

Harlow U3A

Trustees' Annual Report

April 1st, 2023 – March 31st, 2024

Charity contact information

Harlow U3A - Charity Number: **1197680**

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Charity Trustees

The following named Trustees were in post for the whole reporting period.

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Jane Winterbotham | 2. Hazel Sugarman |
| 3. Geoffrey Longster | 4. Anne Richards |
| 5. Helen Simpson | 6. Christine Chesham |
| 7. Vipin Patel | 8. Theresa Sothcott |

Geoffrey Kay resigned in December 2023 and Joan Jones was elected to a first 3-year term in January 2024

Objectives and activities

Harlow U3A, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), was created on April 1st, 2022. It is the successor to the dissolved charity, Harlow and Surrounding Areas U3A and received the assets of the dissolved charity. This is the second Annual Report of the CIO

Harlow U3A is affiliated with the Third Age Trust (TAT), uses its services and guidance, and subscribes to its objectives.

- The object of the Harlow U3A (CIO) is the advancement of education for older people and those who are retired from full time work through activities conducive to learning, personal development and well-being.
- We are a membership organisation primarily serving local Harlow residents who are nearing or in retirement from full-time, paid work. We had 670 members at the beginning of April 2023, 658 at the end of the fiscal year, March 2024.
- Our Activities are focused on the immediate Harlow area. We have some have members from surrounding areas, who are also members of other U3As formed in nearby towns and villages.

The main activities of Harlow U3A are operated through our “Interest Groups”.

We had approximately 60 interest groups running in the period; some have weekly sessions, others monthly and a few operating on irregular schedules. The groups provide opportunities for physical (e.g. walking, racket games, fitness classes), intellectual (philosophy, play reading, book reviews), crafts (knitting, sewing), social (pub lunches, local bus trips) and various travel opportunities to places and events of interest.

There is also a monthly General Meeting that all members can attend to socialize, interact with Group Facilitators (the members who organise and run the Interest Groups) and enjoy a presentation by a speaker on a variety of topics.

Our groups are self-funded by the members attending.

Governance and management

Harlow U3A's governing document is a constitution, based on a model provided by TAT and approved by the Charity Commission.

The constitution provides for a Management Committee made up of the elected Trustees. Trustees are elected to three-year terms and individuals are limited to two terms. Initial terms took service in the prior charity into account so that retirements are staggered. One Trustee resigned in December 2023. Two Trustees were re-elected to second terms and one new Trustee was elected to a first term in January 2024. Two Trustees reach their two-term limit in January 2025, and one is retiring a year early.

Trustee recruitment and appointment

Trustee recruitment was active in the reporting period, resulting in the election of one new Trustee. Efforts to recruit more Trustees with on-line technical experience were unsuccessful and continue. The constitution does not require election to specific offices. The Committee elects officers and appoints roles from the Trustees elected at a general members meeting. Only members of Harlow U3A are eligible to vote at general meetings and to serve as Trustees.

Achievements and performance

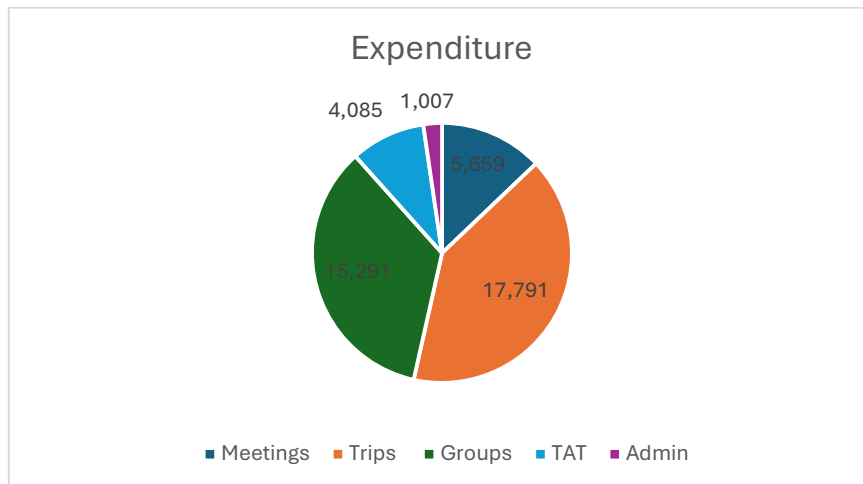
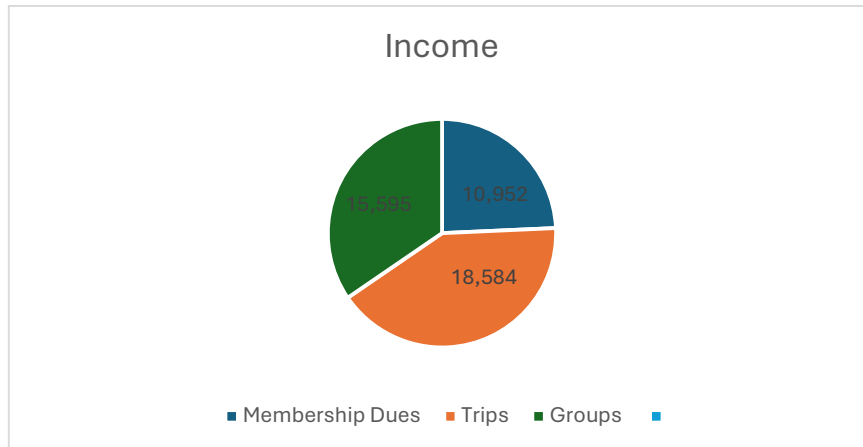
As mentioned above, our membership remained stable through the reporting period and our activity groups operated a full schedule. Several new activities were introduced. "Visits and Outings" are organised as a sub-committee with a Trustee as chair due to the significant revenue stream and obligations incurred by the activity.

Harlow U3A operates on a voluntary basis, with Trustees and Group Facilitators performing the planning and operation roles. There are no remunerated roles or employees.

However, the Choir uses a professional musical director and fitness groups have instructors, on a contracted, fee paying basis, who are trained, licensed and insured for reasons of health, safety and liability.

We attended local events in the year as part of our recruitment efforts to attract local “Third Agers” and provide the opportunities to engage in the variety of activities we offer that contribute to physical, mental and social well-being.

Financial Review



Annual operating income to fund general members’ activities is almost entirely generated through members’ dues, including Gift Aid. The corresponding expenditure is on TAT subscription and services, Meetings and Admin.

Groups are self-funding and required to hold cash above a £60 limit in the Groups account. Each group budgets individually, but this is not consolidated. Annual Income and expenditure are about equal.

Visits & Outings (V&O) are budgeted on a per trip basis to generate a small surplus that is held for contingencies such as cancellation fees. Income and expenditures for V&O tend to be concurrent.

Statement of the charity's policy on reserves

Our policy on reserves is to operate within an annual budget so that our cash balance at any point in time is no less than 50% of annual income and in this range at year end. (Income from subscriptions is virtually all in the first quarter of the FY, as well as the main expenditures.) The value was approximately 48% at the low balance point. We consider this the satisfactory result of a conservative budgeting approach. The purpose of managing reserves in this way is to ensure sufficient funds are available to wind-up the CIO should this become necessary.

This reverses a previous policy of the dissolved charity to accumulate funds in a separate reserve account that did not have a specified purpose. This reserve was spent down in the last two years of the former charity, including no dues collection in 2021-22. Dues have not been increased since the inception of the CIO and are not budgeted for a change for 2025-26.

Details of any deficit

No material unbudgeted deficits were incurred in any of the accounts.

Plans

Harlow U3A will continue to support our groups, develop and encourage new activities and recruit new members. We have increased our participation at local community events, and will take available opportunities in the coming year, with a focus on achieving a membership that fully reflects the local diversity. We must recruit additional volunteers and Trustees to manage internal and external planned events.

Declaration

Signed on behalf of the charity trustees:

S/S

Name: Geoffrey E. Longster

Designation: Trustee, Secretary

Date: November 17, 2024