

Company Registration No. 01752272

Charity Registration No. 288434

Registered office: Old Town Hall, 213 Haverstock Hill, London NW3 4QP

Companies Acts 1948 to 2006

U3A London

**Minutes of the 41st Annual General Meeting held on Monday 31st March 2025,
10.00 am on Zoom and in person in the Old Town Hall, Room 2.21**

Members Present

Richard Arthur (Chair), Gill Korgaonkar (Vice-Chair), Anthony Sober (Treasurer),
Mushtak Macci (Company Secretary)

58 members attended either in person or by proxy, and 20 via Zoom.

The meeting opened at 10.00 am.

1. To approve the Minutes of the AGM held on 11th March 2024

The Minutes of the 40th Annual General Meeting held on 11th March 2024 were approved by the majority of members in the room, 24 members in person and 20 members attending via Zoom plus 37 proxy votes. There were no matters arising.

2. To receive the Chair's report

The Chair, Richard Arthur, welcomed everyone to the 41st U3A London AGM and thanked everyone for coming in person or via Zoom. He gave the following address to the members.

This is such a lovely time of year with sunshine and blossoms on the trees and bushes. It is also a season of special significance to various faiths. Eid was celebrated yesterday, or today in some countries, while Passover and Easter are not far away. So my best wishes to all who observe these holy days.

This is the second year when I have had the honour of being chair of this wonderful organisation.

Its greatest strength is a great team of volunteers.

All our co-ordinators who give classes are volunteers as well as all our administrative and office staff.

We have no full-time employees.

Every week there are 133 scheduled classes - 75% are in the Town Hall with a zoom connection in 12%, and 25% on zoom only.

Amalia Michaels and Gilli Vafidis, assisted by Peggy Wylie and Barbara Stevens, do a great job organising all this.

A rough breakdown indicates that 40% of our classes concern the arts, a grouping that includes the pure arts, art creation, cinema, philosophy and making and appreciating music and literature.

Nearly 30% of classes teach one of 11 foreign languages, and the remaining classes range from games, exercise and dance, to cookery, science, politics and history.

We are so lucky to have so many high-quality co-ordinators giving really interesting sessions.

Our Monday morning talks are hybrid and continue to be popular. Recordings of these talks are made available to Care Homes and played to fit in with their schedules.

All this means we continue to attract new members at a steady rate and at present we have 1,506 members, an increase of 85 on this time last year. Gerta Regensburger continues in her hard-working role as membership secretary.

Our members keep our dedicated team of volunteers in the office busy. This team now has 16 members, led by Gail Levy with Rob Heaton and Sue Kwok. We would welcome more volunteers, preferably with some IT skills and office experience. If you fancy joining a friendly and hard-working team for half a day a week or more, please pop into the office and get your name on the list.

During the last year, a number of changes have been made in the office including a new printer, more time familiarising volunteers about office procedures, and getting more information for members on new notice boards in the corridor by the office.

In the previous year we had a big programme of equipment renewal with new laptops, a new telephone system, new broadband and wi-fi providers, and new projectors. Shafeeq Siddiqui did a huge amount of work to ensure that these all went well, and we are sorry he is standing down from our Executive Committee for personal reasons.

This year our purchases have included a new wide screen TV, as well as office equipment and health and safety items.

Our health and safety committee, led by my vice-chair, Gill Korgaonkar, has continued its valuable work. This year we have invested in new fire extinguishers and we have also bought new wheelchairs. These ensure our disabled members would have no difficulty in exiting the building in the case of a fire. I am pleased to say that a joint inspection by the London Fire Service and Camden Council on our fire precautions gave us fully satisfactory feedback.

I regret to say that two members have had falls on the pavement leading up to the Atrium entrance, which is in poor condition. I am pleased to say that Camden Council has now advised that contractors have been instructed to repair this pavement, although we are awaiting advice as to the start date of this work.

We continue to have excellent relations with our neighbour and landlord WAC Arts. They had to deal with a major problem with an underground gas pipe this year, and were good at providing us with emergency heaters, although I know some members experienced cold rooms when the heaters were not fully operational. It was good to see that WAC Arts have started to clear the garden area next to the Town Hall.

Unfortunately, they have come to the conclusion that a café in the Town Hall would not be financially viable, so hopes that this might be revived have not been realised.

I receive occasional complaints that members fail to follow our code of conduct, which requires all members to treat others with courtesy and respect. All such complaints are taken seriously. I am pleased to say that there were only a handful this year, and all have been resolved amicably.

Volunteers who have made a strong contribution this year include Mushtak Macci as our company secretary, Richard Sattin as our property maintenance manager, Elisabeth Marriott as our minutes secretary, Maureen Guirdham as editor of the weekly update, Marie-Ange King as our webmaster and Sue Kwok as our information and data protection officer.

We experienced our first Subject Access Request this year, which required a considerable amount of reviewing old documents and communications.

Sue Kwok now wishes to stand down from her information role, and we should be very interested to hear from anyone with suitable experience to take up the position of Information and Data protection officer.

We held a successful Christmas Party and a coffee morning for new members, with coffee mornings for our co-ordinators and office volunteers being arranged. Our U3A organised a variety of events on Silver Sunday in October. These included visits to the King's gallery and a Lords Cricket tea and tour. Barbara Stevens has taken on the role of Events Organiser. She also acts as liaison with the Third Age Trust, an umbrella organisation for U3As throughout the country, which has itself been through a major reorganisation this year. The Trust has been very helpful to us in dealing with a legal issue this year.

Volunteers led by our marketing manager, Stephen Barry, will be manning a stall at the Hampstead Fair to encourage new members.

I have a very supportive and experienced Executive Committee, some of whom have put in many hours of admin effort. I am particularly grateful to Gill and Anthony, our vice chair and Treasurer, who have been most helpful as members of our executive sub-committee, which deals with urgent matters between meetings of our executive committee.

U3A is the only national educational organisation in the UK run entirely by its own members, with co-operation and mutual respect at the heart of what we do. I continue to be impressed with the dedication shown by so many who give their time to this organisation.

U3A is fantastic value. Someone attending just one class a week is paying less than £1.50 per session. Our annual subscription is kept low through so much work being done by volunteers, and is also subsidised from our reserves. As advised last year, these have been increased by a substantial bequest. However we are expecting a substantial increase in rent this year, and an increase in our subscription is an inevitable consequence.

That all serves as a good introduction to our Treasurer who will now present the financial report.

3. To receive the Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st August 2024

A. Sober, Treasurer, said that everyone had received a full copy of the U3A Annual Report and Financial Statements either by email or post.

He had prepared a summary of the accounts from September 2023 to 31 August 2024 and explained the results with the help of a simplified version of the Profit and Loss Account and Balance Sheet.

He asked the members to approve the accounts for the year ended 31st August 2024. No questions were raised and the accounts were unanimously approved by members attending in person and on Zoom.

He said that U3A has a 5-year lease and there will be a rent review in June 2025. The rent is expected to go up by around £46,000, the equivalent of £35 per member. U3A is currently paying £130,000 in rent per annum and he does not know what the rent increase will be as this depends on the UK Retail Price Index (RPI) but envisages it will go up by around 40%.

He said that the Executive Committee had discussed the possibility of buying a property for U3A instead of renting premises but said it had been difficult to find somewhere with the same easy access to transport.

In the year 2020-21 the U3A subscription was £75 per annum. As they had been notified that they were due to receive a large legacy the Executive Committee decided to decrease the subscription to £40 for the following year to celebrate U3A's 40th Anniversary. At that stage the subscription was subsidised by £35 per member. U3A has continued with a reduced subscription in subsequent years and the results to August 2024 represent a subsidy of £42 per member.

Because of the rent increase, U3A's subscription for the year 2025-26 should increase by £35 and it would still be subsidised by £42 per person. However, the Executive Committee has decided to limit the increase to £10 to balance current and future needs but it is likely to increase every year by at least £10. If inflation rises it may have to be greater than that.

He said that the only reason U3A can subsidise subscriptions in this manner is because members have left substantial legacies in their wills. U3A have not been notified of any legacies and members were reminded that they may like to leave a gift, large or small, to U3A London in their Wills.

U3A has £2m invested and there was a question why this money could not be used to prevent increases in subscriptions. A. Sober said that investments can fluctuate greatly and it was prudent to save for future rent rises and expenditure. If the investment value goes up this might change.

G. Regensburger said that she felt that it was very good value and said savings could be made by charging for events such as the Christmas party and not having paid entertainment.

4. To appoint Knox Cropper, of 65 Leadenhall Street, London EC3A 2AD, as U3A auditors

A. Sober said that Knox Cropper, U3A's current auditing firm, specialises in charities and he proposed that U3A London should continue to use their services.

Members attending in person, by proxy and on Zoom unanimously approved Knox Croppers as auditors.

5. To receive a report on the election of the U3A Executive Committee

Mushtak Macci, Company Secretary, named the 11 candidates who were nominated for the Executive Committee.

Richard Arthur
Stephen Barry
Jane Fawcett
Rob Heaton
Gillian Korgaonkar
Eugene Moshan
Richard Sisson
Graham Smith
Anthony Sober
Barbara Stevens
Maureen Tilford

As the candidates did not exceed 12 in number, no election was necessary and the above candidates are hereby elected to serve on the Executive Committee for the forthcoming year.

6. Any other business

There were no other questions or comments and the Chair thanked everyone attending and closed the meeting.