

Exeter U3A

Registered Charity Number 1104480

Annual Report and Accounts

1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020



Learn, laugh, live

Exeter U3A - Annual Report to Members

1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020

About us

Exeter U3A is an Unincorporated Members Association whose governing document is the Constitution dated 26 February 2015. Our objects as set out in the constitution are:

- To advance the education of the public and in particular the education of older people no longer in full time gainful employment in Exeter and its surrounding locality.
- 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 a 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 a U3A.
- Members should do all they can to ensure that people wanting to join a 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 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 the month which are free and open to all members. We invite speakers who give talks on a variety of interesting topics and we keep members up to date on developments in our U3A. There is also an 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 or engage in social activities together.
- We have a project team who work with Exeter University. The University provides lectures for us and we get 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 lots of contact details.
- We regularly 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

During the year Exeter U3A has enriched the lives of its members by offering almost 70 different activities and interest groups. Members benefit physically, mentally and emotionally by joining together and supporting each other to

- Pursue interests in a variety of subjects
- Learn new skills or develop existing ones
- Participate in physical activity
- Enjoy social interaction

Membership numbers continued to grow steadily reaching a peak of around 660 towards the end of 2019.

Our monthly meetings at the Mint Methodist church were regularly attended by more than 100 members who heard a variety of interesting and informative talks on subjects ranging from Safer Driving to Brunel's Southwest Legacy.

At our monthly meeting in July 2019 we celebrated the twenty fifth anniversary of Exeter U3A. Long standing member, Faith Wood, was invited to cut the celebratory cake which was then enjoyed by members present at the meeting.

In January 2020 we held a Groups Fair at the Mint Methodist Church where interest groups were able to showcase their activities and recruit new members. It was a great opportunity for existing U3A members to find out about other groups and for potential new U3A members to see exactly what we had to offer.

The Trustees are very grateful for the many hours of work put in by all our volunteers including Group Coordinator and Convenors, Newsletter Editor, Website and Database Administrators, University Liaison Team, Meeters and Greeters, Refreshments Team etc. Without their help Exeter U3A could not continue to operate and offer the wide range of activities that we do. We would also like to thank the Mint Methodist Church Centre for their hospitality, hosting our monthly members meetings, committee meetings and many group activities. Finally, as Chairman, I would like to thank all the Committee members for all their hard work and support.

Since the year end

The Coronavirus pandemic severely curtailed our activities at the end of the year when the mandatory lockdown on 23 March 2020 meant that we were no longer able to hold our large monthly gatherings or face to face group meetings. After a brief initial period of inactivity many of our Group Convenors responded by moving on-line. Where possible many continued their activities using Zoom or other video-conferencing software or kept in touch via e-mail or WhatsApp.

The Trustees changed from meeting face to face every two months to meeting monthly using Zoom to keep abreast of developments in the Coronavirus situation. We are keeping in touch with members through information in the bi-monthly Newsletter and also by publishing a separate communication to members in the months when there was no Newsletter. These are e-mailed to most members but sent out by post to those without e-mail and contain the latest Coronavirus guidance from the Third Age Trust. We have also taken advantage of this period of relative inactivity to update our website and review our policies and procedures and update them where necessary.

As restrictions are being relaxed some of our outdoor groups have started to meet again with measures in place to control numbers and meet sanitisation and social distancing guidelines. Some small groups have met in members' gardens and may soon be able to meet in members' homes. Some community facilities are starting to reopen as covid-secure premises so some indoor activities may be able to resume in the coming weeks and months.

As a group our age profile makes us generally more susceptible to the virus so all members must make their own assessment of the risk involved to themselves and those they live with before deciding whether or not to take part in any U3A activity.

One casualty of the pandemic has been the Annual General Meeting (AGM) which was due to be held in April 2020. This is the time that we would normally have presented our report to the members and held committee elections. We did consider holding the meeting by video-conference, e-mail or post or a combination of these but there was no enthusiasm amongst the membership for any of these. We have therefore decided to follow the example of the National Trust and not hold an AGM at all this year.

A number of committee members were due to step down at the AGM and a few have done so but the remainder have agreed to stay on until we are able to hold an AGM next year. Details of the current Trustees and those who served during the year under review can be seen later in this report. Any members who are interested in joining the committee do not need to wait until next year as we have the facility to co-opt members to fill casual vacancies. We have already used that power to allow Julia Crichton-Smith, who was planning to stand at the AGM, to join us and we still have spaces available.

Financial position

Our income and expenditure for the year under review and the closing position at 31 March 2020 is set out in our accounts which follow this report. As you can see our income exceeded our expenditure for the year resulting in a small increase in our bank balance year on year.

Our policy is to hold reserves at the year-end 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. Even if costs increase in the year or unexpected expenditure is necessary, we have sufficient funds on hand until we are able to adjust the membership fees the following year.

At the year-end we had £15,655 in the bank compared to expenditure during the year of £16,369. The shortfall is due to a lower level of membership renewals than we budgeted for due to Coronavirus. Around 70 members consciously decided to defer renewing until after 1 October 2020 when they would only have to pay a half year membership in the hope that more activities will have resumed by that date.

At the end of the year our financial position was still strong. Many of our members had already renewed their membership before the Coronavirus lockdown came in to force on 23 March 2020. As all of our face to face activities ceased at that time venue hire costs were immediately reduced to zero. Even with little ongoing activity we still have to pay some administrative costs particularly to cover U3A National Membership, Third Age Matters magazine postage and Beacon database licence fees but we are confident that we will have sufficient funds in hand at the end of March 2021 to offer a reduced membership fee to renewing members who paid in full for 2020/21.

Looking to the future

The principal sources of funds for Exeter U3A are the annual membership fees and room hire contributions paid by those members. The age profile of our membership requires continuous recruitment just to maintain numbers and in previous years we have seen steady growth year on year. Since the year end our membership numbers have fallen to around 520, largely due to the impact of Coronavirus.

We had planned to stage a recruitment drive around the National U3A Day which was originally scheduled for June 2020 then postponed to October 2020 and now pushed back again to June 2021. With coronavirus and social distancing likely to be with us for several more months at least we are looking at new ways to keep our activity groups going and to recruit new Trustees to the committee. It is only by attracting more members to join and getting more members involved in the committee that Exeter U3A will continue to thrive in the post coronavirus era.

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 from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 and up to the date of approval of this report are shown below (with starting or finishing dates if they did not act for the whole period).

Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted (if not for whole period)
Phil Slater	Chair	
Kay Matthews	Vice Chair	To 20/7/20
Keith Shaw	Treasurer	
Minna Egan	Secretary	From 18/11/19
Anne Staley		
Jan Rolfe		
Ann Mitchell		From 25/4/19 to 11/5/20
Amanda James		To 11/5/20
Diana Randall		From 25/4/19 to 22/8/19
Steph Ward		From 26/9/19
Vivienne Watson		From 18/11/19
Julia Crichton-Smith		From 20/7/20
Lynn Walsh		To 25/4/19
Maggie Bonfield		To 25/4/19
Jo Joyce		To 25/4/19
Faith Wood		To 25/4/19
Daphne Andrews		To 25/4/19

Contact details

Charity's principal address

Whitehaven, 1A Stockton Avenue
Dawlish, Devon, EX7 9LU

Website

<https://u3asites.org.uk/exeter/welcome>

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees on 14 September 2020 by

Phil Slater – Chair

Minna Egan – Secretary

Exeter U3A – Receipts and Payments Accounts
1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020

Receipts and Payments	1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020	1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019
	£	£
Receipts		
Membership Fees	10,746	11,243
Paid for Venue Fees	3,516	2,698
Gift Aid Claimed	1,520	1,160
University Grants	1,600	200
Tea and Coffee Sales	193	269
Plant Sales	94	70
Donations	24	20
Other income	67	170
Total Receipts	17,760	15,830
Payments		
General room hire	1,431	1,561
Groups room hire	8,805	8,107
U3A National Membership	2,310	2,349
Third Age Matters Mailing	1,531	1,164
Beacon Database Licence	673	306
Convenors Lunch	505	341
Speaker Fees	395	563
Administration costs	186	35
Printing	302	508
University Liaison Expenses	60	0
Other Expenses	171	383
Total Payments	16,369	15,317
Net Receipts	1,391	513
Unrestricted cash funds last year end	14,264	13,751
Unrestricted cash funds this year end	15,655	14,264

Assets and Liabilities

	At 31 March 2020 £	At 31 March 2019 £
Unrestricted cash funds		
Bank Current Account	12,243	12,382
Bank No2 Account	3,412	1,882
Total unrestricted cash funds	15,655	14,264
Other monetary assets		
Gift Aid outstanding to claim	1,342	1,228
Paid for Venue Fees receivable	1,522	1,582
Liabilities		
Stormpress re Newsletter Printing	126	0
Administration costs owing	20	0
Membership overpayments to be refunded	69	0
Room Hire fees outstanding	0	274

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.

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

Signed on behalf of the Trustees on 14 September 2020 by

Keith Shaw – Treasurer

Steph Ward – Committee Member