

ISLINGTON U3A

2017/18 ANNUAL REPORT

The Executive Committee of Islington U3A ("iU3A"), being iU3A's charity trustees, present their report and the accounts in respect of the financial year ended 30 September 2018.

Status

iU3A is an unincorporated association, registered as a charity by the Charity Commission for England and Wales with registration number 1157067. Its correspondence address is 8 College Cross, London N1 1PP and its website address is www.islingtonu3a.org.

Executive Committee

iU3A is managed by its Executive Committee.

The members of the Executive Committee are appointed by the members of iU3A at the Annual General Meeting after a nomination process in accordance with iU3A's Constitution. Candidates for appointment (who need to be members of iU3A) must be nominated by two iU3A members who are not also members of the Executive Committee. iU3A members are invited to submit nominations and, if there are more nominations than places available, a ballot is held. No such ballot was required in respect of the appointments made at the Annual General Meeting in November 2017.

In addition, the Executive Committee may themselves appoint not more than two co-opted members (who must be members of iU3A) to hold office until the next Annual General Meeting.

Subject as mentioned below, the following served as members of the Executive Committee throughout the 2017/18 financial year:

Officers:

Chair: Anne Weyman - *until 23 November 2017*
Secretary: Gwen Ovshinsky - *until 23 November 2017*
Chris Bulford - *from 23 November 2017*
Treasurer: Robert Welsford

Other members:

Dee Austin
Isabel Dickson
Jan Filochowski - *until 2 October 2017*
Sally Fox - *from 23 November 2017*
Ruth Gee (Acting Chair) - *from 23 November 2017*
Derek Harwood
Julie Howell - *until 23 November 2017*
Margaret Wearing
Sue Welsford

There has been no change in the membership of the Executive Committee between 30 September 2018 and the date of this report.

Public benefit

The public benefit role of iU3A is the advancement of education and in giving effect to this role the Executive Committee have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Objects

At a special meeting of the members of iU3A held on 26 April 2018 the charitable purposes of iU3A were amended. This amendment was proposed to the membership following consideration of the advice received from the Third Age Trust (the umbrella organisation for local Universities of the Third Age) as a result of discussions between the Third Age Trust and the Charity Commission. The new objects are:

“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”.

iU3A meets these objects and provides public benefit by enabling members to share their knowledge and experiences and thereby continue to learn, in particular through study and discussion groups (“Groups”) and other meetings of members. It also provides opportunities for personal development and social contact at a stage of life when personal horizons and social networks often shrink, leading to social isolation and a deterioration in health and well-being.

Although there is no geographical restriction on its membership, as its name implies iU3A is based in, and the centre of gravity for most of its activities is in, Islington. The Groups are at its core and reflect the knowledge, skills and expertise of its members. Many Groups are based on equal participation, while others (for example language Groups) are led by members who are experts in the subject. A majority of Groups meet in members' homes, providing a friendly and relaxed atmosphere but all Groups are informal – inspired and enthused by their members. In addition iU3A organises monthly meetings that are open to all members and at which invited high-profile external speakers talk on a wide range of subjects, and the 2017/2018 financial year saw the introduction of a new initiative with outings, again open to all members, to places of interest, often outside London.

Activities, achievements and objectives

There were no nominations for the position of Chair at the 2017 Annual General Meeting so, in practice, Ruth Gee has been filling the role in an acting capacity, supported by the other members of the Executive Committee. It has not been ideal but the Committee has functioned well and activities have continued to flourish. iU3A's membership numbers have increased yet again (from 585 at 30 September 2017 to 663 at 30 September 2018) and new Groups have been added to its offering. The Executive Committee has also invited iU3A members to attend some of its meetings and has organised get-togethers after some of the monthly meetings as part of its policy to be as sociable and accessible to members as possible.

The lack of any nomination for the position of Chair in 2017 inspired the establishment of a Succession Planning Committee and the campaign ***It All Depends on Us***. Through the campaign and with the benefit of a Group Coordinators' survey, more has been learnt about iU3A's membership and the many ways the members contribute to Islington and its community, either inside iU3A or beyond. There is now an iU3A team of about 100 volunteers who give freely of their time to contribute to iU3A's success. No contribution is too small and everyone is appreciated. They have supported what the Executive Committee has done during the year and made helpful suggestions for the future. It is also hoped to fill all the Executive Committee roles this year.

The monthly meetings have been well planned and supported, with topics as diverse as *Growing Up in Islington* to *Twenty Years of the British Library at St Pancras* to *Jewish Images in Renaissance art*. Positive feedback has been received about all the speakers and a further lively calendar is planned for 2019. We are grateful to all our speakers for giving freely of their time, knowledge and expertise.

Some members only attend the monthly meeting, others pack their weekly diary with a range of Group activities. Every member can tailor their involvement to suit their own situation, needs and preferences. Our annual Open Day in October is an opportunity for all members to refresh their timetable and assess new options. The past year has seen the addition of *Outings for members* which embraced visits (open to all members) to venues not necessarily covered by individual Group visits. Horse racing, country houses and other places of interest have been included so far and these visits have whetted the appetite for a planned trip to the Brussels Xmas Market in December. Such visits would not have been possible without some enthusiastic members and the overall Outings Coordinator to organise them.

The Executive Committee is in compliance with the new General Data Protection Regulation. iU3A has established policies and procedures in line with the new requirements and Group Coordinators have been briefed accordingly.

The Executive Committee's principal objective for the 2018/19 financial year is a further increase in the membership of iU3A coupled with the establishment of additional interest Groups and increased diversity in its membership, thus continuing the development of the organisation and its provision of a widening range of activities by and for its members.

Finances

At the heart of iU3A's finances is the size of the membership and correspondingly the amount of membership subscriptions it receives. With the increased membership compared with the previous year, subscription income of £18,981.78 showed a healthy increase of £2,302.28 over the previous year's figure of £16,679.50, and there was an overall surplus for the year of £2,109.69 (compared with a deficit of £624.96 in 2016/17).

During the financial year various grants were received by iU3A. One was a grant of £500 towards the costs of the 2018 Open Day and there were also grants totalling £2,500 towards the costs of the table tennis group. The Open Day grant was not spent until after the year-end whilst all but £450 of the table tennis grants was spent during the financial year. The Executive Committee are extremely grateful to the

respective donors for the very generous support of iU3A that these grants represent.

Amongst the receipts and payments referred to in the annual accounts are items in respect of Activity receipts and Other activity expenses, being receipts and expenses (other than room hire and meeting expenses) relating to Groups and activities organised by iU3A or attended by iU3A members. A large part of these receipts and expenses is attributable to external (i.e. non-iU3A) events attended by members of iU3A where bookings for the events were made by iU3A itself and the members attending the relevant events then paid iU3A for the cost of their tickets. Although in the overall context of the accounts the amounts in respect of these external events may seem large, the fact that the members pay for the cost of their tickets means that there is no net cost to iU3A in respect of those tickets.

In previous years iU3A maintained a separate Social Fund. Whilst this fund was maintained primarily in respect of social and other events that were outside the normal educational activities of iU3A, the money standing to the credit of the fund could be expended on any of the activities of iU3A, not just on social activities. However, as a result of iU3A's adoption of new objects referred to above the maintenance of this separate fund was no longer required and accordingly the fund was transferred to and combined with the General Fund with effect from the beginning of the financial year.

The Executive Committee consider that at the present time the maintenance of total reserves of in the region of £10,000 to £12,000 is desirable in light of the continuing development of iU3A and its activities and the fact that future membership numbers cannot be predicted accurately. At 30 September 2018 iU3A's reserves (i.e. its net assets) amounted to £15,561.34 (30 September 2017: £13,451.65), which was somewhat higher than this target. The current subscription level has remained unchanged since iU3A was established in 2013 and, whilst it is too early to tell whether (and, if so, when) an increase in subscriptions may be needed, the Executive Committee are hopeful that the level of the reserves as at the end of the 2017/18 financial year means that it will not be necessary to increase the membership subscription above its current level for the 2019/20 financial year.

iU3A is a voluntary organisation that is run by and for its members. The Executive Committee are grateful to all the Group Coordinators and other members who contribute so much of their time, energies and expertise in organising and maintaining iU3A's activities. Without them iU3A would not be the vibrant, active and successful organisation that it is today.

This report was approved by the Executive Committee on 22 October 2018.

Ruth Gee
Acting Chair

Robert Welsford
Treasurer