



Dulwich and District u3a

Trustees' Report for 2021-2022

It has been a privilege to be Chair of Dulwich and District (D&D) u3a for the last two years. My family commitments require that I now move to be nearer to my grandchildren but I will continue to watch from afar with great interest and affection.

It has been a pleasure to observe and be part of the many ways in which D&D has not only maintained itself during the pandemic, but has expanded and developed, adapted and evolved to these challenging circumstances. An incomplete list of these developments includes:

Diversity

In 2020, the AGM passed a resolution creating a sub-committee, now known as SCID (South Circular Inclusivity and Diversity), to help the Committee address diversity in all its forms. This important work has been progressed in several ways: by our survey; through Diversity awareness workshops, which all Convenors have been invited to; through the creation of Risk Assessments for all locations (both private homes and other sites); and through facilitated hearing loss discussion groups, which have been particularly well-attended. A diverse range of Open Meeting speakers have been invited. During National u3a Day, we held activities and events in many different locations in our districts and SCID developed a poster to advertise us.

Interest Groups

These are, of course, our life blood. Interest groups have continued to expand, both in number and variety. We now have many more groups offered in a range of areas, including art, languages, eating, music and activity. Some of these groups have come into being by following up on the interests expressed by our new members and asking them if they would be prepared to convene a group. As ever, we owe our thanks to our indefatigable Convenors for all that they do in making groups happen.

Premises

Rosebery Lodge now experiences a heavy footfall with the Committee using it as its meeting place. It stores our assets and a small library (donations are always welcome). Some new groups are choosing to meet on this site which very much justifies the investment made in securing it for our use. The properties which we use also include Stanstead Lodge in Forest Hill, Bell House and, most recently, the Old Grammar School in Dulwich Village. Extensive research has been carried out by volunteers (at no small personal cost) on local hostelrys and eateries and we are now in a position to make recommendations (See Newsletters for February and March 2022).

Paperwork, Communications, Website and infrastructure

Our systems have been greatly enhanced by the adoption of the National u3a's Beacon system for membership and finance, which has made administration of these areas much less onerous. Our bank account is being upgraded and our Constitution is being tailored. Our website has been modernized and our paperwork, including our Newsletters and Mid-monthly Update, have been smartened and standardised with our logo, charity number and layout. Our Group Convenors' Handbook has been revamped and there are plans afoot to reissue a new Directory of Interest Groups once the new Committee are in place to put their stamp on it. At the AGM you will be receiving a hard copy of the Activity Report documenting many of the events of the last year. A mini diary of u3a in action.

Digital skills

The lockdowns galvanized many of us to get to grips with new technology. We were very fortunate to receive an offer from Kevin Fortune of Smiles to put on fortnightly Zoom teaching sessions. These were well attended and gratefully received by many of our members, including myself, who had not previously been getting the most out of their devices. I am delighted to be able to say that Kevin is now offering not only to continue this offer, but to expand it to our Network partners and to offer face to face tuition with volunteers from local businesses (perhaps we may see these volunteers again in the future as members...!)

Activity Programme

Despite being severely limited by government restrictions, D&D has been able to maintain and expand our essential activity programme. The bikers have expanded (in number, not girth!), our games now include bowls in addition to boules; tennis, table tennis and Zumba all continue. Our walks now range from full day hikes, through fascinating town tours, to gentle strolls in the park. Recently we ran a four week mindfulness and meditation session.

Thanks to the efforts of the Committee, the Convenors, and all our members who have committed to our organisation and given so much of their time, we have all benefited from a lived experience of Positive Aging. Long may it continue.

Angela Brown
Dulwich and District u3a Chair
April 2022