

Trustees Annual Report 2025/26

Chair's Summary (Val Girling)

Membership of the LRU3A network, number of London u3as, remained at 43 u3as. The biggest threat to sustainability for all our u3as is the recruiting of committee members and new members. Although participation in LRU3A activities has been steadily increasing, it is still not at full capacity (not all London u3as participate). This is something of a challenge to work on in 2027. Several u3as in the region continue to grow, which helps to achieve the national Resolution raised and approved by members, to achieve a national membership of 500,000 by the end of 2028. However, some London u3as are seeing static or falling membership figures and these ones are being supported by the LRU3A Committee to ensure they are sustainable

Membership figures overall for London Region over the last few years are:

- March 2022 21,032
- March 2023.....21,875
- March 2024.....22,550
- March 2025.....23,349
- March 2026..... 24,859 Average u3a size: 578

London membership is almost back to the pre Covid level **25,888 (2020) was our peak**

LRU3A's main initiatives and activities this year have been: Delegates meetings, support visits to u3as by Chair of LRU3A network; Peer Support Groups (including a Chairs Network meeting), supporting u3a Week (by a repeat of the region's 'Table Tennis Turnout'), Online Talks Programme, a year-round programme of walks and gallery visits, IT Skills training programme and general communications of other events happening across the region or nationally.

We've also conducted a 'performance review' to see if we have meet our Aims and Objectives. This was partly a self assessment and partly by a survey sent to all London u3as. Full results published on our website, but it seems you consider we are doing a reasonably good job with no major failures.

Like many individual u3as, the LRU3A Executive Committee has struggled to recruit members to fill gaps and find successors.

Committee positions are set to continue and are stable for another year but we could always use additional help. For example the position of Vice Chair is vacant.

Objectives of the LRU3A

Our objectives remain to support London u3a committees and educational/social activities for all our members. As a regional network, our support extends to all London u3as, and together with our Council Representatives as ex-officio members of the LRU3A Executive Committee, we uphold and benefit from the work of the Third Age Trust and provide a voice for London u3as at regional and national levels.

Treasurer's Report for Accounts year to 31st August 2026 (John Bent):

The net results for the year ended August 2026 show a surplus of £1,412, compared with the prior year surplus of £2,830. This is close to break even which, as a charity, is our objective.

This has been achieved on less events and with close control of our overheads, which have remained around £2,800, this figure includes visits by LR Committee members in support of u3as.

The prior year also benefited from receipt of £1,970 of Grants, there has been no grants received in the current year.

The Balance Sheet at 31st August remains healthy with £14,091 Reserves (prior year £12,679).

London Region of u3as			London Region of u3as		
Income and Expenditure			Income and Expenditure		
01.09.25 to 31.08.26			01.09.24 to 31.08.25		
Income			Income		
Events Net of Paypal fees	£15,208.54		Events Net of Paypal fees		£19,109.23
	£0.00		Wellness Day		£1,312.00
	£0.00		CAF Grant		£500.00
	£0.00		Grant Dagenham u3a		£750.00
	£0.00		Zoom Licence LRT TAT Bgt		£719.88
Bank Interest	£33.75		Bank Interest		£40.59
Income Total	£15,242.29		Income Total		£22,431.70
Less			Less		
Expenditure			Expenditure		
Walks & Visits & Music Day	£10,955.20		Walks & Visits & Music Day		£15,471.20
			Wellness Day		£1,053.65
AGM Oct 2025	£457.20		AGM		£469.20
Delegates & chairs Meetings	£1,383.99		Delegates & chairs Meetings		£1,370.90
			Genl Exs		
Zoom, Mailchimp, Wufoo	£631.83		Zoom Licence etc		£1,176.03
Bank Charges	£0.00		Bank Charges		£60.00
Misc	401.30		Misc (Equipt)		£0.00
Expenditure Total	£13,829.52		Expenditure Total		£19,600.98
Surplus/-Deficit 23/24	£1,412.77		Surplus/-Deficit 23/24		£2,830.72
Surplus B/fwd	£12,678.89		Surplus B/fwd		£9,848.17
Net Surplus / -Deficit	£14,091.66		Net Surplus / -Deficit		£12,678.89
London Region of u3as			London Region of u3as		
Balance Sheet			Balance Sheet		
at 31.08.26			at 31.08.25		
Assets			Assets		
Bank	£14,195.76		Bank		£13,771.68
Paypal	£1,185.44		Paypal		£1,265.19
Debtors			Debtors		
			Debtors	Chairs Meetg Lit	£369.60
Prepaid Isledon Deposit AGM	£186.00		Prepaid	AGM 17.10.25	£168.00
Creditors			Creditors		
Prepaid Autumn Walks	-£1,475.44		Prepaid Autumn Walks		-£2,895.48
Net Assets	£14,091.76		Net Assets		£12,678.99

Delegate Meetings

The Executive Committee have always been keen to respond to and facilitate the interests and wishes of all u3as in our network – we are not a 'top-down' organisation. The Delegate meetings provide a quarterly opportunity for representatives to get together, discuss issues, exchange ideas and provide mutual support (a problem discussed is a problem halved).

Delegate meetings this year have included sessions on:

- Reports, News & guest speakers on: Chairs Networking Day F2F in February; Update on Strategy from **new Chair, Allan Walmsley** : April; **AI, How Can It Help Us Run Our u3a?**- Alan Freeland; July: **Insurance, Compliance, Risk Assessments**- Kate Cowan
- Reports from Trustees & Peer Support Groups, News from the Trust, and News from London u3as

Attendance at these meetings has been broadly static with about 50% of London u3as participating in these events. Specific data is:

(it tends to be the same u3as that do not engage with any of the LRU3A network's activities)

Metric	October 2025	January 2026	April 2026	July 2026
Participants online at peak (inc some who had not registered)	Face to face. N/A	33	33	38
People registered	40	36	29	37
u3as represented on the day (out of 43)	27	22	22	26
u3as not represented on the day	16	21	21	17
u3as covered by apologies`	9	3	4	3
u3as active	Not recorded	23	22	24
u3as inactive (no response)	Not recorded	17	10	14
Overall	Good attendance	Attendance up since last meeting.	Same attendance as last meeting.	Attendance up since last meeting.

Chairs' Network Day – February 2026 (Val Girling)

Another of these successful events was held this year, with a larger proportion than usual of the regions u3as in attendance. The event allowed discussion on the u3a Movement's goals and strategies to increase membership and enhance engagement. Discussions involved challenges such as the need to attract younger members and the importance of promoting u3a's benefits to prospective and current members alike.

An entertaining talk was delivered by Allan Walmsley, Chair of the Third Age Trust, about the challenges of the role and his hopes for the future. Lively discussions of these ideas followed and Chairs really appreciated the opportunity to focus on themselves, support each other and take away lots of good ideas.

Peer Support Groups:

Web Managers PSG (Derek Harwood): This PSG has been meeting online regularly every 3 months. All of the London u3as that were on Sitebuilder have now migrated to SiteWorks. Hence the dominant topic at all of this year's meetings has been SiteWorks as we learn to use this software to the maximum. A variety of other topics covered have been raised at each meeting including digital Forms, Beacon, Cloud storage, Web Analytics, etc.

Treasurers PSG (Derek Harwood): This PSG has had a successful year, meeting every 3 months online. Topics raised have again been varied and for example have covered: conclusion of Gift Aid dispute (Trust vs HMRC), standard Accounts format, Charity Commission accounts submission, Beacon Finance module updates and Treasurers Forum references.

Public Relations PSG

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

Group Coordinators PSG

This PSG has been dormant for a few years but is due to be restarted this Autumn.

Trustee Reports:

Communications (Rikki Wallman)

The London Region continues to use Mailchimp as the mailing platform for all messages to chairs/delegates. Sometimes the information is for their eyes only, other times there is a request to cascade information to all the members of their u3a. A part of the "role" of a Delegate it should be their responsibility to then pass this information to their newsletter editor, web manager etc, for publicity.

We try to restrict the number of mailshots to a maximum of 2 per month in order to keep all u3as abreast of "the latest news" for LRU3A.

Membership Secretary (Rikki Wallman)

After each u3as AGM contact is made to the chair and secretary for up to date information of key roles within their new committee. This is to ensure communication goes to the correct person in a timely manner and not to someone who has left the committee. Please respond promptly to this request as it's different to sending the information through the national portal. There are two different databases and we cannot share due to GDPR. Any changes throughout the year should also be advised to us please.

There is now a re-send application in our mailing programme, so if you did not open an email sent to you, after two days you will receive it again, so please, to make everyone's life easy open the first one.

If all goes through at the AGM I will be stepping down from this role and my colleague Cariss Smith will be taking over, so look out for the emails from her.

Events team (Rikki Wallman)

The events team have been very busy organising over 50 walks and gallery visits from March –October 26. There are 4 planned for December as well as the ever popular Brandenburg Christmas Choral Concert.

Discussions are taking place now for plans for 2027.

The publicity for all these events are sent to chairs/delegates to cascade to their members as a SAVE THE DATE with the details of how and when to book. This is done with about 5 weeks' notice before the launch date to ensure all u3as are able to let their members know through their usual channels.

Please ensure when you let your members know that the events team cannot book or reserve places on these walks or gallery visits, members have to book themselves. Also emphasise when the bookings launch, this would be much appreciated and would save many unnecessary emails

Any previous participant will be on the direct mailing list and so receive SAVE THE DATE and BOOKING NOW messages directly.

All information can be found on the events page of the London Region website

Web Manager (Derek Harwood): ongoing update of the LRU3A website. Most of the updates relate to the Events. Started up date of our Shared Practice Guides.

Also provided (with AbilityNet) two programmes of IT Skills Training for all London u3a members (November and May). Subjects covered included: Synchronising storage (cloud to devices), AI - What it means for me; Using common Apps (eg City Mapper, Bus app); Building confidence with your device; Sources of information; Tips and Tricks; Practicing failure; Using tools to solve problems; About the internet; Using AI tools to search; Authentication – passwords, 2FA and passkeys.

For the May programme (our 6th programme now) we had our biggest in attendance. Over 3 Fridays we delivered 189 training sessions.

We also arranged again this year a cross London 'Table Tennis Turnout' at the "Bounce" facility at Battersea. 19 members took part representing 10 u3as.

EDI Advisor (Jane Fisher):

My main focus over the past year has been to encourage London u3a's to adopt an EDI policy, if they do not already have one. At the January Delegates Meeting I gave a short talk on the legal requirement to implement the 2010 Equality Act and how having an EDI policy can actually enhance the running of your u3a – in terms of increasing membership and being true to our ethos of being welcoming to all.

Over half of London u3a's now have an EDI policy, clearly displayed on their website. I am still working to reach the remaining u3a's, reminding them that it is mandatory to have such a policy and offering support and guidance. I am also reminding u3a's that there is a national presentation on EDI, which is available by booking with Third Age Trust (at ['Making your u3a a welcoming space for everyone'](#))

SUCCESSION PLANNING:

We feel LRU3A has had another positive year, and we would like to thank all of our colleagues for their contributions to the Executive Committee and Peer Support Groups. Many thanks also to all the u3a Delegate representatives who have attended meetings and workshops and contributed to the lively discussions.

We have struggled to keep some activities going due to the lack of volunteers. We need more volunteers to help with a variety of tasks to support our constitutional obligations, aims and objectives and our events programme.

If you have some spare time, please join us! How we all contribute will determine LRU3as continuing sustainability.

With best wishes for the coming year,

Val Girling, Chair

October 2026

LONDON REGION COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES REPORT:

This report looks at how the new u3a Council has been getting on since it started in April 2025.

The Council is made up of 24 members, called Council Representatives, who are elected by regions and nations across the UK. The Chair of the Council is appointed by the Trust Board, and the Council doesn't have its own staff – just one part-time admin worker, paid for by the Trust.

It's a big group, and as expected, it's taken time to find its feet. This wasn't helped by the fact that, as planned, about a third of the original members stood down after just one year, in April 2026. Many of them had previously been Trustees although the Council Representative role is a different role. The Trust's new senior management team has also been settling in. During this early period, both sides spent a lot of time thinking through the Trust's new strategy and work programme. That early, sometimes awkward, learning period is now mostly – though not entirely – behind them, and a genuine spirit of partnership between the Council and the Trust was building as the first year came to an end.

The Council meets four times a year – two meetings in person and two on Zoom – so it's still working out the best way to organise things between meetings, and how it should work alongside the Trust day to day.

The Council has set its own priorities too, known as the “Five Hot Topics”, agreed back in August 2025. Two small groups are currently working with the Trust on two of them: one looking at recruiting new members, the other at getting more volunteers onto committees. The volunteers group has looked at the latest research on this, to make sure the Trust's work reflects both the evidence and what u3as themselves think and experience. The recruitment group is giving the Recruitment Toolkit – originally put together by a u3a working party – a major overhaul.

Both groups want advice to reach u3as more quickly and easily, especially through a better Trust website – something u3as regularly ask for. It turns out improving the website is trickier than first thought, but some useful changes have already been made: the long-awaited postcode locator for new member enquiries is now up and running, and some restrictions on member access to the website have been eased. Bigger improvements, though, will take longer and will be dependent on the outcome of the Trust's current digital services project which should be a high priority for the Council as well.

One of the Council's key jobs is to act as a link between u3as and the Trust, making sure u3as' concerns get heard. After a slow start – mostly around the new strategy – the Trust is now asking the Council for its views more often, which is good for both sides. As this happens more, the Council may need to think more specifically about how it responds to this in general, and particularly how it handles urgent issues raised by u3as, such as the growing worries about the revised Incident Form. One imaginative initiative on progressing an issue jointly is to use a pilot project to test a possible solution out before it is fully put into place generally. This would directly increase u3a involvement in many cases.

Everyone agrees there's still a lot to do, especially on communications directly between the Trust and u3as and being clear about how queries are handled. Exactly what part Council Representatives should play in this is still being worked out.

There's also growing agreement that more attention should go to regional and local u3a networks – there are now more than 80 of these across the UK. Because they've grown up in their own way over time, there's no single model that fits everyone. London is one of the few places with one regional body covering the whole area, which puts it in a strong position both for passing messages to the Trust and getting them back, and for its Council Representatives generally. It also means London can make good use of national support, like face-to-face workshops. This is an area the Council wants to keep working on.

Another issue u3as often raise is what the Trust does – and spends – on promoting the u3a movement nationally. The Trust now has a revamped marketing and communications programme, and the Council is working to make sure u3as understand its benefits and can see it's worth the money. A key goal is helping

u3as make the most of national campaigns at a local level. On a similar theme, it is noticeable how often u3as are unaware of funding that is available from the Trust to support their local initiatives.

The Council is now in its second year, and a review of how well it's working so far is under way. More on this will follow as the Council continues to develop.

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