

The Trustees present their report and accounts for the year to 31st October 2020

Structure, governance and management

The charity is controlled by Trustees, who serve for three years on election at our AGM. They meet as an Executive Committee each month.

The Executive Committee and Trustees, at 31st October 2020, were as follows:

Ron Duckling (Chairman)
Jerry England (Vice-chairman)
Andrew Robertson (Treasurer)
Tony Johnson (Secretary)
Heather Parry (Membership Secretary)
Zoe Mowbray (Study Group Co-ordinator)
Tony Yates (Minutes Secretary)
Maureen Miller (Member)
Frankie Hogan (Member)
Pamela Tomlinson (Member)
David Silver (Member)

It is with deep sorrow that we here record the death of one of our trustees, Alison Imrie, who was taken ill early in 2020. She resigned from the committee in May and passed away in July.

The Annual Operating Schedule, first created in 2014-15, has been further refined during the year, as the U3A develops and systems change. It has become a key tool in helping the Executive Committee manage the charity and keep on top of the numerous tasks needing to be done at different intervals during the year.

Our new website, accessible at wpu3a.org.uk gives a much broader range of information about our U3A to members and prospective members.

The biggest operating change we have experienced this year has been the introduction of a piece of software called "Simple Membership". This has brought automation to the management of our membership system, and simplified the renewals of membership. It is a bespoke system, designed with U3As in mind.

Communication to our members continues to rely heavily on a monthly emailed and printed Newsletter, reporting on monthly meetings, outings and events, study group activities and messages from the Chairman and the Executive Committee. Whilst this has been produced continuously since 2008, we are particularly indebted to our current editor for the very high quality of the product.

At the time of the last AGM in January 2020, the committee members foresaw much change, especially that which would affect the membership system and changes to the Website. At that time Coronavirus was still largely half a world away. But, within weeks we realized that our organization was going to have to change radically if it was to continue providing its facilities to our members. The age profile of U3A members puts us high on the risk levels. Our monthly meetings were attended by as many as 150 people, who largely filled a church hall with minimal social distancing. Those meetings were one of the first casualties to Covid, and have been replaced by meetings via the Internet. Of course, not all our members are computer literate, and those that are have varying skill levels, but it has provided everyone an opportunity to expand their knowledge in this respect. Learning goes on!

The following paragraph from our website sums up the present situation.

We are still open for business!

There is plenty still going on at Watford Park U3A, despite the Covid 19 restrictions. Naturally, many of our regular activities have been hit - coach trips, theatre visits, outings and larger face to face meetings are all still on hold at the

moment. However, several study groups are meeting, particularly where this can be done outdoors. Monthly meetings with interesting speakers are continuing to take place online using Zoom. Several study groups have also learned how to use Zoom to continue their regular meetings.

Objectives and activities

The objective of the charity (charitable purpose), adopted by a proposal put to the members present at the AGM on 22nd January 2019 is:

The advancement of education, and in particular, the education of older people and those who are retired from full time work, by all means, including associated activities conducive to learning and personal development.

Achievements and performance

Our 13th year started with the regular monthly meetings attended by visiting speakers on a varied range of interesting topics. Soon, we had to adapt to the process of meetings by Zoom. It almost seems the normal thing to do now! A study group show, in which groups of members showcase their musical and other skills, is normally presented at the November meeting. This, our seventh such show, would have taken its place as a regular highlight in the calendar of Watford Park U3A. Our previous year's show had 58 performers. Socially distanced there would have been no room for an audience. So, in 2020 there will be a show with a difference. No massed ukulele bands, but rather single performers and related duet performers will take to the internet, instead of their normal stage. A learning process, both for the performers, and the technicians linking it all together.

Our membership has reduced slightly to around 460 with those leaving and joining in the past year balancing out. Monthly meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday of each month at St Luke's Church Hall, Langley Way, WATFORD. Latterly, of course, these "meetings" have happened from our homes.

We currently list over 70 study groups in our monthly Newsletter and on our website. They would normally meet on a regular basis with attendance ranging from 5 to 60 members at each session. Nineteen of the study groups are now using Zoom to "meet". A small number of the study groups are joint groups with other U3A branches.

New study groups, which have started this year are: Wine appreciation 2. Quiz group and the Quizzers Weekly group. A group investigating the history of Morris dancing. A new rambling group.

Policy Development

During the year we have developed "Simple Membership", to the point where it was possible for members to apply for, or renew, and pay for their membership online. This has resulted in a reduced workload for the Membership Secretary and Treasurer, and ensured that we are operating within the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

Public benefit

All our members are no longer in full time gainful employment, so our activities help to keep them active, both mentally & physically.

Financial review.

It has been a stable year with no exceptional items. There was no capital investment this year.

At the financial year-end the accumulated surplus across all accounts for educational purposes was £16596.52 (+11%) split to £11310.80 (+56%) against general activities and £5285.72 (-31%) against specific educational groups. The overall increase in funds was caused, in part, by receipt of Gift Aid refunds, for two years. Costs were reduced in the second half, due to no expenses for hall hire being incurred, and lower printing costs. Our membership subscription

was reduced for the next year to £15.00 for those who renewed on line. As normality returns, we look to reducing our surplus to the recommended 50% of turnover.

Approved by the Trustees (on 5th January 2021) and signed on their behalf.

Ron Duckling

..... (Chairman)5th January 2021.....(Date)

Note: For security reasons we will not publish an actual signature on a public document.

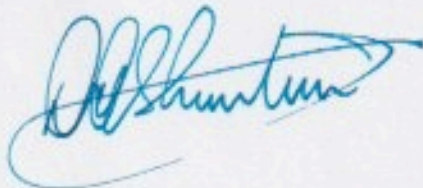
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31st December 2020

To whom it may concern

I confirm that I have examined the books, records and the Financial Statement of the Watford Park U3A covering the period 1st November 2019 to 31st October 2020 prepared by the Treasurer Andy Robertson and in my opinion the Financial Statement presents fairly the financial position of the Watford Park U3A as of 31st October 2020.



Don Shortman
Independent Examiner