

Summary of Topics Discussed at SWN Meetings in 2023/24

Sharing best practice is top of every Agenda.

Overall Picture

- Whilst u3as are back to 'normal' after Covid but it is a mixed picture:
 - Most are generally doing ok but some are struggling.
 - Most are growing slowly but some are not growing at all.
- Virtually every u3a has the problem of getting committee members and Conveners.
 - Existing Committee have been in the role for a long time and are coming to the end of their tenure. Younger members need to come along and replace them.
 - Sharing roles is a good idea.
 - Creating roles outside Committee – some members don't like the idea of 'being on Committee' but would take responsibility.

Social and Recruitment Activities

- Ideas for Open Days, Coffee Mornings, Garden Parties, Summer Parties and Christmas Parties.
 - Good idea to seek advice from u3as who have run Open Days in past 12 months. Running Open Days and similar events can be hard work but those u3as that have run them find that it is a good way of attracting new members as well as publicising their u3a in the local community

Activity Groups

- Ideas for new Activity Groups

- Many new Groups formed though some have fallen by the wayside
- Sharing Activity Groups between u3as can work.

Other Topics

- All u3as are autonomous independent charitable organisations and can set their own rules within their charitable obligations.
- What is the ideal size for a u3a. Should we limit the size – not a good idea? Need an influx of new blood coming into u3a.
- Discussion on lack of u3as in certain areas of South Wales.
- Only need Health and Safety policy if employ people.
- U3as could struggle to have single sex groups such as a Men's Shed or a Women's Group because we are not set up as a single sex Charity like the WI.
- Beacon recommended by those u3as using it. Demonstration available so u3as not using Beacon can make up their own mind.
- If u3a folds the disposal of funds is governed by what is stated in their Constitution. The funds often go to an adjacent u3a.
- Brief discussion on TAT AGM Resolutions in September 2023. Each u3a will vote on these.
- Discussion of the Chairs Forum. Favourable reports from those who have attended.

Monthly Topics

- Contacting your u3a – phone, domains etc
- Welcome and Induction of New Members
- Gift Aid
- Card Readers
- Membership of more than one u3a
- Third Age Matters – Digital or Hard Copy

SWN Website

- List of speakers on the SWN website. See SWN Sharing Activities.
 - U3a members cannot charge but can ask for expenses

 <https://u3asites.org.uk/walesu3a/page/10321>

- Any SWN u3a can advertise special events such as Open Days
- Lot of other useful information on our website including:
 - Links to information pages on the TAT website.
 - Links to TAT Courses
 - York Festival in July 2024.

Wales Trustee

- Site Builder replacement, SiteWorks, on trial with two u3as.
- Grants are available for special events.
- Hilary stood down on 31st March 2023. Karen green was elected in her place.
- Visit from Karen and TAT Chair Liz Thackray in October 2023
 - Over the week they visited a variety of different groups, coffee mornings, and afternoon tea and lunches some allowing opportunity for chat with members others less so.
 - Was the visit worth it? Mixed feelings - half yes, half 'not sure'.
- Karen resigned in January 2024. No reason was given.
- A new Trustee is on process of being nominated

Fit for the Future Presentation

- Presentation from Liz on attended by 13 SWN u3as.
- Links are shown of the main page of the SWN website

Summary

- There are 27 u3as in the SWN (and Pontarddulais would like to join us).
- We can make a big impact on TAT if we speak together as a group rather than as individual u3as.
- We have started doing this following the problems following the TAT AGM but if few u3as come to our meetings our impact is reduced.
- And if we don't have a South Wales Network.