



2023 REPORT FROM THE TRUSTEES OF SEVENOAKS U3A

This report from the Trustees to the Sevenoaks u3a (Su3a) membership complies with the requirements of the Charity Commission and the Third Age Trust, and covers the period between the June 2022 and June 2023 Annual General Meetings (AGMs). Su3a is a charity registered with the Charity Commission. The Executive Committee (EC) currently has 7 members, all trustees. The EC is supported by a number of members in roles and teams covering specific areas.

Philosophy of Sevenoaks u3a

Our u3a is a learning cooperative, and depends on members contributing by participating in groups, open meetings and visits, and by joining supporting roles and/or teams.

Executive Committee

The trustees at the end of the year are:

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|---------------|---------------------------|--|
| Kenneth Brown | Chairman | Completed 2 year term - standing for re-election |
| Beryl Mansell | Vice Chair | Completed 2 year term - standing for re-election |
| Helen Wood | Secretary (co-opted) | Standing for election for a first term |
| David Lowe | Treasurer | Completed 2 year term - standing for re-election |
| David Taylor | Communications Trustee | Retiring |
| Sue Christy | Group Development Trustee | |
| Pam Walshe | Social Trustee (co-opted) | Standing for election |

David Taylor (Communications) has served the full 6 years permitted by the constitution & the committee thanks him for his contribution. He hopes to continue in a non-EC role in the future.

The EC has looked critically at its structure and some revision is planned. One aspect is to activate a second VC post which is allowed within our current constitution, to address Internal Operations and share the workload of the Group Development Trustee. A second key aspect of our u3a is communication to our members by all means such as printed material and digital means. Expansion of teams to support this function is planned. Over the past year the EC has continued to progress its strategy of regeneration of our u3a following a decline in membership numbers and active interest groups. Membership numbers have stabilised at around 827 and are slowly increasing. Most supporting teams need additional volunteers and there will be an ongoing recruitment programme.

Successful New Members' Meetings were held in November 2022 and March 2023 and will continue to run twice a year, or more often depending of number of applications. The new Skills & Interests database is now being populated and the EC will be using this to identify members for committees, teams and groups.

The Group Development function is now active after having been dormant for a few years, and a Group Support team has been formed. Several new interest groups have been formed this year.

Social Events

Visits in 2022 included Winchelsea (gardens), Windsor, Frogmore House and a walking tour around Soho. Our Christmas visit was to the Mill Theatre at Sonning. In 2023, the Winter lunch at Wildernesse Golf Club was well supported, and the tour of the Palace of Westminster was over-subscribed and may be repeated. The Social Events Team has recently been expanded, with new members to help forward planning.

Study Days have not been held during the past year. However the Science Committee is running a Science Seminar in June, which is open to all Kent u3as.



Finance

The annual accounts this year show a further reduction in the funds held at year end when the General Fund stood at £19,774 (2022: £21,274). This partly reflects an increase in costs as we continue to return to 'normal' levels of activity. There are also early signs of the impact of higher inflation on our costs. Our income from subscriptions & gift aid fell slightly as a result of a small reduction in membership numbers but income was supplemented by charitable contributions from the Riviera Travel Scheme. A minor point to note is that our bank (CAF Bank) has reduced its monthly charge & now pays interest on our balance. The minimum balance held during the year was £11,300 compared to our policy of holding a reserve of £8,000. However, a conservative budget for next year indicates a further reduction in funds at year end of around £4,000 (to ca £15,500). The trend of increasing costs indicated above is likely to continue in the short to medium term. Our reserves will support this for the time being but there will come a time when our subscriptions will need to increase.

Communications

Currently most members receive a colour version of newsletters by email, while some elect to receive a printed copy a few days later. The main conduit for membership enquiries is our website, which carries copies of newsletters, policies & other documents, and all EC minutes except confidential content. Work is ongoing to reduce the size of the current handbook & to issue membership cards to all members.

External Affairs

Contact has been maintained with the Third Age Trust and Kent network of u3as by the Vice Chair attending relevant meetings and subsequent reporting back to the EC. Helpful advice has been given on request about EC changes and some other matters.

Conclusion

The Trustees continue to meet the aims and objectives of the charity. However, there is an urgent need to regenerate the management structure of the EC and its supporting roles and teams, particularly by increasing the number of members involved. By achieving this we will sustain the life-long learning and sheer pleasure we, as members, all gain from Sevenoaks u3a.

The Trustees, Sevenoaks u3a

May 2023