

u3a Annual Report for year ended 31st August 2021

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Address of Honorary/Business Secretary: 13 Gainsborough Road, Crawley RH10 5LD.

Independent Examiner: ASBA Accounting Ltd, 2 Furnace Parade, Furnace Green, Crawley RH10 6NX.

Bankers: Lloyds Bank plc Registered Office: 25 Gresham Street, London EC2V7HN

Report of the Trustees For thirteen months ended 31st August 2021

The Trustees present their report and independently examined financial statements for the thirteen months to 31st August 2021

Legal Status

An organisation called 'Learning in Later Years' was founded in 1981. This became the 'Crawley University of the Third Age' when it affiliated to the Third Age Trust in March 1985 and was registered as a charity by the Charity Commission on 24th November 1993. The charitable purposes of the U3A are: 'the advancement of education and, in particular, the education of older people and those who are retired from full time work by all means, including associated activities conducive to learning and personal development. Since last year we have adopted a new logo and are now referred to as The Crawley u3a.

Executive Committee Members

George Redgrave	Chairman	Elected 2019/20*
Jim McGough	Vice Chairman	Elected 2019/20*
Alan Pay	Business Secretary	Elected 2019/20*
Phil Light	Treasurer	Retiring 2021
Ann & Stewart Sole	Membership Secretary	Elected 2019/20*
Peter Beckley	Groups Coordinator	Elected 2020/21*
Janet Morris	Communications Coordinator	Retiring 2021

Those marked with * are willing to serve another year.

The elected Executive Committee members are all Trustees of the Charity. Crawley u3a can have between 5 and 10 elected Executive Committee Members. We have also elected a non-voting President; Maureen Wicks. In addition, there are others that help the Committee:

Name	Role	Reporting to:
Vacant	Assistant Treasurer	Treasurer
Vacant	Events Coordinator	
Vacant	Newsletter Editor	
Vacant	Minutes Secretary	

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Anne Thorn	Beacon Administrator	Membership Secretary
Stuart Spreadborough	Webmaster	Communications Coordinator
Mavis Liddell	Welfare Support	Groups Coordinator
Elsa Tancock	Welfare Support	Groups Coordinator
Maggie Berrill	SUN Representative	Chairman
Maggie Berrill	Seasonal Outings	Groups Coordinator
Ann Sole	Member Support	Membership Secretary
Liz Tennant	Speaker Organiser	Events Coordinator
Isabel Baker	SE Forum	Chairman
Really Useful Group (RUG)		Events Coordinator

The officers and committee members are elected by the members at the Annual General Meeting and hold office for one year but may be eligible for re-election thereafter. They meet together at regular intervals during the year, form the Executive Committee and make all the decisions relating to Crawley u3a. Annually all Committee members are required to affirm that they are not ineligible from being a charity trustee under clause E3 of Charity Publication CC3 and agree to abide by the Constitution of the Society and current edition of its operating procedures. The trustees undertake the affairs of the charity with assistance from some members, these being principally the roles mentioned above and Group Leaders.

Chairman's Foreword

This year has once again been an interesting one with a range of imposed restrictions that we have had to interpret and find the best way forward. In the main, most indoor groups were unable to operate, although in the latter stages, a few ventured to restart, albeit in a restricted way.

The Committee was heavily dependent upon Zoom and often held weekly meetings to discuss the latest restrictions and how to best recommence activities. A highlight for me was u3a day, where Jan and her team of organisers pulled out all of the stops to enable us to show what we do and to encourage new members. Henry Smith MP was present and stayed for a while to discuss our activities and to listen to our talented Ukulele Group providing wonderful entertainment with a range of tunes. Phil managed to organise a walk around historic Crawley which attracted a few potential new members as well as our stalwarts.

Next year will mark a big change to our organisation as a number of those fulfilling important roles are standing down after providing many years of devoted service. I will mention some and hope that those that I have overlooked will forgive my lapse.

Jan Morris who seems to have been doing almost everything this year, not only Communications Coordinator, Minutes Secretary and Newsletter Editor but also introduced and became the Zoom master.

Phil Light, who has done sterling work as our Treasurer has decided to step down and is concentrating on the out and about and ambling groups.

Mavis Liddell and Elsa Tancock, our welfare officers have been a great comfort to our members in times of need. They will be sorely missed and are more than happy to instruct others who are willing to take over the role.

Maggie Berrill is another person who has fulfilled multiple roles to ensure the smooth running of the Crawley u3a. She has decided to relinquish two of those roles; as our representative on the Sussex u3a Network and arranging Seasonal Outings, however, she will continue to lead two Gardening Groups as well as an Out and About Group.

Anne Thorn our Beacon Administrator is stepping down in the near future, but will stay in the role to train her successor and to ensure a smooth transition.

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Several longstanding Group Leaders have stepped down and I would like to thank all of our Group Leaders for their efforts on our members' behalf.

Finally, we sadly lost Beryl Sinclair who not only led Art Appreciation but demonstrated her skills as a fine artist.

We now have many opportunities for members to step into the breach to ensure the future success of the organisation, so please step forward and take on the roles that have become vacant.

Now is a great opportunity for our organisation as next year the u3a will be celebrating its 40th anniversary.

Summary of the Year's Activities

Membership

There are 604 active members but as 2021/22 Membership Renewal is not complete, a precise number is not yet available. We have had 57 new members joining in the last membership year for free with 31 due to u3a day. An additional 21 new members have joined since 1st September 2021.

Member Support has continued to provide a point of contact for members queries and concerns, but as few groups have been meeting there has not been much need. However, with groups starting up again face to face, and with the impending change to Welfare Support, I anticipate it will provide a contact focus for all our members and group leaders.

We continue to use our u3a printer and mail merge experience to print member specific communications for the committee including quarterly newsletters to members without email.

Crawley u3a have been involved in the new social prescribing initiative and are participating in an NHS based project to combat loneliness and mental health issues in our area.

We have provided support to the Treasurer by linking members to their groups in a report not provided by Beacon. This has allowed the Treasurer to develop the new group charging and payment structure. The Treasurer has started implementing annual O&A and walking groups fees being collected at the same time as membership subscriptions. This has resulted in a challenging renewal process this year especially due to Beacon problems, and unexpected changing bank requirements regarding cheques.

Wearing my hat as the Earth Matters group leader, I have implemented Membership renewal by email thereby reducing the amount of paperwork (and therefore trees) involved. Sending individual members details of the information we hold on Beacon allows greater transparency and increased opportunity for members to see and request correction of any errors.

Membership Fees

Following the free year in 2020/21 it was considered that there remained sufficient uncertainty to warrant a reduction in the Membership Fees for 2021/22. Therefore, the annual subscriptions for the 2021/22 year have been determined by the Executive Committee for approval at the AGM as follows:

Single Membership £10, Joint Membership £8.50 per member

Associate Single Membership £6.50 Associate Joint Membership £5.00 per member

Honorary Membership - Free, Concessionary Membership – Free

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Treasurer

Not surprisingly, our accounts for the 13-month period up to 31st August 2021 resulted in a deficit of £5463, due to the very limited activity over the Covid period and the fact that we set the membership fees to zero for 2020/2021. We still incurred costs of course, such as The Third Age Trust fees and magazine costs, our own newsletter, membership & Beacon expenses etc, essential to keep Crawley u3a running and in good shape whilst we go about restarting our group activities.

Fortunately, we still have more than sufficient cash reserves which can be put to good use as we emerge from Covid.

The long period of inactivity gave me the time to consider some alternative ways of collecting and accounting for membership fees and groups subs, and to find a way to introduce cashless payments. Along with Alan Pay, our Secretary, and Ann and Stewart Sole, membership secretaries, we undertook a huge amount of analysis and soul searching to determine if it is feasible to achieve this, plus moving the collection of group subs away from the individual groups. In the end it was decided that the time is not right to introduce substantial changes and other than collecting Out & About, allotment and walking group subs with the annual membership fee, the idea would be put on the back burner, to be reviewed in the future.

It has to be said that collecting subs with the membership fees, was not without difficulties and we have learned some valuable lessons for future years.

Now that I am coming to the end of my term as Treasurer, and before that deputy Treasurer, I would like to thank the many people who have helped me over the last five years, particularly the other committee members and a very special thank you to our group leaders. I am extremely grateful to you all.

Communications

The continued restrictions during the past year have again emphasised the importance of technology for keeping in touch.

I have continued with the monthly emailed newsletter to keep members informed of not only the Committee's latest plans and ideas but also to share details of activities undertaken by various groups who were able to meet under the relevant regulations. Paper summaries were posted to members without email every few months and we continue to be grateful to Group Leaders and other members who have shared information with these members.

We continue to make use of the web site, especially to promote a virtual experience of our u3a for the National u3a day (see below). Thanks again to our webmaster Stuart Spreadborough for his support and advice.

Zoom has played a huge part in keeping us going during the lockdowns. Nine groups held regular meetings via Zoom and more held their planning meetings this way. We re-introduced the monthly meetings last September using Zoom and had varied and interesting speakers some of whom we would not have been able to have in person due to their distant location. The Committee used Zoom to have weekly catch-up meetings and we also hosted several Group Leaders meeting and even 2 Coffee Mornings.

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In June we hosted a celebration as part of the first National u3a Day. Fortunately, the easing of restrictions allowed us to hold an outdoor event which was based around the bandstand in the Memorial Gardens. With displays and photographs from many of our groups, performances by the ukulele and folk singing groups and a guided walk around historic Crawley, (and of course the brilliant weather!) the event was very popular and we recruited more than 20 new members.

Secretary

This has been a relatively quiet year for me and has allowed me to admire the work of my fellow Committee Members as they have striven to make changes and to maintain a vibrant and active organisation.

I did some work with the Treasurer and Membership Secretaries as we worked on possible changes to our method of collecting fees and subscriptions. As it turned out we only adopted some small changes but the exercise should inform any future proposed changes,

Welfare

Mavis and I took over this role 3 years ago and will retire now. We hope someone else will take it on. I think our efforts have been appreciated and we've spoken to many lovely people while carrying out our role.

This year we had 55 referrals and sent get well and Condolence cards to relatives. Also made follow up phone calls and offered advice of where to get help if required.

Members have said they enjoyed receiving the colourful cards painted by the Art group

SE u3a Forum

Despite lockdown and Covid issues, this has been a busy year for the Forum.

All our meetings have been held via Zoom including a delayed AGM in February and an SGM in April. Sadly, our Chair needed to step down due to health issues but we were lucky to have the Vice Chair willing to step up as Acting Chair

There was quite a debate over whether the Forum met the requirements to be recognised as a network but once this was finally agreed, we set about producing our Constitution. This has now been agreed by the Trust and is currently with the Charity Commission for ratification.

There will be a number of changes in the membership of the Forum due to the number of years served, plus the formal identification of three Trustees from each of the three counties currently involved – Kent, Surrey and Sussex. Our AGM is due at the end of October when the new Trustees and Officers will be nominated. It is also planned to have a sub-committee with Terms of Reference with the responsibility of running the annual Summer School. Having not been held for the last two years, we have initial plans in place for 20th – 23rd June 2022 at University of Chichester

We are looking forward to a new era for the Forum and possibly extending the membership in due course.

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Report from Seasonal Outings Sub-Committee

Our last Seasonal Outing was in November 2019 when 45 members went on the Tutankhamun & The Roaring Twenties tour. This involved a visit to the Tutankhamun: Treasures of the Golden Pharaoh Exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery and a coach tour through Kensington and Chelsea with a commentary from our Blue Badge Guide.

The exhibition was being staged to celebrate the centenary of the tomb discovery and contained over 150 authentic tomb objects, 60 of which were on display outside Egypt for the first time. We were very lucky to see the exhibition as this was one of the last exhibitions of its kind, as all objects relating to Tutankhamun will be housed in, and remain in, the new Grand Egyptian Museum in Cairo. The opening of this museum was due to be in 2021, having been pushed back a number of times and the date is still uncertain.

The Spring Outings were due to take place in April 2020, but they had to be postponed due to the pandemic and lockdowns. We had booked for two outings called the Essex Winter Warmer which included a coach tour through Essex country villages, a lunch stop in Saffron Walden and, in the afternoon a visit to the Chocolate Lady for tea, a talk and a demonstration of chocolate making. Unfortunately, the Chocolate Lady has now retired, and a replacement has not been found. Such shame!!

Hopefully our Seasonal Outings will start up again in 2022.

Groups' Coordinator

The last year has been challenging, but many groups rose to the challenge with Zoom meetings and even the occasional outdoor activity when restrictions were briefly eased. Sadly, some long established groups have closed, including Circle Dancing, Scrabble and Plays, Poetry and Prose.

However, we saw some new groups being formed including Folk Dancing, Earth Matters and Beginners Ukulele. Also, a very popular new group, Short Mat Bowls is in the final stages of formation.

We are deeply indebted to Isabel Baker, who stepped into the breach when our Groups' Coordinator was taken ill at a vital time as activities recommenced. Our monthly meetings have now resumed and many groups are getting back to "normal".

Here are some snippets from our group leaders:

Table-Tennis

When we had the ok to continue from the church, we wondered what effect the COVID lockdowns would have on our fledgling group.

We re-opened on the 27th May with 10 people and have steadily grown since then. On the 30th Sept there were 17 attendees as had been for a couple of weeks prior. In fact a total of 30 different people have passed through the doors of our Table-Tennis section. I am pleased to say that the standard of all is improving all the time along with the laughter and merriment of people enjoying themselves. Long may it continue.

Ukulele

Ukulele Sessions have now resumed after lockdown. We are back at St. Paul's and belting out and strumming along to our favourite songs from a wide variety of sources. It was good to start back again and to see most of our regular members from before the lockdown. You could hear the real pleasure to be together again enjoying the music and meeting up.

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During the lockdown we had regular sessions on Zoom and although not very satisfactory it did keep a nucleus of members playing along and also leading songs at home. You could hear that this was a definite step in keeping a high standard in the group.

We have started a beginners group this term which is now full, hopefully we can start another beginners group later next year.

Also, we are pleased to have back members from before lockdown.

So, I'll sum up by saying that our fantastic ukulele group bring a great deal of pleasure and even a small amount of sanity to this crazy world.

History

During the lockdown periods about 50% of our group decided to meet via "Zoom" to continue our studies. As the main group are studying British History we decided to break away and look at a different country. Initially we looked at the Reformation in Europe and then travelled on to the Ottoman Empire before alighting on Russia in the 16th to 18th centuries. We followed our initial pattern of members researching topics and then presenting them at the next monthly session and the results were so good that the Zoom members decided to publish their work. We had 20 copies published and the result is a very professional looking booklet.

Now we are back together as a group meeting in person we are continuing with British History, currently in the Civil War Period.

Poetry

These times were so disorienting that I am still struggling to define the scope of our activity. Without the aid of an electronic calendar this note would be even more whimsical than it is. After tackling the complexities of the initial lockdown by circulating our verses round the group by email, we Zoomed ahead from October 2020 onwards and continued to stick to our timetable of 2 meetings a month.

The unsatisfactory part of this arrangement was our inability to include those Zoomless members, whose wit, companionship, and sensitive choice of verse were sorely missed. The more fortunate six or seven of us, however, continued to meet and share poems, and discussion, round a wide variety of subjects. Initially, and understandably sceptical at first, our consensus, after 9 months of images of talking heads, was that this modern mode had proved its worth, with the caution that it could not altogether replace the sociability and energy of a face to face assembly. But it remains there as an emergency tool, and may even soon be used as part of a hybrid presentation for those unable to make the live meeting.

Our numbers fell from 19 members at the start of lockdown to 13 at the start of this current session, but the indications are that we will grow again in the near future. A significant change for us is that, owing to Library restrictions, we have now taken up residence at St Paul's.

This note cannot finish without mentioning the wonderful contribution of Joan Harding who led the group with grace, energy and warmth for many years. Since standing in her shoes for some months now I know how hard she worked to sustain and nurture the Group. We all miss her.

Quizzing

The quizzing group continued to meet on Zoom during lockdown on a monthly basis which was great fun! We are now back together at St. Pauls on the first Tuesday afternoon of the month,

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quizzing in groups of four with a volunteer quizmaster every month. Everyone accumulates points on an individual basis, so at the end of the year there should be an overall prize-winning champion!

We now have several more people who want to join, so it looks like there will soon be another quizzing group.

Out & About Group 7

Whenever outdoor group activities have been allowed under Covid rules, Out & About 7 have been able to keep going with a programme of walks and simple days out – normally by train. Even under the toughest of restrictions we have managed to operate within the guidelines and keep our members safe – and most important, Active!

We are still not booking the traditional Out & About visits to places of interest for a while yet, but there are plenty of things to do and see over the next few months to keep us occupied. Having said that, we do have a provisional booking for a festive lunch on 14th December, so fingers crossed, that we are able to make it!

A few weeks ago, 24 of us enjoyed a five-day break at Warners, Littlecote House – which was a big success and we are already thinking of doing something similar in 2022, maybe by coach and offering places to other Out & About groups.

So, we are looking forward to 2022 and will shortly be working on a provisional list of trips, including our coach holiday to The Netherlands in May.

The Amblers

I am pleased to say that The Amblers have managed to cope with the Covid restrictions very well, firstly by well attended “bubbles of 6 “ walks, followed then by several trips by train to some very interesting locations.

On a recent walk at Hayling Island, the group split after a splendid lunch and half of the group doubled the usual Amblers three miles – by walking a further 3.5 miles back to Emsworth! Well done those Amblers – you matched the Walkers Extra distance.

We are in good shape and looking forward to 2022 when we hope we can walk without Covid restrictions

Nominations			
Nominee	Position	Nominated By:	Seconded By:
Maureen Wicks	President	Continuing	Continuing
	Chair		
Graham Friday	Treasurer	Maureen Wicks	Wendy Adams
	Secretary		
	Membership Secretary		
Peter Beckley	Groups Coordinator	Isabel Baker	Jean Elmer
	Deputy Chair		
	Events Coordinator		
	Communications Coordinator		

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Essential Role	2020-21	2021-22
Assistant Treasurer	Vacant	
Events Co-ordinator	Vacant	
Newsletter Editor	Janet Morris	
Communications Coordinator	Janet Morris	
Minutes Secretary	Janet Morris	
Welfare Support Team	Mavis Liddell and Elsa Tancock	
Sussex u3a Network	Maggie Berrill	
Seasonal Outings	Maggie Berrill	
Website Editor	Stuart Spreadborough	Stuart Spreadborough
Beacon Administrator	Anne Thorn	Anne Thorn (temporary)
Member Support	Ann Sole	Ann Sole
Speaker Organiser	Liz Tennant	Liz Tennant
South East Forum	Isabel Baker	Isabel Baker
RUGS	Many members, organised by Jean Elmer	Many members, organised by Jean Elmer