

Minutes of the London Region of u3a's Fourteenth Annual General Meeting

Held on Friday 17th October 2025

Venue: LIFT Islington, 45 White Lion Street, London, N1 9PW.

Val Girling (Chair) welcomed the attendees and thanked all for coming to the AGM/ Delegates meeting. There were 2 guest speakers scheduled for the Delegates meeting after the AGM -Sue Russell, Chair of the Council on : 'How the new Council is performing after its first 6 months and Rosemary Mayes, from London Age Friendly Forum on social connections.

Val confirmed that she would be the Chair for the AGM. A register was then taken of attendees (see bottom of table last page). Brian , a visitor is filming segments of our meeting for a video. Attendees can opt out, if they wish.

1. Confirmation of a Quorum

The Chair stated that the meeting was Quorate.

2. Minutes of the thirteenth AGM held on 18th October 2024 (previously disseminated) No errors were identified. The acceptance of the Minutes was approved by all.

3. Matters Arising from the above Minutes There were no matters arising.

4. Receive and Adopt Accounts for the period 1st September 2024 to 31st August 2025

The accounts had been previously disseminated. The highlights from them were given by John Bent:

- a. Surplus of £2831, against the prior year's deficit of -£904. The 2023/2024 year, was the first we haven't run the Summer school. In 2024/2025, we have run a full programme of events with guided walks, visits to museums and galleries, music events etc. The programme was very popular, people from all over the country attended. Between them these contributed a net surplus of £3896 in the year. Many thanks to the LR Events team worked incredibly hard.
- b. The Region received several one-off Grants in 2024/2025 which boosted our income and surplus- £750 donation from Dagenham u3a, £500 from Allied Irish Bank and £720 from the London Regional Trustee- totaling £1970. Gross Overheads for the year showed a slight increase £3076 -against £2099 previous year.
- c. The Network's Reserves at 31st August 2025 stand at £12,679, compared with last year's reserves of £9848. With £15037 in our bank and PayPal accounts.
- d. Thanks to Jim Jenkins for his support in auditing the annual accounts.
- e. John Bent proposed acceptance of the annual accounts, Jenny Wilson seconded. All voted to accept the accounts.

5. To elect the Independent Examiner of Accounts for forthcoming year

John Bent proposed that Jim Jenkins as our independent account examiner for the next year. He has agreed to stay on. Voted unanimously to accept the proposal.

The LRU3a financial year is set out differently to the normal April- April year.

- 6. Resolutions-** Approve revision of the LRU3a Constitution. This is to be updated to reflect changes with the introduction of the Council. No Regional Trustees as these are now Council representatives.
Derek Harwood proposed that the LRU3A Constitution be revised accordingly. Voted unanimously to accept the proposal.

7. Election of Officers and Committee Members to the LRU3A Executive Committee.

Cariss Smith - voted on unanimously by the delegates. Cariss has worked on the Events team; she will have no specific role.

Jane Fisher -voted on unanimously by the delegates. She will be providing EDI expertise to Committee.

Existing members were unanimously voted back onto the committee by all present.

We are losing Liz Day and Vivek Nanda. We are so grateful for all their efforts and long service.

The issued Nominations List showed that Val Girling (Palmers Green) was continuing as Chair, and all others (Rikki Wallman, John Bent, Maria Guest-Naharnowicz are standing for re-election).

The full list of Nominations for election was proposed by Val Girling, seconded by Jenny Wilson and approved by all present.

8. Annual Report (disseminated previously) Highlights were read out by the Chair.

Question from Pamela Freer (Upminster) who asked why the LR needs more events?

Answered by Committee- -one of the core purposes of the LRU3A network was to provide London based events. Also income from events was necessary to cover our overheads (of about £3000).

There is no income from anything else. A delegate suggested that London Region should charge London u3a's for some financial support. The Chair agreed to take the item away and for the EC to consider.

Online talks will cease after the current monthly programme is complete in March 2026. So much is available nationally, that we do not have to compete with national offer.

The Walks and Talks in person are to be continued as both popular and provide income.

We still need volunteers to provide new blood and energy in running LRU3A.

9. Dates of Next Delegate Meetings – 2026

- a. Friday 16th January
- b. Tuesday 14 April (to avoid Good Friday)
- c. Friday 17th July
- d. Friday 16th October + AGM

Chairs Networking lunch date: Thursday 27th February 2026 as a F2F event

10. A.O.B.

No other business was raised.

The Chair thanked all for attending and supporting LRU3A and the AGM was formally closed.

Delegates Meeting

- a. **Presentation to be given by Sue Russell** from Worcester u3a, (Chair of the Council) on 'How the new Council is performing after its first 6 months'.

'Why me?' Has been asked to do every job? It's fun!

Given the role of the Chair of the Council, after being previously, the Head of Network Links (including Herefordshire, Worcestershire).

Sue reminded us about 'Fit for the Future', with emphasis on skills, reducing personnel. A smaller group of Trustees.

There are 12 regions, 2 Council reps in each region in UK.

E.Anglia, SE, N.I, West Midlands only have 1 person each, so 4 vacancies across these areas.

27 people on the board, representing the u3a membership.

Over the last 6 months, we are getting to know what we should do.

The u3a reflects a very diverse range of people.

For the last 40 years or so, the u3a movement has worked quite well with a board of Trustees running everything, but it was obvious that the movement was getting much bigger. Things had to change as people on the board didn't necessarily have the skills that a complex organisation like the TAT needed.

So that is why things changed and it is fit for the future.

Fixed events- in September to give the board priorities from u3a members.

Communication – where does a u3a question go to (initially to the organisation?)

Pathway? The Website is complained about, as the search engine, the fonts, colours, images and layout.

Communications between u3a's and the Council is an area for improvement. So the Council have set up a task force to produce solutions.

Sue asked -do we wait for months for a reply from the Head Office? Is this true?

The Council is listening to all of us and this is the most important thing!

- b. **Report for your London Region Chair- Val Girling**

Val confirmed that we are all in agreement with all of Sue's comments.

It became evident to her that we only have half of our 43 u3a's represented at meetings.

Her visits to u3a's in north London area have shown us what insights have shown. It's not to be nose, it's to be finding out what u3a's are concerned about, their difficulties etc. Every u3a has a problem with recruiting committee volunteers to take up roles. She also mentioned that delegates have asked if meetings could be on a different day than a Friday. This will be discussed at our next Committee meeting. Val said that increasing membership is doable, she has increased her PSG membership by 70% in 3 years, as an example. Whilst Val has been visiting many u3a's, she has been supporting 4 individual u3a's regularly. She has been taking back feedback to the Council via Jenny Wilson and Chris Bulford.

Helping communication between u3a's and the links between u3a's is vital.

The National target of 500,000 u3a members by the end of 2028 was mentioned.

Some felt the issue is not getting numbers, but new enthusiasm! Some London u3a's are seeing falling membership levels.

Getting people to take over the existing roles of those who have fulfilled the role for some time. Treasurer roles in committees are very difficult to fill. No problems in recruiting members but committee roles are another issue!

100% representation at our events-that is Val's aim.

If a u3a is not represented, this is the most importantly thing which we must address.

Also, you do not have to be a Chair to attend meetings, any member can attend. Would be great if every u3a was represented. It is about disseminating information to u3a's.

It's just that we must continue with communicating with u3a's.

London Region Support – we are here for you!

c.. **Jenny Wilson /Chris Bulford** – our Council representatives then took over.

Make a list that are examples of good practice. The concept of opening training /workshops to new committee officers.

In the Main office at TAT, there is younger staff who are producing the publicity (which is not always what we would like). It would be better to represent us. For example, there is a particular leaflet with a younger black female, older white male and it looks like she is his carer. Just not appropriate. We need better flyers or leaflets or other (electronic) ways of advertising what we do.

We need ideas. Sorting the national website- to provide better help and advice -to state who you can go to for specific problems.

Retirement-not just watching box sets! Must be social, give new members ideas and get them organised! Sharing ideas and skills is the aim!

d. **Chris Bulford**-Recruitment.

In the Guardian newspaper, an advert about the u3a has been placed 5 times on full page recently.

Question – Chris asked of the delegates – who reads the Guardian? Very few hands raised in audience. No one joined u3a from the advert. There was a spike in people ringing Jim Jenkins, Brent u3a following the advert.

Rikki Wallman- might get a referral about membership, but not very often.

- e. **Rosemary Mayes**- set up 7 years ago the London Age Friendly Forum, it involved a random choice of age-related organisations in London. Including the u3a, Age UK, London and the Civil Service Pension Authority and a few others. -and has set up a social connection workshop in 3rd November for Barnet u3a. The Selection of age-related organisations were used to encourage the Greater London Authority to produce an age-friendly action plan to include things like access to toilets, riding e-scooters on pavements. This has improved relations recently. Sam Mauger, former CEO of u3a and TAT, has helped with this initiative.

We are now in the process of making ourselves a more formal organisation. We are setting ourselves up as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, a CIO. Now, Rosemary is representing the London Network, on this organisation, along with the Workers Education Association. We are making people realise that there are serious issues about being older in London. There has been a mayoral body for older people in Manchester. It's in places like Manchester and Sheffield that authorities are promoting a more positive

attitude /view towards ageing. It's about older Londoners contribute to the growth of London. It is not about us being a drag on the health service! London's age demographics are older than other parts of the UK.

Rosemary's report is to be posted on the website - 'The London Age Friendly Forum'.

Equality plan (Mayoral) is to be posted at the end of October.

Break out tables (same as break out rooms) but face to face, same concept and writing down thoughts, rather than discussing them at a plenary after the discussions. Delegates asked-how the u3a can help?

Should we re-instate Network Meetings?

- f. **Feedback** from the discussions around the table were collected by Jenny and will be posted on the website.

Wrap up by Val Girling.

Meeting finished at 15.54 pm

APPENDIX 1

FEEDBACK FROM THE DELEGATES' DISCUSSIONS

AFTER THE LR AGM 17TH OCTOBER

Positive points for sharing ideas & best practice to be developed

The Chairs' Forum – good discussions & sharing

Social media

Videos to assist with roles, induction, volunteering, how to chair a meeting well, development of the volunteer concept

Sharing publicity -websites, leaflets, collaboration / tips for developing community engagement – what is the relationship with the London Age Friendly Forum? – more involvement with this group

How to develop a more diverse u3a (e.g. more men, celebrating the richness of ethnic diversity)

Celebrate the uniqueness of u3a – more help with explaining & promotion

Word of mouth is the best recruitment tool / personal contact in the local area / TAT doesn't do the bulk of recruiting

Would like more advance knowledge about national advertising -when & where – then they can be flagged up

Bitesize courses & taster sessions– more explanation for some u3as to expand their I.G. range Use the health check form

Discussion about / developing 'rules' to cope with full groups e.g. members who regularly miss meetings without apologies to be removed to relieve a waiting list. Full groups is an ongoing problem. People are attracted by the groups.

Good experience with insurance queries to the office

Good balance of learning & social – selling the message -u3a is good for you – Learn to Live etc – more hard copies available

Would appreciate a diagram of the u3a organisation / explanation of the logo

Help with collaboration with neighbouring u3as – eg sharing IG – how would it affect membership?

Teams to develop aspects rather than responsibilities loaded on to one person Cost of membership is very varied.

Other Points

Unravel different financial arrangements in different u3as (?)

Contact council leaders

Issue with generic emails – can't use on Beacon / Paypal

Job descriptions e.g. for Walks team – better instructions

National Website needs more work

Contingency planning & rotating roles

Create an answer for some u3as – What's in it for us to belong to LRU3a?

Peer Support Groups – need re-invigorating

Attracting Next Gen & increasing diversity – guides to help, loop systems

More offers for singles e.g. MOTO

More weekend activities

Look at newsletters – how to use them locally to best effect

Social prescribing

Venue sizes for monthly meetings / some u3as have 2 per month

Bring back the Shared Learning Projects

Some u3as are resistant to increasing their membership

National office not helpful with new u3a start-ups – need to make this a smooth process Need to improve information & advice / has been difficult to get staff to give definitive answers

Branding plus merchandise – the latter – limited goods, expensive & sometimes poor quality. It's easier to order from an outside company

The Trust must listen to members

More information & clarity about grants – what is available & how to claim

APPENDIX 2 - Attendance

	Present	Apologies
Committee & other posts		
Chair	Val Girling	
Vice-Chair	vacancy	
Membership Secretary	Rikki Wallman	
Treasurer	John Bent	
PSG Coordinator	vacancy	
Communications Coordinator	vacancy	
Public Relations Advisor	vacancy	
Webmaster	Derek Harwood	
Talks & Summer Programme	Catherine Ware	
Events Coordinator	vacancy	
Mailchimp Coordinator	Rikki Wallman	
Business Secretary	Maria Guest-Naharnowicz	
National Council Representative	Jenny Wilson/Chris Bulford	
u3a Representatives		
Abbeywood & Thamesmead		
Barnet	Jim Jenkins (V), John Bent, Rosemary Mayes	
Beckenham		
Bexley	Rosey Case (V)	
Brent		
Bromley	Sandy Boden (V), Brian Bell	
Crouch End	Andrew Sich (V)	
Croydon	Jenny Wilson	Cariss Smith(V)
Dulwich & District		Tim Pagan
Ealing		Jill Stern(V)
Enfield		
Hackney	Liz Southcombe/ Ken Davison (V)	
Hammersmith & Fulham	Amanda Court (V)	
HGS		
Harrow	Oscar Monterio (V)	
Havering		
Hillingdon		Anne Lines(V)
Hounslow	Gill Chapman	

Islington	Chris Bulford/Derek Harwood/Sally Fox (V)	
Kenton	Dick Nathan (V)	
Kingston		Luanne Higgins
Merton	Linda Thibaut (V)/Jane Fisher	
Mill Hill		Melvin Sandler
Newham	Peter Chung (V)/ Caroline Conlon	
North London	Michael Lewin (V)	
Northwood & District		Rob Thomasson (V)
Norwood		
Orpington		
Palmers Green & Southgate	Anne Rayner (V) /Val Girling	
Redbridge & District	Rikki Wallman/Marilyn Hendleman (V)	
Richmond	John Cardwell (V)	
Sidcup	Noel Lake (V)	
SouthEast London/London SE	Brenda Lobo/William Berry	
Stanmore		
Sutton Area	Sue Deans (V) /Jennifer Walter	
Tower Hamlets	Vanda Green (V)	
U3A in London (Belsize Park)		
Upminster	Bob O' Keeffe/Pamela Freer	
Waltham Forest	Christine Farnes (V)	
Wandsworth		Penny Ryan
Wanstead & Woodford	Jan Martin (V)/Krystyna Derkacz	
Welling	Maria Guest-Naharnowicz (V)	Phill Hinton
TOTALS	25/43 LR u3as represented altogether. Total attendees -40 16 u3as not represented (of which 9 sent apologies)	