

Summary Report of 13th December 2023 meeting

This may be shared with all u3a members. It is recommended National & Regional Trustees distribute it to all u3as in their area for information and engagement.

Please note that official notes are the true record of discussions and decisions taken at Pilot Council meetings. This is a brief summary of the main topics discussed and should not be taken as an authoritative statement. If you require any further detail about any item, please contact your National / Regional Trustee.

This was an online meeting with 25 members present and the main topics discussed were as follows:

- **Confidentiality.** All members were reminded of the need to ensure that documents associated with the Pilot Council remain confidential to the respective members. Documents are often in a draft format and can change over time leading to possible confusion if they are not read and understood in context.
- **Road Shows. Fit For The Future.** The programme and draft documentation for consulting with u3as and networks on proposals to introduce a u3a Council and revised u3a Board was outlined. All u3as and networks will receive a document and Q&A explaining the proposal in January, following final approval by the Steering Group (10th Jan.) and the Board (18th Jan.) All will have an opportunity to hear an online or face to face presentation and ask questions until April 2024. Comments will then be consolidated and considered by the Steering Group who will make a recommendation to the Board for a final decision. If the Board considers there is broad support from u3as for such a proposal, then a resolution will be submitted for consideration and voting at the AGM in October 2024.
- **Draft Papers.** Members discussed draft proposals for Terms of Reference for the Pilot Council and the Strategy Groups as well as the Role Description for Council Members. These are working documents which will be finalised over time. No decisions are yet hard and fast.
- **Risk Register.** A paper on additions to the Trust Risk Register necessitated by the formation of a Council and the associated groups was tabled for information and comment.
- **The Model Constitution.** As requested by a previous meeting of the PC, the Governance committee have drafted changes to the Model Constitution and the accompanying notes and these were approved by the Board on 8th December 2023. The purpose is to ease the restrictions on u3a Trustee terms of service in line with charity legal requirements, This may assist recruitment. The amended clauses are as follows:
 - u3as may propose a resolution at an EGM or AGM to delete clause 16(8) from the model constitution. (*This is the requirement for a gap of one year between each three year term of office. Clause 16(9) annual re-election remains.*)

- Clause 21: delete the advice note attached which states: “no person may be proposed for appointment or serve as an officer or a non-officer of the executive committee if they are currently serving as an officer or member of the executive committee of any other u3a”.
- Clause 16(2) states that u3as “should” rather than “must”, have four officers. The guidance note is to be clarified to allow a u3a to operate with three officers, a chairperson and a treasurer plus one other.

It is emphasised that these measures should be considered as *force majeure* not as recommendations.

- **Friends Extra.** Members were updated on the progress of this scheme which is now expected to be ready for launch in February 2024.
- **Trust Budget and the Council.** It is expected that the budget drafting between the Board and the Council will be a two way process with both having input. The present budgeting system was explained to members and the Projects paper for 2024 tabled. Any future Council will work within the current budgeting system.

The PC went into breakout room to discuss the following:

- **u3a 500K:** possible ways to implement the resolution passed at the 2023 AGM. Among other points, it was concluded that this is a different aim for the Trust and for individual u3as. The latter are operationally independent and must make their own decisions. However, they should be reminded that they need to recruit in order to keep their membership static let alone increase it. The role of the Trust is seen as a marketing one – to enhance the profile of the u3a movement as a whole.
- **Recruiting Trustees and volunteers at u3as.** This is an ongoing problem and the various new suggestions will be noted and implemented where possible.
- **Draft Paper on Grants.** A revised grants programme, approved by the Board subject to comment by the PC was reviewed. The programme recognises a number of limitations of the current policy and focuses on supporting start-ups, replacing old u3a branded materials, encouraging interest-based activities in u3as and broadening the opportunity for raising the profile through large regional or national events. The PC approved the paper but requested that some mention should be included to allow for two or more u3as to run joint events. This has been forwarded to Member Services for consideration.
- **Dementia WG.** A small, short-term working group is being formed to establish some guidelines for u3as to address the issues associated with members suffering from dementia. If anyone has particular experience in the area and would be prepared to help we would like to hear from you. For this or any other queries, please email council@u3a.org.uk