



2022 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 2021 and June 2022 Annual General Meetings (AGMs). Su3a is a charity registered with the Charity Commission. The **Executive Committee (EC)** consists of 7 members who are all trustees of the charity. The EC is supported by a number of sub-committees covering specific areas.

Philosophy of Sevenoaks u3a (Su3a).

Our u3a is a learning cooperative, and depends on members contributing by participating in groups, open meetings and trips, or by joining a committee or sub-committee.

EC composition.

The Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer, Social Secretary, and Communications Trustees, are all willing to serve the second year of their 2-year appointments. EC Secretary Chris Dance is retiring, as is Membership Secretary Jill Davies, as their term of office ends. The EC is grateful to Chris and Jill for their long and excellent service. Jennifer Ruffles has agreed to take on the role of Membership Secretary. The EC has decided that it is not essential for her to be an EC Member so no AGM election is required. A new Group Development (GD) Trustee is urgently needed to lead the GD Committee (below).

The Strategy Working Party consisting of EC Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Bob Ruffles, Peter Bradnock, and Anthony Sinden, produced a Strategy document which was accepted in March by EC members who undertook to take ownership of tasks identified. Implementation of strategy will be reviewed 4 monthly.

The Coronavirus Pandemic

This has affected all aspects of Su3a activity. The last (usually annual) Open Day, took place 4 years ago. An Open Afternoon was planned for October 27th, but Coronavirus issues led to cancellation. In November our first hybrid Monthly Meeting (MM) was held, which could be attended live in the Bat & Ball Centre (B&BC), or at home on Zoom. The EC decided that hybrid MMs should continue, at least through to June. Total numbers attending MMs, live and on Zoom, have been higher than pre-covid attendances. Open meetings of Science, and Computer Groups, have also been on Zoom. Su3a is grateful to the Technical Support Team which made all of this possible.

The Group Development Committee

In July was down to one member, the GD Officer Elaine Knight-Elston. It was reconstituted to include the EC Chairman and Vice-Chairman, and some members of the Membership and Recruitment Committee. Sadly, Elaine died in September, the first active EC Member ever to do so. The reconstituted GD Committee planned the October 27th Open Afternoon, which had unfortunately to be cancelled.

Thereafter Beryl Mansell became temporary Chair of the GD Team, and was joined recently by another member. A permanent chair and at least 2 more new members are urgently needed.

Group Activities.

In May, including the Open Science and Computer Groups, there were 90 groups and we are working to introduce new groups. Around 30 continued to meet during lockdown on Zoom. To facilitate this, the EC agreed to continue the use of Pro Zoom licenses, using fewer since March, when all Covid restrictions were lifted in England and most groups began to meet face-to-face. A permanent chair and at least 2 more new members are urgently needed to develop new groups and support Group Organisers.

The Membership and Recruitment Committee ran New Members' Meetings in December and March, and will continue to run NMMs at approximately 6 monthly intervals.

Membership.

In May membership stood at 865, hardly changed since a year ago (871). Member numbers fell during the

pandemic but have been increasing since the Autumn.

The Beacon Membership Database continues to provide comprehensive individual and group membership data, and the facility to contact all, or a selection of, the 90% of the membership who are on email.

Social Events

These have been disrupted by Covid, but from September to December visits were made to Knole House Attics (2), London City Churches, and a Theatre in Sonning. A Festive Lunch in March was attended by fewer than usual, a visit to Duxford in May has been cancelled for lack of support, but a visit to Winchelsea Gardens is going ahead.

Study Days

Due to the pandemic, we have not been able to hold any study days during the past year. Plans are however already in place for our Science Committee to run an event on 14 September 2022.

Finance

The annual accounts show a small reduction in funds at year end when the General Fund stood at £21,274 (2021: £22,184). It should be noted that the Third Age Trust have changed the timing of the annual Capitation Fee from March to April, resulting in a long term increase of around £3,000 in the balance held at the year end. The minimum balance held during the year was £11,300 compared to our policy of holding a reserve of £8,000.

There was a small reduction in subscriptions as the pandemic continued to affect our membership. However, numbers have started to recover in recent months. As we gradually returned to 'normal' activity, expenditure has started to return to previous levels. We have continued to invest in facilities to support remote meetings by groups, and monthly meetings have benefited from expenditure on equipment for 'hybrid' general meetings.

During the year two sub-committees were faced with the introduction of monthly bank charges. The Computer Group decided to close their account, and now hold a small surplus as cash. The Apple Group decided to close, so their bank account was closed and the balance transferred to the General Fund.

The Finance Policy developed during the previous year was finally published in June 2021 and is available to view at www.sevenoaksu3a.org.uk. Following this, some medium sized groups have been asked to report on their finances, and results are summarised in the accounts.

Communications.

Currently most members receive a colour version of newsletters by email, while some elect to receive a black and white hard copy a few days later. The main conduit for membership enquiries is our website, which carries copies of newsletters, and all EC minutes except confidential content. Work is ongoing to reduce the size of the current handbook by removing duplicated website content.

External Affairs and Public Interest:

The EC Vice Chairman attended Third Age Trust (Zoom) meetings and subsequently updated the EC on relevant issues. Three EC Members participated in a Sevenoaks District Senior Action Forum event, where useful contacts were made with other individuals and groups involved with older people.

The Chairman attended a Town Council meeting to plan the Platinum Jubilee then contacted two Su3a singing groups, some of whose members will sing a specially commissioned song at the lighting of a beacon on the Vine.

The u3a Crochet group has also contributed a large number of crowns to the Sevenoaks Town Council's "Crowns for the Jubilee" project.

Conclusion.

Despite continuing Covid issues, Su3a activities are slowly returning to pre-pandemic levels. The ingenuity and good will of Su3a members have seen us through a difficult year with a more or less stable number of members and groups.

The Trustees continue to meet the aims and objectives of the charity.

The Trustees, Sevenoaks u3a

May 2022