

Frequently Asked Questions about becoming a Crawley u3a Trustee

1) Is being a Trustee the same as being on the Committee?

Yes. Being a Trustee and being on the Committee are one and the same – Committee members are automatically Trustees of the Crawley u3a registered charity. There are no other Trustees apart from the members of the Committee.

2) What does being a Trustee involve?

a) Duties Common to all Trustee Roles

- (1) Attending Committee meetings (currently held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month 16:00 – 18:00 at St Pauls Church Northgate but this time slot is reviewed after each AGM), having made sure you have studied the meeting papers beforehand.
- (2) For each meeting submitting a brief report on what you have been doing over the last month and, sometimes, preparing for a non-standing agenda item relating to your function.
- (3) Adherence to the following, included within the [Essential Documents for Trustees](#) on the [For Trustees](#) website page accessed from Documents.

The Third Age Trust Trustee Responsibilities;

The Third Age Trust Trustee Code of Conduct.

- (4) Attending at least some of the Crawley u3a events and meetings open to all members (Monthly meetings, the AGM, Annual Fees meeting, Annual Open Day, Celebration Events, and Christmas party)
- (5) Participate in temporary working groups relevant to your Trustee specific role.

The agendas, papers and minutes of past Committee meetings can be accessed on the [Committee Meetings](#) website page accessed from the [Documents](#) page.

Although we have to ensure that we comply with any new legislation as it arises our prime objective is to focus on improving the u3a experience for our members, Group Leaders (GLs) and other volunteers.

We suggest that you attend a committee meeting as observer (any member is entitled to do this at any time) to get an idea of what happens at the meetings.

b) Duties Specific to your Trustee Roles

Existing vacant Trustee Roles are listed on the Volunteering webpage (accessed from the [AGM 2023](#) page) with brief details of their responsibilities. Within certain constraints imposed by the Constitution we try to adapt roles to fit the potential Trustee, rather than expect a potential Trustee to undertake precisely the same tasks as their predecessor. We also intend that in future more tasks, particular those around one-off events or projects, will be undertaken by working groups, led by Trustee(s).

3) Will it involve a lot of my time?

Taking on a Trustee role does represent a commitment. But the time required once you become familiar with the role should not be onerous, especially if you plan ahead. We schedule what is to be covered at each Committee meeting some months in advance, and the timing of key events, such as the AGM and the Open Day, normally remain unchanged from one year to the next.

Moreover we recognise that we are not all as young as we were, and that at times other responsibilities outside the u3a and our own health may mean we have to step back slightly for a while.

4) What are the rewards?

The rewards are considerable - a sense of accomplishment, improved self-esteem and gaining new friends. There can also be satisfaction from using, and even improving on, the skills and wisdom gained from your life pre u3a.

And above all, as somebody who has enjoyed being a member of Crawley u3a, the knowledge that you are granting others the opportunity to experience the benefits of membership.

5) Do I need any particular skills or experience?

Personal qualities such as being able to listen to others, work as part of a team, have the confidence to challenge others, and a willingness to face new challenges are at least as important as particular skills.

You will need basic IT skills, and an ability to express your opinions.

It is useful to have had some previous experience of serving on a Committee (whether a u3a committee or not) but this is not essential for any role other than the Chair.

The Treasurer role does require some technical knowledge and experience of accounts, and the Secretary role general administrative skills.

6) Will I be supported at the start?

We will organise a full induction process for you, in which you meet with each of the other Trustees, and a Trustees Handbook is available on our [For Trustees](#) web-site page (accessed from the [Documents](#) page). Furthermore one of our more experienced Trustees will mentor you during the first months if you wish.

7) I don't feel ready to become a Trustee but is there some other way I could help?

You could take on one of the unfilled support roles which would involve working alongside one or more Trustees, but without the responsibility of sitting on the Committee and being a Trustee. Unlike the Trustee roles, there are no elections involved and you can start at any point in the year.

Also at any one time there are likely to be one or working groups operating, meeting a few times to organise a specific event, or perhaps just meeting once or twice to undertake a particular task. Being part of one of these will give you an opportunity to contribute as a member of a team, become familiar with how Crawley u3a operates and improve your confidence so that in time you may wish to become a Trustee.

8) I have heard tales of Trustees of other small organisations having to deal with financial losses and even fraud. Are these likely to happen in u3as?

Unfortunately such stories are common but they normally relate to sports or social organisations which operate bars, purchase significant stocks of drink and food, employ staff and own premises which require maintenance. Crawley u3a does none of these. We operate strict controls over payments and review the financial position thoroughly three times a year.

9) Is there protection if anything goes badly wrong?

Yes, all u3a Trustees are covered by Trustees Insurance Indemnity, which protects u3a Trustees both individually and as a Committee against a genuine mistake or error of judgement providing that they have acted responsibly and followed their u3a's constitution.