



# Exeter U3A

Registered Charity Number 1104480

## Annual Report and Accounts

1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023

# Exeter U3A – Annual Report

1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023

## About us

Exeter U3A is an Unincorporated Members Association whose current governing document is the Constitution adopted on 8 April 2003 and subsequently amended on 26 February 2015 and 22 April 2021. Our objects as set out in the Constitution are:

- The advancement of education, and in particular the education of older people and those retired from full time work, by all means including associated activities conducive to learning and personal development in Exeter and surrounding district.
- The provision of facilities for leisure time and recreational activities with the object of improving the conditions of life for the above persons in the interests of their social welfare.

As a member of the Third Age Trust, we adhere to the principles of the u3a movement which is non-religious and non-political and has three main principles:

### The Third Age Principle

- Membership of u3a is open to all in their third age, which is defined not by a particular age but by a period in life in which full time employment has ceased.
- Members promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging to u3a.
- Members should do all they can to ensure that people wanting to join u3a can do so.

### The Self-help Learning Principle

- Members form interest groups covering as wide a range of topics and activities as they desire; by the members, for the members.
- No qualifications are sought or offered. Learning is for its own sake, with enjoyment being the prime motive, not qualifications or awards.

- There is no distinction between the learners and the teachers; they are all u3a members.

## The Mutual Aid Principle

- Each u3a is a mutual aid organisation, operationally independent but a member of The Third Age Trust which requires adherence to the guiding principles of the u3a movement.
- No payments are made to members for services rendered to any u3a.
- Each u3a is self-funded with the membership subscriptions and costs kept as low as possible.
- Outside financial assistance should only be sought if it does not imperil the integrity of the u3a movement.

## Our Activities

The main activities we usually carry out to achieve our objectives are as follows:

- We hold general meetings on the fourth Thursday of each month which are free and open to all members. We invite speakers who give talks on a variety of interesting topics and we keep our members up to date on developments in our u3a. There is the opportunity for members to socialise over a cup of tea or coffee before the meeting starts.
- We form interest groups where members learn about a subject from each other and engage in social activities together.
- We have a project team who work with Exeter University. The University provides lectures to us and we are invited to take part in research projects.
- We produce a bi-monthly Newsletter which shows details of upcoming events, reports on recent group activities, communications from the committee and contact details of the members who organise groups and activities.
- We meet with other u3as in Devon to exchange news, ideas and experiences.

In planning all our activities, the Trustees keep in mind the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

# Chair's Report

## Review of the Year

This year has continued to be shaped by the after effects of pandemic lockdowns and the subsequent emergence from them. In particular due to the sustained period when Committee were unable to engage in person with members to maintain their interest in the wider aspects of running a u3a, we began the year with both a depleted Committee and also some depletion in membership numbers. Significant progress has been made addressing these issues and we are well into a good recovery with membership numbers close to those before covid-19.

## Summary of events

At the AGM in May the new committee was elected. Significant changes included Frances Berry being elected to the vacant post of Vice Chair and Bill Cross taking over as Minutes Secretary from Lesley Churchill-Birch. New committee members were duly inducted into the charity commission role as trustees and into the governance and operational methods for running Exeter U3A. Anne Staley stood down as Membership Secretary after five years on the committee. In the absence of anyone standing to replace her the role was covered by long-standing member, Daphne Andrews, while we searched for a replacement. Vivienne Watson (Chair) also took on the Speaker Secretary role until January when a new speaker team was launched.

In June a Convenor's thank you lunch at Exeter College, held over from January 2022, took place for about 25. This year's lunch has also taken place at the same venue.

In August we held the first of a series of new members coffee mornings in the Phoenix Arts Centre, followed by another in September and a third in February at the Cosy Club. These were well attended and happily have resulted in several new members quickly getting involved in many aspects of u3a, in addition to the interest groups.

In September we held a busy Third Age Trust 40th Anniversary open event in St Stephen's Church, with singing from the choir group and refreshments served by member volunteers. New members joined, and joyfully long-standing members were able to renew as individual lives continued to return once more to normal.

In October there was a one-off anniversary year celebration event, in the form of an antiques valuation, generously hosted by Bearnas, Hampton & Littlewood. Around 30 members took along objects of interest to discover their history and value from the very knowledgeable experts.

From Tuesday 1st November, a Really Useful Group, ran weekly for three months with the aim of being useful to both members and also to the committee in terms of sharing ideas and initiatives, a meeting point for people to test their plans out with others, and to meet with the committee, talking to them face to face in a convivial setting. It resulted in the popular monthly Drop in Drinks evening, and the development of the new speaker team, together with the Meeters & Greeters team for monthly meetings. Others got in contact with offers to help with administrative tasks, special events tasks, and writing copy for the newsletter.

Another consequence arising from this group, was the formation of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion sub group, which has already given advice for the New Members Welcome Pack, given a presentation about good practice to the committee and is planning some outreach work at the Exeter Respect Festival in June 2023.

In December the Choir invited members to a Christmas choral event, a mix of carols both to hear and to sing, and also a range of entertaining readings. It was a well-attended and most enjoyable event.

In January following the resignation of our Chair, Vivienne Watson, for health reasons the committee was reduced by one, but also increased by one, as our new Membership Secretary, Terry Ancell, took over. A New Members Welcome Pack was by then in the later stages of development, so Terry has been able to use it for the benefit of the latest new members.

In January a sub group of the committee met to assess our contingencies and to advise on areas which needed to be more robust. Many areas were found to be well covered when considering the effects of compromises which had occurred during the constraints of the pandemic, there are still significant areas which need to be completed and it will continue to be a work in progress.

In March a meeting was held to engage with members about how the committee operates and what challenges they face and also to present some future initiatives such as a 30th anniversary celebration for Exeter U3A in 2024.

In March our much-valued web administrator, Ivan Andrews, stood down from managing the design and updating of our website pages. This fortunately coincided with the formation of an IT Support Group convened by Dave Parsons, committee member and Beacon Administrator, to support members with IT and to support the Committee with the new initiatives which are currently in the early development stages, for Beacon and our website.

## **Special reports**

At Exeter U3A we are very fortunate to have a University Liaison Team, which is now back to its pre pandemic activities of monthly talks, research projects and conversation cafes with the international students. There are more details about these matters and more importantly how to sign up for them in Carol McCullough's report below

Our newsletter is an essential means of communication with our membership. With its 6 editions per year, it is the way Committee, Group Convenors and members share a variety of information with one another. It is unique to our u3a and we hope interested people will come forward to help Trudi Learmouth and Paul Bristow to continue with its evolution to meet our future communication requirements.

The speaker team launched in January 2023 has three members (plus a committee member) to research and commission speakers for the monthly meetings. The programme has been planned to cover a range of topics of broad interest and of high quality, using the budget set by the committee, for 10 talks a year. Each member takes on the responsibility for a few speakers, ensuring that everything runs smoothly and satisfactorily for all involved, yet also sharing the planning and the executing of the role between the team, to be less onerous.

Working with them are the Meeters & Greeters team, also increasing in numbers ensuring an enjoyable role with plenty of help for all who need a good welcome and introductions.

Interest groups, supported by our Groups Coordinator, Julie Crichton-Smith, happily have recovered well from the pandemic, yet this creates its own new challenges. Interest groups are the beating heart of u3a being uniquely individual, as they follow the flexible u3a model, without overly formal structuring. Many of the long-standing groups have blossomed to create a need for new ones to accommodate the rising numbers of members.

Groups also evolve and sometimes restructure as the Group Convenors circumstances change. This healthy regeneration ensures that convening a group is not a burden. Several groups have adapted with co-convenors or even a team of convenors, who share the administration, planning and delivery for each event.

Some groups are also helping more widely with the running of our u3a such as Choir, IT Support, Drop in Drinks and Really Useful Group. The Convenors Cafe, meeting bimonthly, is a useful regular opportunity for our convenors to chat about groups and share information and ideas. A few new groups are also in the early stages of planning.

As a members' organisation we all play our part in supporting everything connected with our u3a, however, full appreciation and thanks can never be expressed enough to those who make our u3a shine out and run so well. To all our volunteers both on and off the committee, in all their roles, too many to name individually, we the members are truly grateful for all they do to make our u3a flourish.

**Frances Berry**

## **Groups Coordinator's Report**

A glance back at the many emails concerning u3a groups which have reached me over the past year, reveal a very busy year! Most days, members and potential u3a members request information about joining groups, having taster sessions, asking for convenors' contact details or expressing interest in a particular area. Long-standing groups have grown, extra subject groups have been requested, lapsed groups have been resurrected, and completely new groups have developed.

### **Some Long-Standing Groups News**

Mike Arstall, co-convenor of the Walking Groups, says "New members are joining every month ... numbers are around 100 ... with members leading extra walks between Striders and Hikers." Their activities do not stop at walking with an informal pre-Christmas get together and a bigger social event planned for August.

The Language Group convened by Joyce Burgess continues to tackle a wide range of fascinating topics including Tarot, Esperanto, the difficulties of translation and Scrabble.

Joyce also convenes u3a Intermediate Latin and members have progressed through Books 1–3 of the Oxford Latin Course.

Other long-standing groups include the choir whose membership has grown with over 40 members attending on occasion. After covid restrictions were lifted the choir sang at Cumberland Grange Care Home and at Christmas led a Carolsing for u3a members.

Many, many other groups have seen their membership grow. Many Reading Groups are now at capacity.

### **'Extra' Subject Groups**

Due to the popularity of some subject groups, new ones have been formed. Philosophy is one such group with a second being formed last autumn and a third in the process of forming. Likewise, the Discussion Group has proved very popular and a number of people have indicated they would like to be part of another one. As ever, their success will depend on convenors or co-convenors being found.

### **Lapsed Groups Resurrected or Taken Over by a New Convenor.**

Thanks to those members who have stepped up to the convenor challenge, a number of lapsed groups are now operating again. These include, Spanish Improvers, Walkie Talkies and The Travel Group. Discussions on Death and Dying, although not a lapsed group, reformed with convenor Brenda Barnes. The Saturday Supper Club is proving popular and Cycling is gaining traction, both with new convenors.

### **New Groups**

The past year has seen the formation of a number of new groups. These include the new IT Support Group which it is hoped will not only help members sort their IT queries, but also help with the IT needs of running Exeter U3A. Games for Fun is also a newly formed group.



The Genealogy Group is now meeting and a new group on Economics has formed. Growing Organic Veg is an exciting initiative just getting off the ground in which the members will eat what they grow.

## **Potential Groups and Those Needing Convenors**

Requests for the following groups to be formed have been made – Bowling, Guitar and Creative Writing. Groups which are not meeting as convenors are needed – Natural History, TaiChi, Local History, Geology, Ukulele.

## **In Other News....**

Two sessions of Beacon Training have now been held for convenors, led by Dave Parsons and Steph Ward. The Groups Fair was very successful. Held at the Mint at the end of January, it showcased the activities of around 30 groups and attracted a number of new members.

Clearly, with the number of groups forming and growing, Exeter U3A is in a very good state of health. However, more members willing to take on convenor roles would be really welcomed for without them this trend cannot be sustained.

**Julie Crichton-Smith**

## **Newsletter Editor's Report**

### **Production and Distribution**

There were 6 newsletters produced in the year 2022/23, averaging 20 pages in length, with a bumper 24 pages for the current issue. Electronic copies of the Newsletter are now emailed to registered members by Minna Egan, Exeter U3A Secretary. Fifteen printed copies of the Newsletter are produced (a reduction of 25% from last year) and posted directly to members who need them by Steph Ward, Exeter U3A Treasurer. We continue to use Stormpress for printing the Newsletter.

## Format

The Groups section has always been a key feature of the Newsletter with all groups returning to meeting regularly during 2022/23. A relief to be back to normal after the surreal years of lockdown restrictions on social interaction which u3a is all about!

There were also some new regular open events advertised for all members such as the Really Useful group and Drop In Drinks, in addition to University Liaison events.

The Members' Miscellany section was started in April 2020 as a response to the first lockdown and has been retained as an occasional feature, to allow members to contribute something of interest to share with other u3a members as and when, with three interesting and varied contributions in the last issue.

## Thanks

Thanks to Minna Egan and Steph Ward for electronic and paper distribution respectively. Members often congratulate me on producing such an interesting Newsletter but I always point out that I just put it together. The fact that the Newsletter is full of interesting events, reports, photos and articles is down to you, the hardworking, lively and enthusiastic members of our u3a who *organise* the events, *write* the reports and *take* the photos! So, many thanks to you all as without you the Newsletter would be very thin indeed!

## Newsletter Editorship

This year the Newsletter team has expanded beyond one! Last autumn, Paul Bristow stepped forward to help with the Newsletter and he is now the Features writer. You will have seen Paul's articles spotlighting different groups at the start of the Groups section in the last two issues of the Newsletter.

This coming year, 2023/24 will be my eleventh as editor of the Newsletter, having produced my first issue in April/May 2013! As I said last year, I have thoroughly enjoyed this role but I am aware that there are probably newer and/or younger members of Exeter U3A with more up-to-date technical, publishing and IT skills who would really like to have a chance to take on this role. If anyone perhaps would like to make a start by joining Paul and me in the first instance, please do contact me.

[learnmouthu3anews@gmail.com](mailto:learnmouthu3anews@gmail.com)

**Trudi Learnmouth**

## **University Liaison Project**

We've been involved in something of a 'relaunch' over the last few months to try to get back to where we were before the pandemic struck. We are now trying to have one talk every month on campus as we used to do – in fact in April this year we have two! Although I say 'on campus' the majority of our lecturers are used to 'hybrid' presentations, so it is generally possible for those members who are unable or unwilling to go to the campus to watch or join in. As I'm writing this and spring is well on its way, the Streatham campus is a lovely place to be, so if you book for one of our lectures why not make the most of the beautiful grounds – have lunch or coffee up there, even do the Sculpture Walk? What is more, the university is served by a regular bus service – the Uni bus, every 20 minutes from Exeter High Street.

Many of our members became involved in some very interesting research in an area that affects us all – Bone Health. We were very lucky that in January we had not one speaker – but 6! They all talked to us about their research and it was very good to know that some of us had helped. Our relationship key words are 'mutually beneficial' and this was a perfect example.

Trudi and I have been busy networking to meet some more academics who want to engage with us. The university has just appointed a new Engaged Research Manager – always a useful contact for us – both to find interesting speakers and to participate in projects which might be enjoyable for u3a members.

That doesn't mean we have lost our 'old' contacts – Gabriele Galluzzo, Senior Lecturer in Ancient Philosophy, is talking to us again at the end of April. He's certainly a friend of Exeter U3A as some of our members were very much involved with him in The Happiness Project which actually got a mention in Third Age Matters.

Our link with international students at the University is carrying on very successfully, largely due to the Conversation Cafes in the INTO building.

In early March we were asked to participate in some research being carried out by a collaboration between the Business School and Environmental Geography – about our experiences of flying for holidays abroad – past and present. Some interesting discussions took place and I'm delighted to say that members did not necessarily agree with the academics or each other!

By the time of the AGM we will have had a talk by Professor Mark Jackson on the social and cultural aspects of mid-life crisis. I'm sure it will be a good session. Have we all been asking ourselves – did we have one? When? What? Why? Is it a recent phenomenon related to 'baby-boomers'? We'll find out!

It was good that some new members signed up at the open day in the Mint but we are aware that there may be new members who are not familiar with the work of the University Liaison Project team. You will find details of our involvement since 2013 in the archive on our webpage <https://u3asites.org.uk/exeter/page/30726> created by Bertram Brockington. If you would like to be added to our database, please contact our administrator, Helen Cleasby. [exe.u3a.uni.liaison@gmail.com](mailto:exe.u3a.uni.liaison@gmail.com)

**Carol McCullough** (for the liaison team)

## **Membership Secretary's Report**

Having completed my first year's annual renewal process for all members, I am able to report that we started the renewal process on 13 February 2023 with 688 members of which 19 were Associates.

Having completed the renewal process at 31 March 2023, a total of 609 have renewed with a further 36 who have not been in contact either to renew or resign; these members might yet renew in April or the coming months. A total of 43 members declined to renew and they have therefore been 'resigned' from the U3A.

During the first three months of 2023, a total of 67 people have sought information about joining the U3A of which three were members who had previously resigned, but have now decided to rejoin. Of the other 64, 40 have completed the process of joining the U3A so that at 31 March our membership has netted off at 662 Members of which 19 are Associates.

The U3A held a couple of recruitment events during the year which have proved successful, although word of mouth seems to be successful.

I have sought to conduct an informal poll of those members who have chosen to not renew their membership and largely the reasons for their decisions are personal, including increasing frailty, inability to travel and/or mobility issues. There was one comment that there was a lack of social interaction, which was echoed at the event held at the Mint on Wednesday 29 March. Although the Committee has to review and consider the output of this meeting, there have been some steps taken to improve this aspect by arranging the Drop in Drinks and coffee mornings for new members.

Finally, as your new Membership Secretary, I'm pleased to say that I am being supported by members to formally stand for the role at the AGM and looking forward to continuing in the role and to be an active member in a number of groups.

Terry Ancell

## **Treasurer's Report**

Our income and expenditure for the year under review and the closing position at 31 March 2023 are set out in our accounts which follow this report, along with comparative figures for the previous year.

Historically, our policy has been to hold reserves at the end of the year approximately equal to one year's normal expenditure. As the bulk of our membership income is received in advance but our expenses are spread over the course of the year this enables us to be sure we can pay our bills as they fall due. When the coronavirus pandemic struck our membership numbers and income fell significantly but this was more than matched by savings on room hire fees so our reserves actually increased.

Over the past couple of years our aim has been to use our excess reserves to build our u3a up again by

- offering heavily discounted renewal rates to existing members
- not increasing our joining fee for new members
- continuing to significantly subsidise costs for groups meeting in paid for venues

The good news is that during 2022/23 our membership reached 688 and face to face group activities have returned to pre-pandemic levels. The bad news is that we have been affected by the same cost of living rises as everyone else and all our room hire costs have increased. In setting our budget for 2023/24 we therefore decided to increase our renewal fee for existing members slightly from £10 to £12 but this still represents a significant discount compared to the new member's fee, which remains at £20.

For a number of years, we have asked members to contribute £1 per session in PFV fees for every group meeting they attend in a Paid For Venue. Overall, these fees have never covered the hire costs and with price increases across all venues we have decided to increase the fee to £1.50 per session for 2023/24. This new level will still not cover the full cost but will reduce the amount of subsidy required from membership income.

Looking forward to 2023/24 I am optimistic that our membership numbers will continue to increase and our group activities will flourish. With reserves at the year-end of £18,996 we are in a strong financial position to support that growth.

**Steph Ward**

## Trustees

The Trustees form the Executive Committee and are all Exeter U3A Members who are usually elected or re-elected annually by the membership at the AGM for a term of one year. Trustees may be co-opted by the executive committee during the year to fill casual vacancies on the committee until the next AGM. Trustees who acted during the year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 and up to the date of the approval of this report are shown below (With starting and finish dates if they did not act for the whole period)

Trustees Name	Office (if any)	Dates Acted (if not for the whole period)
Vivienne Watson	Chair	To 18/1/23
Frances Berry	Vice Chair	From 26/5/22
Steph Ward	Treasurer	
Minna Egan	Secretary	
Julia Crichton-Smith		
Dave Parsons		
Bill Cross		From 26/5/22
Terry Ancell		From 4/1/23
Rachel Schaufeld		From 26/5/22 to 22/9/22
Liz Batten		From 26/5/22 to 9/7/22
Anne Staley		To 26/5/22
Lesley Churchill-Birch		To 26/5/22
Hardy Ford		To 19/4/22

### Contact Details

#### Charity's principal address

19 Weirside Place  
Old Mill Close  
Exeter EX2 4BW

Website <https://u3asites.org.uk/exeter/contact>

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees Report above  
Signed on behalf of the Trustees on the 20 April 2023 by

Frances Berry – Vice Chair

Minna Egan – Secretary

## Exeter U3A – Receipts and Payments Accounts

1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023

Receipts and Payments	1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 £	1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 £
<b>Receipts</b>		
Membership Fees	9,910	6,796
Paid for Venue Fees	2,747	968
Gift Aid Claimed	838	1,030
Tea and Coffee Sales	49	22
Grants Received	150	300
Donations	9	70
Other income	70	105
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>13,773</b>	<b>9,291</b>
<b>Payments</b>		
General room hire	1,567	543
Groups room hire	8,268	3,548
U3A National Membership	2,288	1,838
Third Age Matters Mailing	1,481	1,012
Beacon Database Licence	589	539
Speaker Fees	294	585
Administration Costs	390	685
Printing	425	483
Convenors Lunch*	742	0
Other Expenses	147	15
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>16,191</b>	<b>9,248</b>
<b>Net (Payments)/Receipts</b>	<b>(2,418)</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Unrestricted cash funds brought forward</b>	<b>21,414</b>	<b>21,371</b>
<b>Unrestricted cash funds carried forward</b>	<b>18,996</b>	<b>21,414</b>

\*Due to covid restrictions the convenors lunch that would have been held in January 2022 was held in June 2022.



<b>Assets and Liabilities</b>	<b>At 31 March 2023 £</b>	<b>At 31 March 2022 £</b>
<b>Unrestricted cash funds</b>		
<b>Bank Current Account</b>	<b>18,996</b>	<b>21,414</b>
<b>Other monetary assets</b>		
<b>Gift Aid outstanding to claim</b>	<b>1,382</b>	<b>838</b>
<b>Paid for Venue Fees receivable</b>	<b>905</b>	<b>581</b>
<b>Hire Fees paid in advance</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Membership paid in advance</b>	<b>7,584</b>	<b>5,056</b>
<b>Overpayments to be refunded</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Room Hire fees outstanding</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>662</b>
<b>Third Age Matters Mailing</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>28</b>

In addition to the monetary assets listed above Exeter U3A own a PC Projector and a display board which are several years old and have no significant monetary value. During 2021/22 we purchased a flag banner for use at our Groups Fair and Monthly Meetings. The total cost of £225 was included in Administration Costs in that year. During 2022/23 members of the History on the Move group funded the purchase of a Bluetooth Voice Amplifier with Microphone at a cost of £36.54.

**The Trustees declare that they have approved the Receipts and Payments Accounts above.**

**Signed on behalf of the Trustees on 20 April 2023 by**

**Steph Ward – Treasurer**

**Frances Berry – Vice Chair**