

ISLINGTON U3A

2016/17 ANNUAL REPORT

The Executive Committee of Islington U3A (“iU3A”), being iU3A’s charity trustees, present their report and the accounts in respect of the financial year ended 30 September 2017.

Status

iU3A is an unincorporated association, registered as a charity by the Charity Commission for England and Wales with registration number 1157067. Its correspondence address is 8 College Cross, London N1 1PP and its website address is www.islingtonu3a.org.

Executive Committee

iU3A is managed by its Executive Committee.

The members of the Executive Committee are appointed by the members of iU3A at the Annual General Meeting after a nomination process in accordance with iU3A’s Constitution. Candidates for appointment (who need to be members of iU3A) must be nominated by two iU3A members who are not also members of the Executive Committee. iU3A members are invited to submit nominations and, if there are more nominations than places available, a ballot is held. No such ballot was required in respect of the appointments made at the Annual General Meeting in November 2016.

In addition, the Executive Committee may themselves appoint not more than two co-opted members (who must be members of iU3A) to hold office until the next Annual General Meeting.

Subject as mentioned below, the following served as members of the Executive Committee throughout the 2016/17 financial year:

Officers:

Chair: Anne Weyman
Secretary: Gwen Ovshinsky
Treasurer: Robert Welsford

Other members:

Dee Austin (from 13 March 2017)
Isabel Dickson
Jan Filochowski (from 24 November 2016)
Pauline Frost (until 24 March 2017)
Derek Harwood (from 24 November 2016)
Julie Howell
Julia Rountree (until 24 November 2016)

Rosie Walden (until 24 November 2016)
Margaret Wearing
Sue Welsford

The only change in the membership of the Executive Committee since 30 September 2017 has been the resignation of Jan Filochowski with effect from 2 October 2017 due to pressure of other commitments.

Public benefit

The public benefit role of iU3A is the promotion of education within the London Borough of Islington and its surrounding locality, and in giving effect to this role the Executive Committee have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Objects

The charitable purposes of iU3A as set out in its Constitution are:

“to advance education and in particular the education of people not in full time gainful employment who are in their Third Age (being the period of time after the first age of childhood dependence and the second age of full time employment and/or parental responsibility) residing in Islington and its surrounding locality”.

It meets this object and provides public benefit by enabling members to share their knowledge and experiences and thereby continue to learn, in particular through study and discussion groups and other meetings of members. It also provides opportunities for personal development and social contact at a stage of life when personal horizons and social networks often shrink, leading to social isolation and a deterioration in health and well-being.

Constitution

At the Annual General Meeting held on 24 November 2016 a number of changes were made to iU3A's Constitution. These changes were:

- a) to reduce the quorum for members at a General Meeting such as an Annual General Meeting from 20% to 15%;
- b) to change the gendered language of the Constitution to gender-balanced language, a change that had been requested by a member at the 2015 Annual General Meeting;
- c) to tidy up some superfluous wording in the Constitution; and
- d) to delete section 19 of the Constitution that was no longer relevant.

Activities, achievements and objectives

2016/17 was another successful year for iU3A. As a key part of this programme, an Open Day was held in early October 2016 to promote membership and inform existing members about iU3A activities. In addition iU3A has publicised its activities through leaflets in local libraries and attendance at local events. As a result of these actions and members' recommendations, iU3A membership grew during the year from 500 to 585.

The programme of monthly meetings continued to offer a wide range of external expert speakers and attracted on average an attendance of around 120 members. In addition, new interest groups were established bringing the total to some 60 groups.

A number of special events were organised during the year including two visits to the Park Theatre (one in November 2016 to see "Deny, Deny, Deny" and the other in September 2017 to see a revival of Joe Orton's "Loot"), a very popular pub quiz in early January, a summer party in the lovely Olden Garden and two quiz trails in the City during the summer. There was also a fascinating talk on Swifts and a demonstration of bell-ringing (the latter resulting in a number of members beginning to learn the ropes), as well as coffee mornings hosted by members and pub lunches across the borough enabling members to get to know each other.

The Executive Committee's principal objective for the 2017/18 financial year is a further increase in the membership of iU3A coupled with the establishment of additional interest groups, thus continuing the development of what is still a relatively young organisation.

Finances

At the heart of iU3A's finances is the size of the membership and correspondingly the amount of membership subscriptions it receives. With the increased membership compared with the previous year, subscription income of £16,679.50 showed a healthy increase over the previous year's figure of £14,238.60. However, this was largely balanced out by the fact that no gift aid was reclaimed during the financial year (compared with £2,192.83 that was reclaimed in 2015/16), the level of benefits that members enjoy now exceeding the limit that the gift aid rules permit. There was also an increase in expenditure during the year over that of the previous year (the increase being largely attributable to room hire and meeting expenses) with the result that, excluding the Social Fund, there was an overall deficit for the year of £1,080.21. This deficit was able to be absorbed by the surplus built up over previous years.

During the financial year various grants were received by iU3A. One was a grant of £500 towards the costs of the 2017 Open Day and there were also grants totaling £1,250 towards the costs of the table tennis group. The table tennis grants were expended before the year-end, whilst the Open Day grant was spent in October. The Executive Committee are extremely grateful to the respective donors for the very generous support of iU3A that these grants represent.

Amongst the receipts and payments referred to in the annual accounts are items in respect of Activity receipts and Other activity expenses, being receipts and expenses (other than room hire and meeting expenses) relating to Groups and to activities organised by iU3A or attended by iU3A members. A large part of these receipts and expenses is attributable to external (i.e. non-iU3A) events attended by members of iU3A where bookings for the events were made by iU3A itself and the members attending the relevant events then paid to iU3A the cost of their tickets. Although in the overall context of the accounts the amounts may seem large, the fact that the members pay for the cost of their tickets means that there is no net cost to iU3A in respect of those tickets.

During the year iU3A organised a number of social activities, including the two visits to the Park Theatre, the pub quiz, the summer party and the coffee mornings mentioned above. These events fall outside iU3A's normal educational activities and so a separate fund, the Social Fund, is maintained in the accounts in respect of them and they are paid for out of that fund. There was a surplus on the Social Fund for the 2016/17 year of £455.25 (2015/16: £231.43).

Any balance on the Social Fund can be expended on any of the activities of iU3A and not just social events. However, the Executive Committee consider it prudent to maintain a reserve on the Social Fund of at least £500 in order to provide flexibility for future social events needing to be paid for out of that Fund. As at 30 September 2017 the balance on the Social Fund was £919.81 (30 September 2016: £464.56), which was some £420 in excess of that reserve target, and it is intended that this surplus will in due course be set against future events.

The Executive Committee consider that at the present time the maintenance of total reserves (including the reserve on the Social Fund) of in the region of £10,000 is desirable in light of the continuing development of iU3A and its activities and the fact that future membership numbers cannot be predicted accurately. At 30 September 2017 iU3A's net assets (including the Social Fund) amounted to £13,451.65 (30 September 2016: £14,076.61), which was somewhat higher than this reserves target. It is too early to tell whether (and, if so, when) an increase in subscriptions may be needed, although the Executive Committee are hopeful that the level of the reserves as at the end of the 2016/17 financial year means that it will not be necessary to increase the membership subscription above its current level for the 2018/19 financial year.

iU3A is a voluntary organisation that is run by and for its members. The Executive Committee are grateful to all the Group Coordinators and other members who contribute so much of their time, energies and expertise in organising and maintaining iU3A's activities.

This report was approved by the Executive Committee on 25 October 2017.

Anne Weyman
Chair

Robert Welsford
Treasurer