

Minutes of Banbridge and District u3a Meeting
Tuesday 12th September 2023
Bannside Presbyterian Church Hall

1. Present

There were 50 members in attendance plus four visitors.

2. Apologies

Ken Barrett, Austin Corbett, Pearl Johnston, Joan Howlett, Gillian Mitchell, Mary McClean, Susan McGaw, Patricia Reid, Caroline Sadler, and Annette Smyth.

3. Welcome from the Chair

Veronica welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new season, familiar faces, and new members, including our speaker, Deborah Martinet. She made a special mention of our retiring Treasurer, who with his wife Joan, will be returning to England in the near future. Adrian was a founding member of Banbridge U3A and over the years has served as a committee member with periods when he was Secretary and at other times as our Treasurer. Veronica thanked Adrian for his wise wisdom and service over the years and wished both him and Joan good health and happiness for the future. This was affirmed by rapturous applause from the meeting.

4. Business

a) Committee Membership With the recent retirement of three committee members there are now vacancies, and it is important to fill these. We particularly welcome men to the role, so we can have a balanced range of views and ideas. Please consider this and if anyone male or female would like further information please speak to Veronica or any committee member.

b) U3A Insurance A question had been asked recently about U3A insurance cover. Veronica explained that U3A insurance cover applies to all U3A members, for example should you be sued for something you did as part of the organisation. In this instance the group insurance would take effect to protect you. This applies to individual members, interest group facilitators and committee members. There is also public liability, product liability, contents/equipment liability and trustee liability. The insurance cover is world-wide, so is valid in the Republic as it is here.

c) New Interest Groups We are delighted to have two new interest groups – pickleball and cycling. **Pickleball** is fun, social and friendly! The rules are simple, and the game is easy for beginners to learn. Deborah invited anyone interested to give it a try and come along to the Leisure Centre on Thursday mornings from 10:00am to 12:00 when you will be made very welcome.

- d) Cycling Club Those interested in this should come along on Tuesday mornings at 10:30am, meet at Hollie Berries' Tea Rooms, Scarva, all levels of ability are welcome for towpath cycling. Please contact Annette in advance (Tel: 07999492594). Annette and Peter look forward to meeting you for some gentle exercise and chat!
- e) Singing Group This had been a very successful group, however they are currently minus a leader so if your talents lie in that area, please contact Peter Kearns.

Veronica reminded members that anyone can start an interest group, all you need is enthusiasm and some knowledge for the subject area. Some 'start up' monies may be made available. All proposals for a new group should be brought to the Executive Committee for endorsement.

Attention was drawn to the next outing for the history group on Friday 15th please rendezvous at Tesco's small car park, Castlewellan Road at 9:30am. Other groups are as highlighted in the current News Sheet.

5. AOB

Veronica highlighted the Men's Health Fayre on Tuesday 26th September at Dromore Town Hall/Library from 12:00 noon – 7:00pm. Posters were made available.

6. September Speaker

This month we are delighted to extend a very warm welcome to Deborah Martinet, one of our own members. In 2017 Deborah left for Oman to take up a teaching and Assistant headship in Muscat at a newly opened co-educational school. She was there for three years and was involved in setting up the first ever special needs educational provision in the state.

Oman is officially known as the Sultanate of Oman. It is situated on the south-eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula, and spans the mouth of the Persian Gulf. It shares land borders with Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Deborah spoke about the history, culture and personal experiences of her time there and these were supported by some colourful slides. We are delighted that she shared her experiences from the Middle East with us. An additional treat was in store as Deborah had brought along some dates and special treats for us! Most enjoyable.

7. Next General Meeting: Tuesday 10th October, when Sharon Blakely from Lawrencetown Community Centre will be our speaker.