Policy for all u3a on Environmental Issues

Aims of this policy

Given the widespread concern amongst u3a members and wider society about climate change, we suggest that u3as consider adopting these guidelines and encourage groups within the u3a to reflect on the way their activities may impact on climate change, biodiversity loss and the environment.

The aims of this policy are:

- To support committees to put processes and policies in place to ensure their u3a is run in a way that actively aims to limit its impact on the environment.
- For members to take opportunities to inform themselves about environmental issues and the ways in which human activities contribute to waste, pollution and global warming.
- For members to consider ways in which they can minimise their own adverse impact on the environment.

Rationale

This policy has been drawn up to provide suggestions on how u3as might introduce environmental guidelines within their activities in order to make a positive contribution to sustainability and the environment, and also to help mitigate climate change. More specifically, the measures listed below can help local u3as to:

- address the concerns of members and wider society with regard to environmental issues
- encourage communication and dialogue on environmental issues within your u3a
- encourage a culture of awareness and a sense of responsibility within the membership with respect to sustainability and environmental issues
- provide information to members on how they might reduce their adverse impact on the environment
- minimise the environmental impact of organised u3a activities

Practical Measures

The following are suggestions to raise awareness and to minimise environmental impact. Please note that committee members and groups leaders have an important part to play in supporting these measures during the activities of the u3a.

- o Appoint one member as an Environmental Officer to monitor environmental issues arising within the u3a.
- o Arrange speakers on environmental topics for some monthly meetings.
- o Wherever possible incorporate environmental concerns into planning and decision making.
- o Consider the impact of activities which take place outside, in natural ecosystems e.g. walking and nature groups and how trips and holidays could be made more sustainable.
- o Encourage the formation of climate and environmental groups within the u3a.
- o Check whether venues operate environmentally responsible policies such as using local suppliers, and encourage them to do so.
- o Ensure as far as possible that refreshments are served in an environmentally friendly manner e.g. using crockery rather than disposable cups and plates.
- o Minimise waste and encourage reuse and recycling.
- o Encourage travel to meetings and events by walking, car sharing and public transport where available.
- o Conduct a survey of members to seek their views on climate and the environment and suggestions for measures which might be taken by the u3a.
- o Make this policy available on your website and draw your members attention to it.
- o Encourage dialogue on climate change issues with the wider population including e.g. younger people.

Definitions

Environmental issues: These are the often negative effects of human activity on the natural world, including climate change, pollution, drought and biodiversity loss. **Environmental protection** is the practice of working to slow, halt or reverse this.

Climate Change: The UN defines climate change as referring to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. These shifts may be natural, but since the 1800s,this is primarily due to humans burning fossil fuels. A **Climate Emergency declaration: (**or *declaring a climate emergency)* is an action taken by governments and scientists to acknowledge humanity is in a climate emergency.

Further reading

The Climate Coalition is a UK's largest group of people dedicated to action against climate change: www.theclimatecoalition.org.

The Climate Change and Environment Subject Adviser, **Frances Halliday** and can be reached at: https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/subjects/climate-change. You can find out about the u3a Climate Change Network, led by Frances, here: https://www.u3asites.org.uk/climate-change/welcome.

Climate Change Committee
An independent organisation, established as part of the 2008 Climate Change Act, it reports regularly to the UK parliament, and the devolved governments on progress in tackling climate change. It is also acts as an independent advisor on the impact of climate change on all aspects of living in the UK: https://www.theccc.org.uk.

The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. It prepares comprehensive **reports** on climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for reducing the rate at which climate change is taking place**:** https://www.ipcc.ch/.

Local Government will have policies related to the environment. https://www.local.gov.uk/about/what-local-government and we encourage you to research what they are doing in your area.

The Wildlife Trusts are a grassroots movement where members and volunteers work together with local Wildlife Trust to make their local area wilder and make nature part of life **https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/.**

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u3a		The Third Age Trust
Version	Description of changes	Date

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