

CONSTITUTION OF THE **BENFLEET** UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE (U3A),
A MEMBER OF THE THIRD AGE TRUST AS AN UNINCORPORATED ASSOCIATION,
FORMALLY ADOPTED ON 25TH SEPTEMBER 2012
(Amended 27th February 2018)

Amended 28th September 2021

1 NAME The name of the charity is **BENFLEET U3A** hereinafter referred to as "The U3A".

2 ADMINISTRATION

Subject to the matters set out below The U3A and its property shall be administered and managed in accordance with this constitution by the members of the elected Executive Committee, herein referred to as "The Committee", constituted by clause 6 of this constitution.

3 OBJECTS The Objects of The U3A are:

I The advancement of education and, in particular, the education of older people and those who are retired from full time work by all means, including associated activities conducive to learning and personal development, in Benfleet and its surrounding locality.

II The provision of Facilities for leisure time and recreational activities with the object of improving the conditions of life for the above persons in the interests of their social welfare.

4 POWERS

In furtherance of the Objects but not otherwise, The Committee may exercise the following powers to:

1. Raise funds and to invite and receive contributions provided that in raising funds The Committee shall not undertake any substantial permanent trading activities and shall conform to any requirements of the law.
2. Receive donations, endowments, sponsorship, grants, legacies and subscriptions from persons desiring to promote all or any of the Objects of The U3A and to hold funds in trust for the same.
3. Buy, take on lease or exchange any property necessary for the achievement of the Objects and to maintain and equip it for use.
4. Sell, lease or dispose of all or any part of the property of The U3A, subject to any consent required by law.
5. Co-operate with other charities, voluntary bodies and statutory authorities operating in furtherance of the Objects or of similar charitable purposes and to exchange information and advice with them.
6. Support any charitable trusts, associations or institutions formed for all or any of the Objects.
7. Appoint and constitute such advisory committees as The Committee may think fit.
8. Organise and run conferences, lectures, seminars and courses.
9. Publish books, pamphlets, reports, leaflets, journals and instructional matter and to produce films and videos.
10. Participate in and assist in the development of area and regional groupings of U3As.
11. Do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the Objects.

5 MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership of The U3A shall be open to individuals interested in furthering the work of The U3A, provided that they agree to abide by this constitution and any conditions properly imposed by The Committee and to pay the annual subscription as determined by The Committee and confirmed by the membership at an Annual General Meeting ("AGM").
2. Every individual member shall have one vote.
3. The Committee may and for good reason terminate the membership of any individual if annual membership or other fees are unpaid **one month** after the due date or if the member acts in a way which is prejudicial to the U3A or to the running of The U3A or brings it into disrepute, provided that the individual concerned shall have the right to be heard by The Committee, accompanied by a friend who may also speak, or make written representation before a final decision is made.

6 THE COMMITTEE

The management of The U3A shall be vested in a Committee, consisting of members whose duty it shall be to carry out its general policy and to provide for the administration, management and control of the affairs and property of the U3A.

1. **Honorary Officers**
At the AGM of The U3A the members shall elect from amongst themselves a chairman, a vice-chairman/men, a secretary and a treasurer who shall hold office from the conclusion of that meeting.
2. **The Committee**
The Committee shall consist of not less than 5 and not more than **11** members being:
 - (a) The honorary officers specified in sub-clause 6(i)
 - (b) Not less than 1 and not more than **7** members elected at the AGM who shall hold office from the conclusion of that meeting.
3. The Committee may in addition appoint not more than 2 co-opted members who shall have full voting rights and have tenure until the next AGM.
4. Persons who need not be members may be invited by The Committee to serve because of their special expertise. They shall have no voting rights and their term of service shall expire at the next AGM.
5. Vacancies on The Committee which arise through resignation or termination during the year can be filled from the membership and such an appointee shall complete the term of service of the member he or she is replacing and shall be eligible for re-election in the prescribed manner at the next AGM.
6. The proceedings of The Committee shall not be invalidated by any vacancy among its number or by any failure to appoint or any defect in the appointment, election or co-option of a member.
7. A member of The Committee shall cease to hold office if he or she:
 - (a) Is disqualified from acting as a member of The Committee by virtue of section 72 of the Charities Act 1993 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that provision).
 - (b) Becomes incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury of managing and administering his or her own affairs.
 - (c) Is absent without the permission of The Committee from 3 consecutive meetings and The Committee resolve that his or her office be vacated.
 - (d) Is subject to a vote of no confidence from The Committee as a result of actions which bring The U3A into disrepute or conduct prejudicial to The U3A or failure to abide by the terms of this constitution or decisions of The Committee.

- (e) Notices in writing to The Committee a wish to resign (but only if at least four members of The Committee will remain in office when the notice of resignation is to take effect which shall be at least 21 days from the receipt of the notification).

7 ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

1. The election of members of The Committee shall be held at the AGM of The U3A.
2. The newly elected Committee shall take office at the conclusion of the AGM.
3. In respect of the Chairman and Vice Chairman: The tenure for these positions shall be 3 years and they may not stand for re-election without an intervening period of 2 years except that the Vice Chairman may immediately stand for the position of Chairman.
Except for the Chairman and Vice Chairman: The remaining Officers and Committee members shall stand for a period of 4 years.
4. If insufficient nominations are received from members to fill the vacancies for Officers and/or Committee member(s), the membership may be informed (via the Agenda/Notification for the AGM) if Committee member(s) are willing to serve another term. Nomination forms will be completed and a vote taken at the AGM to ratify such appointments.
5. In the event of no nominations being received for the Honorary Officer posts of Chair and Vice Chair, a majority decision can be taken by the Committee to ask the retiring Chair or Vice Chair to stay on until the next AGM.

In the event of no nominations being received for the Honorary Officer posts of Secretary and Treasurer, a majority decision can be taken by the Committee to ask the retiring Secretary or Treasurer to serve for a further two years.

8 MEETINGS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

1. The Committee shall hold at least 4 ordinary meetings each year.
2. A special meeting may be called at any time by the Chairman or by any two members of The Committee upon not less than seven days' notice being given to other members of The Committee of the matters to be discussed unless it concerns the appointment of a co-opted member in which case not less than twenty one days notice must be given.
3. The Chairman shall chair the meetings and in his or her absence the Vice-Chairman shall take over or if he or she is also absent The Committee shall choose one of its number to be chairman of the meeting before any business is transacted. There shall be a quorum when at least one third of the number of members of The Committee for the time being or three members of The Committee, whichever is the greater, are present at the meeting.
4. Every matter shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members of The Committee present and voting on the question but in the case of equality of votes the Chairman of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.
5. The Committee shall keep minutes of the proceedings of its meetings which should incorporate reports of any sub-committees and these minutes shall be available for inspection should a member require it.
6. The Committee may from time to time make and alter rules for the conduct of their business, the summoning and conduct of their meetings and custody of documents. No rule may be made which is inconsistent with this constitution.
7. The Committee may appoint sub-committees consisting of at least one of its members for the purpose of performing any function or duty which in the opinion of The Committee would be more conveniently undertaken or carried out by a sub-committee, provided that all acts and proceedings of any such sub-committees shall be fully and promptly reported to The Committee.
8. No Committee member shall be chargeable or responsible for loss caused by any act done or omitted to be

done by him/her or by any other Committee member or by reason of any mistake or omission made in good faith by any Committee member or by reason of any other matter other than wilful and individual fraud or wrongdoing or actions knowingly beyond the scope of a specific authority or limit thereon on the part of The Committee member in question.

9 FINANCE

1. The funds of The U3A, including all donations, contributions and bequests, shall be paid into an account/accounts operated by The Committee in the name of The U3A at such bank as The Committee shall from time to time decide. All cheques drawn on the account must be signed by at least 2 Committee members.
2. The funds belonging to The U3A shall be applied only in furthering the Objects of The U3A.
3. No funds shall be transferred in any way to Committee members, provided that nothing herein shall prevent the payment in good faith of reasonable and proper out of pocket expenses incurred in the course of U3A work.
4. All proper costs, charges and expenses incidental to the management of The U3A and membership of the Third Age Trust may be defrayed from the funds of The U3A.

10 PROPERTY

1. All property of The U3A shall be applied solely towards the Objects of The U3A.
2. Ownership of property is vested in The U3A and items may with the agreement of The Committee be kept on a temporary basis in a nominated member's home in pursuance of his/her designated role until such time as the member's responsibility for that role ceases or The Committee requests their return.

11 ACCOUNTS

The Committee shall comply with its obligations under the Charities Act 1993 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that Act) with regard to:

1. The keeping of accounting records for The U3A.
2. The preparation of annual statements of account for The U3A.
3. The independent examination of the statements of account of The U3A,
4. The transmission of the statements of account of The U3A to the Charity Commission.

12 ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee shall comply with its obligations under the Charities Act 1993 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that Act) with regard to the preparation of an annual return and its transmission to the Charity Commission.

- 13. A - GENERAL MEETINGS**
B - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS
C - SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS

A - GENERAL MEETINGS

1. The charity must hold a general meeting within twelve months of the date of the adoption of this constitution, unless this constitution replaces an earlier constitution in which case sub-clause (2) applies.
2. An annual general meeting must be held in each subsequent year and not more than 15 months may elapse between successive annual general meetings.

3. Online and hybrid general meetings

- (a) A general meeting (whether an annual general meeting or a special general meeting) may be held in person or by suitable electronic means agreed by the trustees in which each participant may communicate with all the other participants. Where the trustees determine that a general meeting is to be held by electronic means pursuant to this clause 13.A.3, such determination shall be set out in the notice of general meeting sent to members, together with details of how a member may participate in such meeting.
- (b) Where a general meeting is to be held in person, the trustees may if they deem it appropriate set out a procedure in the notice of meeting which allows members to attend electronically if they so wish, and in such circumstances both members physically present in person or by proxy, and members present by electronic means will be considered present in person and will count towards the quorum for the relevant meeting.
- (c) Where the committee determines that a general meeting is to be held by electronic means only, such determination shall be set out in the notice of general meeting sent to members, along with an explanation of the exceptional circumstances which require the general meeting to be held by electronic means only.
- (d) For the purposes of this clause "exceptional circumstances" means circumstances which in the reasonable opinion of the committee render it impossible to hold an effective general meeting in person or by a combination of meeting in person and through electronic means.
- (e) If the meeting is to be held solely by electronic means pursuant to clause 13.A.3.(c) the place of the meeting shall be deemed to be the charity's registered office address.
- (f) Proceedings at a general meeting held by electronic means pursuant to clause 13.A.3.(c) or a physical meeting at which procedures are put in place to allow members to attend electronically pursuant to clause 13.A.3.(a), will not be invalidated due to technical issues which prohibit members from joining such meeting electronically, so long as a sufficient number of members to form a quorum is able to join the meeting successfully.

4. All general meetings other than annual general meetings shall be called special general meetings.

5. The trustees may call a special general meeting at any time.

6. The trustees must call a special general meeting if requested to do so in writing by at least ten members or one tenth of the membership, whichever is the greater. The request must state the nature of the business that is to be discussed. If the trustees fail to hold the meeting within twenty-eight days of the request, the members may proceed to call a special general meeting but in doing so they must comply with the provisions of this constitution.

B - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- 1. There shall be an AGM of The U3A which shall be held in the month of **September** in each year or as soon as practicable thereafter but not later than 15 months after the preceding AGM.
- 2. Every AGM shall be called by The Committee. The Secretary shall give at least 21 days written notice of the AGM to all members of The U3A. All the members of The U3A shall be entitled to attend and vote at the meeting.
- 3. Accidental omission to give notice to any member shall not invalidate the proceedings of the AGM.
- 4. The Committee shall present to each AGM the report and accounts of The U3A for the preceding year for approval.
- 5. The Committee shall seek approval for the appointment of the examiner for the accounts.

6. Nominations for election to The Committee must be made by members in writing and must be in the hands of the Secretary of The Committee at least 14 days before the AGM. Should nominations exceed vacancies, election shall be by ballot.
7. Any other business published in the agenda.

C - SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

The Committee may call a Special General Meeting of the charity at any time and if at least **20%** of the members request such a meeting in writing stating the business to be considered, the Secretary shall call such a meeting. At least 21 days notice shall be given. The notice must state the business to be discussed. There shall be a quorum when **20%** of the members are present. Accidental omission to give notice to any member shall not invalidate the proceedings.

14 PROCEDURE AT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS AND SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS

1. The Secretary or another person specially appointed by The Committee shall keep a full record of proceedings at every General Meeting of The U3A.
2. There shall be a quorum when at least **20%** of the number of members of The U3A are present at any General Meeting.
3. If within half an hour from the time appointed for the meeting a quorum is not present the meeting, if convened at the request of the members, shall be dissolved. In any other case it shall be adjourned to another day and time as The Committee may direct provided 21 days notice is given to all members. If at the adjourned meeting a quorum is not present within half an hour of the time appointed for the meeting, the members present shall be the quorum.
4. The Chairman of The U3A shall be the Chairman of the General Meeting at which he/she is present. In the absence of the proposed Chairman, The Committee shall have the power to elect a chairman for the meeting.
5. Each member shall have one vote but if there is an equality of votes, the person who is chairing the meeting shall have a casting vote in addition to any other vote he or she may have.
6. **Electronic Balloting:** Where a meeting is to be held by electronic means, or where procedures are put in place to allow members to join a physical meeting by electronic means, the trustees may put in place an electronic balloting mechanism to allow members present at the meeting by electronic means to vote as if they were present in person. Where such a voting mechanism is to be used for a meeting, the notice of meeting will set this out. Members who are not able to use electronic means to attend and vote at an AGM or Special General Meeting will be given notice and information by post of such electronic meetings and provided with the means to submit a paper vote.

15. ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

1. Subject to the following provisions of this clause, the Constitution may be altered by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the members present and voting at a General Meeting. The notice of the General Meeting must include notice of the resolution, setting out the terms of the alteration proposed.
2. No amendment may be made to clause 1 (Name), clause 3 (Objects), clause 16(Dissolution) or this clause without the prior consent in writing of the Charity Commission.
3. No amendment may be made which would have the effect of making The U3A cease to be a charity at law.
4. The Committee shall promptly send to the Charity Commission a copy of any amendment made under this clause.

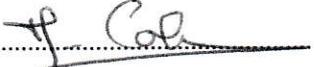
16. DISSOLUTION

If The Committee decides that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve The U3A it shall call a Special General Meeting of all members of The U3A, of which not less than 21 days' notice (stating the terms of the resolution to be proposed) shall be given. If the proposal is confirmed by a two thirds majority of those present and voting The Committee shall have power to realise any assets held by or on behalf of the Charity. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to other such local charitable institution or institutions having objects similar to the Objects of The U3A as the members of The U3A may determine or to the Third Age Trust Registered Charity No. 288007. A copy of the statement of accounts or account and statement, for the final accounting period of The U3A, must be sent to the Charity Commission.

17. ADOPTION OF CONSTITUTION

The constitution was adopted by the membership at the AGM on 25th September 2012 and amendments approved by the membership on 27th February 2018 and at the **AGM on 28th September 2021.**

I certify that this is a true copy.

Signed 

Dated 28th September 2021

Name:.....Marion Coleman

Position.....Chair.....