

Harlow U3A

Trustees' Annual Report

April 1st 2022 – March 31st 2023

Charity contact information

Harlow U3A - Charity Number: **1197680**

Registered Address: 2 Wych Elm, Harlow, Essex

Postcode: CM20 1QP

Telephone number: +44 7948 397285

Email address: HarlowU3A@outlook.com

Website: [Harlow U3A](https://u3asites.org.uk/harlow/welcome): <https://u3asites.org.uk/harlow/welcome>

Charity Trustees

The following named Trustees are the initial trustees and were in post for the whole reporting period.

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Jane Winterbotham | 2. Hazel Sugarman |
| 3. Geoffrey Kay | 4. Geoffrey Longster |
| 5. Anne Richards | 6. Helen Simpson |
| 7. Christine Chesham | 8. Vipin Patel |
| 9. Theresa Sothcott | |

Objectives and activities

Harlow U3A, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), was created on April 1st 2022. It is a successor to the dissolved charity, Harlow and Surrounding Areas U3A and received the assets of the dissolved charity. This is the first Annual Report of the CIO

Harlow U3A is affiliated with the Third Age Trust (TAT), uses its services and guidance, and subscribes to its objectives.

- The object of the Harlow U3A (CIO) is 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.
- Our Activities are focused specifically on the immediate Harlow area. The name of the dissolved charity was “Harlow and Surrounding Areas U3A” and this charity did have members from “surrounding areas”. As the numbers grew it became practical for new U3As to form, focused on nearby towns and villages, so the CIO adopted the more specific location and focused its activities to the local area.
- We are a membership organisation primarily serving local Harlow residents who are nearing or in retirement from full-time paid work. We had 790 members in April 2022, though this is not a true reflection as we suspended membership dues in 2021 during the pandemic. There were 562 paid members in June 2022 and 658 at the end of the fiscal year, March 2023.

The main activities of Harlow U3A are operated through our “Interest Groups”. There is also a monthly General Meeting where all members can attend to socialize, interact with Group Facilitators (the members who organise and run the Interest Groups) and enjoy a presentation by a speaker on a variety of topics.

We had approximately 60 interest groups running in the period; some have weekly sessions, others monthly and a few operating on irregular schedules. The groups provide opportunities for physical (e.g. walking, racket games, fitness classes), intellectual (philosophy, play reading, book reviews), crafts (knitting, sewing), social (pub lunches, local bus trips) and various travel opportunities to places and events of interest.

Governance and management

Harlow U3A's governing document is a constitution, based on a model provided by TAT and approved by the Charity Commission.

The constitution provides for a Management Committee made up of the elected Trustees. Trustees are elected to three year terms and individuals are limited to two terms. Initial terms took service in the prior charity into account so that retirements are staggered. No retirements were required until January 2024.

Trustee recruitment and appointment

No Trustee recruitment was needed in the current reporting period. The constitution does not require election to specific offices. The Committee elects officers and appoints roles from the Trustees elected at a general members meeting. Only members of Harlow U3A are eligible to vote at general meetings and to serve as Trustees.

Achievements and performance

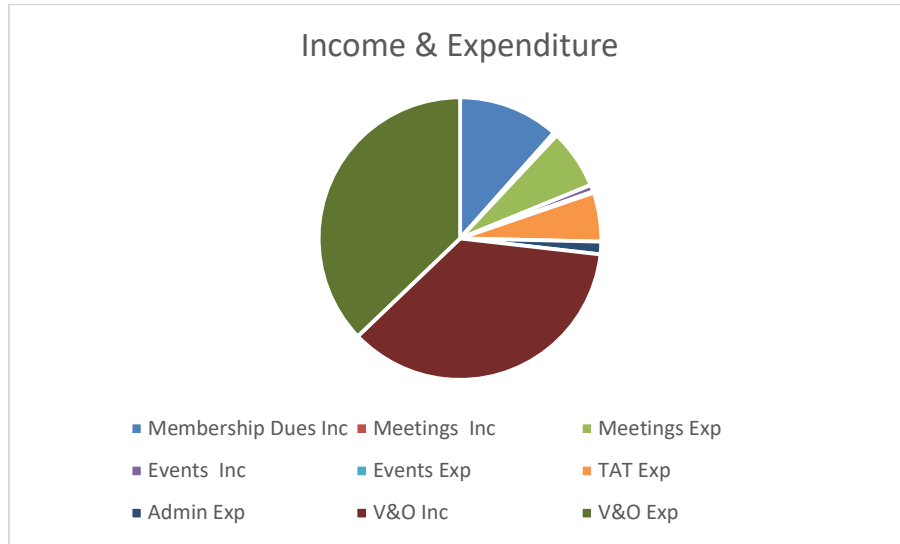
As mentioned above, our membership increased through the reporting period and our activity groups resumed a full schedule as the pandemic subsided. Several new activities were introduced and our "Visits and Outings" were reorganised as a sub-committee with a Trustee as chair.

Our objective is to operate on a voluntary basis, with Trustees and Group Facilitators performing the planning and operation roles.

We have made exceptions for the Choir, which has a professional musical director and Fitness Instructors who are trained, licensed and insured for reasons of health, safety and liability.

We attended local events in the year as part of our recruitment efforts to attract local “Third Agers” and provide the opportunities to engage in the variety of activities we offer that contribute to physical, mental and social well-being.

Financial Review



Statement of the charity's policy on reserves

Our policy on reserves is to operate within an annual budget so that our cash balance at any point in time is in the range of and no less than 50% of annual income. The value was approximately 54% at year end – the low balance point, which is satisfactory. The purpose is to ensure sufficient funds are available to wind-up the CIO should this become necessary.

This reverses a previous policy of the dissolved charity to accumulate funds in a separate reserve account that did not have a specified purpose. This reserve was spent down in the last two years of the former charity, including no dues collection in 2021-22.

Annual operating income is almost entirely generated through membership dues. Budgets for Visits & Outings (V&O) are approximately two thirds of total cash movements and are calculated to generate a small surplus that is held for contingencies such as cancellation fees. Income and expenditures for V&O tend to be concurrent, unlike general account where all income is received at the beginning of the period.

Details of any deficit

Small deficits were incurred on both the general and Groups accounts. In the general account this was due to an unexpected increase in the capitation fee paid annually to TAT. Our budget, including membership dues, was set at the AGM in September 2021. The capitation fee increase was set at the TAT AGM in October 2021. We have since set our AGM date to January of each year to avoid a similar occurrence. The Groups account contains money collected by groups and held on their behalf to cover their on-going expenses. The largest expense category is Visits & Outings, covering travel and admission charges to locations and events, accounted for on a trip basis.

Future plans

Harlow U3A will continue to support our groups, develop and encourage new activities and recruit new members. We are also planning to attend more local community events in the coming year, with a focus on achieving a membership that fully reflects the local diversity. We will also be recruiting additional volunteers and Trustees to manage the additional internal and external planned events.

Declaration

Signed on behalf of the charity trustees:

Name: Geoffrey E. Longster

Designation: Trustee, Secretary

Date: January 17, 2024