



London Region of U3As

MINUTES

Meeting Title:	DELEGATES MEETING
Date/ Time:	16th January 2026 2.00-4.30pm
Venue:	On line with Zoom

Welcome & Previous Minutes:	
1.0	<p>Val Girling (VG) (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting. VG explained the change of agenda, the guest subject, due to unforeseen circumstances. 2 new Committee members have joined the London Region – Jane Fisher, lead on EDI and Cariss Smith (member of LR Events Team) Rikki Wallman and John Bent, both Committee members, sent apologies, as not available to attend due to travels. Previous Minutes (<u>17th October 2025</u>): Action on previous minutes- Reference to suggestions from Pamela F (Upminster) on financial issues and considering why the London Region does not charge u3as for joining the London network and for attending meetings. As John Bent (Treasurer) was not present, Derek Harwood answered with a response. This had now been discussed by the Executive Committee and concluded that there is no need to consider that option in the short term as LRU3as finances were currently healthy. Jenny Wilson is totally against LRU3A charging u3as for their attendance as we want to encourage all London u3as to be part of this network. Minutes were then agreed, no other items arising.</p>
Reports:	
2.0	<p>Reports to support this meeting (Appendix 1) had been sent to registered members previously. Questions were to be directed at any report. No questions were asked.</p>
News:	
3.0	<p>News from the Trust & Networks See Reports, Appendix 1. No questions from delegates.</p>
Topic 1 - Jane Fisher, “Equality, Diversity and Inclusion” (EDI)	
4.0	<p>The guest speaker, Jane Fisher, volunteer for the Third Age Trust (TAT), now EDI Lead and trained presenter and Chair of Merton u3a, provided a talk on the importance of EDI in your u3a. It is a legal requirement that all charities have an EDI Policy. A template policy on EDI is on the <u>TAT website</u>. The policy can be used by all u3as and is an extremely useful tool for discussion in committees. There is other <u>supporting material</u> available as well. Support is available, contact email address is <u>edi@u3a.org.uk</u>. You can book directly from the EDI committee via the email. Presentations can be provided on Zoom or face-to-face.</p>

5.0	<p>Breakout Rooms Feedback/Plenary</p> <p>The meeting was split into breakout rooms to discuss the subject. 2 questions were given to the attendees to discuss in their breakout rooms:</p> <p>Q1. Who in our community is missing from our u3a activities? How can we encourage them to join our u3a network. Why might we be discouraging them?</p> <p>Q2. Which ways of doing things traditionally or using traditions which unintentionally exclude someone new?</p>
	<p>Room 1: William B (SE London) referred to both race and men – these are missing generally. Half the groups in this room have an EDI policy. Unconscious bias is especially important. ‘What is in it for me?’ - Different groups want something and it can be vastly different wants. Many ethnic groups may not have heard about u3a. 28% men represented in u3a membership nationally. Subject matter is often biased towards women.</p> <p>Geography groups, travel related topics, walking football, pub crawls were all put forward as possible male interest groups/activities to encourage more male members. Book groups mainly consist of women. But a book group on Military history might be another topic to interest more male members.</p> <p>Mike McC- suggested a collation of innovative ideas would be good for u3as But best if there is also a contact, someone to talk to about the idea.</p> <p>The LRU3A Executive Committee agreed to take this away as an action. A practical guide will be prepared. There are currently 15 ‘shared practice guides’ on the LRU3A TAT website, but nothing on EDI.</p> <p>Room 2: Oscar M confirmed that this meeting would be a trigger as Harrow currently has no EDI policy. Important to work it out with committee group to get support. Understand what it means and what must be done. There are more women than men in their u3a also. Activities are more skewed towards women than men. Which activities are favoured by men? Harrow most diverse borough in London, but represented by white, middle-class people. Few Asians, few black people. Membership charge is an ‘All Inclusive’ basis but costs £70.00 annually. They have Over 80 groups. Current form of subscription fee is unsustainable as too expensive. Looking to change subscription model to a ‘Pay as You Go’ type. Base subscription then pay extra for events, groups, etc. We must be cautious, fail at things, rather than not trying. Any best practice guide developed not just paper examples. Passion is needed to convince the committee. We need outsiders to help us. VG will help u3as who need support.</p> <p>Room 3: Jenny W (Croydon) confirmed there are 43 u3as in London. Identified disadvantages: -seen as elitist (‘University’); competition with Age UK. But we are caring not carers. We can be kind, but we are not instead of social services. An example of a person with dementia playing in a bridge group - no one wanted to join her table. Examples quoted where on trips members have wandered off and got lost. We can be inclusive, but with a limit.</p> <p>Need to represent our diverse communities. We can offer a wide range of activities. Often cheap compared to eg public gyms. Be welcoming, but we cannot do everything.</p>

	<p>Room 4: Mike McC (Wandsworth)- reported back: institutionalised discrimination within our u3a. We are the shadow of the WI (Women’s Institute) without realising it. Relatively diverse, but still very white in membership. 4 areas we underrepresent: disability, men, younger retirees, ethnicity. The term ‘university’ is a distraction in name. ‘Education’ is a discrimination culture. Groups on diverse cultural foods being offered Can link up with food banks to keep costs down. Expert guidance on how we tackle challenges is requested.</p> <p>Room 5: Bob H, Palmers Green and Southgate fed back from his group: Felt / agreed we mainly are middle-class organisation. Things we are doing do not actively discourage members, like a pub crawl etc. Need other activities to encourage other cultures to join. Huge subject for the u3a as an organisation, we are acutely aware. We must actively take steps to seek ways to address this.</p> <p>Room 6: None of this group has EDI policy in their u3as This will change after today. Feedback related to disabilities; cultures; financial constraints. Waltham Forest covers Chingford, North Chingford which is more affluent than Walthamstow. Waltham Forest also covers Leyton and Leytonstone. Some less affluent areas as well as areas with more expensive housing - mixed bag of demographics. Some open groups, younger ones, Wine group is extremely popular; Bird watching open group as well as new members’ groups. A long table in a venue for new members is useful as numbers attending can be high and everyone is then able to see each other, and this enables good discussion. Membership charges -Waltham Forest £20 ; Wanstead and Woodford £18. Krystyna D (Wanstead and Woodford) joined in and referred to a local Jewish centre which is thriving, but that group is not represented in the u3a group. Asian/Black communities are not well represented in local u3as. Woodford/N and S Woodford both have still working population. Wanstead and Woodford are expensive places to live in. There are not a lot of retired people who live there and therefore not able to join local u3as. Redbridge has more elderly. Jan M reckons we do not represent the local community. All u3as in this group have no EDI policy. Waltham Forest had a local ‘GP’ day, where some people joined the u3a. Venue size has impact on membership attendance at monthly meetings as well as Speakers on offer and transport to and location of venues. Waiting lists and refusal to allow potential new members to join the u3a were discussed. ‘Social Prescribing’ – is where organisations (often GPs) refer people to other organisations such as the u3a. Some Medical Trusts use more than others. We must concentrate on: 1. Increase diversity; 2. EDI Policy; 3. Offer variety of speakers and groups. Asian cookery, spices of the world. Group convener /leader can be involved in this setting of such interest groups/events; 4. Not all members attend meetings, but only social events and activities. 5. In my experience, you cannot have a waiting list or close your u3a membership to new members; 6. New members are popular</p>
6.0	<p>AOB: Nothing arising.</p>

7.0	<p>Wrap Up (VG)</p> <p>The Chair then asked if there were any members willing to volunteer and be prepared to take on roles /vacancies we have identified? If anyone is interested, they should contact VG. Some of the dates of the Delegates meetings have been changed for convenience of members, now not always on a Friday. Upcoming topics for these meetings are as below.</p> <p>The Chair then concluded reminding members that the Chairs Networking Day will be on Friday 27th February 2026. This will be a face-to-face meeting at 'LIFT' in Islington (same as last year). If your Chair cannot attend, please ensure that your u3a has a Representative there. Please remember to register so that you receive all the details and documents.</p> <p>A reminder that there is also a Chairs WhatsApp channel, which is especially useful for advice. Chairs who want to join should send their mobile number to Derek Harwood.</p> <p><u>Year's dates for all Delegates meetings in 2026-</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Tuesday 14 April – AI and its Use for your u3a Wednesday 15 July -Insurance Compliance and Risk Assessment Thursday 15 October with AGM (Face-to-face) - something like How Technology Can Help You Run Your u3a.
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APPENDIX 1 - REPORTS:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS:

Chair's Report - Val Girling

Visits- To date, nine u3as have been visited, some of them more than once.

Four of them are being supported regularly.

Arrangements have been made to visit three more early in 2026.

It has been very pleasing to welcome delegates from some of these u3as attending London Region events for the first time in a while. I have made it clear that even if a Chair or a member of the Committee cannot attend, we would be happy to see anyone representing that u3a so long as they understand the role of a delegate. I shall be hoping to visit even more u3as in the coming year.

AGM 2025 and Chairs Network Day 2026

The AGM was well-attended and all those present were fully engaged in the items on the Agenda. We are working hard on the format of the next face to face meeting to make it even more successful. Details of the day will be sent out soon.

Delegates meetings on Zoom

These will now be on a variety of days of the week so that more people can attend. The content of next year has already been planned and looks extremely relevant, interesting and engaging. January 16th Delegates meeting, entitled "Retiring with Attitude" is a topic that has been highly successful in promoting the u3a and encourages new members to join. It will feature the writer of the course, a teacher of the course and a course participant and offer opportunities to discuss and ask questions of them and your colleagues. Sign up now!

Treasurer's Report- John Bent

London Region of
u3as
Income and
Expenditure
01.09.25 to 31.12.25

London Region of
u3as
Income and
Expenditure
01.09.24 to 31.08.25

Income

Events Net of Paypal fees	£7,027.80
Wellness Day	£0.00
CAF Grant	£0.00
Grant Dagenham u3a	£0.00
Zoom Licence LRT TAT	
Bgt	£0.00
Bank Interest	£0.00
AI Prepd attendees	
Income Total	<hr/> £7,027.80

Less

Expenditure

Walks & Visits	£5,348.98
Wellness Day	£0.00
AGM	£456.30
Delegates & chairs	
Meetings	£0.00
AI Prepyts	
Zoom Licence & Wufoo	£110.97
Bank Charges	£0.00

Income

Events Net of Paypal fees	£19,109.23
Wellness Day	£1,312.00
CAF Grant	£500.00
Grant Dagenham u3a	£750.00
Zoom Licence LRT TAT	
Bgt	£719.88
Bank Interest	£40.59
Income Total	<hr/> £22,431.70

Less

Expenditure

Walks & Visits	£15,471.20
Wellness Day	£1,053.65
AGM	£469.20
Delegates & chairs	
Meetings	£1,370.90
Genl Exs	
Zoom Licence	£1,176.03
Bank Charges	£60.00

Registered Charity Number 1186441

<https://lru3a.u3asite.uk/>

Misc (Equipt)	£42.71
Expenditure Total	<u>£5,958.96</u>
Surplus/-Deficit 23/24	£1,068.84
Surplus B/fwd	<u>£12,678.89</u>
Net Surplus / -Deficit	<u>£13,747.73</u>

Misc (Equipt)	£0.00
Expenditure Total	<u>£19,600.98</u>
Surplus/-Deficit 23/24	£2,830.72
Surplus B/fwd	<u>£9,848.17</u>
Net Surplus / -Deficit	<u>£12,678.89</u>

**London Region of
u3as**

Balance Sheet
at 31.12.25

Assets	
Bank	£12,211.72
Paypal	£1,224.51
Debtors	
Prepaid Cost	£369.60
Chairs Mtg.	
Creditors	
Wufoo C Ware	-£58.00
Net Assets	<u>£13,747.83</u>

£0.10

**London Region of
u3as**

Balance Sheet
at 31.08.25

Assets	
Bank	£13,771.68
Paypal	£1,265.19
Debtors	
Debtors	£369.60
Chairs Mtg 27.2.26	
Prepaid	£168.00
AGM 17.10.25	
Creditors	
Prepaid Autumn Walks	-£2,895.48
Net Assets	<u>£12,678.99</u>

£0.10

Registered Charity Number 1186441

<https://lru3a.u3asite.uk/>

Web manager's report- Derek Harwood

- Maintaining LRU3A website as required.
- Held Web Managers PSG Meeting in November. Subjects covered inc: SiteWorks – Oversights; Sign Up forms; Open discussions - 0300 telephone numbers; Google Workspace.
- Treasurers PSG in October cancelled (I was away) but some email traffic instead
- 5th IT Skills Training programme delivered over November/ December with AbilityNet for all London u3as
- Managing the LRU3A Zoom accounts

Public Relations PSG (vacant):

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

Events Team Report- Rikki Wallman

Online talks continue for January, February and March 2026 and will then cease due to the extensive opportunity on offer for online sessions organised by the National Office. Many thanks to Catherine Ware who has been organising these online talks since 2020

The Wallace Collection study day has been postponed till autumn 2026 due to change of the personnel dealing with such visits. Thanks to Philippa Bassett for organising this and the Brandenburg Concert. This latter event was attended by 130 members and was fully booked within days from the launch.

Usually during the winter months, we do not organise walks due to the weather and dark evenings. We experimented this year with 2 Christmas lights walks 16th Dec 25 and 3rd Jan 26. These were so popular the guide offered to do an extra date, which was filled from the waiting list-experiment worked.

We have not, however, been dormant. 13 sessions are now being publicised for Women's History month in March 2026. Many thanks to Mike Marriot for his contact and communication with the guides and to Patricia Gregory for her diligence and patience in producing the flyers and programme.

Plans are in progress for walks and gallery visits during April, May, June, and early July. Save the Date information will be sent to chairs/delegates at least 6 weeks ahead of the launch date. This should mean that all u3as have the opportunity to publicise the sessions in their newsletters and at their monthly meeting, irrespective of which part of the month their newsletter is published. So please do cascade the information to your members so they are not disappointed. All details can always be found here [Events - London Region of u3as Network](#)

The surplus from all the Events is sufficient to pay for the tools we use-Wufoo, Mailchimp and zoom and to facilitate two face-to-face events during the year. It is not just about the finances but about the social and learning aspect of all the events. During 2025 the events were booked by over 500 unique members, some of whom booked for many sessions.

Do you have any experience of organising a study day, like the Music Day and the AI day in 2025. WE have a couple of venues who we are in contact with but need someone to put a programme together. Any volunteers????

Communications- Rikki Wallman

The trialling of the paid Mailchimp (or mass merge mailing platform) has been slower than predicted due to unforeseen health circumstances. However, migration has started to move the names of

chairs/delegates and the templates for all communications, into the paid account and to mostly utilise its functions than previously.

Training is on going for others to use Wufoo in setting up registration forms and reports.

Mailchimp training is also being carried out with zoom sessions on a regular basis. So, there is hope that communications can, going forward in 2026 be a shared role.

Report of the London Region Council Representatives

Report of the London Region Council Representatives (CRs)

What have the London CRs been up to?

Chris Bulford is involved with a sub-group of Council reps from other regions, working to put together an agreed strategy with plans, resources & targets for Publicity, Marketing and Brand Awareness. Liz Drury who was Head of the Comms team based in the London Office left just before Christmas. Soon her successor will be appointed and therefore it is essential that CRs are ready to develop a business plan.

Currently there is a worrying shortage of PR Advisers (member volunteers) in the regions, and we know from our own situation in London, that we have been unable to recruit since Rodney Fox moved away. Jenny is involved with a different sub-group of CRs who are working to get the original Standing Orders active. We are asking for regular briefings from the office departments so CRs can better understand procedures and protocols, and importantly know who is the appropriate staff member to consult for advice and guidance. It might sound obvious but the working relationship between the Council, the Staff and the Board members has to be clearly documented.

Sue Russell (Council Chair) asked Jenny to assist her with an article for u3a matters. Jenny has written some basic questions so members who knew little or nothing about the Council, could easily get up to speed. Sue & Jenny both thought it hit the nail on the head! But it wasn't well received, so we'll see if that gets published.

There is work going on to write new, better, user-friendly role descriptors. We made the point strongly that they should be written by members who have held those positions, rather than office staff. This is vital because recruitment of volunteers is a high priority.

We've both visited a number of London Region u3as in the period and this will continue. We want to be as supportive and helpful as possible and meet many members and committee members. We welcome invitations to visit you for a special celebration, to join a committee meeting, to help with an issue of some sort or to help navigate specialist advice from staff members.

For both our u3as, we are always delighted when a representative from another u3a visits – it is so worthwhile sharing ideas and friendship.

Happy New Year from Chris Bulford & Jenny Wilson

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
	Communications Coordinator	Rikki Wallman *			
	Secretary	Maria Guest-Naharnowicz *	1		
	Events	Rikki Wallman *			1
		Cariss Smith *	1		
	Guest:	Jane Fisher* (EDI Lead)	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	Jim Jenkins, John Bent,	1		1
3	Beckenham				
4	Bexley				
5	Brent				
6	Bromley	Kay Harbridge, Linda Archibald	0+0		
7	Crouch End	Andrew Sich (C)	1		
8	Croydon	Cariss Smith (O) Jenny Wilson (C)	1+1		
9	Dagenham	Folded but was on original list			
10	Dulwich & District				
11	Ealing	Derek Atkinson (VC), Jill Stern(C)	0+ 1		
12	Enfield				
13	Hackney	Ken Davison, Liz Southcombe	1+0		
14	Hammersmith & Fulham	Sue Adams(D) , Amanda Court	0+1		
15	Hampstead Garden Suburbs (HGS)				
16	Harrow	Oscar Monteiro (C)	1		
17	Havering				
18	Hillingdon	Roger King	1		
19	Hounslow				
20	Islington	Chris Bulford (D), Derek Harwood,	1 + 1		
21	Kenton & District	Dick Nathan(C)	1		
22	Kingston				

23	Merton	Linda Thompson (VC), Jane Fisher(C), Suzanne Shawcross (S)	1+1 +0		
24	Mill Hill				
25	Newham	Caroline Conlon (VC)	1		
26	North London	Michael Lewin	1		
27	Northwood & District				
28	Norwood				
29	Orpington				
30	Palmers Green & Southgate	Val Girling, (C) , Frances Halliday (VC), Bob Holford	1+ 0+1		
31	Redbridge & District	Carol Miles(D) , Marilyn Hendleman, Rikki Wallman (O)	1+0 +0		
32	Richmond				
33	Sidcup & District	Noel Lake (D)	1		
34	South Hillingdon				
35	Stanmore & District	Helena Reid, Brian Prince	1+1		
36	SE London	William Barry, Brenda Lobo	1+0		
37	Sutton Area	Sue Deans (VC)	1		
38	Tower Hamlets	Vanda Green (D)	1		
39	U3A in London				
40	Upminster	Pamela Freer(not able to log in)			1
41	Waltham Forest	Christine Farnes (D), Barbara Humm	1+1		
42	Wandsworth	Andy Crane, Mike McConigley	0+1		
43	Wanstead & Woodford	Jan Martin (VC) , Krystyna Derkacz	1+1		
44	Welling	Maria Guest-Naharnowicz (D)	1		
		Tessa Morrison (JW associate)	1		
TOTALS		Participants online at peak: (4 who had not registered) 33; 39 registered, 12 who registered did not attend; 1 couldn't log on, so apologies accepted u3as represented on the day: 25 out of 43 (58%) Apologies received from members: 6 u3as covered by apologies: 2 u3as active: 25; u3as inactive (no response): 17 Attendance slightly lower since last meeting.			

*Duplicates not counted in totals