

SUTTON COLDFIELD U3A AGM - THURSDAY 28th NOVEMBER 2019

TRUSTEES' REPORT

Introduction

The Trustees [namely the Executive Committee – hereafter referred to as the Committee] submit their report and financial statements for the year ended 31st August 2019. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting guidelines recommended by The Third Age Trust.

The Committee is obliged to report on its activities in various sectors and this report covers: -

- Structure, Governance and Management; Aims; Membership; Activities; and Financial Matters

Structure, Governance and Management

The Sutton Coldfield U3A [SCU3A] is governed by its Constitution, Standing Orders and Executive Committee Code of Conduct. Management is via the Committee and an ever-increasing number of interest groups which are the lifeblood of the U3A. Each group has its own organising committee/group who via the interest Groups Co-ordinator, or direct if necessary, liaise with the Committee. The Committee consists of up to five officers [Chairman, not more than two Vice-Chairmen, Secretary and Treasurer] and seven members all of whom are trustees. In addition, up to two members can be co-opted on to the Committee where they will have the same status and responsibilities as the elected members. Because of the commitments of the committee members the position of Chairman was not filled and to ensure continuity the retiring Chairman was co-opted back on to the committee for the year 2018 – 2019.

The Committee meets eleven times in a year [no meeting in December]. In addition, the Committee publish a SAGE magazine 10-12 times per membership year, distributed both via e-mail and hard copy, together with electronic MailChimp bulletins, most weeks, to all paid up members. Minutes of Committee meetings are available to members on request and other information is available on the SCU3A website.

The Committee do not receive remuneration or any other personal benefits from the activities of SCU3A.

The activities of SCU3A are founded on the guiding principles of the University of the Third Age movement namely 'The Third Age Principle', 'The Self-help Learning Principle' and 'The Mutual Aid Principle', all of which can be found on the national U3A website.

The Committee have a risk management strategy which comprises: -

- An ongoing review of the principal risks and uncertainties that SCU3A faces.
- The establishment of policies, systems and procedures to mitigate or remove those risks identified in the ongoing review.

The committee consider that the two most pressing risks are as follows: -

- General lack of membership interest in becoming a committee member or assisting in committee work or becoming an organiser to ensure the smooth and continual running of SCU3A.
- Reluctance of some organisers to accept and embrace the Beacon management system to enable better communication between individual group members, organisers and the committee.

The Committee is closely monitoring the two stated risks and would welcome input from members to resolve them.

Aims

The main aims of the Committee are to: -

- Facilitate the development of new interest groups and to provide support to existing interest groups.
- Encourage a culture of sharing and participation, teaching and learning.
- Ensure the continuance of SCU3A as a thriving organisation.

Membership

In our last year 01/10/2018 to 30/09/2019 membership increased to 1673 [as at 20/09/2019]. Sutton Coldfield's membership year 2019/2020 will run from 1st October to 30th September and the new membership year has so far produced 1693* members to date, of which 64* are new members. Over 403* members have yet to renew. Members who have resigned to date equals 34*.

[as at 18/10/2019]

Activities

SCU3A currently have 65 Interest Groups. 52 meet at the URC; 3 meet at the Methodist Church; 1 meets at St Peter's Church Hall; 2 meet at the Trinity Centre and 7 meet at other various locations.

Information regarding the Interest Groups is listed in the SAGE Centrefold which is distributed to members each month.

New groups that have started in the last membership year 2018/2019 are Beginners Art Groups [2], Italian Beginners [2], Chess, Electronic keyboards, New Philosophy, 'Been There, Done That', and Desert Island discs to name but a few!

Additional activities have included: -

'Afternoon with U3A' Showcase [07/11/2018] – This was extremely successful with about 180 members attending. The afternoon displayed performances from the guitar, ukulele, singing, writing and '60s Dance' groups. Refreshments were served in the interval and the latter section included a commemorative 'World War One Songs' singalong. The show lasted for about two and a half hours. It is hoped that a similar show will take place in February 2020.

Andrew Mitchell MP [15/03/2019] was invited to give his talk 'Royal Sutton Coldfield: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow' at the Holy Trinity Church Centre in Sutton Coldfield. It proved to be an interesting talk particularly that section relating to the current day and the future.

Andy Street, West Midlands Mayor [08/05/2019] was invited to talk to the membership at the Sutton Coldfield Town Hall where he enlightened all with his hopes and aspirations for the future of the West Midlands with examples relating to Sutton Coldfield. The meeting was well attended.

It is interesting to note though that out of a membership of over 1600 perhaps only 10% of the membership, or less, attended the above events.

Other activities have included a new members coffee morning, Beacon training for group organisers [four sessions] and an organiser's lunch.

Financial Matters

The details under this heading will be dealt with by the Vice Chairman [Financial Accounts] and the Treasurer, but it is necessary to explain that the principal source of funds to SCU3A is your membership fee (plus Gift Aid) which is expended on the administrative overheads of this U3A [approx.41%] and Trust Membership Fees, the Third Age Magazine and membership renewal costs, including the Beacon National Management System to the Third Age Trust [approx. 54%] with the balance being used towards funding net deficits on the interest groups. Interest group activities are aimed to be self-financing with currently the surplus generated by some groups going to support the smaller groups. With increasing room hire charges at Sutton Coldfield United Reformed Church, the surplus generated by the few is therefore reducing making it more difficult to maintain financial support to the other smaller groups. Discussions take place each year with just a few groups about their respective financial situations with the result that their attendance fees have been adjusted accordingly in relation to room hire costs. Reserves are held in accordance with the guidelines of The Third Age Trust and as directed by the Committee to meet specific identified risks, when they arise, and for use as a contingency.

Conclusion

This is your organisation which stands or falls by your efforts. No effort, no organisation. It is so easy to stand back and say 'SCU3A is doing well' with increasing numbers of members and interest groups. But time marches on and many of the regular organisers who are there year after year, familiar faces to us all, are fast approaching.....well need I say more! Do not wait for your organiser to say, 'enough is enough,' offer a little help now and prevent your interest group coming to perhaps a sudden halt with the departure of your organiser.

To all the group leaders, organisers, deputy organisers and group helpers many, many thanks. As to my committee, once again I cannot praise them enough.

R P Austin-Clapham
Chairman

November 2019