

Bishop's Stortford University of the Third Age (B/S U3A).

Volunteer Policy

1.Statement of Values

B/S U3A is an autonomous, self-help organisation run by the voluntary efforts of its members. When becoming a member of B/S U3A, individuals agree to abide by the aims and guiding principles of the U3A movement, often referred to as the 'ethos' of the U3A. The objective of this policy is to make members aware of this.

Each U3A is a learning co-operative of people who are no longer in full-time employment. The main aim of a U3A is to encourage and enable its members to help each other to learn by the sharing of knowledge, skills and experience. The guiding principle for a U3A is that it should offer learning activities which reflect the members' wishes and which aim to satisfy the widest possible range of interests. U3As arrange and support their own programmes as appropriate to these chosen learning activities.

The funding of a U3A is mainly through the subscriptions of its members. Members themselves then undertake, without payment, the many and varied tasks necessary to run their U3A. B/S U3A encourages all its members to embrace this U3A 'ethos' of self-help, by offering to share their own knowledge, skills and experience with the rest of the membership. This can be done in many ways: by sharing your knowledge of a particular subject as a group leader; by sharing an experience as a speaker at a monthly meeting; by offering to help members of the committee, when they ask for volunteers for specific tasks, for example preparing the hall before and after meetings or helping to make and serve refreshments.

The Rights and Responsibilities of volunteers

All volunteers are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of gender, race, colour, disability, religion, age or sexual orientation.

It is the responsibility of volunteers:

- To treat everyone associated with the organisation with courtesy and respect;
- To be reliable, particularly with agreed arrangements;
- To co-operate with other volunteers.
- To ask for support when and where it is needed;
- To carry out agreed roles and tasks;
- To respect the confidentiality of members, visitors and the organisation;
- To be reliable and communicate the agreed level of commitment;
- To notify the appropriate person if you are unavailable or unable to fulfil your volunteer duty.

Recruitment of Volunteers

Membership of B/S U3A is open to all Bishop's Stortford residents, in their third age which is defined not by a particular age but by a period in life in which full time employment has ceased. Members should do all they can to ensure that people wanting to join B/S U3A can do so.

Insurance

All members are covered by the Public Liability Insurance of the Third Age Trust, but members are responsible for their own personal safety. This can be particularly important for outdoor activities such as walking groups. Details of the cover offered are available on the National U3A website or can be requested from the committee.

Expenses

No payments are made to members for services rendered to any U3A. B/S U3A believes that volunteers should be able to claim back reasonable, agreed expenses they incur in the administration of the organisation. All expenses to be claimed need to be approved in advance, and require original receipts.

Problem solving

B/S U3A aims to identify and solve problems at the earliest possible stage.

Confidentiality

Members' details are held on a computer data base in accordance with the requirements of current data protection legislation. This information is retained within the executive committee of B/S U3A and under no circumstances will it be passed to third parties.

Approved by the B/S U3A executive committee July 2017

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