

# **CONSTITUTION OF BELFAST UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE (U3A)**

**as adopted at the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 30 APRIL 2015**

## **A MEMBER OF THE THIRD AGE TRUST AS AN UNINCORPORATED ASSOCIATION**

### **1. NAME**

1.1 The name shall be "The Belfast University of the Third Age" (in this constitution called "the U3A").

### **2. OBJECTS AND POWERS**

2.1 The Objects of the Belfast U3A are to:

2.1.1. Advance the education of the public, and in particular, the education of the middle-aged and older people in Belfast who are not in fulltime gainful employment.

2.2 Powers: In furtherance of the above the U3A may:

2.2.1 Assist members to become aware of their physical, intellectual and cultural capabilities.

2.2.2 Provide members with opportunities to widen their interests fulfil their potential and help others to do likewise.

2.2.3 Enable members to pursue their interests in an environment, where there is no distinction between those who learn and those who teach and there is no reference to academic qualifications.

2.2.4 Purchase, take on, lease or in exchange, hire and otherwise acquire and sell or dispose of real or personal property and any rights and privileges which the U3A may think necessary for the promotion of the objects.

2.2.5 Publish books, pamphlets, reports, leaflets, journals, films, videos and instructional matter.

2.2.6 Found and carry on schools and training courses and conduct lectures, seminars, conferences and courses.

2.2.7 Encourage and assist in the formation and operation of area and regional groupings of other U3As in Northern Ireland.

2.2.8 Receive donations, endowments, sponsorship fees, subscriptions and legacies from persons desiring to promote the objects of the U3A or any of them and to hold funds for the same.

2.2.9 Do all such other lawful things as may be necessary for the attainment of the above objects or any of them.

### **3. MEMBERSHIP**

3.1 Membership of the U3A shall be open to individuals who are not in fulltime gainful employment at the approval of the committee and upon payment of the annual subscription as determined by either the committee or the membership at the Annual General Meeting, provided that they agree to abide by the constitution and any conditions properly imposed by the committee.

### **4. ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP**

4.1 All persons interested in supporting the Objects of the Third Age Trust shall be eligible for Associate Membership at the approval of the committee and upon payment of the annual subscription as determined by either the committee or the membership at the Annual General Meeting, provided that they agree to abide by the constitution and any conditions properly imposed by the committee.

## 5. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP OR ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

5.1 The committee may terminate the membership or associate membership of any member if:

5.1.1 There is any money owed to the U3A in respect of membership, associate membership or other fees after the time lapse of three months.

5.1.2 That a member or associate member acts in a way that is prejudicial to the U3A or brings it into disrepute.

## 6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 The Committee shall consist of:

6.1.1 The principal officers, chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer who will be elected at an Annual General Meeting.

6.1.2 Not more than eight other members elected at an Annual General Meeting.

6.1.3 Not more than one member and one associate member co-opted by the committee. They shall have full voting rights and their term of office shall expire at the next following Annual General Meeting.

6.1.4 Persons who need not be members invited by the committee to serve because of their special expertise; they shall not have voting rights and their term of office shall expire at the next following Annual General Meeting.

6.2 Elections shall take place from time to time, as the committee shall direct.

6.2.1 Nominations to the committee, duly signed by the nominee, shall be proposed and seconded and delivered in writing to the secretary at a date specified by the committee.

6.2.2. The newly elected committee shall take office at the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting.

6.2.3. There shall be no less than four committee meetings each year.

6.2.4 Officers shall serve for a period of two years and committee members for a period of not more than three consecutive years. Retiring officers may stand for re-election providing that no one may hold the office for more than four consecutive years without an intervening period of at least one year. A retiring vice-chairman may stand immediately for the post of chairman and vice versa.

6.2.5 Committee members may resign office by giving not less than 21 days notice in writing to the secretary or chairman. The committee has the power to fill casual vacancies from the membership. Such appointee(s) shall complete the term of service of the member(s) he or she is replacing and shall be eligible for re-election.

6.2.6 At committee meetings matters shall be decided by a simple majority of votes of committee members present. In the case of an equality of votes the chairman shall have a second or casting vote.

6.2.7 The quorum for any committee or sub-committee shall be three or one-third of the said committee, whichever is the greatest.

6.3 Special committee meetings may be called at any time by the chairman or by any two members of the committee, upon seven clear days notice being given to all the committee members of all the matters to be discussed.

6.4 The committee may appoint sub-committees to which it may from time to time, and for which time it determines, delegate such of its powers and functions as it thinks fit. Sub-committees shall report back to the committee as soon as possible on actions taken under delegated powers.

6.5 The proceedings of the committee shall not be invalidated by any defect in the appointment, election or co-option of any member of any committee or sub-committee.

6.6 The secretary shall ensure that minutes are kept of all committee and general meetings. Minutes of any sub-committee shall be kept by the secretary elected by that sub-committee.

## 7. ANNUAL AND SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS

7.1 The Annual General Meeting shall be held once a year and not less than 15 months after the preceding Annual General Meeting. At least 21 days notice shall be given in writing to all members. A quorum shall be 20% of the paid-up members. The business of the Annual General Meeting shall include:

7.1.1 Receiving and approving the Annual Report of the Secretary

7.1.2 Receiving and approving the Audited Accounts;

7.1.3 Electing a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and members of the Committee.

7.1.4 Appointing an auditor for the accounts

7.1.5 Considering proposals to alter the constitution, subject to the requirements of Clause 11.

7.1.6 Considering 'any other business' which has been published in the agenda.

7.2 A Special General Meeting of the U3A may be convened at any time by a resolution of the committee or upon a requisition, signed by at least one-fifth of the members, stating the object of the meeting. A meeting held on such a requisition shall be called by the Secretary of the U3A, giving other members 14 days notice of such a meeting. A quorum will be 20% of the paid-up members.

7.3 Accidental omission to give notice to any member shall not invalidate the proceedings of any General Meeting.

## 8. FINANCE

8.1 All the income and property of the U3A shall be applied solely towards the Objects of said U3A and none of it shall be paid or transferred in any way to its committee members provided that nothing shall prevent the payment in good faith of reasonable and proper remuneration to any officer or servant of the said U3A (other than a committee member) and repayment of out-of-pocket expenses to members or committee members incurred in the course of the work of the U3A.

8.2 The U3A shall have power to collect and accept donations and to issue appeals for donations and to raise money request and otherwise. Any money raised and received may be retained by the U3A and used at the discretion of the committee. No form of permanent trading shall be undertaken in the raising of funds.

8.3 The financial year of the U3A shall end on 31st March in each year and not more than eight weeks later than the Annual General Meeting shall be convened for the purpose of receiving the Annual Report and audited accounts.

8.4 The committee may appoint employees in a full-time or part-time capacity, either permanently or on a fixed term contract, who are not members of the committee as may

from time to time be necessary for carrying out the work of the U3A and may fix their terms and conditions of employment. For the purposes of employment law, the committee shall be their employer.

8.5 All proper costs, charges and expenses incidental to the management of the U3A may be defrayed from the funds of the U3A.

8.6 The treasurer shall keep accounts of all the moneys received and expended on behalf of the U3A and shall prepare and publish such accounts duly audited at the Annual General Meeting. All monetary transactions shall be made through properly authorised accounts in accordance with the directives of the committee.

8.7 No committee member shall be chargeable or responsible for loss caused by any thing or act done or omitted to be done by him/her or any agent employed by him/her or by any other committee member although the employment of such agent was strictly not necessary or expedient or by reason of any mistake or omission made in good faith by any committee member or by reason of any other part or thing other than wilful and individual fraud or wrongdoing on the part of the committee member who is sought to be made liable.

## 9. PROPERTY

9.1 Any property of the Belfast U3A shall be vested in trustees appointed for this purpose or, where the appointment of trustees is not appropriate, shall be deemed to be held jointly by all members of the committee.

## 10. POWER OF COMMITTEE

10.1 All matters not provided for in this constitution relating to the Belfast U3A and not involving an amendment to this constitution shall be dealt with by the committee.

## 11. ALTERATION TO THE CONSTITUTION

11.1 The provisions of this constitution, other than Clause 12 and this clause, may be amended with the assent of not less than two thirds of the members of the U3A present and voting at a General Meeting of the U3A. Twenty one clear days' notice shall be given to the members stating the intention to put forward such a resolution. No amendment shall be made which would cause the U3A to cease to be a charity.

## 12. DISSOLUTION

12.1 The U3A may at any time be dissolved by a resolution passed by three-quarters majority of those present and voting at any General Meeting of the said U3A, of which at least 21 clear days notice stating the intention to put forward such a resolution shall have been sent to all members of the U3A. If any assets remain after the satisfaction of debts and other liabilities, such assets held by or in the name of the U3A shall be transferred to such charitable institutions or institutions having objects similar to the U3A and the U3A shall decide.