



Learn, laugh, live

S.E. Northumbria Chairs' and Business Secretaries' Network Meeting 6th February 2020 **A Brief Summary**

The groups contact welcomed everyone to the meeting and suggested that everyone introduced themselves. There were representatives from the following U3As: Consett, Hartlepool, Ponteland, Tynedale, Whickham, Whitley Bay, Jesmond and Newcastle. Also present were Mo Brown, Regional Acting Chair and the Regional Trustee, Sandi Rickerby.

Updates from the Third Age Trust

One of the roles of the Trust is to help with 'start-ups' (recently Blyth, Jesmond and Cramlington); help sort out any problems whether small or slightly bigger; deliver Trust and Regional Workshops. There is a 'Succession Planning' workshop on March 18th at the Royal Station Hotel in Newcastle at 10.30. This will discuss ways of getting members involved in joining the Committee and also explore ways to get members interested in helping to run groups or doing smaller necessary jobs.

The Third Age Trust Website is being updated constantly. On it are e.g. samples of policies on Diversity, Inclusion, Safeguarding and Finance. There is also a Group Leaders' Handbook which can be adapted as necessary. It was suggested that all trustees should read the available documentation, rather than just the Chair as there should be collective responsibility.

The rebranding is going ahead, with the 'strapline' Learn, Laugh, Live. The phrase 'University of the Third Age' need not be included.

The A.G.M. and National Conference this year will have the title '2020 and Beyond – Positive Aging'.

The National Office is now in Blackfriars, London, temporarily, due to a lack of accommodation. Not all personnel are there both morning and afternoon so sometimes it is difficult to get a response. However, they are looking for new premises in the same area.

A membership survey has been carried out every ten years and the results are on the website. It is worth reading as it throws up some interesting facts. The average age of members is now 73, with a 70/30 ratio of women to men. Currently there are 444,000 members countrywide with 30,000 interest groups, with the NE having the lowest growth rate in the country. Regional reports will be available towards the end of February.

25th Anniversary of Northumbria Region U3A

Ian McCannah, the national chair, will attend the Regional Meeting on 29th April and hopefully the 25th Regional Anniversary Celebration on 11th May. This will be held upstairs at the Catalyst (National Innovation Centre for Aging), Newcastle.

Arrangements for the celebration are 'a work in progress' but about 100 members from across the region should be able to attend. There will be speakers and entertainment with any suggestions welcome.

There is the possibility for different U3As to have a guided tour of the centre before May.

National U3A Day 3rd June

This is the first time such an event has been held and it falls in Volunteer Week. Its aim is to raise the profile of the U3A and challenge any negative perceptions through good use of the media and holding events with a more visible presence. There is a planner published on the website as well as support and guidance booklets, sample letters with some free merchandising products. Other merchandising goods will be available to order after March.

In Newcastle, where there will be three Shared Learning Projects. The U3A will take over the Discovery Museum the Great North Museum and one of the art galleries. There will be a meeting about this on March 16th at the Discovery Museum. Look to regional website for further info.

It is hoped to have some university students to help with the online announcements e.g. publicity, demonstrating tweeting and Instagram etc.

Interest Groups

There was a general discussion about different interest groups in the local U3As. A list of recommended speakers will be published by the Region. Dr. Ray Lowry was mentioned as being highly recommended. Jeff Armstrong, of the regional committee, is collating a list of regional speakers. He can be contacted through the regional website.

Members were thanked for their attendance and valuable input.

The potential date for the next meeting will be made available some time, next week.

Meeting closed at 12.30

Thanks to Liz Ring for producing the summary!