



## Trustees' Handbook (22<sup>nd</sup> December 2022)

This is intended to

1. To inform the new Trustee of their legal duties as a trustee, from the perspective of the Charity Commission and the u3a organisation
2. To understand the relationship of the Crawley u3a with the Third Age Trust (the "Trust"), and the resources the Trust provides to support the local u3as
3. To familiarise Trustees with the wider u3a movement, and the structure of the u3a within the UK, including the various regional and networking bodies

Sections	Page
1. Introduction to the u3a Movement in the UK and Third Age Trust	2
2. Legal Status of Crawley u3a as a charity and relationship to the Trust	5
3. Charity Commission Requirements	8
4. Third Age Trust Requirements	10
5. Crawley u3a Governance and Policies <i>(to be continued)</i>	12
6. The Third Age Trust Structure & Governance	13
7. The u3a Regional and Sub-Regional Organisation for Crawley u3a	14
Annex 1: u3a Motto, Vision, Mission, Principles & Members Code of Conduct	16
Annex 2: Charity Commission Regulations & Guidance on the Annual Report & Accounts	17

# Section 1: Introduction to the u3a Movement in the UK and Third Age Trust

## 1.1 The U3A Movement Internationally (from Wikipedia)

The University of the Third Age (U3A) is an international movement whose aims are the education and stimulation of mainly retired members of the community—those in their third 'age' of life.

There is no universally accepted model for the U3A. Its original conception in France as an extramural university activity was significantly modified in the United Kingdom where it was recognized that most people of retirement age have something to contribute and the emphasis has been on sharing, without formal educational links.

The U3A started in France at the Faculty of Social Sciences in Toulouse in 1973. In France, each University of the Third Age University group is mostly associated with a local university. This academic model is used in many other countries, in particular in continental Europe.

By the early 1980s, the concept reached the United Kingdom, where its nature was radically changed to be more a self-help organization under the influence of its founders, Peter Laslett, Michael Young and Eric Midwinter.

Many English-speaking countries have followed the self-help model, whereas continental European countries have mostly followed the French model. For historical reasons, lifelong learning institute is the term used in the United States for organizations that are similar to U3A groups.

## 1.2. The u3a Movement in the UK

Within the UK the u3a takes the form of a collection of groups (u3as) that run local and online member-led learning for those no longer in full time work across the UK plus the Third Age Trust (the Trust, or TAT).

### Size

The UK network, founded in 1982, grew rapidly in terms of total membership reaching a total of 466,000 pre pandemic, in more than 1,000 groups. Then like many organisations it lost members and fell to a low point of 366,000 members.

1998    65,000 members in 350 local u3as

2008    207,000 members in 698 local u3as

Membership reported in recent Annual Reports and Accounts (it is assumed these are averages across the year rather than point estimates based on the annual end March annual returns but this is not entirely clear)

Year to 31/03/19	439,000	
Year to 31/03/20	450,000	
Year to 31/03/21	400,000	
Year to 31/03/22	388,000	In more than 1,000 u3as

It was hoped that membership would recover to 400,000 by 31/03/23 and this was the figure used for the budget for 2022/23 but the Half Yearly Report issued 15/12/22 indicated that the recovery is not going as well as was hoped.

The number of groups has not declined in line with membership, suggesting that the average membership per group has declined.

### Motto, Vision, Mission, Principles and Members' Code of Conduct (see [Annex 1](#))

These are laid down by the Third Age Trust and apply to all u3a groups and members. They should be brought to the attention of all new members and should always be easily accessible to all members on the Crawley u3a website.

The code clarifies the standard of behaviour expected from all members. Members implicitly agree to abide by it when they sign up to become a member and it features in the Crawley u3a Members Handbook.

It can be useful to remind members of the code on certain occasions e.g. "members are expected to abide by Crawley u3a's procedures and policies" or "members are expected to treat each other with dignity and respect at all times".

### 1.3 Third Age Trust (TAT)

This is the UK-wide body which works with all the u3as across the UK, providing guidance, leaning and administrative support. It is governed by a Board and is overseen by a Board of Governors, to which any u3a member may be elected, comprising up to 12 Trustees elected from the u3a regions and nations, and three officers elected by the whole u3a membership. They work to ensure good governance, drive strategy and encourage innovation.

It is funded by means of a subscription levied on individual levies.

Its structure and governance are described in more detail in [Section 6](#).

### 1.4 Public Profile [from Trustee Recruitment Pack for 2022 AGM disseminated 13/05/22)

The u3as, members and the Trust make up one united u3a movement, which has a powerful voice on issues around the age agenda and staying actively engaged when you are no longer working full time. The movement's research on the impact of the u3a model "Learning Not Lonely" (2018, can be found on the on the u3a brand centre showed that the u3a model resulted in a sustainable and positive approach to age, built on group learning, skill sharing and volunteering.

### 1.5. Rebranding

The movement was originally titled "University of the Third Age" but a rebranding in 2020 (using Brand IQ) did away with the word University as it was believed this could discourage some potential members. The term u3a is now used for all marketing and advertising purposes (though not for legal purposes, for Charity Commission registration purposes it is still Crawley University of the Third Age).

### 1.6 Relationship of local u3as to the Third Age Trust (from <https://www.u3a.org.uk/about>)

The Trust supports local u3as in developing their activities. On their website there is information about the u3a organisation and a wealth of material to help local u3a committees and groups.

The u3a is NOT a 'top down' organization, as each u3a is operationally independent (not autonomous) and not a branch (the term branch for individual u3a organisations is discouraged as it would imply they are not legally independent).

But every u3a is, by definition, affiliated to the Third Age Trust, having signed an agreement when it was formed and renewed each year. Most u3a's also belong to local networks which enables them to discuss issues and share best practice and resources with neighbouring u3as.

### 1.7 Provision of Learning Advice

Although, as made clear in the u3a Principles, individual u3a organisations organise and run their own learning activities in the form of interest groups, the Trust does provide additional resources for both u3a groups and members, as outlined under the Learning section of their website.

A learning leaflet is available to download on the Learning page which describes these.

These comprise:

#### 1. National Programmes (free of charge)

- Online events, one-off talks, and longer courses for members, delivered on-line via Zoom
- U3a podcasts
- Regular competitions for photography, painting and drawing, creative writing etc
- Monthly logic puzzles
- Speaker swaps for u3as to share external speaker details

Members can subscribe to a monthly newsletter listing these. They cover specialist topics which do not tend to be covered by local groups (e.g. story of Motown records) but also some more standard

#### 2. Interest Groups Online

The equivalent of a local u3a organisation but run online. It costs £10 per annum, £5 for existing local u3a members.

As for local u3as, members run the interest groups and members can select which to participate in.

### 3. Subject Advice

The network of over 70-national subject advisers. Some subject advisers keep in touch with local Group Leaders through newsletters or blogs and some organise national study days. Some subjects e.g. Poetry just provide a link to contact the adviser, others, such as British History, provides documents on starting up a group and organises study days and historic London walks.

### 4. Subject networks

Provides a platform for u3a members to connect and come together around their interest. This initiative looks to be very much still in development, there are only around 10 networks currently, though that does include Bridge, climate Change (the Crawley Earth Matters group is listed on their website), Cycling and Speaker Swap

### 5. Research & Shared Learning

Lists various projects (either run by individual u3as or external organisations such as universities) which local groups or individual members might wish to get involved in (e.g. High St project) along with advice on matters such as research ethics.

### 6. U3a Blog -Sources

Individual u3as and members talking about what they are currently engaged in. Some of these are featured in the u3a National Newsletter.

#### 1.8. Digital Strategy Update

The Trust is developing a **Digital Strategy** to provide better support for local u3as and the u3a movement as a whole. This project, which includes Beacon, the development of a replacement for SiteBuilder (see 1.9 below) and upgrading the Trust's systems generally, is being developed by u3a volunteers.

More information is given on the link below

<https://sources.u3a.org.uk/technology/the-third-age-trust-digital-strategy>

#### 1.9. Website Development

The current website platform run by the Trust for the benefit of local groups (including Crawley u3a) which elect to use it rather than develop their own is SiteBuilder.

All these websites, plus Regional websites, can be viewed on the link below. Browsing some of them gives us ideas on how our website can be improved.

<https://u3asites.org.uk/code/index.php>

Many larger u3as with the necessary internal expertise develop and run their own websites. To view them either google "u3a [town name]" or access them via the relevant Regional website.

The trust is currently developing a new web platform **u3aSiteWorks**. It is expected to be launched in 2023 and the process of migration is expected to take between 12 and 24 months [from November 2022 National u3a Newsletter]

## Section 2: Legal Status of Crawley u3a as a charity and relationship to the Trust

### 2.1. Local u3as registered as charities Trustees' key duties

Each local u3a operates as an individual charity (Crawley u3a is registered under the name "Crawley University of the Third Age", number 1029004) and so is subject to regulation from the Charity Commission. Crawley u3a, as most u3a branches, is an unincorporated members' association charity which means it does not have legal personality, and so cannot hold property or enter into contracts (such as employment contracts) in its own name.

All u3a branch Committee Members are automatically Trustees of their u3a charity, which means they must comply with Charity Law and the requirements of the Charity Commission of England and Wales as regulator.

The key duties of Trustees from the perspective of Charity Law are:

- Ensuring the u3a is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- Complying with the u3a governing document [the constitution] and the law
- Acting in the charity's best interests
- Managing the charity's resources responsibly
- Acting with reasonable care and skill
- Ensuring the charity is accountable

The obligations of Crawley u3a from its role as a Charity are covered further in [Section 3](#)

### 2.2. Terms of Membership of the Third Age Trust

As well as being accountable to the Charity Commission local u3as must also declare that they will adhere to the [Terms of Membership of the Third Age Trust](#). These include.

- Agreement to follow the principles of the u3a movement
- Paying the required [annual] membership fee [to the Trust]
- Completing an Annual Return [to the Trust]
- Accepting the Articles of the Third Age Trust
- Using the u3a brand correctly
- Operating in accordance with the local u3a's written Constitution

A local u3a must sign every year when completing the annual return that it adheres to these terms of membership.

### 2.3 Adherence to non-Charity Law

As well as needing to comply with the requirements of both the Third Age Trust and the Charity Commission, Trustees also need to ensure compliance with government legislation which applies to all organisations, such as Equalities, Safeguarding and GDPR.

Fortunately an important feature of the Trust's support is the provision of (under <https://www.u3a.org.uk/advice>) templates for relevant policies on these matters such that if adopted and followed by the u3a should ensure compliance.

### 2.4 Role of Trust in ensuring u3as comply with both Charity Law and Non-Charity Law.

When drafting its policy templates and the model Constitution the Trust seeks the advice of lawyers and the Charity Commission to ensure that its guidance complies with the latest charity and non-charity law. This means that trustees can be sure that by following the u3a guidance they are automatically adhering to the Commission's regulations.

Individual u3as still need to deal directly with the Charity Commission on certain matters, such as by registering and keeping the charity and Trustee details updated, and submitting an Annual Report and Accounts (covered further in [Section 3](#))

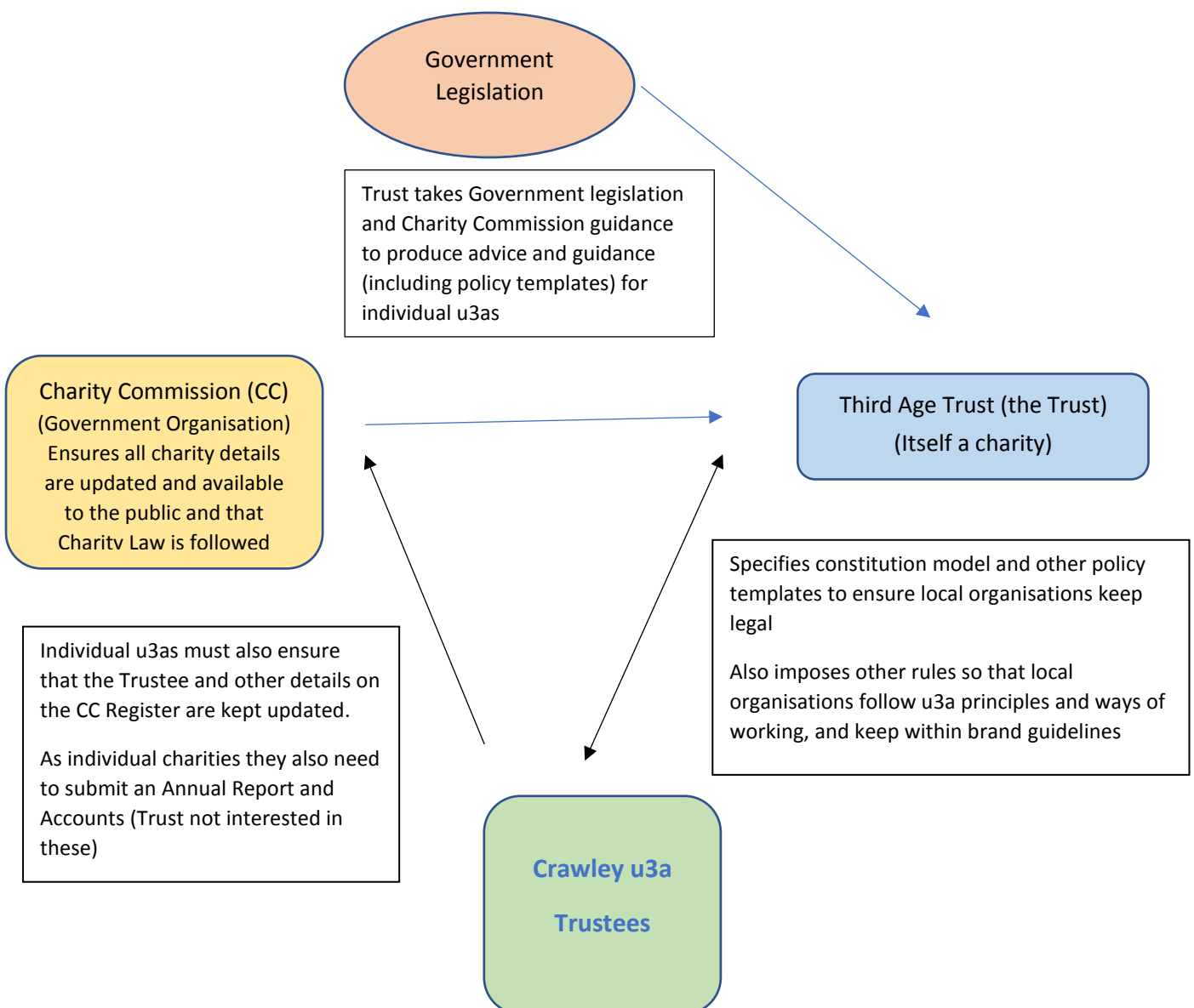
The Trust does not check up on whether individual u3as are adhering to the Charity Commission’s regulations or non-charity law – it does not have the resources. It provides template policies and recommends they be adopted, but no more. The one exception is a u3a’s constitution. Otherwise its key mechanisms of ensuring a u3a and its trustees are acting lawfully are:

- To require confirmation each year, as part of the annual return process, that the u3a confirms each year that it is adhering to its Terms of Membership (see section 2.2 above)
- To insist the u3a follows its Model Constitution, with any departures requiring Trust approval
- Outlining the u3a Trustee Responsibilities all trustees should follow
- Provision of a Trustee Code of Conduct which trustees should sign

## 2.5. Model Constitution

On the Model Constitution (and use of the term “Model” here can be misleading in that it might be taken to imply “suggested” whereas it is in fact prescriptive) the Trust tends to be more restrictive than the Commission over matters such as numbers of trustees and length of service, because it believes such restrictions are in the best interests of the u3a (in that regular turnover of the Trustees prevents a u3a from becoming too dependent on just a small number of individuals).

Not following the Trust’s guidance on constitutional and related matters threatens the u3a’s Charity Trustee Management Liability Insurance cover provided by the Trust.



## **2.6. The Charity Commission requirements are onerous for small u3a charities**

U3a Trustees often complain that the burden which the Charity Commission and the government place on small charities is excessive and presents problems for Boards of Trustees which do not possess professional level accountancy and administrative skills. The Trust states it does try to lobby for more simplicity, but it must be accepted that certain legislation (such as the Equalities Act 2010) is here to stay.

The vast majority of u3as do not employ staff which removes the requirement to keep up to date with employment legislation.

Certainly many u3as do not comply fully with the CC rules on annual reports and accounting, and the Trust does not provide guidance on this. Since, unlike many small charities, u3as receive no funds or donations from either the general public or government bodies (leaving aside gift aid), there seems to be an implicit acceptance of this.

## Section 3: Charity Commission Requirements

### 3.1 Charity Commission Guidance

There is a wealth of guidance for charity trustees on <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-commission-guidance>, much of which is aimed at trustees of far larger and more complex charities with many paid staff.

The documents listed on the [checklist](#) should be sufficient for new u3a trustees

The entire list of guidance publications can be found below

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/list-of-charity-commission-cc-guidance-publications>

Some of these concern annual reporting and accounts and are of interest to only Treasurers and Secretaries.

The few which are relevant to u3as tend to be covered by the Trusts guidance (e.g. CC48 on Charities and Meetings is covered by the “Trust’s Committee Meetings, Annual General Meetings and Minutes”).

Others of possible relevance to larger u3as are:

- CC4     What makes a Charity
- CC8     Internal Financial Controls
- CC14   Charities and Investment Matters
- CC26   Charities and Risk Management

### 3.2 Key Requirements for u3as

#### 1. Annual Confirmation of Eligibility

Before the Secretary is able to register a new Trustee that person must sign a copy of the following document to confirm their eligibility (that they are not a bankrupt etc). Existing Trustees are also required to sign this annually, normally soon after re-election at the AGM.

#### 2. Secretary to keep the Online Charity Register Updated

This requires special access and is carried out annually soon after the AGM and whenever a new Trustee is appointed during the year. Information required:

- Trustee names, date of birth (i), contact details and whether Chairman (ii)
  - The physical area of operation (Crawley & West Sussex in the case of Crawleyu3a). The CC is particularly interested in which countries abroad a charity is active;
  - Whether or not the charity is registered for Gift Aid (Crawley u3a is)
  - Its bank accounts
  - Its activities and classification (e.g. provision of education, social activities etc)
- (i) This is the only occasion date of birth is required. This is to link a Trustee up with any other charities for which they act as Trustee (presumably only relevant when there is a problem)
- (ii) No interest in any other positions (other than which named Trustee is responsible for updating the Register)

#### 3. Keeping accounting records

These include cash books, invoices, receipts, and Gift-Aid records (including the details of which members state they are eligible for gift aid by membership year). All these records should be retained for at least 6 years.

Details of any substantial donors should also be retained for 6 years so as to identify “tainted charity donations” in accordance with HRMC guidance.

#### 4. Submit the CC Annual Return (not to be confused with the Trust’s Annual Return)

The Annual Return is an on-line return, and is automatically requested by the Commission shortly after the financial year-end. It enables the Commission to ensure the details of every charity on its register are as complete and accurate as possible. It is short and straightforward.



A list of the questions (most of which are not applicable for Crawley u3a) asked in the return can be accessed on <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prepare-a-charity-annual-return>

If a charity's income is > £25,000 it needs to declare that there are no serious incidents that have not been reported to the Charity Commission.

If the charity's income exceeds £25,000 it should include the Annual Report and Financial Accounts

## **5. Produce an Annual Report and Accounts**

These must also be presented to and agreed by members at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) irrespective of whether they need to be submitted as part of the Annual Return (which they will do if income exceeds £25,000).

More information on the Annual Report and Accounts is presented in [Annex 2](#).

## **3.3 Additional Support for Charity Trustees**

### **1. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)**

This has some useful guidance particularly on matters not covered by the Trust e.g. Managing Volunteers, dealing with problems and disputes between Board Members, and Having challenging Conversations

### **2. Charity Governance Code for Smaller Charities**

This is available on

<https://www.charitygovernancecode.org/en/pdf>

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/#/>

## Section 4: Third Age Trust Requirements

### 4.1 Adherence to the u3a constitution

- i) The Constitution is the main governing document (as defined by the Charity Commissioners) for all u3a organisations. Each u3a must agree to follow the u3a Model Constitution, and that any amendments to this must be cleared in advance with the Trust prior to presentation to a General Meeting. The current Crawley u3a constitution is based on the Trust's 2012 model. Permission need only be sought from the Charity Commission if a change is being made to the clauses within Part 1 of the new constitution.
- ii) In late 2021 the Trust published a new Model, the first since 2012. This reflects the latest Charity Commission's guidance on the clauses which must feature in every constitution, particularly around the appointment, duties, and behaviours of trustees. Best practice around equalities has also evolved over the last ten years, and the increasing use of on-line meetings and voting also necessitate changes. In addition, some u3a organisations now own property and employ staff, and this needs to be reflected.  
  
This new model is described as being "future proof". There are no significant changes to matters which impact individual members, such as the operation of AGMs and voting for Trustees (except that, if necessary, this can be done on-line).
- iii) The u3a model constitution splits trustees between the four obligatory Officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) and non-Officer Trustees. It specifies that the total number of elected Trustees should be between five and twelve (implying between one and eight non-Officer Trustees), and it recommends more rather than fewer. Crawley has elected for a number between five and ten (so between one and six non-Officer Trustees) as it believes too many trustees could make meetings unwieldy.
- iv) The Trust issues model job descriptions for each of the four officer roles, and also for a Membership Secretary and Groups Co-ordinator. Local groups are not compelled to adhere to these and may design their own job descriptions, as Crawley has done.

### 4.2 Completing an annual return

- The Secretary of each u3a needs to complete an Annual Return (not to be confused with the CC Return) in the April of each year, stating the number of paid-up members as at the 31<sup>st</sup> March (so that the u3a can calculate each branches annual subscription which is levied on a per capita basis).
- At present the names and contact details of the Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary for mailing purposes are also collected though the Trust says it will shortly bring in a new system under which these details can be updated at any time throughout the year).
- As part of completion of each return the Secretary must declare the u3a adheres to all the Terms of Membership.

### 4.3 Paying the required membership subscription

- i) The Trust's financial year runs to end of March. Individuals u3as are able to determine their own year-end; most are end July or end August, as activities are often planned on this basis. Crawley u3a's financial year runs to 31st August (it was 31<sup>st</sup> July up to and including July 2020, necessitating a 13-month year-end for 2020-21).
- ii) The Trust membership fee per member for its year April 2022 – March 2023 was £4.00. This fee is approved at the Trust's AGM for the previous year, which was held in October 2021. But individual u3as with a summer year-end will have had to set their membership fee for 2021-22 before October 2021, meaning they have to make an assumption about the future year's fee level. The Trust tried to deal with this problem at its 2022 by setting a fee for both 2023-24 and 2024-25, but this failed due to objections to the basis and level of fee increase imposed.
- iii) The Trust fee per full member (effectively a "per capita" charge but this term is barred) for 2022-23 was £4.00. This had remained fixed for the previous few years.

- iv) The total membership fee payable to the Trust is automatically calculated by and shown on the Return and is equal to the Fee per member x Number of non-Associate members An invoice is immediately produced electronically and sent to the u3a.

Crawley reported 577 full (non-Associate) members at the census date of 31/03/22 so was charged 577 @ £4.00 = £2,308 in April, covering the year to 31/03/23. The

- v) Associate members are those whose primary u3a is not Crawley but who wish to join one or more of Crawley's groups or other activities. By definition, it is a u3a member's "main" u3a which incurs their Trust subscription charge (and also their TAM charge, if received).

Honorary members (those who are not charged a fee by the local u3a) are excluded.

- vi) Whilst the membership fees are paid to the Trust charity, the charges for both the use of Beacon and subscriptions to the magazine, Third Age Masters (TAM), are payable to the Trust subsidiary, the Third Age Trust Trading Ltd, a trading company, not a charity. Not all members choose to receive TAM, though most do. The charge to the u3a depends on how many of its non-affiliate members receive TAM.

#### **4.4 To conform to the u3a branding rules**

The relevant statement in the Terms of Membership actually states "to conform to the rules regarding the use of the u3a name and logo which are registered trademarks and must only be used with the Trusts permission"

These are specified in detail (taking 44 pages) below on the site below (a separate password needs to be set up):

<https://u3abrand.org.uk/catalogue/item/brand-guideline-20>

This is version 2, dated 2022, and should be used for marketing and advertising to the general public. Many u3as have not yet changed their websites to comply.

The logo, in various formats, can be downloaded free of charge from this site.

It also sells branded goods (banners etc) for marketing purposes to individual u3as.

#### **4.5 To accept the Articles of Association of the Trust and to act in accordance with them and any resolution passed at a General Meeting of the Trust**

The Articles of Association effectively represent the constitution of the Third Age Trust and may be accessed via the most recent Trust AGM site

## Section 5: Crawley u3a Governance and Policies

### 5.1 Crawley Governance and Policies

All policies, together with dates when they were last reviewed and/or updated are listed on [Crawley u3a Governance Documents](#)

#### 1. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The [General Data Protection Policy](#) explains this legislation and how the Trust recommends individual u3as deal with it. Basically, u3as must comply with data protection legislation in managing the data of their members. The most recent legislation is the Data Protection Act 2018 which incorporates the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Under GDPR 2018 all organisations involved with processing data need to establish a lawful basis for doing so.

The [Privacy Policy](#) sets out exactly which personal data Crawley u3a collects and retains on members, and how it is used, together with members rights with regard to that data.

A key implication of GDPR is that, because no personal data (which includes e-mail addresses and photos) should be available to those who do not need to use it, e-mails sent to u3a members (other than those going to immediate Committee members) should include the e-mail addresses as a bcc item rather than under to. Also permission must be obtained from all individuals shown visibly in any photographs included in newsletters or placed on the website.

#### 2. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It is not a legal requirement for an organisation to operate an EDI policy, but the Trust strongly recommends that all u3as operate one and provides a template policy which the Trust expects individual u3as to adapt to reflect their own circumstances and mix of members.

The protected characteristic of most relevance to u3as is disability. The Trust template EDI policy implies the Appointment of an [Accessibility Officer](#) and the development of an [Accessibility Policy](#) (the Trust has a template available for this). A problem with the template EDI policy is that it states that the local organisation will monitor the diversity of its membership, which cannot be done using the existing data collected from members for GDPR reasons. No advice on how to overcome this problem seems to exist.

#### 3. Safeguarding

Safeguarding means protecting a citizen's health, wellbeing and human rights; enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. Adults in need of safeguarding help (often called "vulnerable" adults) are generally elderly and frail, and either live alone or in care homes with little support from family members. They may have mental health issues, a physical disability or learning difficulties.

A safeguarding policy and procedure will enable the committee to address issues where there are safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding includes incidents between members, concerns regarding abuse or neglect that a u3a member may be experiencing outside of the u3a, health related issues or previous or pending criminal convictions. A u3as committee has a duty of care to its members but does not hold any statutory authority. Matters of concern will be reported to the relevant safeguarding authorities and charity regulatory authorities, as appropriate. See [Crawley u3a Safeguarding Policy](#).

### 5.2 Insurance

The Trust arranges insurance policies covering the whole UK u3a movement. These policies are listed on the [Insurance Cover](#) document and the [Guidance on Insurance](#) covers these in detail. Group Leaders, especially those leading outdoor groups and arranging trips and holidays need to be aware of the implications of the policies relevant to these activities. An [Incident Report](#) form should be completed by the relevant Group Leader whenever something happens which could potentially give rise to a later insurance claim. Risk assessment form should ideally be completed in advance.

## Section 6: The Third Age Trust Structure & Governance

### 6.1 The Third Age Trust: Structure & Governance (from <https://www.u3a.org.uk/about>)

1. The Trust is a company limited by guarantee (01759471) incorporated on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1983 and registered as a charity (28807) on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1983.
2. The Registered Office is Unit 104, 156 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8EN.  
Phone number is 020 8466 6139, and lines are open Mon-Fri 9:30 – 16:30
3. It has a subsidiary trading company named Third Age Trust Trading Limited (11899419) incorporated on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019 and which commenced trading on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019. The purpose of the trading company is to further the aims of the Trust.
4. The Trust is overseen by a Board of Directors, to which any u3a member may be elected. This Board is made up of 12 trustees elected from the u3a regions and three officers elected by the whole u3a membership. They work to ensure good governance, drive strategy, and engender innovation.

The board's prime responsibility is to ensure that the management and coordination of the movement meets the standards laid down by the Charity Commission and that all activities are legal and support the objects of the Trust.

5. The Board of Trustees comprises 3 Officers and 12 Regional Trustees (1 for each of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and 1 each for the 9 English Regions). The Officers serve a maximum term of 3 years. The Regional Trustees serve terms of three years but appear able to stand for re-election for a further term.
6. At June 2022 the ones of relevance to Crawley u3a are;

Chair	Liz Thackray	Elected 2021 AGM 26 <sup>th</sup> August 2021
Vice-Chair	Allan Walmsley	Elected 2022 AGM 6 <sup>th</sup> October 2022
Treasurer	Derek Harwood	Elected 2021 AGM 26 <sup>th</sup> August 2021
South East Regional Trustee	Susie Berry	Elected 2020 AGM 29 <sup>th</sup> September 2020

7. There is no Secretary on the board as this function is taken by Sam Mauger, the full time salaried Chief Executive. In the year 2021/22 the average number of staff employed by the Trust was 18.

### 6.2 Fit for the Future (see <https://www.u3a.org.uk/news/fit-for-the-future>)

This refers to the discussions the Board has been holding since March 2022 on how current governance arrangements (which date from 2008) can be made more effective, particularly in respect of hearing the voice of members and local u3a groups. Events leading up to 2022 AGM in October and the reaction of local u3as against the proposed Trust fee increases indicated that the membership and local groups felt that the Trust was not listening to their concerns and was imposing too great a burden, administrative and financial, on local u3as also battling against the impact of the pandemic.

Moreover the Trust was felt not to be sufficiently transparent over the composition of committees below the main Board (e.g. the Finance Board) and how the members of such bodies were elected.

The slides presented at the 2022 AGM (on the website above) outlining the Strategic Aims for the Future are interesting.

**6.2 Progress since 2022 AGM** (Mailing "Third Age Trust: An Update on Board Activity disseminated 8/12/22" and disseminated at the 15/12/22 Crawley u3a Committee Meeting)

The main points were:

- A clear majority of u3as preferred that future increases should not be tied to an external index and should provide an adequate lead time for implementation.
- The Trust is creating a dedicated section on the website (<https://www.u3a.org.uk/trust-and-trustee-updates>) that will contain useful and regularly updated information on board meetings, half-year financial reports and the main membership and Committee structure
- There will be opportunities to speak with the Board Officers, CEO and office staff at a programme of 'Conversations with.....' held throughout the year [a SouthEast Region on-line event was held on 17/11/22].

## Section 7: The u3a Regional and sub-Regional Organisation for Crawley u3a

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/regional-u3a-websites>

### 7.1 The Regional Level

There are 12 Regions, nine within England and one each for Scotland, Wales and Northern Island.

Crawley comes under the South East region. The map on this link below shows which counties are included in this region: <https://u3asites.org.uk/south-east/home>

### 7.2 The South East Region

The region has its own website on <https://u3asites.org.uk/south-east/page/108038> It is the largest region in the UK with 194 u3as and 10 Networks spread across 9 counties. Susie Berry (elected for a three year term in September 2020) is currently the Regional Trustee representing the region on the Trust's Board.

The South-East Region Support Team (SERST) helps the Trustee Susie Berry with the work across this large area. Sue Howard is the SERST member representing West Sussex.

The SE Region offers the following support to u3as within its region:

- Grants for publicity: £500 Grant if you wish to have a stand at an Exhibition or Agricultural Show etc, £250 Grant for an Open Day Event where the General Public find out about u3a and is free.
- Access to various Networks

### 7.3 u3a Networks in the South-East Region <https://u3asites.org.uk/south-east/members>

A u3a Network is a group of u3as which have chosen to work together for support and the mutual benefit of the members of the u3as concerned. A network does not interfere with the operation of individual u3as. The activities of networks are many and various including, a 'talking shop' for Chairmen, Study Days, running Workshops, Research and Shared Learning Projects, and meetings of peer groups (e.g. Treasurers, Group Coordinators, Subject group leaders), and events. Networks also exchange information and to get the latest information from the Board, and National Office. They also act as a communication channel between the u3as and the Regional Trustee. Although most Networks are affiliated to the Trust they are not a layer of governance. <https://www.u3a.org.uk/advice/u3a-networks>

### 7.4 Networks in Sussex

Until recently there existed the Sussex Network (SUN) which was set up with charity status, a constitution, and an Executive Committee (Sussex u3a Network Committee, abbreviated to SEC). It ran study days and the occasional shared learning project but these ceased after the pandemic due to a lack of volunteers. The SUN constitution was difficult to make work, since the principal governing body of the network comprised all 40 of the u3a members, and as the networking elements are now fulfilled by the West Sussex and East Sussex and Brighton networks it was left with no role and was dissolved in December 2022.

The network of relevance to Crawley is the West Sussex Network : <https://u3asites.org.uk/south-east/page/110273>

The West Sussex Network (WSN) was set up in 2020 as an informal Network (so no formal constitution, trustees nor bank account) to provide a 'talking shop' for the Chairs of West Sussex u3as. It was established at the request of several West Sussex u3as and with the encouragement of The Third Age Trust. It was intended that WSN would expand to include occasional/annual meetings of Treasurers, Web Masters Group Coordinators and Group Leaders operating groups in specific areas such as history or language but so far meetings of these non-Chair groups have not started. Some East Sussex and Brighton chairs have attended the WSN meetings (and vice versa).

## 7.5 The South East Forum and Chichester Summer School

The South East Forum is distinct from the South East Region as it covers only Kent, Surrey and Sussex. It is best known for running the annual u3a Summer School at the University of Chichester.

<https://u3asites.org.uk/southeastu3aforum/page/120113>

On its website the Forum's objective is described as:

- To enable effective co-operation between the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Networks, so that activities such as the University of Chichester Summer School, Conferences, seminars on topics of relevance to u3as and workshops for group leaders can be organised for members.
- To enhance communication with the National Executive Committee of the Third Age Trust through the elected trustee for the region.
- To provide a forum for debate on Third Age Education and the many advantages that u3as bring to their members.

The South East Forum is a Network affiliated to the Third Age Trust and is a Registered Charity (Charity No. 1196999).

The Chichester Summer School has been going for 15 years, and all u3a members in the area are eligible to attend. It is a residential course, but members can commute from home if they wish. The 2022 Summer School took place from 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> June and ran 11 different courses on a wide range of topics. All courses are tutored by experienced U3A members who kindly give their time for free, in return for board and lodgings during the School.

<https://u3asites.org.uk/southeastu3aforum/events>

## Annex 1: u3a Motto, Vision, Mission, Principles & Members Code of Conduct

**Motto** [from Third Age Trust website]

**u3a motto: learn, laugh, live**

### Our Vision

Our Vision is to make lifelong learning, through the experience of u3a, a reality for all third agers.

### Our Mission

Our Mission declares our purpose as an organisation and serves as the standard against which we weigh our actions and decisions. It is to:

- Facilitate the growth of the u3a movement.
- Provide support for management and learning in u3as.
- Raise the profile of the u3a movement.
- Promote the benefits of learning in later life through self-help learning.

### The Principles of the u3a Movement [from Third Age Trust website]

The u3a movement is non-religious and non-political and has three main principles:

#### The Third Age Principle

- Membership of a u3a is open to all 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 promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging to a u3a.
- Members should do all they can to ensure that people wanting to join a u3a can do so.

#### The Self-help Learning Principle

- Members form interest groups covering as wide a range of topics and activities as they desire; by the members, for the members.
- No qualifications are sought or offered. Learning is for its own sake, with enjoyment being the prime motive, not qualifications or awards.
- There is no distinction between the learners and the teachers; they are all u3amembers.

#### The Mutual Aid Principle

- Each u3a is a mutual aid organisation, operationally independent but a member of The Third Age Trust, which requires adherence to the guiding principles of the u3a movement.
- No payments are made to members for services rendered to any u3a.
- Each u3a is self-funded with membership subscriptions and costs kept as low as possible.
- Outside financial assistance should only be sought if it does not imperil the integrity of the u3a.

### u3a Members Code of Conduct [from Third Age Trust website <https://www.u3a.org.uk/advice>]

- Members are expected to know, follow and promote the [Principles of the u3a Movement](#) at every opportunity.
- Members must always act in the best interests of Crawley u3a and the u3a Movement, strive to uphold its reputation and never do anything which could bring their own, another u3a or the u3a Movement into disrepute or expose it to undue risk.
- Members are expected to use Crawley u3a's resources responsibly and only to further its stated charitable objects/purposes.
- Members are expected to reflect the current organisational policy of Crawley u3a, regardless of whether it conflicts with their personal views.
- Members are expected to abide by Crawley u3a's procedures and practices.
- Members are expected to treat each other with dignity and respect at all times.



## Annex 2: Charity Commission Regulations & Guidance on the Annual Report & Accounts

### 1. Requirements depend upon income

The level of annual income determines:

- Which parts of the Annual Return online form need to be completed
- The basis on which the accounts should be prepared
- Whether the accounts need to be submitted to the CC or not
- Whether any external verification is required, and if so what type
- The content of the Annual Report

Income	Annual Return	Accounts and verification check	Annual Report
< £10,000	Basic trustee details only	Accounts must be prepared but not required to be submitted. No independent examination required (a)	A simple report must be prepared but not required to be submitted
£10,000 - £25,000	Basic questions to be completed	Accounts must be prepared but not required to be submitted. No independent examination required (a)	A simplified report must be prepared but not required to be submitted
£25,000 - £250,000	All questions	Accounts must be prepared and submitted with an independent examiner's report	A simplified report must be prepared and submitted
£250,000 - £500,000 and gross assets < £3.26m	All questions	Accounts must be prepared on an accruals basis (and hence adhere to the Charities' SORP) with a full audit	A simplified report must be prepared and must be submitted

(a) Unless the charity's constitution requires it

### 2. Deadline for Submission

The Annual Return and other documents must be submitted within 10 months of the end of the financial year (so an end August year-end implies a deadline of end June the next year). Crawley u3a holds its AGM in November and aims to submit by the end of November.

### 3. Basis of Account Preparation

There are two bases on which a charity's accounts may be prepared:

- **Receipts and payments**  
This is the simpler and may be adopted where a non-company charity has a gross income of £250,000 or less during the year. Consists of a cash Receipts and Payments account, with a summary of assets and liabilities at the year-end.
- **Accruals**  
All other charities must prepare accounts on the accrual basis (matching income and costs to the year to which they relate, which may be different to the accounting years in which the cash income or cash payment were made). The Charities SORP (Statement of Recommended Practices) must be followed

Given its gross income Crawley u3a may select either of this but has selected to the Accruals basis to ensure meaningful comparisons can be made between one year and the next.

The Commission provides templates for each of these ([CC16](#) and [CC17](#) respectively) and associated notes giving guidance on technical matters such as the different categories of receipts/income and payments/expenditure to be shown and when notes are required. But since u3a organisations have no endowment funds or restricted income much of these templates are irrelevant.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charity-accounting-templates-receipts-and-payments-accounts>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/accruals-accounts-pack-cc17-sorp-frs-102>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-sorp-2005>

CC16 notes (page 4) states that “although there is no legally required format for receipts and payments accounts, it is generally accepted that they should record all individual receipts and payments (like a cash book)” This suggests there should be no netting off. Otherwise “netting off” is not specifically covered. The Trusts Finance FAQs document includes a question under accounting “Accrual vs cash accounting” the response to which “ some of the money that is in the u3a account may already be allocated for future payments. For example, you may have collected money from members for a trip but you haven’t yet paid the costs of the trip. If this happened at a period end the accounts would show a “false” surplus” implies that there should not be netting off”

Presentation should of course be consistent from one year to the next.

Prior to 2021-22 Crawley u3a kept the income below £10,000 by “netting off”. The income for 2021-22 was almost £35,000 so it needed to follow the requirements for charities with income in the range £25,000 - £250,000.

#### **4. Verification check**

CC32 Independent Examination of Charity Accounts: Examiners advises independent examiners on how they should go about their work.

#### **5. Annual report for charities with income £25,000 - £250,000**

From <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prepare-a-charity-trustees-annual-report>

If a non-company charity’s income is under £500,000 (and providing it doesn’t have assets worth more than £3.26million), the Annual Report needs to include just the following:

- The charity’s name, registration number, address and trustee names
- Its structure and details of how it is managed, including how it recruits trustees
- Its activities and objectives in the year
- Its achievements and performance, including reporting on its public benefit
- A financial review including any debts and details of your reserves policy (if applicable)
- Details of any funds held as a custodian trustee

The Commission provides a template “TAR-DOC”.

The Trust recommends that Annual Reports contain a report from the Chair and possibly from other Committee members, such as the Groups Co-ordinator. More detail can be included if the charity wishes. A copy must be sent to the commission with the annual return if income exceeds £25,000.