

Protocol for Appointing Committee Members and Coordinators

Barnsley U3A is a successful and vibrant organisation, and this is significantly down to the willingness of its members to voluntarily take on a range of roles which all contribute to creating a feel-good factor amongst the membership. The committee recognises that not all members will volunteer to take on additional tasks and responsibilities, but whilst ever there are sufficient members willing to dip their toes into the volunteering pool then we should continue to thrive and grow.

However, the committee also recognises that a duty of care needs to be afforded to those members who put themselves forward to undertake significant roles within the organisation. In the interest of ensuring that members do not overreach themselves, or take on roles to which they are not entirely suited, some thought needs to be given to the appropriateness of the person being allowed to undertake the role in question. Examples of roles where such consideration needs to be given include Coordinators and Committee positions.

In the case of new Coordinators, responsibility rests mainly with the Development Officer who needs to make an informed decision about the suitability of the prospective volunteer based on a range of factors, including the following:

- The nature of the group activities - simple or complex activities requiring detailed knowledge of the subject and a range of management skills.
- The nature of the volunteer's background in relation to the activity.
- The length of the volunteer's membership of the U3A.
- The volunteer's understanding of the national philosophy and ethos of the U3A.
- The volunteer's understanding of BU3A's practices, rules and protocols.
- Evidence of the volunteer's understanding of the role in question.
- Judgement on the volunteer's ability to cope.

NB. The Development Officer's role includes providing support, guidance and help to prospective and newly appointed Coordinators, and this provides the opportunity to clarify any possible questions about suitability etc.

In the case of an application to join the executive committee, this can be more problematic. Such applications have normally to be considered as part of an election process at the AGM, and this by its very nature can mean there is little input from other committee members.

However, it is sometimes the case that senior members of the committee have the chance beforehand to talk to and to counsel prospective new committee members. Such counselling should allow for some level of judgement to be made and discussed with the prospective volunteer, including discussion on the challenges and pressures of the prospective committee role to be undertaken.

March 2017