

**MINUTES OF THE U3A GENERAL MEETING  
HELD ON 21st MAY 2015  
AT THE SOL IFACH HOTEL, CALPE**

John Pickford welcomed the 136 members who signed in and 3 new members.

Before the start of the meeting John announced the death of Pat Stuart who was a very long-standing and much loved member of our U3A. Pat and her husband had returned to England but remained in close contact with many of their U3A friends. Condolences have been sent to Ian and family.

**INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER:**

Our speaker today was one of our members David Farmer who gave us a most informative view of a year in his life as Mayor of Shrewsbury. Alderman David Farmer was first elected to the Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council in 1992 and 12 years later was proposed as Deputy Mayor. The following year he and his wife Diana became Mayor and Mayoress of the Borough. Over the years David has worn many hats in serving the local community and although now retired maintains a keen interest in local sports.

David was presented with a bottle by Mike Warnes who gave the vote of thanks.

**APOLOGIES FROM THE COMMITTEE:** Diane Putnam

**CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:**

**MINUTES OF THE APRIL GENERAL MEETING:**

The minutes had been put on the website and circulated. They were proposed by Mike Warnes , seconded by Ray Ellis and signed by the President John Pickford.

**MATTERS ARISING SINCE THE LAST MEETING:**

- Postal Voting Emails: We have looked thoroughly into the background to this matter. Those responsible have apologised for a slight error of judgement and the matter is now closed.
- Questions put to the Mayor: We have the responses from the Town Hall and they are appended at the end of these minutes.
- Keith Wildman, President of AFPO has asked us to let you know, to save any confusion, that their meeting which was going to be held here on Thursday has been moved and will now take place on Tuesday 26th May. Their speaker will be Cathy Humphreys, the 'Loose Woman' columnist of the Costa Blanca News. When the meeting closes AFPO members are invited for a glass of wine with nibbles. This information will be of interest to those members of U3A who are also AFPO members.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- Insurance for members using the Sports Hall and other Council-run facilities: We have been informed that members playing in the Sports Hall (Badminton, Table Tennis or other sports) or participating in other Town Hall venues (swimming etc) must have their own insurance against injury. This reminder has been put on the website and players will be asked to sign that they are aware of this new fact.
- There is a defibrillator on the wall in the Sports Hall and users are reminded of the 112 emergency telephone number. Diane Putnam has informed Group Leaders and it is also suggested that Group

Leaders have a basic knowledge of first aid and subject to the committee approving the cost of printing we will have available some basic first aid information cards that could be used as a reference in the event of an accident.

- U3A Accounts: Following slight criticism previously that maybe our accounts were not totally transparent we have introduced more formal accounts for any activity or group where larger sums of members' monies are generated.

The Committee did make members aware of this matter during a recent previous meeting following suggestions/concerns that 'freebies' were being taken which to the best of your committee's knowledge is definitely not the case. The U3A General and Travel accounts along with accounts from some of the other groups will be audited independently before the AGM and will be available to view by any member at the AGM held in November. Our Policy Amendment book will be updated to reflect this.

- Launch of a new page on the Website: We have created a new page on the U3A website which John Pickford will be looking after. This is entitled 'Members Items for Sale or Exchange' and includes a 'Members Wanted' section. This will be available for all members to use if you have items you wish to sell, exchange, give away or are looking for. You will need to describe the item so it can be listed, a picture may be added as well. Send the details and set an asking price or whether you want to give it away or swap it for something you need. Items will be on the website for up to 60 days and then be automatically deleted if they have not been taken up beforehand.

John is looking for a volunteer to test out this new facility.

**REPORTS:** To save time this month the reports were read out from the front:

Social:

- Today is the signing up day for the summer lunch after the last (June) meeting before the summer break. The menu choices were read out from a poster which had been put on the notice board before the meeting.

Groups: Diane was on holiday in Canada but sent in her report and updated Groups List. (She will be re-designing the Groups List during the summer break):

All group details and news are on the website. Additional items of note are:

- Papercraft Workshop: Liz was at the meeting today taking sign-ups for her next workshop on 4 June
- Diana Farmer is interested in starting a Chess Group later in the year. She had 4 people interested to date and all abilities are welcome
- JUGS ladies' lunch. La Brisa Andaluz on 4th June. Ladies are asked to keep the first Thursday of the month free for future JUGS lunches
- Mens' Dining. 28th May at Hotel Gran Sol
- Lorraine Swan's Beauty class. The first of these is imminent and Lorraine will hold another in the autumn. Contact her directly if you are interested.

Travel:

- 31 May Northern Spain and Southern France. Still a few places left
- 24 June Manises/Albufera/Cullera: 1 place only available
- 24 September a subsidised day trip to Elche. Do as you please (Palm gardens, or the Elche historical sights. 28 signed up and room for 27 more
- Med Cruise in October. A few places available with price on request.

All complete trip details are on the website and there is a suggestion box available at the travel desk.

### **Culture and Publicity:**

May begins the period of fewer local concerts leading up to the summer. The brochure from the Casa has not yet been finalized. Items of interest this month (already circulated to the cultural interest group) are :

24 May at Pedreguer the Montgo Choral performing 'The Armed Man'. Highly recommended as the acoustics at the church are special

30 May at the Casa is a musical concert in aid of poor local families: free but expect donations

23/24 June Bonfires of St John on the beach

28 June Coral Ifach Choir Concert at the Casa

9-12 July dates set for Andalusian Fair

16 July feast of Virgen del Carmen at the Port

28 July annual visit of the Cologne Philharmonic Orchestra featuring a concert from 9.30 at the Casa costing 17 euros for pensioners

23 May final charity concert of the summer season of the Costa Blanca Male Voice Choir. 7 pm in Salon de Actos in Teulada at 7 pm.

**Membership:** Teresa reported 3 new members today. We now have 532 paid-up members.

**Treasurer:** Edith reported a healthy balance of around 6,000€.

### **AOB:**

Peter Purvey said a few words about his New Discussion Group. The membership has dwindled for various reasons and Peter would like another 4 or 5 members to make a more meaningful discussion. The next session will be on Thursday 28th May and the topic will be Migration / Immigration / Integration and all are welcome at Peter's home.

Peter also asked a few pertinent questions: Most of the audience can download items from the website, most belong to more than one group but a disappointing few looked at their Group Leaders' webpages!

### **NEXT MEETING:**

The last meeting before the summer break will be on Thursday 18th June when our speaker will be Michael Bullied, a barrister/QC who will be talking about some of the more interesting cases he has been involved with.

The date of our October meeting has been changed to 8th October when our speaker will be Andrew Johnson.

Janet Bond, Secretary  
22 May 2015

Proposed: David Stockton

Seconded: Barbara Turner

Signed: John Pickford

**QUESTIONS FOR THE ALCALDE**

1. Could the local police pay more passing interest to the 'Free Parking Area' behind the Sol Ifach Hotel, Calle Castellion and Alfas de Pi?

2. Every Saturday now the young people turn up in their cars and have a drinking party and play loud music from their cars before going to the local discos. The residents are using ear plugs to try and have some sleep after 1 am?

*Answer: The police pass by that area regularly at the weekend. If there are problems with noise the neighbours must call the local police and ask them to pass by. The call is recorded and the local police have to act on it. If you do not tell the local police they cannot act on it.*

3. Whilst the town hall claims that the visiting Portuguese students will add 1.5 million euros to the Calpe coffers, who actually benefits from this other than supermarkets and hotels?

*Answer: The Portuguese students are told to bring 300€ each to spend. There were 7,000 here this year. They spent over 2,000,000 euros in the town. All the local businesses at La Fossa beach made more money in a week than they had made in the first 3 months of the year. The Portuguese will probably go to Benidorm next year.*

4. The parking spaces have been commandeered by the coaches leaving the poor old residents to fend for themselves amid the noise and the piles of beer cans.

*Answer: This year the coaches were parked on the land owned by the Esmeralda Group.*

5. We would like to know what Calpe is going to do about the problem of dog excrement on the streets and pavements.....We have personally witnessed dog owners allowing their pets to foul pavements and then doing nothing to clean it up. There is another town in the Costa Blanca that has introduced compulsory DNA registration of all dogs (who have owners). Then if dog poo is found on the street a DNA sample is taken and compared with the database so the dog in question (and thus the owner ) is uniquely identified. Then the owner is fined for allowing his dog to foul a public place. Can Calpe adopt the same idea?

*Answer: The Town Hall has distributed hundreds of dog pooh bins through the town and is about to put out more. The situation has improved 100%. DNA testing is totally unfeasible because of the amount of visiting dogs in the town.*

6. Since the 'rejuvenation' of the town centre until the present day how many car parking spaces have been lost and how many new ones created?

*Answer: The original rejuvenation of the town was not implemented by the present government and it is considered that approximately 150 parking spaces were lost 5 years ago. The present road works have not lost any parking spaces.*

7. How much is the cycle track costing between the Consum roundabout and the town centre and on average how many cyclists a day does he think will use it?

*Answer: The Cycle track cost 250,000 euros, a large portion of it being paid for by the Generalitat.*

8. What are the Town Hall plans for Avenida del Puerto in the fishing harbour? Recently the pavement outside the Arrozeria at the top of the avenida has been doubled in width which has resulted

in the loss of the off-road bus stop and car parking space. Now buses and delivery lorries have to wait in the road.

*Answer: This is at the moment being worked-on.*

9. What is the current financial position of Calpe and how do you see the next 5 years developing?

*Answer: The Town Hall is 900,000 euros in the BLACK at the moment. We committed the town to enter the Central Government Plan Ajuste for town Halls on the brink of bankruptcy 4 years ago. We are not allowed to overspend by order of the Government and the Town Accounts are sent quarterly to Madrid to be checked. We have reduced the debt by 20 million.*

10. Are there any major development plans for Calpe?

*Answer: The only major development at the moment is that of the 4-star hotel.*

11. When will the side roads and urbanizations be re-surfaced and repaired?

*Answer: A large proportion of them have been resurfaced and all will be done so by the end of the year. This is being done in three phases.*

12. When is the fountain the Plaza Mayor planned to function again?

*Answer: It will cost 50,000 euros to repair the fountain. It will be done as soon as funds are available.*

13. Some potholes and annoying cracks in the road go unattended to for months. The police are constantly driving along Calpe's roads, would it be too much to ask them to report any really bad patches to the highways dept?

*Answer: Yes!!!*