

SUTTON COLDFIELD U3A AGM - THURSDAY 28th NOVEMBER 2024

TRUSTEES' REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Trustees [namely the Executive Committee – hereafter referred to as the Committee] submit their report and financial statements for the year ended 31st August 2024. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting guidelines recommended by The Third Age Trust.

The Committee is obliged to report on its activities in various sectors and this report covers: -

- Structure, Management and Communications
- Objectives
- Membership
- Activities
- Financial Matters

STRUCTURE, MANAGEMENT and COMMUNICATIONS

The Sutton Coldfield u3a [SCu3a] comprises a Committee and a number of interest groups which are the lifeblood of the u3a. Each group has its own Organiser/organising group who via the Interest Groups Co-ordinator, or directly if necessary, liaise with the Committee. The Committee consists of up to five officers [Chairperson, not more than two Vice-Chairpersons, Secretary and Treasurer] and seven members all of whom are trustees. In addition, up to two members can be co-opted on to the Committee where they will have the same status and responsibilities as the elected members. The principal governance mechanism of SCu3a is the 10-12 monthly Committee meetings. Minutes of Committee meetings are available to members on request.

For much of the year 2023-24 the Committee has consisted of just 10 members. A number of SCu3a members have attended various Committee meetings, but none of them wished to join the Committee as a trustee.

The Committee do not receive remuneration or any personal benefits from the activities of SCu3a.

The Committee have a **risk management strategy** which comprises: -

- An ongoing review of the principal risks and uncertainties that SCu3a faces.
- The establishment of policies, systems and procedures to mitigate or remove those risks identified in the ongoing review.

The committee consider that the three most pressing risks are as follows: -

- Reluctance of some members to regularly attend group meetings in the aftermath of Covid, partly due to other commitments.

- Reluctance of members to volunteer to become a committee member or assist in committee work to ensure the smooth and continual running of SCu3a, although some are willing if they are asked personally.
- Lack of knowledge of SCu3a amongst younger retired people.

Safeguarding and Equal Opportunities Policies

During the course of the year we drew up formal safeguarding and equal opportunities policies and agreed to review them on a regular basis. These may be useful in ensuring we handle various issues appropriately.

SCu3aBeacon

Beacon continues to be a very useful resource which most Organisers use because it gives them an easy way of keeping in contact with all members of their group. There are occasional issues, but the national Beacon support team report that the existing system continues to perform well, and to provide u3as with a solid basis for administering membership and other activities. Andrew Hopkins has now become SCu3a Beacon Site Administrator.

Beacon has greatly simplified membership joining and renewal. Over half our members pay by PayPal or by BACS, which greatly reduces the workload of the SCu3a Membership Secretary. The payment records kept in Beacon help us to prepare a claim for Gift Aid, although this year HMRC has told us that membership payments are not eligible for Gift Aid. All other u3as have been given the same message, and the Third Age Trust has taken the matter up with HMRC. Beacon also easily enables the generation of a file containing names and addresses of members to receive directly the Third Age Trust's magazine, TAM (Third Age Matters) that is published five times a year. New members should automatically receive TAM. Members who do not want to receive this national publication can opt out by informing the SCu3a Membership Secretary.

Monthly Diary

A diary listing the group meetings during the coming month is emailed via Beacon to all members, who are encouraged to get further information from the SCu3a website <https://scu3a.org.uk/>. Information about upcoming meetings is included in the Sunday Mailings [MailChimp] posted out most weeks.

SCu3a Sunday Mailing

This is an email sent out usually on a Sunday evening in a Newsletter format using an online facility called MailChimp. The email list for this publication is separate and not connected to the email list on Beacon. Members not currently receiving this email need to send an email containing their SCu3a Membership Number and postcode to: mailchimp@scu3a.org.uk

Many thanks to Bob and Lyn, our SCu3a MailChimp volunteers who have continued their commitment during the past year.

SCu3a Website

Our website <https://scu3a.org.uk/> continues to develop. It contains updated versions of all relevant information in an easily accessible form. The Members Only section is accessible only by members of SCu3a. The rest of the website is our shop window to the general public, so all Organisers are asked to keep their Interest Group Pages up to date on a regular basis. Many thanks to our Webmaster, Ian Sawyer, for keeping the website updated even when in Australia.

Facebook

We have a Facebook page which we use for publicity. At present we have one administrator and we hope to have a second one again soon.

Information Booklet

Many thanks to Andrew Hopkins for updating the Information Booklet for prospective SCu3a members and arranging printing. Copies have been distributed by members and at various events to promote SCu3a, such as the Community Games and New Hall Mill open day.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the Committee are to: -

- Ensure the SCu3a groups offer a wide variety of activities that attract members to participate and to attend regularly
- Facilitate the running of interest groups that enable members to share their skills and to develop new ones
- As well as group activities having a learning aspect, ensure that they have a friendly and supportive atmosphere that encourages members to chat and make friends
- Assist the development of new interest groups in appropriate locations, encouraging members to get involved in various ways
- Raise the profile of SCu3a in the locality, showing that SCu3a activities enable people to enhance their knowledge and obtain enjoyment.

MEMBERSHIP

In our last year [1st September 2023 to 31st August 2024] the total number of members was 1362, an increase of 9% on the previous year. Of the total, 208 were new members and others re-joined after a period of non-membership. Many thanks to Heather Goddard who continues to do an admirable job as Membership Secretary.

ACTIVITIES

Groups that have been successfully started during the year include Spanish Beginners, Rockers and Rollers, Pickleball (3 groups), Science Fiction. Many thanks to Ann Scott for arranging these. Also Relaxed Bridge has started in conjunction with Sutton Coldfield Bridge Club. The Out and About group has closed and a new group Days Out is now starting.

New Members were invited to a Cabaret on 31st January, to give them a taste of what a number of our groups do, and to give them an opportunity to chat. Positive feedback was received about this event.

We successfully applied to Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust for a grant of £4,091 which enabled us to purchase a new projector to have one at the Methodist Centre, and also to offer the Away Day to members at a very favourable price. The hope is that contact with the Trust will help with publicity. They are preparing a free newspaper about charities in Sutton Coldfield and they have said they will include a feature about SCu3a with photographs of our Away Day.

We liaise with the West Midlands Regional Trustee, and with the Third Age Trust.

Ann Scott liaises with Neighbourhood Network and has attended their events to publicise SCu3a. Lucy Costello and Sue Stephenson ran a stall for us at SC Community Games. Facilitated by Graham Hollister, we again had a stall at New Hall Mill which was visited by both existing and potential new members. The ukulele group played to entertain everyone.

The care home Bishops Manor offered us a free room for groups so that their residents might join in or be entertained, and two groups, Madrigals and Guitar Improvers, now meet there.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Stephen Lewis has continued as Treasurer and has prepared the 2023-24 accounts, while Judith Wright has again fulfilled the role of Independent Examiner. The Finance Sub-Committee, which includes David Lissaman (Financial Analysis) and Anne Darby (Room Bookings) in addition to the above persons, has met regularly. Tony Goddard has offered to stand for the Committee and to become Treasurer following the 2024 AGM. Preparations are in place for this transition.

Other details under this heading will be dealt with by the Treasurer.

CONCLUSION

SCu3a has flourished during the past year [September 2023 to August 2024], despite some on-going reluctance of SCu3a member to attend activities. Great work was done by the committee and group organisers to put on and publicise interesting activities, and to encourage people to come to them. Many thanks to all of you who have worked hard at this.

To all group leaders, organisers, deputy organisers and those who help in many different ways, including the administration of Facebook and the Sunday Mailings many, many thanks.

As to my committee, I cannot praise them enough.

Jean Soper

Chair
November 2024

Sutton Coldfield U3A 2023/2024 Final Accounts

SCU3A Income Statement (Cash Basis)

		2022/2023	2023-2024	Net Change
Operating Revenue	Memberships	£12,673	£12,771	£98
	Group receipts	£56,743	£61,267	£4,524
	Other Income	£144	£0	-£144
	Grants	£1,356	£5,038	£3,682
	Interest	£318	£294	-£24
	total	£71,234	£79,370	£8,137
Operating Expenses	Room hire	-£32,637	-£36,909	-£4,272
	Other Group costs	-£5,264	-£3,869	£1,395
	Coach Trips	-£15,899	-£10,266	£5,633
	Tutors	-£5,645	-£6,173	-£528
	Photocopying	-£553	-£1,142	-£589
	Equipment	-£640	-£711	-£71
	Away Day Costs	£0	-£5,158	-£5,158
	Total	-£60,638	-£65,327	-£3,589
Operating Income	£10,595	£14,044	£3,448	
Administration Costs	U3A Affiliation	-£4,888	-£5,056	-£168
	Magazine cost	-£1,559.00	£0.00	£1,559.00
	TAM magazine	-£2,876	-£4,138	-£1,262
	Beacon	-£1,234	-£2,508	-£1,274
	Admin	-£2,229	-£2,908	-£679
	Donations	-£121	-£1,500	-£1,379
	Total	-£12,907	-£16,110	-£3,203
Surpluse/Deficit	-£2,312	-£2,066	£245	

SCU3A Balance Sheet at August 30 ,2024

		2022/2023	2023/2024	
Assets	Cash in Bank	£20,763	£18,728	-£2,034
	Fixed Assets	£12,271	£12,941	£670
	Less Depreciation	-£11,151	-£12,321	-£1,170
	Net Fixed Asset	£1,120	£620	-£500
	Total Assets	£21,883	£19,349	-£2,534
Liabilities	Current Liabilities	£1,758	£3,284	£1,526
Capital	Capital Reserve	£20,125	£16,065	-£4,060

I have reviewed the Income Statement and Balance Sheet above and can confirm that, in my opinion, they represent the transactions and activities for the year ended 31st August 2024 and are in accordance with the books of account, bank statements, and receipts as presented to me.

Judith Wright (Independent Examiner)

Jean Soper (Chairperson)

Stephen Lewis (Treasurer)

Notes to Accounts:

SCU3A records income on a cash basis. All transactions are derived from the charity's various bank accounts with income and expense reconciled each month.

Operating Revenue

Revenue during 2023/2024 increased by £8,137 compared to 2022/2023 due to an increase in receipts from Group room bookings and the securing of a grant worth £4,391 from the Sutton Coldfield Trust. The SC Grant offset the loss of £1,400 Gift Aid caused by a change in HMRC policy. The loss of Gift Aid has affected all U3A branches and is being challenged by the National U3A organisation.

Operating Expenses

Operating expenses increased by £3,589 primarily due the cost of the "Away Day" and the rise in room booking costs due to the increase in Group activity. The Away Day cost grant from the SC Trust.

The increase in Operating Expense were partially offset by a decrease in coach trip activity due the illness of several Group Leaders.

Administration Expenses

Administration costs increased by £3,203 primarily due to a decision by the Executive Committee to donate £1,500 towards the refurbishment of the facilities at the URC Sutton Coldfield Church. The refurbishment has been completed and materially improved the facilities where most of our Groups choose to meet, Administration cost were further increased by increased costs for the TAM magazine and use of the U3A business and group management system (Beacon). These increases include both a price increase and payment for invoices carried forward from the prior year but not received till 2023/2024.

Cost increases were offset by a decision to discontinue publication of the SAGE magazine

Assets

The primary asset for SCU3A consist of the bank accounts maintained to facilitate the charity's operations. The balance of each account as of 31/08/2024 was as follows:

	Balance	Purpose
Operating	£3,617	Fund ongoing SCU activities
Reserve	£6,458	Central repository for funds.
Out and About Group	£18	Fund operations of the Out and About Coach Trip Group
Membership Renewal	£6,966	Capture payments for new and renewed members
Garden Interest	£1,617	Fund actiities of this special interest gorup
Art History	£53	Fund actiities of this special interest gorup
Total SCU Bank Accounts	£18,728	

The Treasurer transfers balances between the Operating, Reserve and Membership accounts as required during the year. The Group specific accounts (Out and About, Garden Interest and Art History) are maintained by Group Leaders with electronic payments made on their behalf by the Treasurer.

Liabilities

Current liabilities include amounts owed for room bookings for which invoices were not received at year end and five months of U3A affiliation costs (the annual bill is paid each April so SCU3A is liable for five months of membership fees through end August).

All tutors used during 2023/2024 were paid in full by year end.

There are no long term liabilities.

Capital and capital reserve

The net effect of SCU3A activity during 2023/2024 has been to reduce the overall charity's capital reserve (or "Surplus") by £4,060 to. £16, 065. This is line with the organisation's overall policy of gradually working down the surplus accumulated over the past years.

Financial Summary

SCU3A finances remain in a healthy position. The continued healthy growth of Group Activity and strong membership numbers combine to enable the charity to retain its £10 membership fee for another year while continuing its policy of supporting groups unable to fully cover their costs. The loss of Grant Aid will not materially affect the organisation's financial position.

The Financial Analyst maintains a close review off the costs and income generated by all our active groups and requests adjustments whenever costs appear excessive. It will become increasingly important to monitor such groups as the charity continues to reduce its surplus.

There may be a need to review membership fees towards during the latter part of 2024/2025 as the charity continues to gradually work down its surplus.

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J. Wright 27/9/24

Jean Soper (Chairperson)

Jean Soper 11.10.24

Stephen Lewis (Treasurer)

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