

Asociación Social de la Tercera Edad de Jávea

Minutes of General Assembly Meeting 27th September 2017

Committee Present:

President:	Eric Atkins
Vice President	Guy Marriott
Secretary:	Roy Brown
Treasurer:	Mick Cox
Groups Coordinator:	Karen White
Membership Secretary	Sheila Giacomelli
Communications Officer	Ian Rogerson

Apologies

None

Location:

Parador, Jávea Arenal

The meeting commenced at 11.00am

Welcome

Eric greeted everyone and commented that it was nice to see everyone after the summer break, nice to get our town back from visitors, cars and gridlock, but equally it was a shame to say goodbye to the chiringitos.

Eric then handed over to Mick Cox to say some words regarding the recent demise of Ken Robinson, who had been our auditor for the last 7 years. Mick said that, despite what everyone thinks about accountants, Ken was a gentleman, a kind and calm individual, always there to find the reason why if on the odd occasion a trial account did not balance, and he did this in a calm and friendly manner. Mick, along with many others, had attended Ken's funeral service the day before and he will be well remembered by all that knew him, particularly Mick for all the help he had been given.

This led on to the fact that the U3A now need an auditor for the accounts. This is a once-a-year requirement around the end of January. If anyone here has, or knows of someone, with the necessary credentials to carry out an audit, we would very much appreciate some help. Mick then passed the microphone back to Eric.

Eric reaffirmed the condolences from the committee.

Eric commented that the members present were traditionally a very dedicated group, and always read the minutes, so there was little point in asking whether this was the case. He did ask if there were any objections – there were none.

Two previously chosen but willing volunteers, Alan & Elizabeth Colquhoun were invited to sign off the minutes which were thus duly approved.

Eric announced that collection boxes for the "Make a Smile" charity would be sited on various desks today and in the future, following which he introduced Tony Grande, founder of that organisation, to make a short presentation.

Tony gave the following potted history:-

Tony's journey began some eight years ago when his business was asked to supply four mattresses to a children's home in Benissa. This was a life changing moment both for him and, he hopes, for the children as well – he found the eight children, from ages 7 – 13 were living in appalling conditions. Tony together with friends and support from the local community and businesses, totally refurbished this house over a five week period. Since

then the charity has grown to what it is today, operating 7 houses with 96 children between the ages of 3 months to 18 years. At the age of 18 the children must leave as they become classified as adult, and Spanish law prohibits adults from sleeping in the same accommodation as the children.

There is a broad conception that the children are orphans – they are not. The problem is that all these children do have parents, but all come from hostile backgrounds and have been removed from the family home by social services or the Guardia Civil. All the children have suffered horrendous abuse, every type of abuse you could think of and some that normal minded people would not or could not conceive.

Tony explained the situation with the former management group Emaus, which collapsed two years ago. Since that time, through the generosity of the community and hard work of volunteers the “Make a Smile” charity has supported the children to the sum of €250,000, and hence saved these children from the threat of being dispersed due to a total collapse of funding – neither the social services nor the government had any solution to this dilemma.

From last June a new national management company took over and some support is being received from the regional government, though this will cease at the end of this year. The future is still insecure - there is light at the end of the tunnel but we are not out of the woods yet. Everyone’s support is therefore still essential.

Because of the hostile background there is never any publicity, photographs or release of the addresses that the children live in. A majority of the abusing parents are still looking for their children (mostly because they have lost a source of income)

Charity is one, but not the only solution to our financial problems. These children need to learn how to work, and need to learn to stand on their own two feet. The Farm in Rellu is one way of doing this and currently there are 24 mentally challenged youngsters and a safe house for 12 minors there. At this moment the premises are locked down as a safe house by the new management company and public access is denied. It is hoped that a visit can be organised for later. The other way we raise money is by recycling, - donations of recyclable material are always welcome and a charity shop opened in Teulada last June to further this initiative.

Tony concluded by saying that Make a Smile continues to need volunteers, moral support and definitely financial support. However Make a Smile is a working charity and raising money through recycling and the farm helps in their aim to provide some work experience and self-reliance to the youngsters. He thanked the U3A for inviting him to the meeting and for all their help to date.

Joni pointed out that there are four large bags of donated material for Make a Smile ready for collection.

President’s Report

Eric thanked all the volunteers who had been working flat out in the lead up to the meeting.

The high level of programmed events now seen on the website is a clear indication of the work done in the background by the various group leaders. There are also two new groups starting up – see the website for details.

The November meeting is traditionally taken up with the Extravaganza, where the committee make fools of themselves, but this will take a new format this year as Sally Wells feels unable to continue following the death of her husband. We are very lucky that Shirley King has kindly volunteered to put together the program, which will involve known acts and some impromptu sketches. Eric requested that anyone with ideas for sketches should contact Shirley King.

Eric presented the traditional gift to Val Dromgoole, who had recently retired as the Rummikubs 2 group leader.

Eric went on to say that the candidate nomination period for next year's committee starts today. Roger Barkley and Irene Charlesworth had volunteered to be election auditors again. Irene has nomination forms for anyone who may be itching to share the fun of being a committee member.

Yvonne Brown, president of the Benitachell Bowls Club was invited to publicise their Autumn fair, to be held at the club on Sunday 22nd October.

There were 33 new members and 4 renewals today, taking the membership to circa 1400 – an amazing result at this time of the year.

Treasurer's Report

Mick said that there would be no joke today as a mark of respect for Ken Robinson. He reported that figures are good, as (even after his absolutely superb summer holiday) we are currently holding €35,453 and we owe 40.... no, we are holding for travel etc. €18,654 so it can be seen that the balance is positive and the end-of-year projection is good. Mick had nothing more to report.

Eric then introduced our:-

Guest Speaker, Peter Davies – Bill Gates, Steve Jobs and Me

Peter gave a fascinating insight of life at the top in the technology sector, based on his experiences as a company lawyer dealing with Microsoft and Apple, amongst others. Peter finished with a few examples of barrister courtroom gaffes, culminating with a defendant who was representing himself questioning a witness - "Did you get a good look at my face when I stole your handbag".

Thanks

Eric thanked Peter for his talk, and presented him with a gift of (Eric's favourite) wine and also thanked everyone for coming.

The meeting closed at 12:11 pm

Proposed by (print name) Signed

Seconded by (print name) Signed

President..... Secretary