

Pilot Council Meeting: 17th May 2023

This Summary Report may be used and shared with any u3a members.

This was an online meeting and the first of this model of the Pilot Council to be trialled.

- **Reasons for the Pilot Council:** to test out a new model for governance of the Trust which would a) allow u3as to have greater input into policy and decision making through their elected representatives, b) enable national and regional representatives to have more time to concentrate on national and regional activities by relieving them of the financial and legal responsibilities required of the Board and c) thereby allowing the formation of a much smaller Board elected for their expertise in matters concerning compliance with both charity and limited company requirements.
- **Council Responsibilities:** If it is agreed to form a Council it would have a representative role as well as a consultative one. It would also have decision making powers on matters concerning programmes run within the movement and receive and act on ideas, initiatives and updates.
- **Communication:** it is vital that the Council engages with u3as across the movement and a long discussion was held on how this might be achieved. It is recognised that there is room for improvement in the present system. This will be discussed further at the next meeting.
- **Constitutions:** it is agreed that a major problem confronting many u3a is the recruitment of volunteers to serve on committees. Although a great deal of advice is available on the u3a website, the suggestion that the easing of some of the requirements in the model constitution might help, was accepted.. The proposal from the Governance Committee to produce a draft paper in time for consideration the next meeting was also welcomed.
- **Paid Tutors:** this subject had been raised by several u3as **and** it was agreed that the guidance on having paid tutors needed review. Members were asked to look at the current advise in order for there to be an informed discussion at the next meeting.
- **Networks:** some suggestions had been put forward concerning the role of networks in the governance of the movement. It was agreed that networks had an important role to play but they should not be a layer of governance. However, Network Link would have representation on the Council and retain a close collaboration.
- **Future Committee Structure.** The current committee structure, which has existed for a number of years, is under review and the Board has agreed to examine how it can be amended to reflect current trends. Initially the Development, Learning, Equality and Communications Committees will report progress to the Pilot Council, rather than the Board. These will include progress reports from the various sub-committees and working groups currently in existence. Meanwhile, proposals will be developed for new groups to become effective in 2024. These will be more closely aligned with the strategic aims of the Trust. The Governance and Finance Committees will remain unaffected by the changes and will continue to report to the Board.
- **Committee Reports:**
 - **Development committee** has been updating the online toolkit; researching methods of accessing company retirement workshops; revising the advice on new u3a start-ups.

- **Learning committee** is constantly reviewing events and learning priorities; considering input from members and subject advisors; asking what members want – central to the movement; defining what is education / learning relative to the Object clause in the constitution.
- **CEAC** is concentrating on raising awareness of the movement; establishing an APPG; continuing with Future Lives project as well as Push Back against agism; they have a Festival WG; revisiting the project to have u3a Ambassadors; looking at social influencing e.g. Bank closures (joining with Age UK); identifying experts for research projects.
- **EDI** are gradually recruiting TVs from each region and nation to deliver EDI workshops – still need ones from West Midlands, Wales and Scotland; a new presentation is being developed which will be trialled at the end of June.
- **Festival 2024** Building on the success of the Hadrian's Wall project, work is in hand to consider a weekend Festival 2024 showcasing u3a activities, with music, tours and tournaments. York University is a possible venue and 19-21 July 2024 is currently pencilled in. This topic will be an agenda item for the next meeting.
- **Reporting:** the chair of the Pilot Council will report progress to the Steering Group meeting on 24th May.
- **Email address:** the u3a Office will set up a dedicated address to which u3as may send suggestions or requests for items they would like the Council to consider.
- **Matters for the next meeting:** the following have been identified as items to be discussed on 14th June. Any u3a wishing to have an input should do so via their Regional or National Trustee or directly to council@u3a.org.uk
 - Communication strategy
 - Possible amendments to the model constitution
 - Review of guidelines on paid tutors
 - Plans for the 2024 Festival
 - Possible shape of a future u3a Conference
 - u3a week – what would u3as like

Please note that official minutes are the true record of discussions and recommendations at Pilot Council meetings. This is a 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 Trustee.

SB/19/05/23