



London Region of U3As

MINUTES

Meeting Title:	DELEGATES MEETING
Date/ Time:	18th July 2025, 2.00-4.30pm
Venue:	On line with Zoom

Welcome & Previous Minutes:	
1.0	<p>Val Girling (VG) (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Vivek Nanda and Liz Day, both Committee members, are not available to attend due to travels.</p> <p>Previous Minutes (17th April 2025): comments received- RW- contacted Rosemary (Newham delegate) as she did not receive the last minutes until 2 days ago-due to not checking her secretary @ email address. RW to check Wufoo contact/ email address and details for Rosemary to ensure she receives the emails. Using personal email now. Also, Rosemary said she would be in touch with Liz Drury regarding membership. Also, amendment to minutes, as should have referred to - 'Royal College of General Practitioners', in break out Room 5.</p> <p>VG advised that JW (one of the London Region Council Reps) and she would be visiting u3a's throughout London region. These are visits to seek ideas and opinions and NOT monitoring visits. VG is concentrating on u3a's north of the Thames as based in Palmers Green and Southgate, whilst JW is concentrating u3a's on south of the Thames as she is based in Croydon. It is about having a conversation about how the London Region and its Council Reps can help the u3as. If any have problems, this is an opportunity to share them, as well as sharing good practice: we can then spread this across the region. This should help falling membership numbers in some u3as. We would like to encourage collaboration as much as we can. If JW or VG have not been in touch yet, they will be contacting the relevant u3a soon. If any u3a want certain items on the agenda, they should let the Chair know. Chris B, the other London Region one of Council Reps, has been in touch with other u3a's. VG confirmed that she will be visiting Wanstead /Woodford on 21/07. Neil A (Dulwich & District) confirmed he is happy for JW to attend that u3a and would welcome to learn from Croydon's success and what Croydon is doing in terms of relationships with other communities. JW will be in touch with Dulwich & District shortly.</p>
Reports:	
2.0	Reports had been previously issued to all u3as. Additional verbal reports were given at the meeting and have been included now in Appendix 1. Any questions arising are also recorded in Appendix 1.
News:	

<p>3.0</p>	<p>News from the Trust & Networks See Reports, Appendix 1. No questions from delegates.</p> <p>Chris F (Waltham Forest) explained that a social meet-up group for new members was started and really successful as 14 people turned up-50% of these were new members. There are new members attending, despite groups already being full. So 50% new members are making up these new interest groups. Lost 3 committee members but replaced with younger members who have come up with excellent ideas for more open groups, rather than meeting in someone's home. An example is a 'cultural capital group', who communicate via WhatsApp. So they organise visits within that WhatsApp conversation.</p> <p>Frances H (Palmer's Green and Southgate) mentioned that Core Telecom is a company which can set up a generic phone number for a u3a. This is a free number and 0300 number. Very fast turnaround of applying for a number and it being set up. It has been tested and can send messages. This means no personal number is given out to, nor displayed to members.</p> <p>Neil A (Dulwich & District) – new member's badge is given to new members on joining. A small, but successful way of seeing who the new members are at the members' meeting. It helps others chat and make the new members feel welcome.</p> <p>Rosemary J (Newham) – there are 12 interest groups already meeting. Afternoon talks for members once a month, but non-members are invited on a one-off basis. With the last talk, 2 non-members joined on the first day they visited us. We have also made contact with our local newspaper- the Newham Voice. After 6 months of starting our u3a, we'd produced an article for the newspaper and thus generated 3 new members. Newham Voice is now going to advertise the activities we do regularly on a monthly basis. This is good public reach.</p> <p>Looking at other publications within the Newham area. Planning our AGM, written to and invited local MP. Thus would be another win. An opportunity to get the press involved in the publicity. Also contacting The Standard to get an article published in the newspaper.</p> <p>Sandy B(Bromley)- new members being very keen – started 3 social groups almost immediately and they love a good social. There's a separate pub night and a curry night group. A couple have started a Spanish conversation group within 2 weeks of them joining! This was fully booked immediately. People were very keen.</p> <p>Also, they are lucky enough to have a member who is a professional video maker and he has volunteered to make promotion videos for Bromley u3a. He is going to put something together to celebrate our 35th anniversary as part of a public promotion in October. Applied for a grant from the Third Age Trust and received £400, which was especially useful. Hoping the Mayor and VG to attend this event.</p> <p>A delegate suggested that new members might need to be given time to settle for a while, before expecting too much of them, even if they are brimming full of ideas. VG disagreed with this; she felt it is important to 'tap' this newfound energy and convert it into useful conversations, offering to run own groups or activities.</p> <p>Oscar M(Harrow)- agreed that VG to attend next Harrow committee meeting on Monday 04/08/2025.</p> <p>Rikki W (Redbridge & District)- started a "motto" (Members On Their Own) group which has lunches and coffee mornings. 14 people turned up at members' house. They are on</p>
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	<p>a WhatsApp group, send messages to each other and are arranging successful cinema trips, visit to a Sikh temple, and other activities. It's like another Outreach activity. Maria G-N (Welling)- has set up a similar own WhatsApp group for members who do not want to be tied to traditional u3a trips, like National Trust or official trips. We have visited Fulham Palace, St Alban's market, Spitalfields market, Borough market and about to visit Little Venice on the river, by canal boat next week. 15 people are regulars in the WhatsApp group, but now there are 35 are in my group and if they turn up, they turn up. They pay independently for tickets/fees themselves. The insurance is now covered by u3a, which I did not have before as an outside of u3a group. We have now booked Kew Gardens, Kensington Palace all online individually and are using the 'Fever' app to book the Titanic exhibition in November. I have been supporting those who have never booked online nor used apps before. I am trying to get them into thinking there are other ways of doing group work. My trip planning includes risk assessments for such trips, as now in remit of u3a.</p>
<p>Topic 2- Sheila Crawley - " Grow your Membership through Facebook"</p>	
<p>4.0</p>	<p>The guest speaker, Sheila Crawley from Ashbourne and District u3a, provided a presentation on how Facebook can be used to rapidly grow any u3as membership levels. A copy of the presentation can be seen here: Social Media FB Presentation</p> <p>Sheila then took a few general questions before the meeting was split into breakout rooms to discuss the presentation. The rooms were also to discuss and share ideas on what they were planning for this u3a Week.</p>
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Breakout Rooms Feedback/Plenary</p> <p>Room 1: General discussion, some not on Facebook. Links on Facebook, don't work in Instagram. Value of Facebook to raise awareness was highlighted. Not sure how this would translate in increasing membership. Redbridge has a Facebook page. There is 4 in the comms team. No Instagram. Croydon has a Facebook page, creating calendar using Google calendar. Instagram. Will notice things mentioned which are missing from page. Use of committee people to do comms. Group leaders could be used to spread the workload. Merton- social media needed to be handed over by earlier chair. No earlier access, new Facebook page to replace old one. Weekly Facebook and Instagram posts. Uses AI to go with posts. Will not post personal contacts. Kenton & District- problem that only 50% of members can attend venue as restricted by size of venue. Consent on social media with copyright/privacy issue. Event viewer allows calendar in WordPress. Permissions can be difficult if former user died. Must be personal page, set up as administrator roles within team. Permissions can be awkward. U3a page cannot be set up as a commercial one. Welling- has no social media presence. MGN uses both platforms to show reels and videos and photos on her personal page. U3a week – Woodford & Wanstead were going to use the Wanstead Fair in a 7-day campaign to promote themselves using a stall there. This is no longer the case. Redbridge is having a stall at the Wanstead Fair and also working on their 30th anniversary in November. Kenton – away for u3a week. Welling- nothing planned. Good idea for the u3a week but needs organising still by many. Middle aged parents to be encouraged to use Facebook and Instagram.</p>

5.0	<p>Room 2: Extremely useful insights. Mixed bag in the use of Facebook by the u3a's. Merton does not use Facebook. Next Door Neighbour app is popular and attracting the older person to target. No one happy with Tech companies. No 'X' used by many of this group due to politics. Event viewer for use of calendar was felt exceptionally good. Privacy issues were discussed. Consent to use photos of members in social media posts can be tricky. Merton are promoting u3a week at a stall at the Mitcham Carnival.</p> <p>Room 3: Introduction of Core Telecom was considered very useful. Palmers Green and Southgate use Facebook. Bromley is starting to use Facebook. We do need a team to promote Facebook. Posts on Facebook have had good responses. Every year- u3a week – we put on events, open to others, rather than members.</p> <p>Room 4: Bromley – presentation makes a 'lot of sense'. Little experience or dependent on committee commitment. Set up a group for help with Facebook. Some are doing things for u3a week. Taking advantage of 35th anniversary for Bromley this year. Hillingdon 25th anniversary next year? If London region has a page, could u3a's post to it? Future delegates' topic- Risk Assessments.</p> <p>Room 5: Sutton u3a reported back from the group-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sell concept to committees after handing out Sheila's presentation 2. Facebook pages exist but not used a lot. 3. Connecting with groups- especially important = investigate further! 4. Calendar – to cover events- more manageable. 5. U3a week – connect into calendar of local events. Footfall [concentrated on this.
6.0	<p>AOB: The meeting was then asked if they could suggest any other regional events they would like to see, and if they would then organise. No ideas were forth coming.</p>
7.0	<p>Wrap Up (Val Girling) The Chair then asked if there were any members willing to volunteer and prepared to take on roles /vacancies we have identified ? If anyone is interested, they should contact VG.</p> <p>The Chair then concluded reminding members that the next Delegates meeting will be on Friday 17 October which would include the LRU3A AGM. This will be a face-to-face meeting at 'LIFT' in Islington (same as last year). Also another Chairs Networking session will be held in February 2026. Exact date yet to be set.</p>

APPENDIX 1 - REPORTS:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS:

CHAIR (from Val Girling):

I have started my round of visiting u3as around London. The purpose of these visits is to solicit views on how best the London Region and the Trust can support you. It is to collect success stories and problems and facilitate sharing them around the region.

The u3a is a COLLABORATIVE organisation and I would encourage those u3as who are successful to be prepared to share this with those who are going through a tough time.

We are being urged to raise our profile and attract more members so that more people can share in what we have – a great organization that allows members to enjoy life to the full.

Our Speaker today will help with this agenda, as using social media is one of the ways we will succeed in interesting younger people in our organization. Most u3as realise that it is only by recruiting from the younger age bracket that our u3as will survive.

Let's embrace the challenge, together.

TREASURER (John Bent):

In summary, there have been no significant items since the last accounts and the bank balance remains healthy, around £9,500. All payments are up to date.

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR (Vivek Nanda): no report

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY (Rikki Wallman)

Ongoing update of u3a contacts.

EVENTS TEAM (Rikki Wallman)

Since the last report there have been in

May -5 walks and gallery visits. 43 new people 70 existing ones already on the database

June- 10 sessions. 59 new and 128 existing

July- 7 sessions 30 new 110 existing

Total in May, June and July 22 sessions, 440 applicants 132 new on the database 30% existing 70%

There is a small surplus which is used to pay for the tools we use like Mailchimp(our communications platform), zoom, Wufoo (our registration platform)

September and October SAVE THE DATES already sent out to our Mailchimp audiences directly and to all chairs and delegates. Launch date for September is 31st July and for October is 21st Aug. This has given each u3a over a month to ensure the information is cascaded to their membership whenever in the month their newsletter goes out.

The feedback response has been on the decline so it's been decided for the September and October events there will not be a feedback form, but simple "please email me with any feedback you wish to share, or suggestions you have to make" or something like that. If members have left their name on the feedback forms, I have followed up but very rarely get a response back.

A further change is asking those registered how they found out about the events, this has been previously “tick all relevant boxes” I am now asking please tick just one. This will show if the direct mailing works. For May and June 28% was a previous participant and 44% from direct mailing 17% from their own u3a 3% online talk participant. And 8% from another u3a member

There are still u3as that do not have any members attending any session we have organised in 2025. A couple of people I’ve spoken to say their newsletter editors are reluctant, or do not understand, about LR events, so don’t advertise them.

Brandenberg Christmas Concert confirmed for 3rd December The Wallace Collection study Day is firmed up for 10th March 26 for Women’s History Month and there are still plans for a Wellness Day in October . This is being led by Peter Chung as last year with input from Vivek and Cariss Smith

The events team are always looking for extra help especially if prepared to learn some new skills with Mailchimp and Wufoo. I promised it’s not hard or complicated but sometimes just takes a little more time than is available. Looking for someone to share the admin

In the process of trying to upgrade a Mailchimp account to combine the 3 free accounts

Mike Marriott is willing to continue to be liaison with the guides for 2026 for the walks and gallery visits. A programme similar to 2025, e.g Womens History Month –March. May- Mid July, September and Black History Month in October.

Catherine Ware has some ideas for further study days but I am afraid that there is no-one to organise them. She also said she will start to put out feelers for on-line talks but hopes that 2 will be led by Vivek and Liz Day as the cultural Debate was. All to be confirmed

WEB MANAGER (Derek Harwood):

Ongoing update of the LRU3A website as required. The ‘Latest Notices’ feature being used to highlight up and coming Events.

Events page updated with details for all autumn Walks and Talks.

PEER SUPPORT GROUP (PSG) COORDINATOR (Liz Day):

GROUP COORDINATORS PSG (vacant): Any volunteer to re-start this PSG?

WEBMASTERS PSG (Derek Harwood):

This PSG continues with regular meetings, the last one being held in May with reps from 6 London u3as attending. The main agenda items for that meeting included:

- Questions submitted (on ‘SiteWorks’ and ‘Cloud Storage’)
- LRU3A IT Skills Training Programme
- And open discussion points (on ‘Beacon & SiteWorks Consistency’ and ‘Use of Beacon’)

LRU3A have arranged a further IT Skills training programme (our 4th) in conjunction with AbilityNet to be held in July. The content of this one is a repeat of the May programme – as this was oversubscribed. Details published on the LRU3A website.

TREASURERS PSG (Derek Harwood):

This PSG continues with regular meetings, the last one being held in May with reps from 7 London u3as attending. The main agenda items for that meeting included:

- Gift Aid update
- Setting Reserves
- Anything else / open discussion / AOB

The national office is still in ongoing discussion with HMRC regarding the rejection by them of over 12 u3as gift aid submissions. A face-to-face meeting has now been held and some progress made.

Other specific issues were also raised and shared at this PSG including: 'Gifts of Appreciation', 'Format of Annual Accounts/ Annual Reports', 'Beacon Training Workshops for Treasurers'.

PUBLIC RELATIONS PSG (vacant):

In abeyance as no Coordinator. **Any volunteer to re-start this PSG?**

NATIONAL GENERAL NEWS (Derek Harwood and John Bent):

The new governance structure is now in place (from 1st April) with new Trust Board trustees and a new 'Council. London u3as has two elected as their Council Representatives - Jenny Wilson (Croydon) and Chris Bulford (Islington). See their report below.

The national programme of Events and Workshops has been published on the national website. Activities continue to support the membership initiative of growing the overall membership to 500,000 by the end of 2028. London Region has a number u3a's where membership is static or falling.

NETWORK LINK (Derek Harwood):

This forum offers a common discussion and support platform for all u3a networks, such as LRU3A. The last NL Zoom meeting was held in June with over two hundred attending. There were two main topics presented

- Alan Freeland: "Using AI to make leading within the u3a easier and less time consuming".
- Sheila Crawley: "Using Social Media"

Both subjects triggered healthy discussions and sharing of experiences.

As Sue Russell has now been elected as the Chair of the new Council there is a new Network Link Chair been elected: Karen Green.

COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES (Jenny Wilson and Chris Bulford):

The Council Reps for the 12 nations & regions of the UK-wide u3a have had a number of meetings since inauguration at the beginning of April, to clarify purpose, roles and responsibilities. We are very active on WhatsApp to share concerns and offer support. A staff member Mimmi Brostromer has been appointed to facilitate Council business.

Each of the 12 areas has a small budget and a zoom licence to support contact within the region.

So far I have been in contact with a number of u3as to help, support and encourage as required.

On 31st July there will be A Strategy Day (F2F, 10-5pm) in London for members of the Board, the Council and the office staff which will run by a professional convenor. So once a consensus has been reached and strategic decisions made, we will share these ideas with you, as they will indicate the future direction of the movement.

In the meantime Jenny is one of 5 Council Reps working on developing and improving the 3 Strategy Implementation Groups so that we can see positive ideas being put into place. We have been meeting once a week so it's quite a commitment.

Our LR Chair, Val Girling, has visited some of our u3as and our team of two is really benefitting from her involvement and enthusiasm.

Looking back over the first three months of the Council it is becoming increasingly obvious that it will take at least to the end of its first year to make a realistic assessment of how the Council is faring. It is not just the Council that is new. The Chief Executive has only been in post since last autumn as has the Chair of TAT Trustees. The paid staff will need to work through how to relate to Council Representatives and there is, of course, a large agenda of issues to consider.

APPENDIX 2 – ATTENDANCE REGISTER

ATTENDANCE					
		<u>Present</u>		<u>Apologies</u>	
	LRU3A Committee & other posts				
	Chair	Val Girling *	1		
	Vice-Chair	Vacant			
	Treasurer	John Bent*	1		
	Learning Development Coordinator	Liz Day *			1
	Communications Coordinator	Vivek Nanda *	1		
	Secretary	Maria Guest-Naharnowicz *	1		
	Events	Rikki Wallman *	1		
	Talks Coordinator	Catherine Ware*	1		
	Guest:	Sheila Crawley	1		
	London Region Council Reps	Jenny Wilson *	1		
		Chris Bulford *	1		
	London Region Local Networks:				
	BOB	See Bromley			
	SW London	No rep			
	London U3A Representatives (Chair, Delegate, Other)				
1	Abbey wood & Thamesmead				
2	Barnet	John Bent	1		
3	Beckenham				
4	Bexley	Rosemary Case(C)	1		
5	Brent				
6	Bromley	Angela Dowling (S), Sandy Boden(C)	1+1		
7	Crouch End				
8	Croydon	Cariss Smith (O) Jenny Wilson (C) Joy Ellery (VC)	1, 1, 1		
9	Dagenham	Folded but was on original list			
10	Dulwich & District	Neil Abrahams (VC) , Liz Day	1+0		1
11	Ealing	Derek Atkinson (VC), Jill Stern (C)	1 + 1		
12	Enfield	Michael Witter(C)			1
13	Hackney	Ken Davidson(C)	1		
14	Hammersmith & Fulham	Sue Adams(D) , Amanda Court	1+1		
15	Hampstead Garden Suburbs (HGS)				
16	Harrow	Oscar Monteiro (C)	1		
17	Havering				
18	Hillingdon	Gaynor Mason (S) , Judith Peddle (C)	0+1		1
19	Hounslow	Gill Chapman (O)	1		

20	Islington	Chris Bulford (D), Sally Fox (D), Derek Harwood, Vivek Nanda	1 + 1 1+1		
21	Kenton & District	Dick Nathan(C)	1		
22	Kingston	Luanne Higgins (C)	1		
23	Merton	Linda Thompson (VC) Catherine Ware, Mike Dawson, Suzanne Shawcross (S)	1+1 +1+ 0		1 1
24	Mill Hill				
25	Newham	Rosemary Jenkins, Elizabeth Jenkins (S)	1 0		
26	North London	Michael Johns (C)	1		
27	Northwood & District	Rob Thomasson (C)			1
28	Norwood	Judith Foskett (D)	1		
29	Orpington	Sally Fox (D)			1
30	Palmers Green & Southgate	Val Girling, (C) , Frances Halliday (VC)	1+ 1		
31	Redbridge & District	Carol Miles(D) , Rikki Wallman (O)	1+ 1		
32	Richmond				
33	Sidcup & District	Noel Lake (D)	1		
34	South Hillingdon				
35	Stanmore & District				
36	SE London				
37	Sutton Area	Sue Deans (VC), Tony Hagger (O)	1+1		
38	Tower Hamlets	Vanda Green (D)	1		
39	U3A in London				
40	Upminster				
41	Waltham Forest	Christine Farnes (D)	1		
42	Wandsworth				
43	Wanstead & Woodford	Jan Martin (VC)	1		
44	Welling	Maria Guest-Naharnowicz (D)	1		
TOTALS		Participants online at peak: some who had not registered) 38; 37 People registered: u3as represented on the day: 26 out of 43 (60%) Apologies received from members: 6 u3as covered by apologies: 3 u3as active: 24 ; u3as inactive (no response): 14 Attendance up since last meeting.			

*Duplicates not counted in totals