary no later than Friday, 22nd April 2016.

Jenny Graaf, Secretary

AGM AGENDA
Registration from 9.45am, when tea/coffee and biscuits will be served.
1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the 29th Annual General Meeting.
3. Chair’s Annual Report 2015/16.
4. Treasurer’s Report.
5. Adoption of a revised constitution. In consultation with the Charity Commission and the Third Age Trust (TAT), the Executive Committee reviewed the constitution taking into account the latest best practice and the model constitution produced by TAT. Both the existing and proposed constitutions, plus explanatory notes, are available on our website. Hard copies can be obtained from the Secretary. Members are being asked to approve the new constitution.”
6. Elections to Committee, including vacancies.
8. Any Other Business (brought up informally but no decision can be taken at the meeting).

SHEFFIELD U3A
Minutes of the 29th Annual General Meeting held on 6 May 2015
at the Victoria Hall, Sheffield
Present: around 115 members, with Jean Stevenson in the Chair.

1. Minutes of the 28th AGM
The Minutes of the AGM held on 15 May 2014 (previously circulated) were agreed as a correct record.

2. Chairman’s Annual Report
The Annual Report had appeared in the April Links.

3. Treasurer’s Report
The Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2014 had been circulated to members via the April issue of Links.
Barry De Roeck asked what were the items of equipment referred to in the accounts. It was reported that a new sound system had been purchased, and a printer for the Secretary. The computer upgrade related to the
Membership Records Officer’s system. The Treasurer was also asked about cost of the Wild Apricot membership management system. He reported that the system cost about £2,500 a year, with a transaction fee of 35p for everyone who joins. No one at the meeting was able to suggest a less expensive system.

The approval of the Accounts was proposed by Barry De Roeck and seconded by Judith Vernier. Agreed by the majority. The Treasurer thanked Robert Mellors for his work as Independent External Examiner.

4. Elections to the Committee

It was pointed out by John Richards that the new Committee members must be individually elected. Nominations have been received for:

- Brian Cave - Proposed by Samina Aslam and seconded by David Longson
- Jenny Graaf - Proposed by Samina Aslam and seconded by Dot Sutcliffe
- Clare Chiba - Proposed by Rati Chiba and seconded by Tricia Pulfrey
- Mike Granville - Proposed by Pat Ryan and seconded by Jean Stevenson

Mike Granville introduced himself and gave details of his career and interests, and Clare Chiba gave details of her past work for U3A. In the absence of Jenny Graaf and Brian Cave the Chairman read out statements from them. The four nominees were individually elected unanimously. The meeting was asked to vote en bloc for the continuing members of the Executive Committee - Samina Aslam, David Longson, John Evans and Chris Cave. Tricia Pulfrey would stay on the EC during the transition period to help the new Secretary, Jenny Graaf. This motion was agreed and carried unanimously.

The Chairman reported that Robert Mellors had indicated he was prepared to continue as Independent External Examiner. This was agreed.

Thanks were expressed to those retiring from the Committee – Jean Stevenson, Dot Sutcliffe, Jane Whitehead and John Wragg.

5. Change to the Constitution

The following motion was proposed:

To enable the posts of Secretary, Treasurer and General Coordinator to be held by non-Committee members by inserting in Clause 6(ii) of the Constitution “if there is no suitable candidate for the posts of Secretary, Treasurer or General Coordinator on the Committee, the Committee may appoint non-Committee member(s) to those position(s), such appointment(s) to be effective only until the next Annual General Meeting”.

Chris Cave, in proposing the motion, spoke about the problems of recruiting to the Committee people with suitable skills and experience. Roy Pilkington, Derek Cave and John Richards all gave reasons for being against the motion, including possible problems with the Charity Commission and with Gift Aid. An amendment was proposed by John Richards as follows:

That the following words be added before the text subject to consultation with the National Office and the prior approval of the Charity Commission “... and following on with "if there is no ...”

The amendment was approved on a majority vote, with 3 against and 3 abstentions. The Chairman said the Committee would need to refer the matter to the Charity Commissioners and take advice.

6. Any other business

No matters had been formally notified in advance, but various points were raised in an informal discussion.

(i) Sound systems. Judith Vernier mentioned that members with various degrees of hearing loss were having difficulties at some venues. Only venues with a reliable loop system would enable them to hear speakers, and it was not always made clear beforehand whether this was available. She requested that where the U3A uses various
premises (other than members’ own homes) any publicity should include whether or not there is a loop system available. The Chairman said the Committee would discuss this and produce a list of venues.

(ii) Executive Committee. Pat Ryan thanked the Committee members who were stepping down.

(iii) Membership. Margaret Bullivant asked what the current criteria in relation to addresses/postcodes were for accepting new members, saying the Travel Group received applications from people who lived in different areas but gave a Sheffield address of a friend or relative. John Lees, who had provided the recommendations when he was previously a Committee member, said that at that time people outside of Sheffield were taking advantage of the Travel Group, and that the problem had obviously re-emerged. The current rule was that anyone who could realistically travel to Sheffield for a normal day’s Group activity could join SU3A.

The Chairman said that the new Committee would reconsider the matter from all aspects of modern life. She mentioned that the rule might be superseded by the proposed Travel Network, where any unfilled places on visits might be offered to other U3As

(iv) Book of Remembrance. Shelagh Woolliscroft drew members’ attention to the Book which was available for inspection in the hall.

(v) Links. The Chairman mentioned that Links was only being produced 4 times a year instead of 6 because of a shortage of volunteers. A member suggested that a professional printer could be employed.

The Chairman thanked Ann Barclay for her work as Minute Secretary.

Chairman’s Annual Report for the AGM 2016
Sheffield U3A continues to grow in both numbers and group activities. 2015’s membership was 3223 with 195 active groups. As we draw to the end of the membership renewal period, members choosing to renew or join online is 2037, a great help that reduces the burden on our volunteers who help with the running of our U3A. As our numbers increase the Executive Committee debated and decided that we would not change the boundary criteria for membership of SU3A, following the U3A principle of being open and inclusive.

As we continue to grow, communication with members is critical and we continue to utilise our website, emails and the Links magazine. The EC discussed and took the decision in late 2014/early 2015 to reduce the number of Links publications to 4 due to the pressure on our volunteers. In late 2015, we introduced a Links Open Groups Supplement magazine which will be produced by the Open Groups for the Open Groups twice a year along with 4 publications of the Links magazine.

This means that members will still receive a magazine every two months. This has made life easier for the travel schedules for our Open Groups and has also created space and opportunities within Links to highlight the activities of individual members as well as group activities.

The monthly Drop-Ins continue to be very active with a new organiser, volunteers old and new and the presence of EC members and General Coordinators to speak to any new or existing members, as well as supporting our local university students with their projects. 2015 saw our members involved in seven of these projects. We continue to provide IT/Web support on these mornings and these have proved to be extremely popular with our members. Existing groups continue to meet and we have seen the introduction of an eclectic mix of new groups from Learning How to be Retired to Mah Jong. All groups continue to be ably supported by our three General Group Coordinators as well as the EC when required.

In the spirit of self-learning and self-development some members went further afield from Sheffield and attended and enjoyed summer schools organised by the Yorkshire and Humber Region (YAHIR) in Barnsley and Third Age Trust (TAT) in Cirencester. Two new-member meetings and a coordinators meeting were held
and the feedback received showed them to be very useful to the members who attended. The feedback on the subject of volunteers from the coordinators meeting was particularly pleasing and very useful. On this topic we have seen a slow but steady increase in our number of volunteers due to the hard work of many officers and non-officers of SU3A. We still need more but are confident that we will slowly but surely increase these numbers with the support of a newly created non-officer role of Volunteer Coordinator.

Many of our members join the U3A movement to increase their social contacts. They may be new to Sheffield or have lost loved ones and are on their own. The Open Groups activities and the Drop-Ins provide an opportunity to do this. In total the Open Groups (Travel Group, Weekenders, European Travel Group, Classical Concertgoers, Steel City Wanderers, Friday Lectures, Lunch and Lecture and Study Days) provided over 40 opportunities for our members to participate in a wide variety of events and excursions during 2015. Our members who have taken these opportunities have reported how well organised, informative and enjoyable they found them.

2015 saw SU3A celebrate some of its longest serving members and the EC decided that any members over 90 yrs of age would receive free membership and become honorary members of our organisation. To date we have 47 honorary members.

The facilities provided by Room 50 (Victoria Hall), which is open to all groups to hold their meetings, are proving to be useful. The lease to use this room was renewed for another year until June 2016 despite the current charges not meeting the full cost of the lease. Though we have seen an increase in usage and it is now used on a regular basis by several groups as well as the EC, and used for storage of SU3A equipment and files, we still need to increase it. For groups to rent the room the cost remains at £10.00 for a two hour session. 2015 has also seen the start of a review of our constitution based on the national template for all U3As provided by Third Age Trust (TAT). Our constitution was last reviewed in 2004 and we will be following the legal guidelines as laid out by TAT whilst trying to retain flexibility for the running of our SU3A. TAT at the time of this report was in talks with the Charity Commission to ensure their guidelines are up to date.

Another topic that has been debated by the EC is that of paid tutors, following not only revised guidelines but also a strongly worded recommendation from TAT, that U3A groups should not accommodate groups with paid tutors as this is against the fundamental principle of the U3A movement, namely of self-help and self-development and can lead to problems with insurance and HM Revenue & Customs. The EC has discussed this topic and sought guidance from TAT as we in Sheffield have some groups who pay for tuition and have been successful in receiving from TAT some flexibility and strict guidelines for these groups to continue with paid tutors. At the time of this report the EC were nearing the end of their communications with these groups.

It may seem to some members that there has been an increase in the rules, regulations and guidelines required for running SU3A. This is not necessarily so. As the requirements to meet the Charity Commissions regulation change and guidelines or regulations from TAT are amended, we in the SU3A have to be flexible and accommodate them. In doing so we ensure that we do not jeopardise our charity status, we maintain the fundamental principles of the U3A movement, and we ensure that our members retain relevant insurance cover for our group activities and protect our coordinators and trustees (EC members).

On behalf of the EC, I thank all our group coordinators for offering such a wide variety of activities; the Open Groups who work so hard and spend a great deal of time in organising events; the General Coordinators for supporting our groups; all our volunteers who beaver away in the background whether they be members of our refreshment team or non-EC officers, the Wild Apricot team who have
successfully provided support to ensure almost 70% of our members have or will have renewed or joined online. All of you have made SU3A the envy of other U3As in our region and nationally.

Finally, I must thank my fellow EC members who have investigated the pros and cons of each topic brought up, voiced their opinions and thrown themselves into debates making my first year as Chairman both fruitful and enjoyable.

Samina Aslam, Chairman
19 January 2016

Annual General Meeting:
Wednesday 18 May 2016
1st Floor, Central United Reformed Church
Entertainment from 10.30 followed by the AGM.
Drumming, Old Time Music Hall and Singing for Pleasure.
Compere: Pat Ryan
Please come along and support your SU3A

NOMINATION FORM FOR ELECTION TO
SHEFFIELD U3A COMMITTEE 2016
To be returned by Friday 22 April 2016 to the Secretary:
Jenny Graaf, 12 Hayfield Close, Dronfield Woodhouse, Dronfield, S18 8RP.
Name of person nominated ...........................................................................
Address ........................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................
SU3A membership number ..................... Tel No .................................
Groups to which nominee belongs ................................................................
..............................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................
Name of Proposer ........................................................................................
SU3A membership number ........................................................................
Signature of Proposer ...................................................................................
Name of Seconder .........................................................................................
SU3A membership number ........................................................................
Signature of Seconder ...................................................................................
I am a member of Sheffield U3A and agree to be nominated as a candidate for election to the Committee of Sheffield U3A at the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 18 May 2016.
Signature of Nominee ................................................. Date .................

Independent Examiner’s Report to the Members of the Sheffield University of the Third Age
I have reviewed the income and expenditure accounts for the year ended 31 December 2015 and the balance sheet as at that date and report as follows:-

Respective Responsibilities of the Executive Committee and the Examiner
The charity’s trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity’s trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993) (the Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to examine the accounts (under section 43(3)(a) of the Act); follow the procedures specified in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 43(7)(b) of the Act) and state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report
My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Direction given by the Charity Commissioners and included a review of the accounting records and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the Act have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: Bob Mellers 19th February 2016
12 Ryefield Gardens,
Sheffield, S11 9UD