



1.1 CONSTITUTION OF THE CHARITY NAMED BELOW, AN UNINCORPORATED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION, AND A MEMBER OF THE THIRD AGE TRUST

THIS IS A CHARITY IN ENGLAND AND WALES

This constitution was adopted by the membership at an AGM held on: 6th April 2023

I certify that this is a true copy

Signed: Tony Callender

Office: Chairman

Date of Certification: 6th April 2023

The terms he / his / him are used throughout this constitution generically and, according to legal interpretation, denote both male and female.

1. NAME

The name of the charity is Diss u3a hereinafter referred to as 'The u3a'.

2. PROPERTY AND ASSETS

Subject to the matters set out below, The u3a and its property and other assets shall be administered and managed in accordance with this constitution, by the members of the Executive Committee.

3. CHARITABLE PURPOSES

The charitable purposes of The u3a are:

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.

4. POWERS

In furtherance of the charitable purposes but not otherwise, the Executive Committee may exercise the following powers to:

- i. raise funds and to invite and receive contributions for The u3a by any lawful means, provided that in doing so any applicable requirements of the law shall be met;
- ii. receive donations, gifts, endowments, sponsorship, grants, legacies and subscriptions from persons desiring to support The u3a and its charitable purposes and to hold and apply any funds so acquired for the charitable purposes (subject to any restricted funds being applied to the relevant restricted purposes);
- iii. buy, take on lease or in exchange or otherwise acquire, hold and make use of any property (real or personal);
- iv. sell, lease or otherwise dispose of all or any part of the property of The u3a, subject to any consents required by law;
- v. co-operate with other charities, voluntary bodies and statutory authorities;
- vi. support any charitable organisations in furtherance of The u3a's charitable purposes;
- vii. appoint and constitute such advisory committees as the Executive Committee may think fit;
- viii. organise, promote and participate in conferences, lectures, seminars, courses, trips, educational, leisure and social events;
- ix. publish, supply and make available books, pamphlets, reports, leaflets, journals, instructional matter, educational materials and aids of all kinds, whether in printed, electronic or any other form;
- x. associate and collaborate with other U3As and groupings of U3As (such as regional associations and networks) and The Third Age Trust in any way;
- xi. do all such other lawful things as are appropriate to the pursuit of the charitable purposes and the delivery of benefit to the public in accordance with the charitable purposes.

5. MEMBERSHIP

- i. Membership of The u3a shall be open to individuals who are in their Third Age and are interested in participating in and furthering the work of The u3a, provided that they agree to abide by this constitution and any membership conditions properly imposed by the Executive Committee and to pay the annual subscription as determined by the Executive Committee and approved by the membership at an Annual General Meeting. No individual may be admitted to membership if the Executive Committee considers that they do not meet these conditions.
- ii. Every individual member shall have one vote.
- iii. Members are bound by and shall observe any membership conditions and any disciplinary code of The u3a.
- iv. The Executive Committee may terminate the membership of any individual:
 - (a) if annual membership or other fees are unpaid one month after the due date; or
 - (b) if the member acts in any 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 Executive Committee, accompanied by a friend acting in their personal capacity, who may also speak, or make written representation before a final decision is made.

6. HONORARY PRESIDENT

The members of The u3a may elect an Honorary President (who need not be a member) at the Annual General Meeting. If they do so, the person so appointed will serve until the next Annual General Meeting. A retiring Honorary President may be re-appointed for a further term. There is no limit on the number of terms that may be served. The Honorary President shall not be deemed a charity trustee and shall not be a member of the Executive Committee but may be invited to attend any Executive Committee meeting at the discretion of the Executive Committee and shall be entitled to attend the Annual General Meeting as a guest.

7. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND OFFICERS

i. The management of The u3a shall be vested in an Executive Committee, which shall be the governing body of The u3a and its board of trustees for the purposes of charity law. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the strategy and policies of The u3a, and shall deal with the administration, management and control of the affairs and property of The u3a.

ii. There must be at least seven and not more than twelve U3A members appointed to the Executive Committee. No person may be proposed for appointment or serve as an Officer or as a non-Officer member of the Executive Committee if they are currently serving as an officer or non-officer member of the executive committee (or equivalent) of any other u3a.

iii. *Officers*

The Officers are the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and Membership Secretary. The Officers shall by virtue of holding their office be members of the Executive Committee. An individual may serve in only one Officer role at a time.

iv. *Appointment of Officers*

The Officers shall be elected by the membership at the AGM with appointment effective from the 1st of the following month.

v. *Appointment of other members of the Executive Committee*

Non-Officer members shall also be elected by the membership at the AGM with appointment effective from the 1st of the following month.

vi. *Terms of office and limits on periods of service*

(a) Non-Officer members of the Executive Committee have a three year term of office and may serve not more than two consecutive terms.

(b) Officers Have a three year term of office and may serve not more than two consecutive terms in any Officer role.

(c) No individual may serve more than a maximum of six consecutive years in any combination of Officer roles or any combination of non-Officer member and Officer roles.

(d) Any nomination for election which would breach the above restrictions may be allowed to proceed following a proposal by the Chairman of the meeting being accepted by a two thirds majority vote of members present.

vii. *Nomination and election of candidates*

Prior written nomination of any candidate for appointment as an Officer or Non-Officer member of the Executive Committee at an Annual General Meeting shall normally be required, made by a proposer and seconder from amongst the membership, to be in the hands of the Secretary at least fourteen days before the meeting. Should nominations exceed vacancies, an election shall be conducted by a show of hands. Otherwise, nominations of candidates and the conduct of voting for appointments shall be dealt with in accordance with the Standing Orders of The u3a or, if there are no Standing Orders, as determined by the Executive Committee. If there are insufficient candidates standing for the vacancies, the Chairman of the meeting may appeal for any member present to agree to stand. A vote must be taken and carried by a simple majority for such an appeal for volunteers at the meeting to be permitted. Any willing candidate may then offer himself and be proposed to the meeting for appointment in accordance with the constitution.

viii. *Casual vacancies – Officers and Executive Committee*

The Executive Committee may fill any vacancy arising amongst the Officers or the non-Officer Executive Committee members, until the following Annual General Meeting. A person so appointed may stand for appointment to a first full term at that meeting, provided he is a member of The u3a.

ix. *Co-options to Executive Committee*

The Executive Committee may in addition appoint not more than two co-opted members (who must be members of The u3a), who shall have full voting rights and hold office until the next Annual General Meeting. At that meeting a retiring co-opted member may be proposed for appointment to a first full term on the Executive Committee in accordance with the provisions of this constitution. Provided always that an individual cannot be co-opted more than once.

8. DEFECTS IN APPOINTMENTS

The proceedings of the Executive Committee shall not be invalidated by any vacancy among their number or by any defect in the appointment, election or co-option of a member.

9. CESSATION OF OFFICE – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

A member of the Executive Committee shall cease to hold office if he:

- (a) is disqualified from acting as a member of the Executive Committee by virtue of charity law;
- (b) becomes incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury of managing and administering his own affairs;
- (c) is absent without the permission of the Executive Committee from three consecutive meetings and the Executive Committee resolve that his office be vacated;
- (d) is removed by resolution of the Executive Committee for significant misconduct under the Trustee Code of Conduct, which may be passed only after the completion of the disciplinary procedure set out in that Code;
- (e) notifies in writing to the Secretary a wish to resign (but only if at least seven members of the Executive Committee will remain in office when the notice of resignation is to take effect which shall be at least twenty-one days from the receipt of the notification);
- (f) ceases to be a member of The u3a;
- (g) becomes an officer or non-officer member of the executive committee (or equivalent) of any other U3A.

10. MEETINGS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- i. The Executive Committee shall hold at least four meetings each year.
- ii. Additional meetings may be called at any time by the Secretary on behalf of the Chairman or by any two members of the Committee, upon not less than seven days' notice being given to other members 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.
- iii. The Chairman shall chair the meetings and in his absence a Vice-Chairman shall take over or, if there is no Vice-Chairman present, the members shall choose one of their number to be Chairman of the meeting before any business is transacted.
- iv. There shall be a quorum when at least one-third of the number of members, or three of the Committee members, whichever is the greater, are present at the meeting.
- v. Every decision shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members present and voting on the question, but in the case of equality of votes, the Chairman of the meeting shall have a casting vote in addition to his own vote.
- vi. The Chairman shall ensure that minutes are taken of all its meetings and those of any sub-committees and are available for inspection should a member request it.
- vii. The Committee may from time to time make and alter rules for the conduct of their business, the summoning and conduct of its meetings and custody of documents (including, but not limited to, the use of electronic communications). No rule may be made which is inconsistent with this constitution.
- viii. The Committee may appoint sub-committees including at least one Executive Committee member, for the purpose of performing any function or duty which in the opinion of the Executive Committee would be more conveniently undertaken or carried out by a sub-committee, provided that all acts and proceedings of any sub-committees shall be fully and promptly reported to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall authorise the terms of reference of sub-committees and may alter them from time to time. Sub-committees may make proposals to the Executive Committee, but, unless and only to the extent specifically authorised by the Executive Committee, may neither make decisions nor incur any expenditure.
- ix. No Committee member shall be chargeable or responsible for loss caused by any act done or omitted to be done by him 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 member in question.

11. FINANCE

- i. The financial year of The u3a shall end on such date as the Executive Committee shall decide, provided always that the financial year must be in accordance with applicable charity law requirements and the annual accounts and trustees' report must be submitted to the Charity Commission (if required by law) within relevant statutory time limits.
- ii. The funds of The u3a shall be paid into such accounts as the Executive Committee may open in the name of The u3a. All transactions on such accounts shall be carried out in accordance with the terms of that account as agreed with the account provider and approved and accepted by the Executive Committee from time to time. Only members of the Executive Committee, authorised by the Executive Committee to do so, may arrange and authorise any transaction on any of The u3as accounts and dual authorisation shall be required for all transactions.

- iii. The Executive Committee shall determine the financial controls and procedures to be followed, including but not limited to, controls and procedures in relation to accounts and transactions on them.
- iv. The funds belonging to The u3a shall be applied only in furthering the charitable purposes.
- v. No funds shall be transferred in any way to Executive Committee members, provided that nothing herein shall prevent the payment in good faith of reasonable and proper out of pocket expenses incurred by a member of the Executive Committee in the discharge of his duties.
- vi. All proper costs, charges and expenses incidental to the management of The u3a and membership subscriptions in respect of the Third Age Trust may be defrayed from the funds of The u3a.

12. PROPERTY AND ASSETS

- i. All property and assets of and held on behalf of The u3a shall be applied in accordance with charity law.
- ii. Title to any property and assets shall be held on behalf of The u3a in such manner as the Executive Committee thinks fit from time to time and in ways permitted by charity law.

13. ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING

The Executive Committee shall comply with its obligations under charity law, and observe applicable time limits in the case of any obligations to file items with the Charity Commission, with regard to:

- (a) the keeping of accounting records;
- (b) the preparation of annual statements of account and a trustees' report;
- (c) the audit or independent examination of the statements of account (if required by law);
- (d) the making of a charity annual return to the Charity Commission;
- (e) the transmission of the statement of accounts and trustees' report to the Charity Commission (if required by charity law).

14. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- i. There shall be an Annual General Meeting which shall be held within 12–15 months of the previous AGM.
- ii. Every Annual General Meeting shall be called by the Executive Committee. This formal notice shall give at least twenty-one days' notice to all the members. The notice shall specify that the meeting is the Annual General Meeting and shall set out the business of the meeting, including resolutions to be proposed, and shall provide information about proposals for the election of Officers and non-Officer members of the Executive Committee to be made at that meeting. All members shall be entitled to attend and vote at the meeting.
- iii. The Executive Committee shall present to each Annual General Meeting the trustees' report and annual accounts for the preceding year.
- iv. The Executive Committee shall seek approval for the appointment of any independent examiner or auditor for the accounts from the membership at the Annual General Meeting, if permitted or required to do so by charity law.

15. SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

The Executive Committee may call a Special General Meeting at any time and if at least twenty per cent of the members request such a meeting in writing stating the business to be considered, the Secretary shall call such a meeting. At least twenty-one days' notice shall be given. The notice must state the business to be discussed.

16. NOTICES, COMMUNICATIONS AND PROCEDURE AT GENERAL MEETINGS

- i. Notices of meetings, documents and other communications to a member may be sent by electronic communication provided the relevant member consents to receive them in this way and provides an appropriate electronic address to the Membership Secretary. It is the responsibility of that member to notify the Membership Secretary of any change to that address and to comply with any security and other procedures determined by the Executive Committee for such communications. A member may opt to return to hard copy communications at any time.
- ii. Accidental omission to give notice to any member of any General Meeting (including the AGM) shall not invalidate the proceedings.
- iii. The Secretary or other person specially appointed by the Executive Committee shall keep a full record of proceedings at every General Meeting.
- iv. There shall be a quorum when at least twenty per cent of the members are present at any General Meeting.
- v. 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 Executive Committee may direct provided twenty-one 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 a quorum.
- vi. The Chairman of The u3a shall be the Chairman of any General Meeting at which he is present. In the absence of the Chairman, the Executive Committee members present shall have the power to elect a Chairman for the meeting.
- vii. If there is a tied vote the Chairman of the meeting has a second or casting vote.

17. ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- i. Subject to the following provisions of this clause, the constitution may be altered in any way 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 details of the alterations proposed.
- ii. The prior consent of the Third Age Trust must be requested for any proposed alterations to The u3a's constitution. The u3a may proceed with the proposed changes:
 - (a) At any time after specific consent has been received from the Third Age Trust; or
 - (b) When four weeks have passed since the consent request was delivered and the Third Age Trust has not notified The u3a of any objection to the proposals.
- iii. If The u3a is a registered charity, no amendment may be made to clause 3 (the charitable purposes) without the prior consent in writing of the Charity Commission.
- iv. No amendment may be made which would have the effect of making The u3a cease to be a charity at law.

The Executive Committee shall ensure a copy of any amendment made under this clause is promptly sent to the Charity Commission if The u3a is registered.

18. DISSOLUTION

- i. If the Executive 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 twenty-one 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 Executive Committee shall have power to realise any assets held by or on behalf of The u3a. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to:
 - (a) Any one or more local U3As, which are charities and have charitable purposes similar to those of The u3a, as determined by the members of The u3a; or
 - (b) To the Third Age Trust (registered charity in England and Wales no. 288007).
- ii A copy of the statement of accounts and relevant reports, for the final accounting period of The u3a, must be sent to the Charity Commission if The u3a is registered.