

Trustees' Annual Report

For the period from 1st March 2024 to 31st January 2025

(The reason for this report covering an 11 month period is explained in the accompanying Treasurer's report)

OBJECTIVES and PUBLIC BENEFIT

The charity's object is the advancement of education, and in particular the education of older people and those retired from full time work, by all means including associated activities conducive to learning and personal development in Lymington and surrounding district.

The trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit.

PROSPECT

Lymington u3a was stable and in good shape as we approached the end of the 2024/5 financial year, but did not get off to a good start at the commencement of the year. Membership fees had been increased and despite the increase being clearly announced there was widespread confusion among the membership with a significant number of under payments and late payments to be sorted out. More significantly the Chairman and Treasurer were both standing down from office at the forthcoming AGM and in the absence of candidates for these posts it appeared that Lymington u3a would be forced to put its affairs into good order and then cease to exist. Fortunately, as is evident from the 2024 AGM minutes, candidates were found just in time and were elected to fill both of these officer roles. For this organisation to flourish, reliant as it is on volunteers and with no paid staff, it will be important for sufficient of the association's members to continue to be willing to fill key roles. The poor response to various appeals made, for example through our Newsletter, suggests that this is by no means certain.

CONSTITUTION

A new Constitution was adopted at the 2024 AGM. This is based on the revised model constitution provided by the Third Age Trust. In addition to bringing various points up to date, our constitution now provides for the use of new IT communications technology, allowing more functions to be carried out online rather than with pieces of paper. We have made use of these opportunities in reviewing various functions.

WEBSITE

Lymington u3a has had various website iterations since it began, the most recent being a platform administered by the Third Age Trust, but delivered through a team of volunteers. We were given notice of the closure of this platform requiring us to build ourselves a new website. Although this was an unlooked-for additional task it provided an opportunity to think about just what we wanted from a website and what functions we should build into it that had not previously been possible. The Third Age Trust offered to provide hosting and backup for new websites built within their proposed framework using 'WordPress', an open-source product that is used worldwide and extensively by many organisations. We opted for this and rather than trying to transfer material from our old website we set about building a new one. This was to be presentable to outsiders wishing to know about Lymington u3a, but more importantly inward looking as a resource for our own members to use for up to date information about all Interest Groups and Events, and for some transactions. We purchased and registered a new domain name – www.lymingtonu3a.org – that is simple, easy to remember and clearly belonging to a non-commercial organisation. The website went live at the end of August 2024.

MANAGEMENT AND PROCESS REVIEW

Inevitably as any organisation grows new ways of doing things are added, at times increasing complexity. The committee has reviewed our various administrative processes with a view to simplifying, reducing duplication and if possible reducing the time it takes to do 'stuff'. Moving processes online has been a key part of this, but we are very mindful that a reducing but significant number of u3a members do not spend their lives online and must be provided with other paper-based ways. With these members in mind we ran a "Let's Get Digital" course provided by Solent Mind and have arranged for a similar course to be again put on during 2025.

New Member Applications are now online, on our website.

Membership Fee payments can now be made online through Direct Debits.

Payments for trips open to all members are now online.

Membership Subscriptions: There is now only one fee payable for a whole membership year with 'free' months for those joining towards the end of the year.

Membership record keeping has been transferred to the Treasurer to be done in conjunction with processing membership subscriptions.

Membership Secretary: Following the transfer of Membership records as described above, this role is now designated as **Membership Support** and concentrates on supporting member activities at various events and working with the new members welcoming team.

Assistant Treasurer: The trustee with this role will be retiring after the AGM and the tasks of processing payments for trips has been transferred to the Treasurer.

Trip details and risk assessment: An online form is now available for this to ensure all required information is consistently collected and the committee notified in order to meet the requirements for public liability insurance.

Membership and Finance Years: These have now been separated to make membership fee processing be contained within the appropriate year.

Our bi-monthly Newsletter is now published online (also with a PDF downloadable version) on our website. It is designed to be readable with a smart phone. Paper copies are distributed to members who are not online.

Notices of new events are now listed on the website Home Page and are circulated by email as they become available.

The trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit

MEMBERSHIP

At the end of 2023/4 Lymington u3a membership was slightly over 500. Following the confusion over subscription payments in 2024 (explained in accompanying Receipts and Payments Account) membership had dropped to 450. There has been a steady flow of new member applications during 2024/5, totalling 81. Overall this is more than the losses during the year and Lymington u3a now has more than 500 members again. We held three very successful New Member meetings during the year to provide information to new members, answer their questions and generally present Lymington u3a as being a friendly and inclusive organisation.

MEMBER ACTIVITIES

Interest Groups: At the start of the year there were 47 groups and by the end of the year this had increased to 49 with more new Groups starting up than others losing their leaders and running out of steam. Languages remains the most popular category with eight Groups speaking French, Italian, Spanish and German.

Monthly Talks and Meetings: These have been held every month apart from August with subjects ranging from Climate Change to Lumberjills. Attendance has varied (and we learned not to clash with Wimbledon), but was typically mid 60s to mid 70s.

Monthly TED talks have remained popular with an attendance usually in the high 30s. They have challenged the discussion groups to think about a wide range of issues from ‘Whether we are ready for the dawn of extinction’ to ‘How to turn the tables on food waste’.

Trips and Visits were halted during Covid and we have struggled to bring together a new team to organise these. In 2024/5 there were organised trips to the Weald and Downland Museum, Chalke Valley History Festival and the RNLI College in Poole. A trip to Bath Christmas Market was cancelled at the last minute because of a severe weather warning.

Theatre trips were revived with a trip to Salisbury Theatre and more are planned for 2025.

Social Activities: While u3a is essentially an educational charity focussed on lifelong learning, social events are an important part of the glue that holds members of our association together. A successful and well attended Christmas lunch was organised, the monthly Lunch Club is thriving and at the request of a member we experimented with a drop in coffee morning in the Solento Lounge in Lymington High Street. This has become a regular well supported occasion held twice a month for members to get together and ‘natter’ over coffee.

The Lymington u3a Committee wish to thank the many volunteer helpers who have made most of the above possible with tasks including meeting new members, arranging a monthly talks programme, providing tea and coffee, organising social and other events, producing the Newsletter, IT support and media correspondent. And all of the Interest Group Leaders without whom there would be no Lymington u3a.

Lymington u3a Trustees 2024/5

John Ward	Chair
Adrian Palmer	Vice Chair
Edward Ratheram	Secretary
Sheila Ward	Treasurer
Hugh Keal	Assistant Treasurer
Sue and Tim Norris	Interest Groups Co-ordinators
Penny Witherick	Membership Support

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees’ report above.

Chair (John Ward)

Secretary (Edward Ratheram)

LYMINGTON u3a - Charity no: 1098003**RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT**

	YEAR TO 31/1/2025	YEAR TO 29.2.2024 (Note 6)
RECEIPTS		
Donations - mainly visitor fees	68	
Gift Aid (Note 1)	3,374	
Groups Income - mainly room hire and GAG group subs (Note 2)	7,265	3,312
Membership	9,460	7,047
Pre-paid membership carried forward	2,884	
New Members	1,293	783
Social and Trips - groups and all members (Note 3)	19,862	8,980
Total income	44,206	20,124
PAYMENTS		
Groups Spend - mainly room hire and GAG group costs (Note 2)	4,755	5,233
U3A Trust Fees	2,398	2,592
Third Age Matters	945	1,018
Social and Trips - groups and all members (Note 3)	21,468	8,976
Software	78	67
Meetings (Note 4)	2,981	3174
Publicity - Print & postage	339	229
Admin - Audit Fees	200	720
Admin - Postage	5	229
Sundry - Gifts	88	23
Sundry - Affiliations	127	55
Sundry - Other (Note 5)	1,105	7,987
Equipment & Capital expenditure	199	213
Total expenditure	34,688	30,515
NET INCOME (EXPENDITURE)	£ 9,518	£ (10391)
BALANCE SHEET		
ASSETS		
Cash at bank Current Account	14,066	4,086
Cash at bank Social and Trips account	3,379	4,985
Cash at bank Holding Account (deleted)	0	8
Pre-payment for Social and Trips	971	n/k
Stamps held	175	n/k
URC key deposit	15	15
	19,006	9,094
LIABILITIES		
Social and Trips income in advance	429	
Independent examiners fee	80	
Pre-paid membership renewals	0	2,884
	509	
NET ASSETS	£ 18,497	£ 6,210
RESERVES		
Current Account balance B/Fwd	4,825	4,289
Social and Trips account balance B/Fwd	4,154	4,985
Holding account balance B/Fwd (deleted during year)		8
Net income/expenditure for the year	9,518	(10,391)
Carried forward	£ 18,497	£ (1,109)

Notes to the Accounts 2024-25

Note 1: We benefited substantially from Gift Aid this year because it had not been claimed for 2 years. We cannot look forward to such a large amount next year.

Note 2: The Garden Appreciation Group operates its own subscription system within the Current Account to pay for its winter programme, and is carrying forward a considerable amount which it intends to reduce in 2025-26.

Note 3: Outings are accounted for in the Social and Trips account, which covers activities organised by Questers, Group outings, Theatre trips and all-member events such as the Christmas lunch. Because there may be forward commitments at the year end, this account may be in deficit at some year end dates. It is intended to break even overall, as the intention is that events are self-funding and do not make a loss, nor too large a surplus.

Note 4: The cost of venue hire for our monthly meetings and TED talks rises steadily, while these worthwhile events are only attended by a minority of members. As a result your committee is reviewing which venues represent best value.

Note 5: The 'Sundry other' category for 2024 includes refunds for payments into the wrong account or other erroneous payments. £1,000 was a transfer of excess income from the Social and Trips account to the Current Account. (U3a national states that excess groups income belongs to the u3a.) The committee intends that such a large surplus should not build up in the Social and Trips Account in future. These refunds and transfers should have been recorded in a different way as it means that the income and expenditure under some categories is inflated incorrectly – a matter which will be corrected in year 2025.

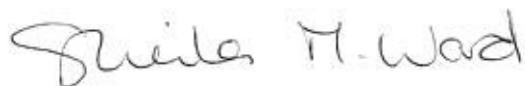
The 'Sundry other' category for 2023 includes substantial adjustments of £6585 inwards for pre-paid subscriptions and one outwards of £7,202 to agree the ledger to the bank.

General Note:

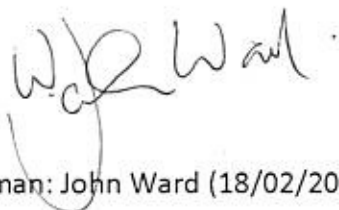
The figures for year 2023 as issued in the statement of accounts for 2023 and those in the financial statement produced by our Beacon bookkeeping system as shown here do not match, in part because reconciliation between Beacon and the bank accounts was never carried out. Some data is apparently missing, and it has not been possible to align them in spite of best endeavours. They are therefore of little use for comparative purposes. Until late in 2024 the Beacon bookkeeping system had no facility for refunds, and thus erroneous payments and refunds inflate the overall receipts and payments somewhat. The system is being improved all the time which should help.

These Accounts have been prepared in a format which complies with guidance issued by the Charity Commission.

Approved on behalf of the Trustees



Treasurer: Sheila Ward (18/02/2025)



Chairman: John Ward (18/02/2025)



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Charity Name Lymington u3a		
On accounts for the year ended	31 st January 2025	Charity no (if any)	1098003
Set out on pages	 (remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)		

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/01/2005.

Responsibilities and basis of report As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (~~other than that disclosed below~~ *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:  Date: 15. 2. 25

Name: JULIET LYNN

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

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