

Trustees' Progress Report as at 22nd February 2025

Covers period from the 20th January Progress Report

Key

References to dates of future meetings and other events in purple

Policy and other key documents underlined

All items under **Section 1** to be reported upon in every progress report, as they are the **Aims for 2025**.

Section 1: Strategy & 2025 Aims (paragraph numbers relate to relevant <u>Aim for 2025</u>)	
1.	<p>Progress Towards New Organisational Structure</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A request was made at the 14th Feb Monthly Meeting and in the <u>Chair's Extra Slick Slice of 18th Feb</u> for volunteers to organise the speakers for the monthly meetings and the two annual seasonal outings, to replace Liz Tennant. Liz has informed us that she is happy to continue organising speakers until somebody comes forward and she can do a proper handover. She is prepared to also organise the Spring and Autumn 2025 trips and the December 2025 Royal Albert Hall trip as long as somebody comes forward to assist her. (SP/ML)2. Also in his <u>Extra Slick Slice</u> the Chair included an urgent call for new Committee Members, to replace those whose terms of office come to an end in November this year. No response received as yet.(JMcG)
2.	<p>Venue Strategy & Roger Combes Report</p> <p>The Chair disseminated to Trustees on 19th Jan his annotated version of the <u>draft document</u> submitted by Roger Combes on 11th November, listing rooms available for hire across Crawley</p> <p>Only one Trustee submitted any feedback. The Chair has recently had a brief discussion with Roger Coombes on this lack of feedback and agreed to meet him again in the next week, if possible. He will ensure that a version is available by March 3rd for dissemination in advance of the 10th March GL's meeting for GLs' comments and discussion at the meeting. Their feedback is likely to be the most valuable.(JMcG)</p>
3.	<p>Progress towards Crawley u3a Office</p> <p>The <u>Chair's Xtra Slice of 21st Jan</u> asked members if they knew of any accommodation which might be suitable. No members responded with suggestions, although Nicola Postle, bookings manager at St Paul's, offered to ask some of her contacts and the Chair will check with her on the morning of 26th Feb whether this has yielded anything. (JMcG)</p> <p>Chair's additional comments 23rd Feb</p> <p>I saw this objective as being aspirational and opportunistic in the medium term, rather than as a priority for 2025. The approach to members was the first step, though I am less convinced that written pleas to members are effective. The trustees should be asked to consider/ authorise an approach to the commercial sector in due course, but we will of course have to develop a clear specification. (JMcG)</p>

4(a)	<p>Support for Activity Groups and Group Leaders (GLs)</p> <p>The Chair included an item in the <u>Chair’s Extra Slick Slice issued 18th Feb</u> asking if any members would like to attend a workshop (Workshop 1) exploring ways to keep existing groups fresh and vibrant, and how new groups and topics can be developed. No responses to date. (JMcG)</p>
4(b)	<p>Proposal for Educational Development Working Group</p> <p>Also in his <u>Extra Slick Slice issued 18th Feb</u> the Chair asked for interest in attending a workshop (Workshop 2) focussing on higher-end educational development and promoting new initiatives. No responses to date (JMcG)</p>
5.	<p>Liaison with Local Organisations and Related Publicity</p> <p>The Chair will be producing a note on the question of joining Crawley Community Action (CCA), which provides useful services to voluntary groups operating in Crawley. https://www.crawleycommunityaction.org/join-us/membership/.</p> <p>This has been deferred for the moment as the Chair plans to talk with Michael Jones (Leader of CBC), Chris Mullins (CBC Cabinet Member for leisure & Wellbeing) & Sue Mullins (CBC Cabinet Member for Community Engagement & Culture) on the future of CCA given the Government policy to move to a Unitary Local Government structure). This will become clearer in the next two weeks (JMcG)</p>
6.	<p>Risk Management Policy and Contingency Planning</p> <p>The Secretary is developing draft contingency plans (to be approved at a later 2025 Quarterly meeting) for back-up users of key systems, in case the key operator withdraws suddenly. No further progress has been made since the <u>20th January Progress Report</u> was issued.(ML)</p>
7.	<p>Ruby Celebration Event</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Communications Coordinator (CC) met with Jackie Murray, Events Manager at the Charis Centre, on <u>11th February</u>. The report on this meeting included under Agenda Item 7 2. A brief article on the planned event was included in the <u>February Newsletter</u>, with a request for more volunteers for the Working Group. 3. To date, in addition to the Treasurer & Communications Coordinator, the following members volunteered to be part of the Working Group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jon Williams (General Trustee) • Isabel Baker (representing the RUGS) • Marion Graham (when available) • Jackie Piper • Gloria Dallas Devere • Helen Strangeway (ML)
8.	<p>Development of New Website</p> <p>The Web Editor and Secretary have made considerable progress on this over the last few weeks. There is now a separate page (“Join Us”) aimed at potential members and the membership application process. On Members, a new sub-page covering Membership Fees has been developed, and the sub-pages on Recreational and Learning Opportunities and Other Support and Wellbeing reformatted and improved in terms of content. These have all gone live.</p>

	<p>The Web Editor sent out an email on 20th Feb to all those involved in running Groups asking for their thoughts, suggestions and preferences on the content of both their individual Group pages and the Group Leaders page.</p> <p>The redesigned Events page went live on 23rd Feb.</p> <p>Work also remains on reformatting the content currently under Groups, Group Leaders and Documents, as well as on improving the number and quality of the images.</p> <p>The Agenda for the 10th March GLs' meeting includes an item on the new website asking for GLs' thoughts and ideas (see Agenda Item 9). (ML)</p>
9.	<p>Simplifying and Documenting the Annual Membership Renewal Process and Documentation</p> <p>The Review of the 2024 Membership Renewal Process is included under Agenda Item 10. Although documentation on the process was produced during the renewal period, it needs to be consolidated and updated in the light of experience (ML)</p>
<p>Section 2: Crawley u3a Operations</p>	
1.	<p>Budgets, Financial Reporting & Financial Compliance</p> <p>Gift Aid HRMC Registration The Treasurer is still waiting for HRMC to action the changes to our authorisation up set requested in February 2024, despite lodging a formal complaint in August. This means we are still waiting to receive the income from the 2021/22 claim (£710.75) submitted in July 2023. Once the authorisation issue has been resolved a claim will then be made for £1,294 for 2022/23 (the total of these two amounts, £2,005, was treated as a debtor in the 2023/24 financial accounts)(GF).</p>
2.	<p>Non-Financial Compliance Matters</p> <p>Policy Documents Requiring Update The Secretary has drawn up a list showing which of our policy documents require updating, and by whom (in most cases this is the Secretary herself, with the Treasurer also responsible for a few). She is contacting individual Trustees directly.</p>
3.	<p>Communications for All Members</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The February Newsletter was published early on 3rd February, with copies taken to the Coffee Morning held on that day (SP) 2. The Chair published an Extra Slick Slice on 18th Feb – see under Section 1 items 1, 4a & 4b above for content (ML) 3. The Comms Coordinator disseminated a note on 17th Feb via Beacon to all members with email advising them of the new security entry/exit system at the Friary Hall (see item 6 below) . A paragraph on this will be included in the March newsletter and will be accompanied by a photo of the exit button (SP) 4. The March Newsletter is due out 3rd March (SP)
4.	<p>New Facebook Page Crawley u3a Extra</p> <p>Trustees agreed at their Team meeting on 30th Jan to go ahead with the proposal outlined in the Communication Coordinator's (CC) proposal of 28th Jan. The General Trustee, John Williams offered to become a Facebook Administrator, along with the CC, Peter Beckley & George Redgrave.</p> <p>George Redgrave is happy with the proposal to move his poetry readings onto Crawley u3a Extra.</p> <p>It is planned to launch the new Facebook page on 1st or 2nd March so that a link to Crawley u3a Extra can be included in the March newsletter. The newsletter will include an article describing which posts go on which Facebook page. The l also be covered at</p>

	<p>the 10th March GL's meeting. The new system is expected to take a couple of months to settle down. The admin team for both Facebook sites will be Peter Beckley, Sue Parker, George Redgrave and John Williams. The CC will draft a guide on how to administer it. The comms Coordinator and General Trustee have booked to attend a Third Age Trust zoom session "How Best to Use Facebook" on 5th March at 1pm. (SP)</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Groups: Existing & New Groups (from Assistant Groups Coordinator (AGC) unless stated otherwise)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The <u>Feb Newsletter</u> advertised the following groups as having vacancies (SP): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afternoon Exercise • Film Group • Italian for Beginners • Short Mat bowls • Table Tennis • Air Rifles 2. Art Appreciation 2 The Group Leader (GL), Carolyn Wadley, is now resuming meetings. 3. The <u>March newsletter</u> will advertise for a new GL for the Science Group, so that the new GL can overlap with the current GL, Marion Lang, who steps down in September. 4. Group Leader Succession is to be covered at the <u>10th March GL meeting</u> (see <u>Agenda Item 9</u>) (ML) 5. Singing for Fun Chair will contact ex GL before <u>26th Feb</u> to understand the reasons for the Group's demise (JMcG) 6. Indoor Pickle Ball The Group is experiencing problems with use of the pickle ball courts and has not been able to resolve the issue directly with Everyone Active, the operator of K2. A person from Crawley Borough Council who works in the team with responsibility for overseeing the contract with EveryOne Active, has been in touch with the Treasurer to say they will raise the issue with the K2 management and report back on the outcome. Nothing heard as yet (GF) 7. New Craft Group Tina Belben, a new member, is keen to start up a craft group based in her home in Pound Hill. The AGC is assisting her on this.
<p>6.</p>	<p>Venues</p> <p>The Chair and Assistant Groups Coordinator attended a meeting with Victoria Ashley, the new Friary bookings contact at the Friary, on <u>Friday 14th Feb</u>. the following topics were covered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Victoria's Role. Victoria explained that she was now the sole manager of the Hall, responsible for all lettings, adding also that the parish was short of staff in all areas. She works part time and generally will be around from 1000 until 1400 on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. She sees her objectives as effecting some badly needed reorganisation of the hiring processes. In this respect, we talked about the need for clear and updated contracts, invoices, and sight of our mutual insurance documentation. 2. Contracts & Insurance. The AGC subsequently sent her our booking dates for the rest of 2025 along with a copy of our liability insurance, which will enable Victoria to generate both a new contract and provide a copy of the Friary's Insurance Certificate.

	<p>3. New Hall Entry Method We also discussed a new method of entry to the hall. Victoria supplied us with fobs, making access much more convenient, and Peter has, via the Communications Coordinator (see Section 2 no. 3 above), alerted members to the new arrangement, which may need some refinement.</p> <p>4. Future Relationship Lastly, we had a general discussion in which she and I highlighted the need to have regular contact and so maintain a good working relationship. I also pressed her on the prospect of any updating of the Hall facilities, including the provision of a hearing loop, although she had never heard of this! But, perhaps predictably, she pleaded the need to work within a limited budget.</p> <p>5. Parking (inc Disabled Parking) Victoria did not have sufficient knowledge for this to be discussed so the Chair will raise it with her on a later occasion, and before the 30th April Coffee Morning as Ros Phipps is concerned about being able to bring in her books 30 minutes ahead of the meeting and to park near the entrance. (JMcG)</p>
7.	<p>Coach Pickups & Parking at the Hawth</p> <p>A member approached the Chair at the monthly meeting repeating an enquiry about our inability to arrange pickups and parking at the Hawth for those going on Gardening outings. The Chair spoke to Maggie Berrill who said that this had been the practice in the past, but the Hawth had taken a hard line on this more recently and the consequent switch to picking up at the Bus Station had made it difficult for those with mobility issues. Before taking this further with the Hawth/ Council the Chair will consult leaders of O&A groups to discern the scope of the issue (JMcG)</p>
8.	<p>Reports on Events since last Progress Report</p> <p>1. Coffee Morning Monday 3rd February 13 new members, 2 prospective (one of which joined on the spot). 3 New Members tables. Approx 50 existing members, inc 5 Trustees & RUGS. The 2nd hand bookstall & jigsaw swap made £16.00 .</p> <p>2. Feb Friary Monthly Meeting Friday 14th February Tony Harris as Winston Churchill. This was very successful, with an attendance of 107, the highest since records started to be kept (in Jan 2023), beating the previous highest attendance (Tony Harris again, as Henry VIII in Feb 2024). £18.10 was taken on the bookstall.</p> <p>3. Confusion over Feb Monthly Meeting date The Friary caretaker reported that a few members turned up on Friday Feb 7th for a monthly meeting, presumably because it was four weeks since the previous one. This is despite the fact that we broadcast the dates clearly, on the front page of the newsletter months in advance and on the website. The Communications Coordinator has added a sentence in the March newsletter under next month’s speaker reminding members that the monthly meetings take place on the 2nd Friday of the month, and will also add something to the main Facebook to remind members BEFORE 7th March that the meeting takes place on March 14th.(ML)</p>
9.	<p>Future Events (other than Trustee Meetings). From Secretary</p> <p>1. This term’s Group Leaders meeting. See Agenda Item 9</p> <p>2. The March Friary monthly meeting is Friday 14th March 14:30, with Chris Smith on “Three Wives & The Truth”. He asked for permission to promote the meeting on SUSY Radio (Sussex & Surrey, community radio for Redhill, Reigate, Horley, Gatwick, Crawley and the surrounding villages, established 1996) on Wednesday 12th March. This was given by the Chair and Secretary, on the condition that he mention Crawley u3a.</p> <p>3. The next Coffee Morning has been arranged for Wednesday April 30th and notification will appear in the March newsletter and is already on the Events page of the website. (ML)</p>

9.

Membership

Latest Membership Numbers as at 17th February

Members Renewing (end date 16th Jan)	559
New Members Joining 2024-25 to Feb 17th	
August (2876 - 2881, 2877 not used)	5
September (2882 - 2895)	14
October (1896 - 2914)	19
November (2916 - 2919, 2915 not used)	4
December (2920 - 2927)	8
January (2928 - 2933)	6
February to 17th (2934 - 2937)	4
Total New Members 2024-25 to date	60
Members previously resigned rejoined (2705)	1
Members deceased since renewing	-3
Members as 17th February	617
At 31/03/24 we had 635 members	

We continue to attract new members but are behind the 2024 level, due to the large number of non-renewals at the start of 2024-25 (see [Agenda Item 10](#)). No new members have joined since mid-Feb, as the reduced 50% membership fee comes into operation on 1st March. (ML)

10.

Trustee & Support Role Holders Holidays & Other Time Out

The Secretary will be on holiday abroad from 9th – 13th March inclusive. She will be unable to attend the 10th March GLs’ meeting. (ML)

11.

Trustee Team Meetings Held since last Committee Meeting

All Trustees attended a trustee Team Meeting held at the Revive Café in Charis Centre on Thursday 30th January 11:30 – 13:30. Matters covered included:

- Trustee reports would be issued every six weeks or so, just before a Quarterly meeting and half-way between them.
- Agreement to establish a 2nd Crawley u3a Facebook page called Crawley u3a Extra (see [Section 2 item 8](#) above)
- On the TAT Board elections, only the Chair & Secretary wished to participate in selecting the candidates to vote for (see [Section 3 Item 1](#) below), but the Treasurer would review their choices, in light of his own knowledge gained from his position on the TAT Finance Board.
- A discussion around the current O&A groups and the shortage of members willing to become O&A Group Leaders, and to run individual trips. It was agreed the situation should be discussed in more depth at the 26th Feb Quarterly Meeting, and the Secretary would provide some information on the Groups ([Agenda Item 8](#)). (ML)

Section 3: The Third Age Trust & Other u3a Bodies From Secretary

1.

Third Age Trust Updates

Election for Four Members with Specific Skills for the Board

Only the Chair & Secretary wished to be involved in this decision, though they would seek the Treasurer's views on their selection before voting. They agreed to each come up independently with their 4 preferred candidates after watching the hustings. As it happened they agreed on the same four:

- John Bent
- Alan Russell
- Jean Jackson
- Elaine Toms

The Chair submitted our vote on 20th Feb. The results are due to be announced on 26th Feb.

New Council Elections

Elections for Council Representatives are only taking place for Scotland, Wales & Yorkshire and Humber. Although the South East region has currently only one representative, Sally Ingledew, lack of any other candidates coming forward to replace Susie Berry in the recent election has led to a decision to wait a year before attempting to find a second representative.

Nominations for the Chair of Council closed on 21st February.

The new Council will come into existence on 1st April 2025.

2.

Chairs Forum (outside the Third Age Trust)

The Chair has notes from these meetings. At the meeting of 21st January there was a useful presentation and discussion on recruitment of Group Leaders (slides and discussion notes to be disseminated).

The meeting held on 17th February hosted the new CEO, Ian Cassidy, who gave a presentation and answered questions.

The next Chairs Forum takes place on Tue March 18th at 7pm, topic to be confirmed. The Chair is attending.

3.

Regional Networks

1. **West Sussex Network (WSN).** The next WSN meeting takes place on Zoom at 10:00 on 14th March. The chair will attend.

2. **South East Regional Network Agenda** The last meeting of this took place by zoom on 22nd Jan at 16:30. Allan Walmsley, the new Chair of the TAT Board, joined the meeting and shared the outcome of the recent council and board applications and other updates from TAT. The next meeting takes place on Tuesday 11th March at 14:30.