

Westerham



Westerham University of the Third Age

Trustees' annual report for the year July 2015 – June 2016

Reference and administrative information

Name of the organisation

Westerham University of the Third Age.

Address of the office of the Organisation

c/o Membership Secretary Fiddlers Field Croydon Road Westerham Kent TN16 1TX.

Committee Members

Lynette Snowden, Chairman, Linda Little, Secretary, Jane Dodd, Treasurer, Stuart Barnes, Groups Co-ordinator, Sharon Lord, Membership Secretary Tina Rhoda, Social and Meetings Co-ordinator, Louise Wood, PR/Webmaster, Kay Ions, Sue Hurst.

Structure Governance and Management

The governing document of the charity is its constitution adopted on 11 July 2013. The Committee Members are the members of the Executive Committee, elected by the membership at Annual General Meetings.

Objectives and Activities, Achievements and Performance

Westerham U3A is devoted to lifelong learning, providing opportunities for those no longer in full time employment to share skills and interests by learning together.

The activities undertaken during the year are summarised in the report below.

Westerham University of the Third Age

Trustees' Report for 2015 – 2016

This is my final annual report as Chairman and it continues to be a pleasure to serve with such a dedicated and hard working committee. We have had a busy and successful year with memorable events and activities. Westerham U3A continues to develop into a strong and vibrant establishment and that is due to all of you, the members, the group contacts, the volunteers helping with different activities including making teas and coffees at Open meetings, and the Committee, all working together to support our organisation. I would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to all for their contribution over this year.

Growth and Numbers

The past year has seen a small increase in our membership numbers, from 223 at our last AGM to 224 at the end of June. Some of our members have very sadly passed away in this last year and our heart-felt condolences go to their family; we will sadly miss them. Others have moved and a few have chosen not to re-new their membership. This means that we welcomed a number of new members over the year whom I hope are enjoying and getting the most from their membership.

Monthly Meetings

We have enjoyed a wide variety of speakers at our Open Meetings; this time last year we were honored to listen to Captain Eric 'Winkle' Brown talk about his experiences during WWII and a lifetime of being a pilot. We have learned about the world of magic, Mrs Beeton's Christmas, the Mary Rose and the Magna Carta. Speakers talking about local interest have entertained us with information on Kentish Crafts, Darwin's Orchis Bank. Gilbert and Sullivan and the Spitfire Women Pilots of WWII have also been the focus for talks. All followed by tea and cake served by our kind and generous volunteers.

Social Events

The social side of Westerham U3A continues to evolve. The Coffee Mornings on the first Monday of each month at the Grasshopper on the Green are well attended and provide an excellent opportunity to get together and discuss a wide ranging number of topics. **We have had fascinating visits to Bletchley Park; a return riverboat cruise from Runnymede to Windsor, with time to explore Windsor; and Brooklands car and aviation museum. Finally, many of us enjoyed a delicious Christmas lunch with time to chat.**

Study/Interest Group Activities

There continues to be quite a strong demand and growth in group activity covering a wide range of interest areas. New groups were established during the year including Beginners French and iPad for Beginners. A pilot scheme was initiated for Computing for Beginners, last year for a small group, to establish the issues of disparity of skills. With popular demand this has been expanded to provide more formalised learning for Beginner iPad Users. Members now have access to 48 different groups, offering a variety of interests and a number of these are open to Edenbridge U3A members. On a reciprocal basis, we also have access to a select number of groups run by Edenbridge as well as for specialist groups for Digital Photography at Sevenoaks U3A and the Science Group at Knole. We continue our efforts to minimise waiting lists and support the creation of new groups where required. We have chosen to have active recruitment for new and existing groups at each of our open meetings, which are held 10 times a year.

Members will be used to the groups' tables at Open Meetings, which contain all of the information about the groups and includes sign-up sheets for anyone who wishes to join a group or express interest in a group that is waiting to start. There is also a folder on the table for members to identify any new ideas that they might have for a new group. At the last AGM members were encouraged to identify topics of interest. Considerable interest has been shown for topics like Watercolour Painting and Beginners Italian, but the Committee is seeking support from the membership to organise the activities. Members to act as Group contacts are always in short supply and volunteers are encouraged.

Groups vary in size from 4 to 20 - size is immaterial as, where there is an interest, we will try to help and form a group. So please keep coming up with ideas as in this way we will keep our U3A thriving.

Communicating with members

An electronic newsletter is sent out monthly, to alert members of upcoming events e.g. Open Meetings, with a hard copy version sent to those without email. Our website www.westerhamU3A.org gets good visitor numbers and is regularly updated, so members and the wider community know details of activities, study groups and events. A hard copy newsletter is sent twice yearly and posters and flyers are also distributed. We have an email address which can be used to contact Committee Members (westerhamU3A@hotmail.co.uk), a 'contact us' form on the website, and a suggestions box at OMs.

The Financial Front

A detailed report on the state of our finances will be tabled at the AGM, but it is worth noting that the accounts for Westerham U3A continue in a good state. Our membership numbers are stable, and we hope to achieve and maintain a reserve of approximately 6 months running costs to cover any unforeseen expenditure. The Committee is reviewing the purchase of equipment needed by our U3A and items purchased in this year included a laptop computer. We now have funds available for specific equipment for groups and all group organisers are invited to put forward proposals to the committee. All equipment purchased remains the property of Westerham U3A and available for the use of all group organisers. For next year, the Committee proposes to have funds available for white boards for groups' information and a secured external storage unit located at Westerham Hall.

The Committee are happy to propose that membership subscription levels remain the same for the next year.

Conclusion

Over the coming year the Committee will continue to look at ways of improving and developing our organisation, and are keen to have the views of all of our members so that Westerham U3A continues to grow into an enterprise supporting your interests. The definition of a U3A is "a learning cooperative which draws upon the knowledge, experience and skills of its own members to organise and provide interest groups" For our organisation to continue to flourish we need all of you to get involved and become active members of what we hope can continue to be a thriving and dynamic U3A.

Please let us have your ideas about how we can improve and grow our U3A.

Lynette Snowden
Chairman, Westerham U3A
July 2016