

u3a Bury St Edmunds

Trustees' Annual Report

and

Financial Statements

Year ended 31 July 2024



Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 July 2024

1. Administrative information

Charity Name	University of the Third Age in Bury St Edmunds
Charity Number	803112
Charity Website	https://www.u3aburystedmunds.co.uk
Registered Address	Risbygate Centre 90 Risbygate Street Bury St Edmunds IP33 3AA
Banker	Lloyds Bank 9 Buttermarket Bury St Edmunds IP33 1DB
Independent Examiner	Jacobs Allen 59 Abbeygate Street Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LB

2. Governance and Management

u3a Bury St Edmunds is an unincorporated association and a registered charity. It is governed by its constitution which was adopted on 20 June 2001 and is affiliated to the Third Age Trust and the East of England u3a.

Appointment of Trustees: trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting which is normally held in October. Under the constitution, there must be a minimum of eight and not more than twelve elected trustees. The trustees may co-opt a further two trustees if they consider it would be in the interests of u3a Bury St Edmunds to do so.

Management: the trustees are responsible for strategic direction and governance as well as the day-to-day operation.

Trustees who served in the year to 31 July 2024:

Committee Role

Rainaldo O'Meara	Chair
Elizabeth Barham	Secretary
Malcolm Seymour	Treasurer

Jennifer Baker	Interest Groups	
Peter Chapman	Trips Liaison	
David Dawson	Development	
Susan Hawthorn	Social	
Caroline Saul	Membership	Appointed 17 October 2023
Mark Manning		Appointed 7 May 2024
Richard Leonard		Appointed 7 May 2024 / Resigned 31 July 2024
Douglas Patterson		Appointed 4 June 2024
John Byrne		Resigned 17 October 2023
Sheila Deare		Resigned 17 October 2023
Stuart Lee		Resigned 17 October 2023
Jonathan Hart		Resigned 17 October 2023

3. Objectives

The charitable purpose of the u3a Bury St Edmunds 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, in Bury St Edmunds and its surrounding locality.

As a member of the Third Age Trust, we adhere to the principles of the u3a movement which is non-religious and non-political:

- membership of a u3a is open to all in their third age, which is defined not by a particular age but by a period in life in which full time employment has ceased.
- members promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging to a u3a.
- members should do all they can to ensure that people wanting to join a u3a can do so.

4. Chair's Annual Report for the Year

Our end of year report for 2023/24 carries a somewhat mixed message. On the one hand, once again we are happy to report yet another successful year of steady membership increases and a firm and healthy income base, managing to do this without raising our annual subscription, whilst at the same time expanding our social activities. On the other hand, this accomplishment has not come without a caveat. This growth in membership numbers has not brought with it a corresponding and necessary upturn in volunteer Trustees to help run our organisation. Consequently, we have had to amend our constitution.

A few months ago we announced that our membership had reached 1,000, and since then our numbers have grown still further. The 31st of July 2024 year-end total of 1,075 paid subscriptions represents an increase of 108 members compared to the same point last year. Whilst the finer details of our accounts can be read in our Financial Statement, a headline feature worth highlighting is that although our total cash funds at year-end were slightly down

compared to July 2023, we still carried forward just a little over £23,000 into 2024/25. Many grateful thanks go to our Treasurer, Malcolm Seymour, for again steering a steady ship this past year.

Very sadly we have to say farewell to five of our Trustees who have decided to step down from the Committee this October. Malcolm Seymour our aforesaid Treasurer, who has executed this role with aplomb for the last 3 years; David Dawson, who has been our successful Talks and then Development Secretary since October 2021; Sue Hawthorn, who has been our enthusiastic Social Secretary during a very productive year; Jennifer Baker who has been looking after Interest Group matters for the last year; and Liz Barham, a previous Chair and current Business Secretary, who has been a constant source of ideas and energy for almost five years;. Our most heartfelt thanks go to them.

Those who undertake to stay on as Trustees also deserve thanks for the hard work they have put in during this flourishing year. Peter Chapman, who has continued in his role of Trips liaison; and Caroline Saul, who has most effectively controlled the demanding role of Membership Secretary.

We were fortunate that within the past six months, Mark Manning, Richard 'Jim' Leonard, Doug Patterson, and Mike Burt agreed to be co-opted as Trustees, although Jim has since had to withdraw from the Committee as a result of health concerns, and we also thank them for their valuable contributions. Mike will become our new Treasurer following this year's AGM, and Mark and Doug will be taking on specific roles in the Committee to be announced in due course.

We are also most thankful that we have many volunteers in off-committee roles to whom we are particularly grateful: Gayle Wade edits the newsletter, runs our publicity, and also organises the Apex stewarding; Peter Lydamore supervises the Apex technical team; Pat Lees plans and organises the day trips; Martin Saul works on our website content; Jonathan Hart has assisted David Dawson on the Apex talks; Stuart Lee is in charge of posting out paper copies of the newsletter to those who do not have email; and then of course there are all those individual Group Leaders, those in the Technical Team, the Computer Clinic, the Apex Stewards - their enthusiasm and commitment is instrumental in maintaining the on-going success of Bury St Edmunds u3a.

Whilst it is encouraging to report a healthy u3a in terms of membership and finance, it is also important to ensure that the future remains viable. And in that respect the ratio of Trustees to the total number of members still remains far too low for the growing size of our u3a.

So, although we have over 1,000 members, we unfortunately received only 6 nominations to stand for the next committee at the time of our deadline for submissions. As a consequence, having just 6 committee members would be in breach of our existing constitution, which required a minimum of 8. Faced with the possibility of having to dissolve our Bury St Edmunds branch, we decided that we preferred to soldier on, but with a revised constitution which would allow us to continue with fewer committee members. The revision of our constitution required ratification from the national u3a organisation before we could put it to a vote of our own membership at an AGM, which in turn required a three-week notice of the AGM

agenda and accounts. This, we felt, was too short a time to have everything in place for the usual October AGM, and so it was agreed to postpone this year's AGM to today's date.

Highlights of 2023-2024

Recruitment of New Members

As mentioned earlier, it has been another year of growth in our membership and in June we announced that we had passed the 1,000 mark. Since then we have been joined by several dozen more members. November last year saw the introduction of a New Members Help Desk in the Apex foyer prior to our monthly talks. This has remained in place during the course of this year and has served as a point of welcome and assistance for our members whether attending the talk or just passing by.

Publicity

It is always pleasing to have positive publicity, and, thanks to Gayle Wade's efforts, there was a feature in the Community section of the Bury Free Press in June commenting on our u3a.

Social Activities

The existing programme of 'new members' coffee mornings was developed. Our Social Secretary, Sue Hawthorn, organised two more this year, with approximately 20 to 25 new members attending each event, the latest of which was held at the Oddfellows location in the centre of town. In addition, Sue organised a very successful Spring Lunch at Edmunds Restaurant in April, which was a resounding success.

Interest Groups

This last year saw a number of new interest groups formulating, including Members On Their Own (MOTO), Cryptic Crosswords, Dementia Carers, a second Cribbage group, Scrabble, Pickleball, Walking Cricket, Walking Football, lawn bowls and several more. Hopefully, given time, all will grow and thrive. As I mentioned last year, no subject is too niche and there is always a good chance that there will be others that share your interest. If you have a pastime that you think others may share, suggest it to our Interest Group Co-ordinator in order to have it advertised to make up a group.

Talks

Our programme of monthly talks, organised by David Dawson and Jonathan Hart, has gone from strength to strength. Attendances in the last year have been the highest since the onset of the Covid restrictions. The talk before last December, a most successful and entertaining return by Charlie Haylock, provided us with our largest audience of 2023. This year we have been treated to talks ranging from a Suffolk teacher's ascent of Everest to the role of the RAF Special Operations Executive in World War II, and in between we have heard about Renaissance and Revival in Building Design, Sacred Places in the World, the history of our local Theatre Royal, and Medieval Lavenham.

In late April David introduced the first of a new programme of occasional speciality talks designed for a smaller audience and introduced by one of our members. The idea of the Tea Time Talks was piloted successfully last year with the subject of bereavement, and this year covered the topics of 'On-Line Scamming and Fraud', led by Stephen Poulter, and 'Patients

Who Changed My Life' with Barbara Wilson. In late September Peter Chapman discusses 'Philosophy for Life'.

Trips

Once more we are indebted to one of our non-committee volunteers, Pat Lees, who working with Peter Chapman has planned and organised our day coach trip programme, which is open to all members. This year trips were made to Finchingfield Guildhall and Braxted Park in Essex, Our Lady of Walsingham and Thursford Steam Museum in Norfolk, and Bourne Mill and Green Island Gardens, also in Essex. In September, a visit to Houghton Hall House and Gardens near Kings Lynn is on the agenda.

To close, many thanks to all members for continuing to strengthen the Bury St Edmunds u3a, and especially to all members, past and present, who have served on the Committee for their commitment and support.

Rainaldo O'Meara
Chair

5. Treasurer's Report

When the Committee agreed the budget for this financial year back in early 2023, the expectation was that membership numbers would be around 950 and there would be a planned net deficit. However, another 100 members joined in the year and this continuing growth in membership has contributed significantly to the annual surplus of £1,894 on the General Fund. The balance on the General Fund is now £23,055; this is managed by the Committee and is separate from the 'ring fenced' Interest Group funds, which total £11,332.

The main elements of the surplus are the increased subscription income and additional interest on the deposit account. The absolute level of expenses - £17,511 - is lower than the previous year - £18,916; because the accounts are prepared on a cash basis this can mask the fact that certain costs include charges for more than one year. So, Room hire and accommodation costs are £850 compared with £62 last year; however, this reflects the fact that not all the costs for 2022/23 were invoiced in the last financial year. Similarly, this year's cost of the Third Age Magazine is £2,618 compared with £4,278 last year; the 2022/23 figure included two years' worth of charges. Nevertheless, the annual level of costs is broadly in line with the budget.

It is pleasing to note that coach trips and events organised through the Committee have increased significantly this year, with total receipts of £11,477 compared with £7,001 last year. The process for booking coach trips has evolved during the year, and members are encouraged to pay via BACS rather than cheque; this is also the case with trips organised by individual Interest Groups.

The accounts as presented reflect all the transactions recorded in the financial year, which total some 1,600 postings to the financial records.

The Trustees continue to review the level of the General (Unrestricted) Fund and are seeking ways to utilise the resource in line with our charitable purpose. With increasing membership and the level of funds, there is no current pressure to review the annual subscription.

Malcolm Seymour

Treasurer

Approved by the Trustees on 1 October 2024 and signed on their behalf by:



Rainaldo O'Meara (Chair)



Malcolm Seymour (Treasurer)

University of the Third Age in Bury St Edmunds

Charity Registration Number 803112

Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31 July 2024

	Unrestricted Funds <i>General Fund</i>	Restricted Funds <i>Interest Groups</i>	Total 2023/24	Total 2022/23
Income				
Membership subscriptions	16,125		16,125	14,514
Bank interest	810		810	403
Donations	-		-	191
u3a Suffolk District Network	126		126	-
Gift Aid reclaim	2,126		2,126	1,938
	19,187		19,187	17,046
Coach trip and event receipts	11,477		11,477	7,001
Travel Group receipts		1,215	1,215	650
Theatre Group receipts		24,663	24,663	28,563
Other Study Group receipts		17,127	17,127	14,895
	30,664	43,005	73,669	68,155
Expenses				
Third Age Trust membership	3,932		3,932	3,692
Third Age Matters Magazine	2,618		2,618	4,278
Equipment purchase	590		590	-
Website	1,009		1,009	1,237
Monthly talk costs	5,581		5,581	5,437
Coffee/Social events	685		685	1,725
Room hire and accommodation costs	850		850	62
Accounting software	578		578	470
Postage and stationery	439		439	569
Committee expenses	8		8	37
Independent Examiner fee	414		414	390
E-banking commission	357		357	340
Miscellaneous expenses	420		420	16
Publicity	30		30	240
Membership cards	-		-	423
	17,511		17,511	18,916
Coach trip and event expenditure	11,259		11,259	6,021
Travel Group expenditure		890	890	1,024
Theatre Group expenditure		22,537	22,537	29,889
Other Study Group expenditure		15,904	15,904	12,294
	28,770	39,331	68,101	68,144
Surplus/(Deficit)				
	1,894	3,674	5,568	11
Cash Funds at 31 July 2023 b/f	21,161	7,658	28,819	28,808
Cash Funds at 31 July 2024 c/f	23,055	11,332	34,387	28,819

University of the Third Age in Bury St Edmunds
Charity Registration Number 803112
Statement of Assets and Liabilities for the year ended 31 July 2024

	Restricted Funds	Equals Cards	Lloyds Main A/c	CCLA Deposit	Lloyds Theatre A/c	Lloyds Travel A/c	Total
Unrestricted Funds		20	6,651	16,384			23,055
Restricted Funds							
Theatre Group	155		-	-	5,134		5,289
Travel Group	74		-	-		700	774
Other Groups	461		4,808	-	-	-	5,269
	710		11,459	16,384	5,134	700	34,387

Assets retained for the charity's own use

The following assets are held for members use and relate to the General Fund:

Viz-Pro Display Board
 2 x Wonderwall Tabletop Folding Exhibition Display Boards
 3 Hewlett Packard Pavillion notebooks
 Toshiba Satellite laptop
 Epson projector
 Ative AT-16X shredder
 3 x iZettle card readers

Asset costs are expensed in the year of purchase.

Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 31 July 2024

1. The financial statements have been prepared on the Receipts and Payments basis.
2. Restricted Funds were held during the year on behalf of the following Interest Groups:


Art Appreciation, Art History, Badminton, Calligraphy, Choir, Churches and Villages, Craft, Current Affairs, Garden, Government and Politics, History, Music Matters, Painting and Drawing, Philosophy, Photography, Science and Society, Theatre, Travel, Wine Appreciation, Wines Around the World

3. Coach trips and events receipts include £1,505 received from members relating to a future visit in September.
4. Travel Group receipts include £675 received from members relating to a future visit in August.
5. Theatre Group receipts include £12,075 received from members relating to future events; costs of £7,991 have been paid in advance.
6. Churches and Villages Group receipts include £1,506 received from members relating to a future visit in August.
7. Garden Group funds include £750 for coach hire costs incurred in July but not yet invoiced.

Approved by the Trustees on 1 October 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Rainaldo O'Meara', written over a horizontal dotted line.

Rainaldo O'Meara (Chair)

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Malcolm Seymour', written over a horizontal dotted line.

Malcolm Seymour (Treasurer)

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of
The University of the Third Age in Bury St Edmunds
Charity Number 803112**

I report to the trustees of my examination of the accounts of the University of the Third Age in Bury St Edmunds (the Trust) for the year ended 31st July 2024 which are set out on pages 1 to 3.

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 all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 135(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 in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. The accounts do not accord with those records.

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

Signed 

Date: 01/10/2024

Christopher P Kelly FCA

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