

AGENDA & REPORTS

Meeting Title:	DELEGATES MEETING
Date/ Time:	8th July 2022, 2.00-4.30pm (log in from 1.30pm)
Venue:	Online with Zoom

'CELEBRATIONS'	
1.30 - 2.00	Log in / Registration
2.00 - 2.10 10 mins	Welcome (Derek Harwood) Comments on previous Minutes.
Reports (chaired by Derek Harwood)	
2.10 – 2.30 20 mins	Reports from Trustees & Peer Support Groups: Public Relations - Rodney Fox Group Coordinators – Liz Day IT/Webmasters - Derek Harwood Communications – Vivek Nanda Regional Trustee – John Bent Highlights from reports below and any questions.
Topic 1 - News (chaired by Liz Day)	
2.30-2.45 15 mins	News from the Trust & Networks (see reports): What's known, cascading information. Take questions.
2.45-3.15 30 mins	News from London u3as: Delegates asked to share news – one thing they have done in their u3a or one thing that they are considering and wondering if anyone else can offer help or one thing they are concerned about (6 examples only @ 5 mins each).
10 mins Comfort Break	
Topic 2 – Retention & Recruitment (chaired by Jenny Wilson)	
3.25-3.40 20 mins	Frances Berry, from the R&R Work Group, will present to us to update us regarding the status of this important initiative and the 'toolkit' available to support all u3as.
3.40-3.50 10mins	Questions & Answers on the above presentation
3.50-4.10 20 mins	Breakout Rooms: (approx 8 rooms of 6 members). 1. To discuss R&R and ideas that each have tried and been successful. 2. Any points arising from the News cascade section
4.15-4.25 10 mins	Plenary: One member per room to feedback their room's 2 ideas.

4.25 – 4.30 5 mins	Wrap Up (Derek Harwood) <input type="checkbox"/> Any volunteers for the LRU3A Executive Committee..... Dates for next meetings: 21st October (& AGM)
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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORTS:

VICE CHAIRS (Jenny Wilson & Derek Harwood):

Walk London: work proceeding on the LRU3A initiative to support the national 40th Anniversary programme. So far over 20 u3as are taking part – to collectively walk all of the two orbital long distance paths: the Capital Ring and the LOOP. This will broadly take place the week before, and the week of, 'u3a Week'.

Limited general work due to lack of volunteers on the LRU3A Executive Committee. However still managing to support the Peer Support Groups and share communications across the region.

TREASURER (Jim Jenkins)

Aside from this year's Summer School we have spent approx. £900 in the year, mainly on hosting the Chairs Meeting at the Bridewell Centre last November.

The Summer School is on target for a small surplus. The income to date is approx. £11,900 and costs are expected to be in the order of £11,700. The Bridewell Centre has been fully paid for but obviously the catering costs will not be paid until closer to the days of the event.

COMMUNICATIONS (Vivek Nanda)

The Comms Team has sent out 11 emails and supported 22 Zoom meetings on behalf of the London Region since the last Delegates meeting. The Comms Team has also been discussing how best to communicate requests about meetings that individual u3as in London kindly and generously open to members of other u3as in London. The current thinking is for host u3as to email information about their events to Catherine Ware, our Talks & Summer School Coordinator (talks.lru3a@gmail.com). The Comms Team is also keen to hear about any changes to Committee Members, Delegates and other post-holders such as webmaster, publicity person, etc for u3as in London Region in order to maximise the chances of getting the relevant emails to the appropriate person. Please let Rikki Wallman, our Mailchimp Administrator (mailchimpadvisor.lru3a@gmail.com) know of any changes to you Committee in 2022 if you have not already done so. Ideally, please furnish details of changes after your AGM and throughout the year.

LRU3A SUMMER SCHOOL (Catherine Ware)

This year's event is scheduled for July 26th/27th, and focuses on the theme of 'London – past, present and future'. The programme includes 18 talks, 3 creative workshops, and 8 guided walks. Bookings were launched 7th April, and within 4 days, all the walks were fully booked with several members aborting their applications if they were unable to book on a walk. (I feel this urge for outdoor activities may be due to the pandemic). Walk Leaders agreed to increase the number of spaces to total 120 and these were also snapped up, but there are still some places available for talks.

We have exceeded our targets in terms of income and the number of day bookings -- we are expecting around 170 participants each day. Lunches will be pre-packed for hygiene and speed of service. Helped by two notices in TAM, there are almost as many u3as outside London (33) represented as there are London u3as (37). The number of applicants who have never attended a London Summer School is almost equal those who have attended, possibly because the popular online talks programme has raised the regional profile.

In doing the risk assessments, Covid is less concern this year, but we are now facing the possibility of train/Tube strikes. We'll report on the outcome at the AGM.

REGIONAL TRUSTEE (John Bent)

Verbal report to be given.

GROUP COORDINATORS PEER SUPPORT GROUP (Liz Day)

Having held three Group Coordinators Meetings this academic year in September, December and March, we decided to have a break in the summer term and focus on the LR Summer School in July.

This year we cascaded information and u3a Office initiatives in Learning Developments and presented on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at some length, with various discussion opportunities.

We wish to develop some Bitesized learning opportunities and encourage some Subject networks, if there is sufficient interest, in the future.

PUBLIC RELATIONS PEER SUPPORT GROUP (Rodney Fox)

PR PSG workshop: Having passed what we hope has been the worst of the pandemic, many u3as have re-commenced member recruitment to rebuild their membership. Though good for rebuilding membership, adding new members using out traditional word of mouth methods typically brings more people like us, in our age group! Our May 9th workshop focussed on why u3as need to recruit new YOUNGER members if they wish to survive into the 2030s. It also looked at ways to make our u3as more attractive to younger potential members yet at the same time maintaining the u3a ethos; some thoughts about how to locate and identify these new members; and some alternatives to u3a available to these potential new younger members.

The workshop materials were passed to Paul Martinez as subject matter for his most recent Pathfinder meeting.

There will be a further PR Peer Group workshop later in the summer, subject yet to be confirmed.

London Region PR Mailings. Issue No.10 has been issued to London u3as and is available on the LRU3A website.

The Third Age Trust has contracted for provision of a press / media database from a company called Vuelio. In order to help your u3as identify contacts in the various local publications I attached to the mailing a spreadsheet of contact information for London media organisations.

As an example of outreach beyond our normal channels, I had earlier mentioned working with a Social Prescribing Link worker who looks after 11 doctors' surgeries in Ruislip and Ickenham. I was asked to join her and her 7 colleagues, each covering surgeries in other parts of Hillingdon borough in their next group meeting, which took place late in May. I was given about 40 minutes to cover and discuss the u3a and the potential role we can play, much as it is described in the 2018 u3a publication "Learning not Lonely". We have had the first feedback from the meeting, as it happens it is the link worker for Northwood surgeries, which will be handled by our Northwood u3a colleagues.

WEBMASTERS PEER SUPPORT GROUP (Derek Harwood)

One meeting held in the period. Agenda and discussions covered:

1. Digital Strategy: a brief presentation was given showing the results from the 'Phase 1 ('Discovery') workings of the volunteers. This includes Workstream 1: evaluating and determining the current digital systems used by the Trust (in the u3a Office); Workstream 2: evaluating what the 1060 local u3as used digitally & what their future digital aspirations were

(with examples of the Survey response shown); and Workstream 3: which looked at other similar charities and the Digital Strategies that they had developed and implemented.

2. Shared Practice Guides (SPG): three more now live on the LRU3A website covering: Converting PowerPoint to Video; Use of Mailchimp and use of Bank Card Readers. All encouraged to review these and if anyone has further feedback on the topic to feed this back so that the Guides can be improved and expanded to capture all experiences & learnings One more SPG in preparation: Online forms. This initially will be regarding the use of Google Forms and Wufoo but may be expanded in scope in the future.

3. Placelt software: this is a software programme that is easy to use for making simple videos. A demo was given developed by the 'Let's Talk Tech' u3a team. The hyperlink to the demo (Placelt) had now been added to the Converting PowerPoint into a Video SPG (ultimately this Guide could be expanded to include all forms of making videos, inc by OBS – which some u3as are now using for their Town Halls/Monthly Meetings).

4. AOB:

First item was re Sitebuilder migration to WordPress. A progress status note had been issued before the meeting. The volunteer team are progressing with developing the proposal for the migration and considering things like: should there be one u3a prime domain or should each u3a have its own direct domain; what level of u3a 'template' (theme) should be provided versus general WordPress flexibility, etc. For the 700 u3as using Sitebuilder it is expected that only a few u3as will be migrated to WordPress this year, the rest all being in 2023.

There was a reminder of the 'Let's Talk Tech' initiative for IT Support and it's 3 support methods (dedicated website, Facebook page, & weekly Zoom drop in sessions). Link to it can be found under the 'Support for u3as' tab of the national website or here: Lets Talk Tech.

OTHER GENERAL NEWS:

News from the Third Age Trust

Development plans underway (were suspended over the pandemic). Includes increasing staff levels to support volume of queries raised. 40th Anniversary programme ongoing, many Picnic in the Parks held, Quilt reveal happened, local summer events – generally to all help raise the profile. Membership levels have fallen over the pandemic (to 366,000) but were now starting to recover and increase again.

Annual Returns process revised this year (using 'Netsuite') allowing for automatic issue of Subscription Invoice following submission of Annual Return. Has your u3a submitted it's Annual Return? Let us know if not. Some further improvements for next year.

The range of branded merchandise slowly expanding for online shopping. The '40th Anniversary Tree' initiative very popular (now aiming for 10,000 trees).

The consultation on draft Strategy has now lead to the shaping of near terms plans (this year) and longer term plans.

Started to develop a 'Digital Strategy' (to support the overall Strategy) which is looking at the digital needs for the Trust and all u3as. Sitebuilder replacement with Wordpress is part of this. More will evolve into 2024.

Website being revised with a clearer layout. The Support for u3as' Advice section has a simpler listing of all documents in a simpler category basis.

Notes from plenary of Network Link Meeting - 23 June 2022

Issues raised:

Recruitment of new members

- Recruitment of younger members and the u3a offering not appealing to new members, this could be part of a brand/image problem
- Could look at the use of social media for recruitment and contacting local businesses who have a large number of staff might be running retirement sessions with staff where they can promote u3a
- Looking at u3as coming together in an area to promote what they are doing/why others should join

Volunteer roles and recruitment of

- The challenge of recruiting people to Committee roles and also encouraging volunteers to stand as a Regional Trustee
- Concerns around apathy to spend time volunteering and people being less keen to get involved and taken on responsibility
- Succession planning for and recruitment of new Treasurers
- Recruiting and retaining Committee Trustees
- When a Committee member doesn't share information about what they are doing and perhaps have all their information stored on one laptop which no one else can access
- Solution – could look at sharing responsibility within a network e.g. having a rota of u3as within a network to organise meetings, Chair etc.

Engagement

- Getting members to attend AGMs
- Members only joining one group and not getting involved in any other way (not all agreed this was an issue)
- Getting local u3as to attend network meetings
- In rural areas there is often a distance issue with getting people to meetings
- Poor response/apathy amongst members to get involved and encouraging people to come to study days
- Struggling to encourage u3as to join networks – some don't want to be a part of one and will go straight to the Third Age Trust for information and support
- Not knowing how many people will turn up to a meeting/events
- Losing the ethos of volunteering
- Lethargy is the fastest growing group in the u3a, though there are many who want to get things going

Finance and banking

- Banks being slow to respond/support and asking for lots of additional information e.g. previous meeting minutes.
- Issues with online banking and resistance to
- Ensuring everyone has sufficient information available to make sure this is managed correctly. E.g. bank deciding to close an account because there was no activity

Information and support

- Difficulty in getting in touch with the right person at the Third Age Trust (not knowing who is in which role and does what, and who is on which Committee)
- Access to the Trust website – information changes/is updated and people aren't informed. The website is also difficult to navigate

Communication / IT

- Those who aren't using Beacon making it difficult to communicate with as their data is held locally and often only accessible by one person
- Concerns around moving from SiteBuilder to WordPress
- Needing confidence in technology

Other

- Safeguarding & social prescribing – what should be considered here?
- Cost of venue hire – for some this has increased following Covid and some venues are limiting numbers so can no longer offer the required capacity

Contingency Planning

These conversations highlighted that most u3as don't have any contingency plans in place, and agreement on the usefulness on a contingency/succession planning workshop.

Committee Roles

- Ensuring there is a turnover of roles as per your constitution, then those who have previously held roles can then be called upon to provide backup/interim cover if needed
- Having deputies/vice/assistant positions for key roles or a job share/team who taken responsibility for an area/role together. This could also be achieved by having people shadow key roles (though these roles don't necessarily have to be a Trustee).
- Each committee role to have a role description/list of responsibilities so there is clarity on who is doing what and can be picked up if needed
- Importance of keeping in touch and sharing updates with the Chair and wider Committee
- Thinking about succession planning from the beginning of taking on a role, and not just when someone is needed to fill a role
- Having handover sessions - sharing role descriptions/list of responsibilities with anyone new coming into a role
- Could you look at sharing a Treasurer with another local organisation?

Finance and data

- Importance of having finance contingency plans for the Treasurer role and related finance process
- Reviewing where finance information and membership data is stored and ensuring that more than one person can access this information and carry out processes as needed. The use of Beacon can help with this as it means data is not held locally on someone's personal device and can be accessed by more than one person.
- Those with Committee roles using generic email addresses so a successor can access the information as needed
- Sharing passwords to necessary databases, SiteBuilder, finance processes e.g. with the Chairperson (TBC the safest/most sensible way to do this)
- Banking, ensuring bank signatories as kept up to date as it can be the case that to remove previous signatories you will need their permission and not relying only two signatories, having three so there are options
- Having financial plans to enable others to take over roles more easily
- Having emergency contact details member

Events

- What if a speaker doesn't turn up to an event? Have something else ready that can be used

- Having a calendar of events for your u3a which can be passed on so everyone knows what has already been planned/booked

Increasing Engagement

- Use of short-term working groups can be a good way of engaging with people who might not usually come forward to get involved. You can then find out what else they might be interested in
- Having a box to tick on recruitment/renewal forms if someone is interested in helping out and or asking for skills/jobs they have done e.g. working in events/Finance/management and can then approach them about taking on roles
- Holding new member meetings and encouraging people to take on smaller volunteer responsibilities to get them involved, and then they might take on more responsibility/attending meetings/joining Committee in the future.