



London Region of u3as

MINUTES

Meeting Title:	DELEGATES MEETING
Date/ Time:	14th April 2026 2.00-4.30pm
Venue:	Online with Zoom

Welcome & Previous Minutes:	
1.0	Val Girling (VG) (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Previous minutes -January 17 th 2026 accepted. No other items arising.
Reports:	
2.0	LRU3A Reports from the Committee to support this meeting (Appendix 1) These had been sent to registered members previous to the meeting. Questions were to be directed at any report. No questions were raised specifically about the issued reports.
News:	
3.0	News from the Trust & Networks Covered by issued reports. Nothing else added. No questions / clarifications arising.
4.0	General Discussions Social Prescribing: Question from Penny, Wandsworth 'Social Prescribing' – is where organisations (often GPs) refer people to other organisations such as the u3a. Some Medical Trusts use this process more than others. Is there any u3a guidance for us? Suggested procedures – Sutton has visited Harrow who have dealt with this. Wandsworth has a meeting about this topic Discussion about a discounted rate for 'social prescribing' referrals. Chris B (Council Rep) said this topic came up at the u3a Council. He advised that as an example, if people have been referred to Islington u3a from a GP, they have been inappropriate referrals (looking for Carers). Important to be cautious. Upminster-advised that we need to make it clear to care homes what the u3a can offer. Brenda (South East London) has had referrals from hospitals/care homes about the u3a and what they can offer. Inappropriate referrals, we are not carers. VG will send out information with supported steps which can be taken. Minutes: Sutton- asked if the LRU3A network minutes for Delegates meetings were taken and issued? Yes! – DH and RW replied. They will be issued through a news mailshot and are also posted on the 'Delegates' LRU3A webpage.

<p>4.0 continued</p>	<p>Paid Tutors: Chris B (Council Rep) raised the topic of acceptability of u3as employing paid tutors for u3a Interest Groups. This is a frequent question sent to the TAT office. DH and JB responded that, while not ideal (vs the principle of mutual learning) it was acceptable. Each u3a should decide its own policy on this matter. Some u3as avoid paying for tutors or instructors. Other u3as feel they have no other choice. There is advice on TAT website (‘Finance Matter – Guidance’) . National office will offer general support and help with questions on this topic. Some general points to be aware of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutor cannot be related to a u3a member- • Tutors are not ‘employees’ • They are self employed and hence must have their own public liability. Activities / exercise tutors like Pilates and Tai Chi. The term ‘employee’ must not be used and they must be a self-employed contractor, • Need an agreement or “contract” when working with tutors. • Need to consider GDPR aspect. Group to handle membership details when working with tutors. <p>Brenda (South East London) commented that several u3a tutors are on the u3a website. One u3a employs Spanish tutor for a small course. £3 contribution from each member pays towards the cost. Yoga instructor has their own insurance.</p>
	<p>Summer Activities: Michael (North London)- provides a 7-week summer programme for its members. Also offered a winter programme and wondered if other u3a’s offer such opportunities.</p> <p>If you want any help or advice for implementing such an event, ask Michael. This could be offered to new members to attract them.</p> <p>Several participants, including VG , DH and Joy (Croydon) shared that their groups continue regular activities throughout the summer without specific summer programs, though they may offer different events like a barn dance or picnics.</p> <p>Joy (Croydon)- confirmed that summer school/activities for 1 week or 2 weeks. It’s the same team all the time; we are not reaching new members, it’s the same people who run the ordinary meetings.</p> <p>Sandy(Bromley)- carries on normal activities, but different events. Barn Dance in May has proved an extremely popular addition. Regular tick over of new members by email. Important to re-send events, adverts, and reminders in regular communications, not just leaving it to the newsletter as some members might miss the updates. Rikki (Redbridge) -asked Michael (N london) how their summer school was organised?</p> <p>Courtney (Upminster) – mentioned about the setting up and use of PayPal, with 700 members, but still slow progress. Picnic organised for May in a local park.</p> <p>Brenda (South East London)- has a break in events during August, all conveners/ group leaders keep August free.</p>
	<p>Online Renewals: John B (Barnet)- Has grown in membership from 800 to 1600 members now. At this size need a good membership system, eg Beacon. Beacon is used as it is efficient way of communicating with this substantial number of members. Though he noted their current online renewal rate is disappointingly low. The Beacon link with PayPal was seen as a negative by many members. It is possible to pay by credit card through Beacon. The use of the Beacon system will save time, communicating with emails, treasurer’s role etc.</p> <p>Derek advised that Islington with over 800 members-have a rate of 83% online through Beacon/ PayPal. Beacon/online renewals eases workload for Membership Secretaries and Treasurers.</p>

Topic -Alan Freeland- How AI can help u3a committees and u3a groups?	
5.0	<p>The guest speaker, Alan Freeland (AF), provided a talk on Artificial Intelligence (AI). Recent studies estimate that over 40% of Facebook posts are likely generated by AI, as of November 2024.</p> <p>AF shared examples of how AI is being used across different u3a groups for various purposes including travel planning, family history research, marketing and administrative tasks and providing specialised advice through virtual committee members. The presentation included use of 'Padlet' (noticeboard software) to host many AI guides and tools, which can be accessed by searching "U3AI for Everyone". All links are in the presentation material which will be posted on the LRU3A website ('Delegates' page).</p> <p>How are u3a members using AI Chatbots? Examples were given about the use of research assistant, creative assistant, admin assistant, technical assistant, and learning assistant.</p>
6.0	<p>Breakout Rooms Feedback/Plenary</p> <p>The meeting was split into breakout rooms to discuss the subject. 4 questions were given to the attendees to discuss in their breakout rooms:</p> <p>How AI can help u3a Committees and Groups?</p> <p>Q1. What help do London u3a's need from the u3a AI- for Everyone team in helping their members live in the AI world?</p> <p>Q2. What tasks that are done by committee members would u3a's like AI to do for them?</p> <p>Q3. What does a u3a look like when it's activities are no longer limited by willing volunteers?</p> <p>Q4. How do we support Group Leaders who teach, to get the benefits of AI for themselves and their students?</p> <p>NB - Q4- 'learn' to be used not 'teach' in the questions.</p> <hr/> <p>Room 1: Sandy B (Bromley)- – did not know that 'Padlet' was a storage site, not AI. Sue (Sutton) -used AI to put together a Tamil speaking class, Zoom was used. AI Companion was used to make notes. Secretary didn't find them great. Checking them is vital, you cannot take for granted what AI presents as the version of what has happened. Question often asked – what on earth would you do with it? Got to have somebody to do it- but it has security implications – should always be cautious and check what AI produces.</p> <hr/> <p>Room 2: Cariss(Croydon)- What did people think of the presentation- overwhelming, very intense, couldn't keep up with the knowledge, so much to absorb! Couple of people could identify positive points, like in research and planning. Some have used AI for their own reasons. Not everybody would know where to start.</p> <p>Motivation was mentioned. Some could use Google – ask a question – AI overview can be extremely useful. Encouragement of use of IT. Alan added- could AI help in this area of secretarial support. Cariss – honestly afraid of AI. Minor interaction in some ways would help.</p>

	<p>Room 3: Slides and materials were considered very good. Angela D (Bromley)- minute taking using Zoom has meant AI has helped. AI – to produce bulletins and newsletter. Attracted by the prospect of being able to do more routine and repetitive tasks, eg subject and interest groups.</p> <p>Co-Pilot used when it comes to group leaders, eg. Music, art, nature groups, exercise- using AI to compile a survey about what each group leaders have been doing? Scheduling events and activities for the future.</p> <p>VG and /Brenda (South East London)- starting AI as a start, as an IT group. This could be rolled out to group leaders. Alan suggested that 1 person should be assigned to areas. So, Alan is London based.</p> <p>Russell is the representative for Surrey area. There are Subject Advisors for different networks, eg family advisor, who can help with your family history group in TAT, there is a Spanish advisor as well. Use TAT advisors to help support group leaders.</p>
	<p>Room 4: Michael (N London) – group found the presentation overwhelming; many are still overwhelmed. Some are suspicious, particularly if AI is not answered correctly, like questions for a quiz must be 100% accurate -so should be checked rigorously.</p> <p>Can't see how any Group Leaders would use AI at this time.</p> <p>Courtney (Upminster) – using the word 'luddite' is too strong, but some could not see how AI can help. Exclusively online maybe but what will AI give us now above what we are doing now?</p> <p>VG- being creative, thinking outside the box. Younger members might help, could bring younger members to the group to support others.</p>
	<p>Room 5: John (Barnet), Joy (Croydon), MGN (Welling)-overwhelmed and enthused. Very good presentation lots of information to take on board. -Also felt that there is too wide the divide between those who can use technology and those who cannot. Some members cannot use smart phones. What help can AI give? The idea of being brave using it, the benefits and still mistrust. Tasks completed by the committee – secretary can use AI to save time with writing up summary /minutes of meetings. Skills supplement to be used by a virtual committee. A complaint can be addressed and use AI to check if things are legal. AI Policies can be produced more easily with AI , accessing AI websites, albeit with care and checking details. Derek (Islington)- u3a groups using AI. Oversight of data from individual u3a's – can be analysed to give a 'cloud' picture.</p> <p>Different labels of each interest groups. Digital systems for u3a's- integration with SiteWorks. Evaluation of the 6 genders was easier using AI.</p> <p>Online videos- like Pilates, yoga and photography groups can via video -make personal assessments of photos – same as AI and personal judgement. John's wife is on a panel of creative writing and running stories via AI to see the result of the competition judgement, is nothing like a generic answer in AI Chatbots.</p> <p>Joy would like to challenge AI systems, assessing the systems. Speaking to AI in a different way, like emotional intelligence. We, as a group agreed that there are real benefits of AI. AI / Google literacy skills can be very useful.</p>

	<p><u>Overall comments-</u></p> <p>Split u3a – good points seen by some, others cannot see the need for AI. Members remembered when Windows operating system appeared on computers years ago, it was amazing, giving us access to do more things on the internet. AI in a similar place now to that development.</p> <p>More speedily the progress. In regard to AI, the group leader would have help with the schedules. Beacon – so immensely helpful, but AI does add a further level. If you have an open mind in the u3a committee, it can work out well. Trying to convince them is the hard part. Take photograph of handwriting, then use AI system to transcribe.</p> <p>60 examples of AI being used by u3a's in the UK.</p> <p>RW- uses AI in creating messages for London Region walks and visits and finds it invaluable. AI puts together all the details like meeting, location, speaker/leader, dates, and times, but not PayPal. It always looks professional.</p> <p>DH- confirmed there are 60 examples of use of AI across the u3a's. Could use it to try to recruit members onto the committee. New Groups Co-ordinator would find AI useful in arranging schedules and details of groups.</p> <p>Best way of attracting this is by asking communications person to try AI and put notes into AI and it creates paragraphs instantly.</p> <p>Joy (Croydon) – there is the normal distribution in AI, at one end those not interested and at the other end there are members being held back by the blockers.</p> <p>Alan Freeland- added that there are 'AI Agitators'.</p> <p>Best start with something which needs changing , use AI to meet requirements. Take something that you have got already and make it better.</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 as requested for the convenience of members. Now not always on a Friday. Upcoming topics for these meetings are as below.</p> <p>The presentation slides by Alan Freeland will be on the LRU3A Delegates page within 24 hours. This will include the link to the master file of 60 AI use/case examples for u3a members.</p> <p>VG to write to Nick Trotman (Chair, Norwood) to arrange a visit to the executive committee, as discussed with Judith.</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"> a. Wednesday 15 July -Insurance Compliance and Risk Assessment b. Thursday 15 October with AGM (Face-to-face) - something like How Technology Can Help You Run Your u3a. <p>Meeting ended 16.14 pm</p>

APPENDIX 1 - REPORTS:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS:

Chair's Report - Val Girling Chair's Report - Val Girling

Progress since last meeting February to March 2026

Social Prescribing

F2F meeting at Chase Farm Hospital with the Memory Team

Several more bookings now with Age UK and other team for social prescribing.

Visits to u3as

Hampstead Garden Suburb Monday March 2nd EC Meeting

Harrow AGM Tuesday March 10th

Planned visits

Abbey Wood Friday March 20th EC Meeting 10am

Hackney Tuesday April 7th EC Meeting

Hillingdon 25th Anniversary Monday June 8th

Sidcup Monday July 6th EC Meeting

Treasurer's Report- John Bent

London Region of u3as
Income and Expenditure
01.09.25 to 10.03.26

Income	
Events Net of Paypal fees	£9,162.86
	£0.00
	£0.00
	£0.00
	£0.00
	£0.00
Income Total	<hr/> £9,162.86
Less	
Expenditure	
Walks & Visits	£2,705.20
Music Day	£3,250.00
AGM	£456.30
Delegates & chairs Meetings	£1,383.99
Zoom Licence & Wufoo	£393.90
Bank Charges	£0.00
Misc	215.2
Expenditure Total	<hr/> £8,404.59

London Region of u3as
Income and Expenditure
01.09.24 to 31.08.25

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
Misc	£0.00
Expenditure Total	<hr/> £19,600.98

Surplus/-Deficit 25/26	£758.27
Surplus B/fwd	£12,678.99
Net Surplus / -Deficit	<u>£13,437.26</u>

Surplus/-Deficit 23/24	£2,830.72
Surplus B/fwd	£9,848.17
Net Surplus / -Deficit	<u>£12,678.89</u>

London Region of u3as
Balance Sheet
10.03.26

Assets	
Bank	£10,367.69
Paypal	£3,069.57
Debtors	
Prepaid Cost	£0.00
Creditors	
Net Assets	<u>£13,437.26</u>

London Region of u3as
Balance Sheet
at 31.08.25

Assets	
Bank	£13,771.68
Paypal	£1,265.19
Debtors	
Debtors	Chairs Mt6 27.2.26 £369.60
Prepaid	AGM 17.10.25 £168.00
Creditors	
Prepaid Autumn Walks	-£2,895.48
Net Assets	<u>£12,678.99</u>

Notes

LR Activities in th year to date are much less than in the previous Financial Year.

Events this ytd are Walks, Gallery visits and the Christmas Concert

Events in 2024/2 were Walks and Galleries; AI Day ; Christmas Concert; Gilbert & Sullivan Day ; Wellness Day

This year to date we have already incurred the AGM cost and in person Delegates meeting

Registered Charity Number 1186441

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

LR Zoom licence is substantially reduced.

Bank Balances remain healthy at £13k

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Web Manager and LRU3A Trustees and PSG Web Managers- Derek Harwood

- Web Manager: ongoing update of website as required.
- LRU3A Trustees: supported visit of national Chair to London Region (& escorted him to Hackney u3a, Group Coordinators annual meeting).
- PSG Web Managers: one meeting held since last report. Various topics covered.
- Overall: no actions outstanding.

Public Relations PSG (vacant):

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

Communications and Events Team Report- Rikki Wallman

Membership secretary-I continue to contact each u3a after their AGM to get a list of their current committee and any members that have left the committee. This is to ensure the communications get to the right person promptly.

Events- The events team of currently working on the June and July walks and gallery visits

In March we scheduled 13 sessions and for April there are 6-due to Easter and 10 for May, messages for SAVE THE DATES go out to Chairs/Delegates to cascade to membership usually,6 weeks prior to the launch date, hopefully giving each u3a time to publicise the information. Junes events will be advertised around end April. Several sessions have changed their dates due to proposed tube strikes, so we thought it better to rearrange in advance rather than face having to disappoint members and offer refunds

The events for March and April were fully booked very quickly

Direct mailing is sent on launch day to all participants of the walks and gallery visits in 2025 and 2026. This accounts for about 2/3 of the applications the other 1/3 is from their own u3a

We will continue to organise the Brandenburg concert for November but there will be no Wallace Study Day as the contact we had, has left and there was no space in their diary to accommodate u3a in 2026, maybe in 2027.

All details can always be found here [Events - London Region of u3as Network](#)

Report of the London Region Council Representatives

From Jenny Wilson

I have been in touch with a number of LR u3as and have dates booked for future visits. Having Allan Walmsley (national Chair) and Sam Dukes (Head of Marketing) as the LR Chairs' Networking Day was extremely helpful. Allan said that in his opinion the u3a movement had to work harder to be more connected to the community, although he did not have the time to go into detail. He thinks the movement is too 'introverted'. He worries that we are not attractive to 'younger' retirees. Sam Dukes spoke briefly about a survey (of 2000) to gauge public awareness of the movement. He told me that we must 'own the retired' story and not shy away from the word.

I am part of a small group of Council Reps working on 'Recruitment of Members'. We have been trawling the 'back drawers' to unearth valuable documents and advice with the aim of compiling easy to find resources for all u3as whether new or well established.

From Chris Bulford

For the Council, an interim report from the Recruitment and Retention group, for which I am currently the convener, has been submitted. It remains to be seen what happens next in relation to any action taken on it by the Trust Office. As the Council comes to the end of its first year in operation, there will be a more extensive report on perceptions of how it went in the next report.

A very consistent message coming from a significant number of London u3as, and the London Executive, is dissatisfaction with the "branding" consistently used by the Trust office to describe u3a. A good example is using the word retirement as referenced by Jenny above in relation to the new marketing manager. For reasons which still remain unclear it has proved very difficult to get a dialogue with the Trust office on this.

The creation of Council Representatives has created a new communications channel to individual u3as. Although more relevant to Regions other than London, this will be discussed with the London Executive to see if and how it can be used to add value to the London Network.

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:	Alan Freeland	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				
5	Brent				
6	Bromley	Sandy Boden (C), Angela Dowling (Sec)	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	Finola Stack	1		
11	Ealing	Jill Stern(C)	1		
12	Enfield				
13	Hackney	Ken Davison (C)	1		
14	Hammersmith & Fulham	Sue Adams(LRD) ,Amanda Court (D)	1+1		
15	Hampstead Garden Suburbs (HGS)	Carole Spiers (C)	1		
16	Harrow	Krutsna Buddhe	1		
17	Havering				
18	Hillingdon	Pauline Rees (C)			1
19	Hounslow				
20	Islington	Chris Bulford (Trustee), Derek Harwood (WM)	1 + 1		
21	Kenton & District	Peter Rummer	1		

22	Kingston				
23	Merton				
24	Mill Hill				
25	Newham	Caroline Conlon (VC), Peter Chung (C)	1+1		
26	North London	Michael Lewin(VC)	1		
27	Northwood & District				
28	Norwood	Judith Foskett (D)	1		
29	Orpington				
30	Palmers Green & Southgate	Val Girling, (C)	1		
31	Redbridge & District	Carol Miles(D) , Marilyn Hendleman(GC) , Rikki Wallman (LREx)	1+1 +1		
32	Richmond				
33	Sidcup & District	Julie Flynn (Speakers Sec)	1		
34	South Hillingdon				
35	Stanmore & District	Helena Reid	1		
36	SE London	Brenda Lobo	1		
37	Sutton Area	Sue Deans (VC)	1		
38	Tower Hamlets	Vanda Green (D)	1		
39	U3A in London				
40	Upminster	Courtney Moita de Del (C)	1		1
41	Waltham Forest	Christine Farnes (D), Barbara Humm	1+1		
42	Wandsworth	Andy Crane (C), Mike McConigley(WM), Penny Ryan (T)	1+1 +1		
43	Wanstead & Woodford	Krystyna Derkacz (Sec)	1		
44	Welling	Maria Guest-Naharnowicz (D)	1		
TOTALS		Participants online at peak: 30; 37 registered plus speaker= 38; 100% who registered attended; only 1 apology received. u3as represented on the day: 26 out of 43 (60%) Apologies received from members: 1 u3as covered by apologies: 1 u3as active; u3as inactive (no response): 16 Attendance slightly higher since last meeting.			

*Duplicates not counted in totals