

DELEGATES MEETING

26 January 2018

Canada Water Library, 21 Surrey Quays Road, SE16 7AR

MINUTES

Present:

Chair: Catherine Ware
Vice-Chair South: Rona Black
Vice-Chair North: Marjorie Power
Hon. Treasurer: Jim Jenkins
Hon. Secretary: Sylvia Stirling
Outreach Liaison: Liz Day
Membership Secretary: Jo Livingston
Web-master: Michael Black
SLP Co-ordinator: Jo Walters
Regional Trustee: John Bent

Abbey Wood: David Cross
Barnet: Jim Jenkins
Beckenham: Win Casey, Sally Stalley
Bexley: Jo Livingston
Crouch End: Sue Felgate, Sally Whitaker
Croydon: Jenny Wilson
Dulwich & District: Liz Day
Ealing: Michael Black, Sylvia Stirling
Hackney: Barry Blinks
Hammersmith & Fulham: Graham Tigg, Angela Elkholy, Sue Adams
Harrow: Gwen Wright, Kathy Westhead
Havering: John Gordon
Hounslow: Gail Hebert
Islington: Chris Bulford, Derek Harwood
Kingston: Ireni Esler
London South East: Roger Mead
Merton: Rosemary Mattock, Robert Cole
North London: Sue Collingridge, Estelle Cohn
Orpington: Frank Rowe
Palmers Green & Southgate: Mike Bleach, Pat Bleach
Stanmore: Brian Prince
Sutton: Elizabeth Aumer
U3A in London: Jenni Bartlett
Waltham Forest: Barbara Humm
Wandsworth: Andy Crane, Sue Leigh

Wanstead & Woodford: Win Smith

Welling: Marlene Harmer, Laurence Harmer
SE London Network: Angela Brown
SW London Consortium: Sue Leigh
North London Network: Sue Collingridge

Apologies for absence were received from:

Summer School Co-ordinator: Chris Feldman
Barnet: Martha-Anne Montlake, Terry Palmer
Bexley: Jean Playford
Bromley: Shirley Eagar
Dulwich: Roman Bednarz, Lore Arthur
Ealing: John Moore
Enfield: Joy Lewis, Frances Pope
Hampstead Garden Suburb: Daphne Berkovi
Haringey: Sheila Forteau
Hillingdon: Judy Peddie
Hounslow: Eileen Marsh
London South-East: Eileen Wyatt
North London: Patricia Isaacs
Sutton: Debbie Edwards, Doris Richards
Wandsworth: Jane Castle
Wanstead & Woodford: Sue Waite

No representative or apology received:

Brent, Kenton & District
Hillingdon South; Mill Hill; Norwood;
Northwood; Redbridge & District;
Richmond; Sidcup & District;
Tower Hamlets
Upminster

1/18 **Introduction of new Committee Members (Item 1)**

Catherine Ware, Chair, welcomed Delegates to the meeting and noted that this was the first Delegates Meeting since the AGM in November.

She introduced the new Committee, elected at that AGM, but reported that unfortunately Carole Schomberg, who had been elected as Delegates Liaison, had had to resign. Mike Black, the Webmaster had also indicated the need to resign but had kindly agreed to stay on a little longer in the hope that a replacement could be found. The London Region of U3As was very grateful to him for everything he had done on the website over the years.

2/18 **Apologies for absence (Item 2)**

Apologies for absence are given above.

3/18 **Minutes of the Delegates Meeting held on 7 July 2017 (Item 3)**

As the Delegates Meeting held in October was the AGM, the Chair referred to the Minutes of the previous Delegates Meeting held on 7 July 2017. These were approved as a correct record.

4/18 **Matters Arising from the Minutes not otherwise covered in the Agenda (Item 4)**

Arising from Minute 8, Communications Survey Results: The Chair referred to the Communications Survey carried out by Jim Jenkins, and said that various points would be followed up, as communications remained an important issue. The Committee would be looking at ways to improve communication, but she reminded Delegates of the importance of passing on information they received to their Committees and memberships.

5/18 **Chair's Report (Item 5)**

- (1) The Chair's report was contained with other reports in a document disseminated with the Agenda. This was intended to enable Delegates to come to the meetings better informed, and to reduce the amount of time taken in verbal reports, so as to free up time for new interactive discussion, presentations and other activities. Verbal reporting should therefore concentrate on highlights and additional information.
- (2) She highlighted the monthly U3A national email Newsletter as a new means of communication from National Office directly with all U3A members, and she asked Delegates to tell their members how they can subscribe via the national website – which is gradually being redeveloped. Liz Drury, the new Communications Officer of the Third Age Trust, had expressed an interest in attending a London Region Delegates meeting later this year.
- (3) The Chair reminded Delegates about the London Region Summer School (31 July-2 August) and that online booking would be launched in mid-February on the Events page of the London Region website. Chris Feldman, who has retained his role as Coordinator of the Summer School, had already received about 200 expressions of interest following dissemination of the advance publicity poster.

6/18 **Treasurer's Report (Item 6)**

- (1) The Treasurer's written report was disseminated with others prior to the meeting. He reminded Delegates that the timing of the Financial Year and reporting to Delegates had been discussed at the last AGM.
- (2) With the Financial Year ending on 31 March (as specified in the Constitution), Delegates had been asked at October AGMs to approve accounts that related to a financial period which had ended some seven months previously. Importantly, the accounts received at the AGM did not include the most recent Summer School, where the greatest movement in finances occurred.
- (3) In order to overcome this problem, it was proposed that the Financial Year be moved to run from 1 September to 31 August. This proposal would require a change to our Constitution, to be voted on at the next Delegates meeting, in which a section would be designated an Extraordinary General Meeting, to take this vote.
- (4) If approved at the EGM, the Financial Year for 2017-18 would, exceptionally, run an extra 5 months from 1 April 2017 to 31 August 2018 (thus reporting on two Summer Schools). Thereafter, our Financial Year would revert to 12 months, ending on 31 August.

7/18 **Trustee's Report (Item 7)**

- (1) John Bent was elected as London Region Trustee at the July 2017 Delegates meeting. As such, he explained that he is a member of the National Executive Committee of the Third Age Trust, representing the interests of U3As in the London Region constituency. There are 12 constituencies – 9 English Regions and 3 Countries. The Trust does not govern U3As but provides advice and support as required.
- (2) As an *ex officio* member of the Committee of the London Region of U3As, the Trustee is able to provide advice and support and act as an intermediary for communications between the Committee and the Trust. The Trustee's attendance at Delegate meetings provides a convenient way of communicating information simultaneously from the Trust to all U3As in London, and vice versa.
- (3) The website for the Third Age Trust was being up-dated: <https://u3a.org.uk/> and it was hoped U3A Committees would consult it, as there was a lot of useful information concerning management of U3As.
- (4) The Trustee section of the reports, disseminated with the Agenda, contained the new 'Object Clause,' that had been agreed by the Trust with the Charity Commission on behalf of U3As in England and Wales. If U3As wished to opt in to this agreement, they should inform the National Office by 20 March 2018, and the Third Age would include them in the blanket "opt in" to the new Object Clause from 1 April 2018.
- (5) It was noted that some U3As, when preparing accounts, simply put in a net figure for income or expenditure, without showing the working. In each case the total income and total expenditure related to the event should be recorded, and the net figure is the balance.

- (6) The U3A Plus initiative aims to advise and support U3As to ensure that all their members can access activities regardless of impairment or disability. A new website has been launched: <https://plus.u3a.org.uk/>
- (7) The National Executive Committee had started to prepare the Trust's next Strategic Plan and were undertaking a 'SWOT' analysis to consider Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to the U3A. Although not on our Agenda, John asked Delegates to contribute. A lively discussion followed (see appendix attached) but because it was unscheduled, there was only time for a brief discussion of the Strengths and Weaknesses.

8/18 **Update on Research/Shared Learning Projects and University Links (Item 8)**

- (1) Liz Day reminded Delegates that the study day, 'Active Learning and Research: A Workshop for Enquiring Minds', would take place on Monday 26 February, at the Canada Water Library. Many people had already signed up for the event, and she was considering whether the event should be repeated because of demand. Details are at the end of these Minutes.
- (2) Jo Livingston reported that she now had about 100 names on her panel of volunteers offering advice to universities about how they word and frame research projects involving older people.
- (3) A new research project at the University of Roehampton is at last providing opportunities for panel volunteers in the SW London.
- (4) She was also now in touch with the Societal Engagement Team at Imperial College and hoped to expand U3A links with them too.

9/18 **Reports from Vice Chair & Local Networks North of Thames (Item 9)**

- (1) Marjorie Power referred to her report disseminated with the Agenda, and said that she was delighted to meet so many Delegates at her first meeting as Vice Chair North of Thames.
- (2) She reported on the two new U3As established in 2017. Hampstead Garden Suburb was confirmed as a member of the Third Age Trust in July and already had 50 interest groups. Crouch End held its inaugural meeting in September and already had 400 members with more than 40 interest groups.
- (3) She drew attention to the U3A in London's Easter Conference entitled "How the World Has Changed". The event would be held from 3 - 5 April at the Old town Hall, Belsize Park. It is a non-residential conference costing £45 for three days, which includes lunch on two days. These very successful conferences had been run for some 20 years. Full details and an Application Form are on the London Region's website, and on the U3A in London website. Bookings were already coming in fast and as spaces were limited, she asked Delegates to publicise the event and encourage early booking.

- (4) *North London Network*
Patricia Isaacs had sent a report for dissemination with the agenda but was unable to attend the meeting, so additional notes were read by Sue Collingridge.
- (5) The North London Network members had met the previous on 19th January and had been happy to welcome John Bent and Marjorie Power who had both provided useful information and advice. Network members had been surprised to learn that they were the only network north of the river.
- (6) The network started by Patricia about 2 years ago. Despite changes when U3A Chairs had retired, the network was a continuing unit and Patricia found it hard to believe that other networks North of the River had not developed. Chairs met three times a year but any network member could contact any others if they needed advice or support. They currently had an informal approach, although they provided an agenda and minutes. They would, after the next Network Link meeting in May, discuss whether they would put their network on a more formal footing. Patricia's personal view was that their present arrangement worked well, and a more formal organisation would involve significantly more work. It could be difficult to find people to take that on, as everyone was busy, but they would give it consideration.
- (7) *North West London Network*
As indicated in the report disseminated with the Agenda, formation of this network appears to have stalled. However, Gwen Wright, Delegate for Harrow who originally tried to set it up, said at the meeting that she would be prepared to try and resurrect it if U3As in the area would contact her.

10/18 **Report from Vice Chair & Local Networks South of Thames (Item 10)**

- (1) Rona Black, Vice-Chair, South of Thames, referred to her report circulated with the Agenda. She said that she was getting to know the different U3As. She felt the South-East Network was working well and the AGM had been well attended. There had been a recruiting event for Dulwich & District U3A at Tesco's to raise the profile of U3A.
- (2) She would be happy to attend meetings of U3As south of the river to meet members, and to learn about activities that were taking place. There were three networks south of the river, and she hoped to find out what they were doing, and who their contacts were.
- (3) *SW London Network*
Sue Leigh referred to her report that was disseminated with the Agenda and added that, following a meeting with Roehampton University on 17th January, the following are under discussion:
- a) Seminar take-up: it was felt that attendance at lunch-time seminars offered to U3A members had been very low due to the specialised nature of the topics. However, it was decided to continue with a shorter list of more general topics.
 - b) A Study Day for U3As, based at the university, is being considered for Autumn Term Reading Week 2018.
 - c) Talks by university staff on a subject of their specialism, could be requested by individual U3A interest groups in the area.

- d) Research on the Hearth Tax SLP was likely to be extended to other parishes in the London area.
- (4) *BOB Network*
There was nothing to add to the report by Janet Holmes disseminated with the Agenda, but Wyn Casey (Beckenham U3A) indicated there was some confusion about who should be the main network contact/representative at regional level.
- (5) *Greater London South East London Network*
Angela Brown, Network Chair, read a report to say that good communications was retained with their members through *Network News* – all members can subscribe to this via Network website.
- (6) Suggestions from the membership have led to 4 future events in planning stages:
- a) A Membership Database workshop on 14th March will look at various systems including Beacon. John Hopkins from the Beacon team will present, thanks to an introduction by John Bent
 - b) A Garden workshop in conjunction with Coolings Garden Centre in Kent on 26th April.
 - c) A Study day with SE London U3A on Women's suffrage. Date to be Confirmed.
 - d) A Shared Learning Project with the South London Botanical Institute. Date to be confirmed.

11/18 **London Region and Networks (Regional & Local) (Item 11)**

- (1) Following on from her report about the Network Links meeting in November (see Chair's report disseminated with the Agenda), Catherine Ware gave a presentation to explain the differences between Countries/Regions as constituencies of Third Age Trust administration, and the diverse types of networking groups that have developed for mutual support outside the Trust's governance structure.
- (2) The presentation described how Trust and 'networks' co-exist in the geographical area known as the London Region. In addition to the Trust's London Region constituency, there is the regional 'network' which exists for the mutual support of all U3As in the London Region. (London is one of only three Trust constituencies with regional 'networks' -- the other two being Scotland and Northern Ireland).
- (3) The London regional 'network' was previously called 'The Greater London Forum of U3As' but the current constitution, confusingly, renamed it as 'London Region'. [Informally, it is also referred to as the 'London Region of U3As'].
- (4) In addition, there are currently 5 local 'networks' in the London Region area. The presentation described some of the complimentary benefits of networking both at regional and local levels.
- (5) The intention had been to follow the presentation with open discussion, but this was unfortunately not possible due to lack of time. Catherine offered to make the presentation available on the website, and as a PDF for dissemination with the Minutes. More time will be made available for discussion at the next Delegates meeting in April.

12/18 London Region Network Communications (Item 12)

- (1) Mike Black, Webmaster, provided a quick demonstration of the London Region website. He showed a statistical report of 'hits' to various pages of the website over the past year, which indicate:
- A pleasing increase in Home Page visits over the year.
 - The most popular pages are 'Events' and 'London U3As'
 - The 'Events' page probably attracts many visits because of the of the Summer School, as the 'hits' are highest in those months when people are booking (Feb-May), but hits are also relatively high at other times, indicating that visitors are looking to see what's on.
 - The high number of visits to 'London U3As' indicates that visitors are using the website to find where U3As are located. Are these visitors looking for a U3A to join? The heaviest use was in Aug-Nov last year – is this the time of year when people are considering joining?
- (3) He urged Delegates to circulate their memberships and encourage someone to come forward to take over as Webmaster. He said that the Site Builder software was easy to manage. However, from what he had seen, he also felt that those U3As using other software had rather more attractive websites. Mike particularly invited Delegates to make suggestions for how the website could be improved. More time will be made available for discussion at the next Delegates meeting in April.

13/18 Any Other Business (Item 13)

- (1) A London-wide Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Group had been established by Maggie Jones, of Wandsworth U3A. The Group was open to all U3A members in London, whether LGBT not. For further information or to contact Maggie Jones go to <http://u3asites.org.uk/wandsworth/page79610> and click on the blue bird, top right of page, to send a message.
- (2) A Music Study Day is planned for 19 May, to be held at King's Place. The event is being organised by Gwen Wright, and she is looking for two more presenters. She asked Delegates to circulate their membership with this information. There is no set theme this year. For expressions of interest and further information please email Gwen at gwen.wright@virgin.net,

14/18 Dates of Next Delegates Meetings (Item 14)

Please note revised time of meetings:

April, Friday 20th, 2.00 - 4.00 p.m.

July, Wednesday, 11th, 2.00-4.00 p.m.

October (AGM), Friday, 19th, 2.00 - 4.00 p.m.

Forthcoming Events:

Active Learning & Research: A workshop for enquiring minds

Monday, 26 February 2018, 10.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Canada Water Library

Online booking <https://u3asites.org.uk/london-region/events> or further information from liz@the-days.org.uk.

London Region Summer School Tuesday, 31 July - Thursday, 2 August 2018, at the St Bride Foundation. Further details and online booking mid-February. To register interest now, contact Chris Feldman cchris@waitrose.com

Trustee's Report (Item 7)

John Bent, London Region Trustee for the Third Age Trust, had been asked to do a Strengths and Weaknesses analysis of items listed in the U3A Mission Statement. Delegates contributed to the discussion as follows:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
1. FACILITATE THE GROWTH OF THE U3A MOVEMENT	
Increasing number of older people in the population	U3A is not generally well known
Retired and semi-retired population is increasing	U3A members are predominantly middle-class, and the movement is not diverse
The U3A movement is spread throughout the country, so there is full national coverage	
Computer literacy is growing	Websites should be “buzzier”
A Minister for Loneliness has just been appointed – Tracy Crouch should be approached	U3A websites made with Site Builder not very attractive
Self-help organisation, self-financing and therefore not answerable to government	
2. SUPPORT LEARNING IN U3A AND PROMOTE BENEFITS OF SELF-HELP LEARNING	
Wealth of expertise amongst the membership	Not universally applied in individual U3As
Networks of U3As	Silo working
3. PROVIDE ADVICE AND SUPPORT FOR MANAGEMENT OF U3AS	
Well established and reviewed model (Committee Reference File is on national website)	Poor perception of the Third Age Trust by those who know of it
	Poor perception of Trustees
Coterie of volunteers set up to help start-up U3As	Membership do not know much about the Third Age Trust
National Office staff are all listed on the website	U3As do need support when starting a U3A
Insurance is covered, and Charities Commission registration is all done by the National Office	
4. RAISE THE PROFILE OF THE U3A MOVEMENT THROUGHOUT THE UK	
Opportunities for U3As to self-publicise	Not currently set up to take advantage of opportunities
Realisation that U3A is self-help and need to do things ourselves	Need to raise the profile in the UK to help individual U3As raise their own profiles
Recognition that we can do things ourselves and can start up new groups	
New members’ meetings – importance of welcome to new members emphasized	