

Belfast University of the Third Age

Northern Ireland · Charity number 101362

Details

Known as	Belfast U3A
Status	Received
Registered	2015-02-03
Register	View on the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland register

Contact

Address Unit 136
Mail Boxes Etc.
38 Montgomery Business Park
Montgomery Road
Belfast
BT6 9hl
BT6 9HL

Phone 07740429662

Email secretary@belfastu3a.org

Website <https://belfast.u3asite.uk>

Activities

Purposes: To advance the education of the public, and in particular, the education of the middle-aged and older people in Belfast who are no longer in full time gainful employment.

What the charity does: The advancement of education, The advancement of health or the saving of lives, The advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science

How the charity works:

Advice/advocacy/information, Arts, Cultural, Education/training, Heritage/historical, Sport/recreation

Who the charity helps: General public, Men, Older people, Women

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£61,269	£60,752	£0	0

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Barbara Mcdermott		
Geoff Crowther		
Helen Mcglinchey		
John Nicholson		
Mavis Turner		
Mr John Meikleham		
Mr Trevor Busby		
Patsy Torney		
Sean Canning		

Belfast University of the Third Age

Northern Ireland - Charity number 101362

Accounts

Belfast University of the Third Age – Belfast U3A
Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC 101362
Financial Statement for the year ended 31st March 2025

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT	2024/ 2025		2023/ 2024	
	£	£	£	£
General activities:				
Income				
Membership fees	17,970		16,885	
Gift Aid	2,698		2,056	
Bank interest	671		428	
Donations	148		245	
Other income	60		6	
	<u> </u>	21,547	<u> </u>	19,620
Deduct expenses				
Functions – Payments	4,494		-	
Less Receipts	<u>1,658</u>		<u>-</u>	
<i>Net deficit (surplus)</i>	2,836		-	
Third Age Trust	8,413		7,301	
Room hire	5,340		3,420	
Assistance to groups	454		471	
Speakers and gifts	510		1,102	
Equipment purchases and maintenance	75		249	
Newsletter	274		96	
IT expenses	1,425		1,064	
Mailbox rental	692		-	
Membership Secretary expenses	100		337	
Bank charges	415		367	
Sundry expenses	<u>201</u>		<u>186</u>	
		20,735		14,593
Surplus from General activities		<u>812</u>		<u>5,027</u>
Group activities:				
Income from group activities	38,064		26,784	
Deduct group expenses	<u>38,359</u>		<u>26,235</u>	
(Deficit) / Surplus from Groups		(295)		549
		<u> </u>		<u> </u>
Total Surplus		<u>517</u>		<u>5,576</u>

BALANCE SHEET	31 st March 2025	31 st March 2024
	£	£
ASSETS		
Bank accounts:		
Groups	7,643	8,038
Deposit	45,814	32,143
Current	1,195	13,969
Membership pending	<u>30</u>	<u>15</u>
Total	<u>54,682</u>	<u>54,165</u>
FUNDS		
Balance brought forward	54,165	48,589
Surplus for the year	<u>517</u>	<u>5,576</u>
Balance carried forward	<u>54,682</u>	<u>54,165</u>

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS


1 MEMBERSHIP ANALYSIS AT 31st MARCH 2025

Honorary members	2
Individuals	241
Individuals paying by Direct Debit	<u>874</u>
Total	<u><u>1,117</u></u>


2 FIXED ASSETS

	Computer Equipment £	Printer £	Hearing Support £	PA System £	TOTAL £
COST					
At 1 st April 2024	2,287	590	1,768	290	4,935
Additions					-
Disposals					-
At 31 st March 2025	<u>2,287</u>	<u>590</u>	<u>1,768</u>	<u>290</u>	<u>4,935</u>
DEPRECIATION					
At 1 st April 2024	2,287	472	1,768	290	4,817
Disposals					-
Charge		118			118
At 31 st March 2025	<u>2,287</u>	<u>590</u>	<u>1,768</u>	<u>290</u>	<u>4,935</u>
NET BOOK VALUE					
At 31 st March 2025	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Previous year	-	118	-	-	118

These accounts were approved by the Trustees on 19th May 2025 and signed on their behalf:
(and thereafter adopted by the general membership at the AGM on 29th May 2025)



Jim Livingstone - Chair



Neil McQuillan - Treasurer



Belfast University of the Third Age – Belfast U3A (Registered Charity NIC 101362)

Treasurer's Report for 12 months to 31st March 2025

My term as Treasurer began on May 16th 2022 and will end this year at the AGM on May 29th. In conducting the tasks associated with being Treasurer, over the past 3 years I have been aided by Tom Capper, Deputy Treasurer, by Jim McDonnell and Margaret Stirrup, Membership Secretaries and latterly by the prospective incoming Treasurer, John Nicholson. I would like to pass on my thanks to them all for their help throughout my term. And, as I will also be stepping down from the committee, I would relay my thanks to all members of the committee, past and present, for putting up with me for the past 3 years. Lastly, I thank each and every member of Belfast u3a for endeavouring to comply with my (overly angry!) missives re the methods for conducting payments.

Examination and Approval of Accounts

These accounts were completed and approved by the Trustees on 19th May 2025 and the report by the Charity's Independent Examiner was also completed on that date.

Re-organisation of Financial recording practices

As one of the goals I had as incoming Treasurer, we wanted the U3A funds held on behalf of Group Activities to be fully separated from the funds held for all other U3A activity. In the Banking system this has entailed holding funds in the Groups Account (for Group activities) and the Main Account (for all non-group related U3A activity – e.g. memberships, room hire, paying for speakers, IT expenses etc). This, I feel, is better practice, provides more clarity and will greatly facilitate the administration of the Treasurer function. Hopefully everything we have done with this, and with the full implementation of Beacon as the sole financial recording system, will allow for a more seamless transition for our new incoming Treasurer. It has certainly proved extremely useful to date.

Group Activities

These represent the funds managed on behalf of Groups during the year. The funds are delegated to be used only for the activities of each individual group, are ringfenced from central Belfast U3A funds and should not be transferred between groups. Group activity has increased significantly, mainly due to the formation of a number of additional groups and the significant increase in membership.

With all Group financial activity now separated from other monies (both on Beacon and within our Banking accounts) it is easier to ensure that all Group activity is being correctly recorded and accounted for.

Membership

Membership numbers have increased again this year to the point where we now have well over 1,100 members. We continue to encourage all to sign up for Direct Debits, as it reduces the amount of work associated with administration of membership fees. We would also encourage those who have not already done so and are eligible to sign up for Gift Aid (it costs members nothing), as a considerable sum for the organisation can be gained from this (£2,698 this year).

Impact of Receipts and Payments on Operating Surplus

We currently record all financial transactions (in or out) on Beacon at a point in time as close as possible to when they occur on the Banking system. The aim has been to have the banking system balances totally aligned with the Beacon balances at all times which allows for total transparency and, more importantly, for a system that can be readily understood by people with only a basic knowledge of accountancy.

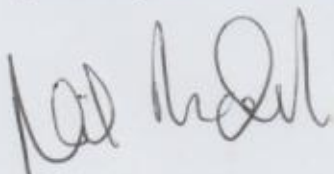
Room Hire for our monthly meetings in the Balmoral Hotel remains one of our larger costs, with a full cost over the year of £5,340.

Overall, we achieved a surplus for the year of £517. The Charity needs to retain reserves to protect us from unforeseen events. We have an adequate level to carry us through our next financial year and to fund the additional expenditure we anticipate in our special anniversary year.

In the past year we aided a couple of groups in purchasing equipment and in start-up funds. We would continue to encourage any group, especially new ones, to make a case for one-off additional funds, especially to help in starting up, which can be a difficult period. I am sure the committee will take a pragmatic but generous view of any applications.

Fixed Asset Schedule

The statement of Fixed Assets attached records equipment used by Belfast U3A in providing services to its members and associated depreciation.



Neil McQuillan
Honorary Treasurer
19th May 2025

Belfast University of the Third Age

Northern Ireland - Charity number 101362

Accounts

Belfast University of the Third Age - Belfast U3A
Registered with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC 101362
Receipts and Payments Account for 12 Months to 31st March 24

Income & Expenditure, 1st April - 31st March

Start year	2023/2024		2022/2023	
Category	Receipts	Payments	Receipts	Payments
Bank Charges		367		402
Bank interest	428		8	
Donations	245		802	20
Equipment purchases		249		710
Gift Aid	2056		1925	
Group Activities Payments	28	26263		23944
Group Activities Receipts	26784		25070	
Group Assistance		471		
IT Expenses		1064		936
Membership	17015	130	15010	245
Membership Secretary		337	43	291
Newsletter		96		100
Room Hire		3420		5475
Speakers and Gifts		1102		540
Sundry expenses		186		185
Sundry Income	6			
Sundry Recon			171	17
Third Age Trust		7301		6674
Sub-totals	<u>46562</u>	<u>40986</u>	<u>43030</u>	<u>39539</u>

Total Surplus/(Deficit) 5576 3491

Surplus	5576	3491
Surplus b/f	48590	45099
Surplus c/f	<u>54166</u>	<u>48590</u>

Represented By: -

Bank Balance Sheet

Belfast U3A Groups 4375	8038	6247
Belfast U3A Reserve 4383	32143	31707
Current	13969	7145
Membership Pending	15	
	<u>54165</u>	<u>45099</u>

Membership Analysis, at 6th April 2024

Honorary	2	2
Individual	254	539
Individual DD	763	285
Totals	<u>1,019</u>	<u>826</u>

Approved by Trustees 16th May and signed on their behalf (and thereafter adopted by general membership at AGM on 30th May 2024)



 Jim Livingston - Chair



 Neil McQuillan - Treasurer

Belfast University of the Third Age - Belfast U3A
Registered with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC 101362
Statement of Fixed Assets as at end of March 2024

FIXED ASSETS	Computer Equipment	Printer	Hearing Support	PA System	TOTAL
COST					
Cost at 1st April 2023	2,287	590	1,768	290	4,936
Additions					0
Disposals					0
Cost at 31st March 2024	<u>2,287</u>	<u>590</u>	<u>1,768</u>	<u>290</u>	<u>4,936</u>
DEPRECIATION					
1st April 2023	-2,287	-413	-1,768	-290	-4,758
Depreciation Charge	0	0	-442	-71	-513
Disposals					
31st March 2024	<u>-2,287</u>	<u>-413</u>	<u>-2,210</u>	<u>-361</u>	<u>-5,271</u>
NET BOOK VALUE					
March 2024	<u>0</u>	<u>177</u>	<u>-442</u>	<u>-71</u>	<u>-335</u>
Previous Year	<u>0</u>	<u>177</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>177</u>

Belfast University of the Third Age – Belfast U3A (Registered Charity NIC 101362)

Treasurers Report for 12 months to 31st March 2024

My term as Treasurer began on May 16th 2024. In conducting the tasks associated with being Treasurer, during the past year I have been aided by Tom Capper, Deputy Treasurer and by Jim McDonnell, Membership Secretary. To both I pass on my thanks for their help throughout the year.

Examination and Approval of Accounts

These accounts were completed and approved by the Trustees on 16th May 2024. The report by the Charity's Independent Examiner was completed 26th April 2024

Re-organisation of Financial recording practices

From the beginning of the previous financial year (my first as Treasurer), the U3A funds held on behalf of Group Activities have been fully separated from the funds held for all other U3A activity. In the Banking system this has entailed holding funds in the Groups Accounts (for Group activities) and the Main Account (for all non-group related U3A activity – e.g. memberships, room hire, paying for speakers, IT expenses etc). This is better practice and will greatly facilitate the administration of the Treasurer function. With this coming year being the final year in which I am permitted to be Treasurer, I hope that the above work we have done to date, alongside the full migration we have conducted to use ONLY the Beacon system for financial recording, and production of Financial statements, will allow for a more seamless transition for a new treasurer coming in. It has certainly proved extremely useful to date.

Group Activities

These represent the funds managed on behalf of Groups during the year. The funds are restricted to be used *only* for the activities of each individual group and are not available to central Belfast U3A funds nor to be transferred between groups. Group activity has increased, mainly due to the formation of a number of additional groups and the significant increase in membership. With all Group financial activity now ring-fenced from other monies (both on Beacon and within our Banking accounts) it is easier to ensure that all Group activity is being correctly recorded and accounted for.

Membership

Membership numbers have increased again this year to the point where we now have over 1000 members. We continue to encourage all to sign up for Direct Debits, as it reduces the amount of work associated with administration of membership fees. We would also encourage those who have not already done so to sign up for Gift Aid (it costs members nothing), as a considerable sum for the organisation can be gained from this.

Impact of Receipts and Payments of Account on Operating Surplus

We now record all financial transactions (in or out) on Beacon at a point in time as close as possible to when they occur on the Banking system. The aim is to have the banking system balances totally aligned with the Beacon balances at all times which allows for total transparency and, more importantly, for a system that can be readily understood by people with only basic knowledge of Accountancy.

Room Hire for our monthly meetings in the Balmoral Hotel remains one of our larger costs. However, we have managed to ensure that the costs for next year will not increase despite the general levels of inflation.

Overall, a surplus for the year of £5,576 (up by over 50% on last year) from operation of the Charity was reported. The Charity has sufficient general fund reserves for the next financial year.

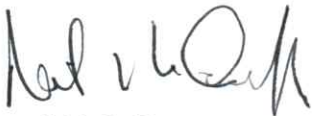
In the past year we aided 2 groups in purchasing equipment and in start-up funds. We purchased wine glasses for the Wine-tasting group (previously members purchased their own individually). And we purchased some equipment and training sessions for the new Pickleball group. We would encourage any group, especially new ones, to make a case for one-off additional funds , especially to help in starting up which can be a difficult period.

Financial Reconciliation

Sundry Recon (rom last year) includes amounts unidentified when transferring balances to the Beacon finance system. There was no reconciliation required this year as everything fully reconciled (mainly due to full and correct recording on the Beacon system).

Fixed Asset Schedule

The statement of Fixed assets attached records equipment used by Belfast U3A in providing services to its members and associated depreciation.



Neil McQuillan
Honorary Treasurer

16th May 2024

Belfast University of the Third Age

Northern Ireland - Charity number 101362

Annual report



**Belfast University of the Third Age
Trustee Annual Report for the year
1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**

Reference and Administrative Information

Name of the Charity

The name of the Charity is the Belfast University of the Third Age

Other names by which the Charity is known

Belfast U3A

Registered Charity Number

NIC101362

Address of the principal office of the Charity

c/o Treasurer Belfast U3A, 77 Onslow Parade, Belfast BT6 0AS

Names of Trustees (31 March 2024)

Jim McDonnell

Barbara McDermott

Margaret Stirrup

Jim Livingstone

John McQuillan

Helen McGlinchey

Neil McQuillan

David Blair

Geoff Crowther

Tom Capper

Patsy Torney

Structure Governance and Management

The governing document of the Charity is its Constitution as adopted at the Annual General Meeting 30 April 2015. The Trustees are the members of the Executive Committee, elected by the membership at the Annual General Meetings (or occasionally co-opted).

The Charity is affiliated to the Third Age Trust (Charity No: 288007), the co-ordinating body for u3a groups within the UK.

Objectives and Activities, Achievements and Performance

Belfast u3a is devoted to its commitment as set out in Article 2.1.1 of its Constitution i.e. 'Advance the education of the public and in particular, the education of the middle aged and older people in Belfast who are not in full time gainful employment'.

The activities undertaken during the year as outlined in reports below are evidence of that continuing commitment.

Financial Review: See Accounts and Treasurer's Report for 12 months ending 31st March 2024

These have been approved by the charity's independent examiner. (See separate reports)

Committee activities

All of the business of the charity was fully completed throughout the year, including the preparation and submission of all the necessary reports for the 22nd AGM (held in April 2023) and for the Charity Commission for NI (CCNI). Accounts and reports and other information relating to the AGM were placed on the Website of the Belfast U3A.

It was agreed at our June 2023 meeting to schedule future meetings on a bimonthly basis starting in September 2023 as well as scheduling a Planning meeting to develop strategic priorities for the future.

We were pleased to run the monthly meeting for all members (with a speaker) throughout the year at the Balmoral Hotel and to hold meetings with the Convenors of our interest groups in April 2024, and with New Members in October 2023. We also organised an event in September 2023 to celebrate the U3A movement and attracted almost 100 people. In addition, a wonderful Christmas Party was organised in Shorts Social Club with food and entertainment in December 2023. Again 100 of our members joined in the festivities, welcoming the opportunity to meet their friends in the Christmas Season.

As our membership continues to grow, committee members continue to increase their commitment to keeping up with administrative and digital developments. We are delighted to welcome new committee members each year.

Strategically, the Executive Committee has identified some key priorities for future development which are focused on (a) enhancing accessibility to Group activities and other events by members with a disability, (b) strengthening our marketing capability to ensure optimum membership for people living in all parts of the city of Belfast, and (c) building greater support and sustainability for the Executive Committee to fulfil its administrative and management functions. Work is now in progress to achieve these objectives over the next year and beyond.

Membership

We are delighted to report that our membership numbers have continued to increase in the past year. We now have 1,020 members as of March 2024. Our membership is now some 30% larger than it was pre-pandemic. We are pleased to say that we have welcomed 401 new members since April 2021. So, Belfast u3a continues to thrive and grow significantly. While many of our members have been with us for some time, we welcome new members, all of whom have new skills and interests which they are willing to share with other members.

The Newsletter (which is bi-monthly) was sent by email or post to all members. With 97% of our members accessible by email, this means that most of our members are digitally included. Printed copies are posted to members not accessible by email. Other methods of communication now include frequent emails to individual members through our Beacon (membership management) system, introduced in January 2020, regular activity news updates on our website and some news entries on the social media outlets run by the Third Age Trust.

The annual membership subscription was reviewed (in terms of methods of payment and size of the subscription) for the coming year and decisions were made by the Executive Committee aimed at ensuring the charity remains adequately funded and has sufficient reserves. As a consequence, there will be no change in the membership fee for the coming year.

Interest Groups and Activities

In keeping with the u3a movement, our 65 Interest Groups remain the lifeblood of Belfast u3a and each year new groups emanate from the membership based on requests and on the knowledge and skills of members themselves. Activities include, but are not confined to, reading/literature, walking, cycling, bowling, golf, language learning, bridge, photography, Pilates, art appreciation, creative writing, music, wine tasting, gardening and discussion

groups. New groups established in the past year include pickleball, a new creative writing group, a ukulele group, a myths & legends group and a folk singing group.

Annual meetings with Convenors have continued and have been well attended and welcomed by Convenors. The executive committee appreciates these special members who give so much of their time, skill and energy to leading activities and discussions on a regular basis. Activities may have slowed a little during the COVID pandemic years, but they are generally now back thankfully to face-to-face meetings.

With Group venues now open and free of previous constraints, we are now meeting physically to enjoy all of our activities and discussions, as social mixing is an essential part of the u3a ethos. This also counteracts social isolation, encourages learning, and supports mental and physical health, essential for all ages certainly, but especially so in an organisation like ours, with a membership of third agers.

Monthly Meetings of Members

These meetings, with a range of guest speakers, to which all members are invited, were held very successfully at the Balmoral Hotel throughout the year, with more members joining us each month, the typical attendance being up to 160 members. The speakers provided stimulating talks on a wide range of topics which were an excellent mixture of culture, entertainment and education.

Concluding remarks

In the context of recent years being dominated by the global COVID pandemic, we are delighted to say that Belfast u3a now operates in more normal times. But, it continues to change with the times, with members learning new skills and knowledge, as well as exploring new opportunities for living a full and active life in the 'third age'.

Jim Livingstone, Chairperson, on behalf of the Trustees of Belfast U3A.

Belfast University of the Third Age

Northern Ireland - Charity number 101362

Annual return

Independent examiner's report to the charity trustees of Belfast u3a (Charity Commission for Northern Ireland ref: NIC101362)

I report on the accounts of Belfast u3a for the year ended 31st March 2024, which are set out on pages 1 to 4.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

As the **charity's trustees** you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

It is **my** responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 65 of the Charities Act
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

I have examined your charity accounts as required under section 65 of the Charities Act and my examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act.

My examination included a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as charity trustees concerning any such matters.

My role is to state whether any material matters have come to my attention giving me cause to believe:

1. That accounting records were not kept as required by section 63 of the Charities Act
2. That the accounts do not accord with those accounting records
3. That the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act
4. That there is further information needed for a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination and have no concerns in respect of the matters (1) to (4) listed above and, in connection with following the Directions of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, I have found no matters that require drawing to your attention.

Signed: Sheila Magee Name: Sheila Magee

Date: 26/4/2024

Address: 15 SAUL RD
DOWNPATRICK
BT 30 6NN

Belfast University of the Third Age

Northern Ireland - Charity number 101362

Accounts

Belfast University of the Third Age - Belfast U3A
Registered with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC 101362
Receipts and Payments Account for 12 Months to 31st March 23

Income & Expenditure, 1st April - 31st March

Start year Category	2022/2023		2021/2022	
	Receipts	Payments	Receipts	Payments
Bank Charges		402		294
Bank interest	8		9	
Donations	802	20	172	
Equipment purchases		710	0	
Gift Aid	1925		1518	
Group Activities Payments		23944		7975
Group Activities Receipts	25070		9273	
IT Expenses		936		2088
Membership	15010	245	12750	
Membership Secretary	43	291		683
Newsletter		100		318
Room Hire		5475		900
Speakers and Gifts		540		325
Sundry expenses		185		433
Sundry Recon	171	17		
Third Age Trust		6674		5456
Sub-totals	<u>43030</u>	<u>39539</u>	<u>23722</u>	<u>18472</u>

Total Surplus/(Deficit)	3491	5250
--------------------------------	-------------	-------------

Surplus	3491	5250
Surplus b/f	<u>45099</u>	<u>39849</u>
Surplus c/f	<u>48590</u>	<u>45099</u>

Represented By: -

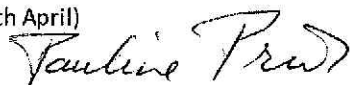
Bank Balance Sheet

Belfast U3A Groups 4375	7332	6247
Belfast U3A Reserve 4383	31715	31707
Current	9543	7145
Membership Pending	0	
	<u>48590</u>	<u>45099</u>

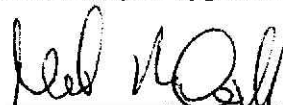
Membership Analysis, at 31st March 2023

Honorary	2	2
Individual	316	539
Individual DD	<u>569</u>	<u>285</u>
Totals	<u>887</u>	<u>826</u>

Approved by Trustees 17th April and signed on their behalf (and thereafter adopted by general membership at AGM on 27th April)



Pauline Prior - Chair



Neil McQuillan - Treasurer

Belfast University of the Third Age - Belfast U3A
Registered with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC 101362
Statement of Fixed Assets as at end of March 2023

FIXED ASSETS	Computer Equipment	Printer	Hearing Support	PA System	TOTAL
COST					
Cost at 1st April 2022	2,287	354	1,768	290	4,699
Additions		236			236
Disposals					0
Cost at 31st March 2023	2,287	590	1,768	290	4,936
DEPRECIATION					
1st April 2022	-2,139	-354	-1,326	-218	-4,037
Depreciation Charge	-148	-59	-442	-72	-721
Disposals					
31st March 2023	-2,287	-413	-1,768	-290	-4,758
NET BOOK VALUE					
March 2023	0	177	0	0	177
Previous Year	148	0	442	72	662

Belfast University of the Third Age – Belfast U3A

(Registered Charity NIC 101362)

Treasurers Report for 12 months to 31st March 2023

Examination and Approval of Accounts

These accounts were completed and approved by the Trustees on 17th April 2022. The report by the Charity's Independent Examiner was completed 12th April 2022

New Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer

My term as Treasurer began at the start of this Financial year (April 1st 2022). I would like to thank the previous Treasurer, Andrew Walmsley, both for his work in this role over the previous period and also for his help in what was a complicated transition from a manual Excel based recording system utilising a number of interlinked spreadsheets, to the financial modules on the Beacon system. For the first 3 months I had no sight or use of the Banking system, neither in person nor online, due to the time taken to attain correct authorisations from our bankers, so Andrew had to act as my eyes and ears!

During the financial year we appointed a Deputy Treasurer, Tom Capper whose main role is the collection of all Direct Debits from the banks, while the Membership Secretary ensures that members are recorded as being signed up for Direct Debits and the Treasurer then ensures that all membership renewals (Direct Debit or otherwise) are properly recorded on the Beacon Financial system. The number of members who have signed up for Direct Debits for their membership renewals has again increased and this definitely makes our task easier. The Deputy Treasurer will also look after the claims to be made to HMRC annually for Gift Aid, a task which the outgoing vice-Chair previously undertook.

Segregation of Group Money

From the beginning of this financial year, the U3A funds held on behalf of Group Activities have been fully separated from the funds held for all other U3A activity. In the Banking system this has entailed holding funds in the Groups Accounts (for Group activities) and the Main Account (for all non-group related U3A activity – e.g. memberships, room hire, paying for speakers, IT expenses etc). This is better practice and will greatly facilitate the future administration of the Treasurer function

Future development of Beacon – the software used by Belfast U3A

Beacon, already used for the Membership administration, is now fully implemented for Finance (with effect from 1st April 22) and in addition available for use by Convenors. The benefits of this are many, but include:-

1. Ready availability of any particular group's own accounts
2. Ready availability of an instant overall Belfast U3A Financial statement for committee perusal – and transparency of same
3. When the time comes to pass on the mantle of Treasurer, we are now in a position whereby we can readily do so, with an easily understood simple package in place

Group Activities

These represent the funds managed on behalf of Groups during the year. The funds are restricted to be used only for the activities of each individual group and are not available to central Belfast U3A funds nor

to be transferred between groups. Group activity has increased, mainly due to the formation of additional groups and moving out of Covid restrictions. With all Group financial activity now ring-fenced from other monies (both on Beacon and within our Banking accounts) it is easier to ensure that all Group activity is being correctly recorded and accounted for.

Membership

Membership numbers have increased during the year to the point where we have almost 900 members. We would expect this to continue to increase and look forward to eventually welcoming our 1000th member. As mentioned previously, we have made great strides in encouraging members to sign up for Direct Debits (which greatly reduces the burden placed on the Membership Secretary and the Treasurer roles). We continue to encourage all to sign up for Direct Debits, and, indeed to sign up for Gift Aid (it costs members nothing), as we gain a considerable sum for the organisation from this.

Impact of Receipts and Payments of Account on Operating Surplus

We now record all financial transactions (in or out) on Beacon at a point in time as close as possible to when they occur on the Banking system. The aim is to have the banking system balances totally aligned with the Beacon balances at all times which allows for total transparency and, more importantly, for a system that is readily understood by people with very basic knowledge of Accountancy.

Room Hire for our monthly meetings in the Balmoral Hotel remains one of our larger costs. However, we have managed to ensure that the costs for next year will not increase despite the general levels of inflation. Thank you to our outgoing Chair for helping to negotiate this.

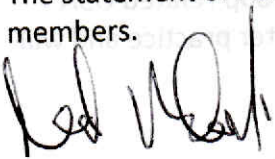
Overall, a surplus for the year of £3,491 from operation of the Charity was reported. The Charity has sufficient general fund reserves for the next financial year.

Financial Reconciliation

Sundry Recon includes amounts unidentified when transferring balances to the Beacon finance system.

Fixed Asset Schedule

The statement of Fixed assets attached is equipment used by Belfast U3A in providing services to its members.



Neil McQuillan
Honorary Treasurer

17th April 2023

Belfast University of the Third Age

Northern Ireland - Charity number 101362

Annual report



Belfast University of the Third Age Trustee Annual Report for the year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

Reference and Administrative Information

Name of the Charity

The name of the Charity is the *Belfast University of the Third Age*

Other names by which the Charity is known

Belfast U3A

Registered Charity Number

NIC101362

Address of the principal office of the Charity

c/o Treasurer Belfast U3A, 77 Onslow Parade, Belfast BT6 0AS

Names of Trustees (31 March 2023)

Jim Mc Donnell

Maria Curran

Pauline Prior

Caroline Brown

Helen Mc Glinchey

Neil Mc Quillan

Tom Capper (co-opted June 2022)

Barbara Mc Dermott (co-opted December 2022)

Structure Governance and Management

The governing document of the Charity is its Constitution as adopted at the Annual General Meeting 30 April 2015. The Trustees are the members of the Executive Committee, elected by the membership at the Annual General Meetings (or occasionally co-opted).

The Charity is affiliated to the *Third Age Trust* (Charity No: 288007), the co-ordinating body for U3A groups within the UK.

Objectives and Activities, Achievements and Performance

Belfast U3A is devoted to its commitment as set out in Article 2.1.1 of its Constitution i.e.

'Advance the education of the public and in particular, the education of the middle aged and older people in Belfast who are not in full time gainful employment'.

The activities undertaken during the year as outlined in reports below are evidence of that continuing commitment.

Financial Review: See *Accounts and Treasurer's Report* for 12 months ending 31st March 2023. These have been approved by the charity's independent examiner. (See separate reports)

Committee activities

Due to *Covid-19* restrictions, which changed throughout the year, monthly meetings of the Executive Committee were held virtually (on the Zoom platform) until June 2022. With the easing of restrictions, it was possible to return to physical meetings from September 2022. All of the business of the charity was fully completed throughout the year, including the preparation and submission of all the necessary reports for the 21st AGM (held in April 2022) and for the *Charity Commission for NI (CCNI)*. Accounts and reports and other information relating to the AGM were placed on the Website of the Belfast U3A.

We were pleased to run the monthly meeting for all members (with a speaker) throughout the year at the *Balmoral Hotel* and to hold physical meetings with the *Convenors* of our interest groups in April 2022 and in February 2023, and with *New Members* in October 2022. Also, after running the event for two years on *Zoom*, we organised a wonderful physical *Mince Pie Party* with food and entertainment in December 2022. In spite of the icy conditions on the day, 90 of our members joined in the festivities, welcoming the occasion to meet their friends.

As our membership continues to grow, committee members continue to increase their commitment to keeping up with administrative and digital developments. We are delighted to welcome new committee members each year.

Membership

We are also delighted to report that our membership numbers have continued to increase in the past year. We now have 890 members in March 2023. Our membership is now larger than it was pre-pandemic. We are pleased to say that we have welcomed 271 new members since April 2021. So, *Belfast U3A* continues to thrive. While many of our members have been with us for some time, we welcome new members all of whom have new skills and interests which they are willing to share with other members.

The *Newsletter* (which is bi-monthly) was sent by email or post to all members. 97% of our members are on email which means that most of our members are digitally included. Other methods of communication now include frequent emails to individual members through our *Beacon (membership management) system*, introduced in January 2020, regular activity news updates on our website and some news entries on the social media outlets run by the *Third Age Trust*. Informal communication between members continues in person and by phone and all of these communication methods keep people in touch with activities and advice on all aspects of our organisation.

The annual membership subscription was reviewed (in terms of methods of payment and size of the subscription) for the coming year and decisions were made with a view to

ensuring that the charity remains adequately funded and has enough reserves. There will be no change in the membership fee for the coming year.

Interest Groups and Activities

In keeping with the U3A movement, *Interest Groups* (53) remain the lifeblood of *Belfast U3A* and each year new groups emanate from the membership based on requests and on the knowledge and skills of members themselves. Activities include but are not confined to reading/literature, walking, cycling, bowling, golf, language learning, bridge, photography, Pilates, art appreciation, creative writing, music, wine tasting, gardening and discussion groups, with the addition of new groups in the past year - snooker, climate awareness, science for everyone, local history, and mindfulness.

Our first post-pandemic physical meeting with *Convenors* in April 2022 was well attended and was a great success as was a second one in February 2023. We appreciate these terrific members who give their time and energy to leading activities and discussions on a regular basis. Activities may have slowed a little during the pandemic, but they are back in full swing now. Some had held virtual meetings (and some continue to do so) while others communicated by phone, or by using new technologies and digital platforms.

Since January 2022, venues have gradually opened up as restrictions on meeting indoors have eased, so with great enthusiasm among members, we are now meeting physically to enjoy all of our activities and discussions, as social mixing is an essential part of the U3A ethos. It also prevents social isolation, encourages learning, and supports mental and physical health. This is essential for all ages, but especially in an organisation like ours, with a membership of third agers.

Monthly Meetings of Members

These meetings, with a speaker, to which all members are invited, were held very successfully at the Balmoral Hotel throughout the year, with more members joining us each month. The speakers offered us a range of topics which were an excellent mixture of culture, entertainment and education. We hope to continue with a mixture of physical and online events in the future as our members continue to be active both digitally and physically.

Concluding remarks

In the context of emerging from over two years dominated by a global pandemic, we are delighted to say that *Belfast U3A* continues to change with the times, with members learning new skills and exploring new avenues for living a full and active life after retirement.



Date: 27th April 2023

Pauline Prior, Chairperson, on behalf of and approved by the Trustees of Belfast U3A.

Belfast University of the Third Age

Northern Ireland - Charity number 101362

Annual return

Independent examiner's report to the charity trustees of Belfast u3a (Charity Commission for Northern Ireland ref: NI 102362)

I report on the accounts of Belfast u3a for the year ended 31st March 2023, which are set out on pages 1 to 4

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 65 of the Charities Act
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

I have examined your charity accounts as required under section 65 of the Charities Act and my examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act.

My examination included a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as charity trustees concerning any such matters.

My role is to state whether any material matters have come to my attention giving me cause to believe:

1. That accounting records were not kept as required by section 63 of the Charities Act
2. That the accounts do not accord with those accounting records
3. That the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act
4. That there is further information needed for a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination and have no concerns in respect of the matters (1) to (4) listed above and, in connection with following the Directions of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, I have found no matters that require drawing to your attention.

Signed:  Name: SHEILA MAGEE

Date: 5/4/23

Address: 15 Saul Road, Downpatrick, BT30 6NN