

NOTES OF THE PILOT COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 11:00 A.M.

Welcome and Introduction

Susie Berry welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised to those attendees who have not attended before, that as it is a Pilot Council, meeting notes will be available. Any proposals agreed, will be taken forward to the Trust Board.

Agenda Item One: Update on Pilot Council Progress

John Bent provided a power point presentation on the following:

- a) Why Change is Needed
 - ☐ Complex legislation, (HMRC requirements)
 - ☐ More tasks for the staff/trustees
 - ☐ Board appointments do not serve the skills required for trustees.
 - ☐ Regional Trustees have onerous tasks, particularly financial wellbeing for their regions.
- b) Proposed Key Changes
 - ☐ Pilot Council, conduit between members to the Trust Board
 - ☐ Listen to members
 - ☐ Appoint board members re skills required
 - ☐ Working arrangements between Council and Board. A Steering Group has been established to take this forward.
- c) Summary of the Aims
 - ☐ Creation of the Council
 - ☐ Creation of a smaller Board
 - ☐ Representative Council – hear from u3as (i.e. proposals)
- d) Progress
 - ☐ Steering Group set up
 - ☐ Pilot Council – 2 meetings taken place
 - ☐ Communication – improved. (A summary of the content of the Pilot Council meetings provided.)
 - ☐ Mailings to u3as.
 - ☐ Evaluation sent to attendees.

Susie Berry also provided an update on other progress:

- a) Communication: Trustees will be undertaking social media training soon and communications from regional trustee, will have their name and their picture.
- b) Model Constitution: Thanks to u3as for their input and it is hoped that this will be presented at this year's AGM.
- c) Committee Reports: A report from the Development Committee, will accompany the notes of today's meeting and the EDI Committee will show an on-line presentation on 2nd October at 10:00 a.m.

(Action)

- d) Meeting dates for 23/24: a) 13 December 2023 (on-line); 28 February 2024 (in-person); 22 May 2024 (on-line); 18 September 2024 (in-person) and 11 December 2024 (on-line).
- e) PC meeting notes: will be available for onwards distribution and a summary of the Trust Board to be available to PC members.
- f) Submitting agenda item for PC meeting: Regional and national trustees to encourage their members to do this, via email address: council@u3a.org.uk.
- g) Channels to feedback to the movement after PC meetings: Trustees/PC members to distribute the meeting notes to their regions/individual members.

Questions from attendees:

- a) Skills for Directors – details can be found on the Charity Commission website.
- b) Communication a priority, why has CEAC been disbanded? Three committees are reforming (Learning, CEAC and Development) as the governance structure is being revised. The aim is that these three Committees will report to the Council (if established) and the emphasis of the committees will be on a ‘task and finish groups’.
- c) Clarity needs to be given to where the Council will fit in, bearing in mind that there is the Trust Board, TATTL and Office. Purpose of the Council is that it will hear from u3as and not a governance emphasis. There are two papers available, one outlining the timeline and another relating to the progress of ‘Fit for the Future’ project, the latter available on the Trust website, later in the week.
- d) Communication with Pilot Council members between meetings – it was agreed that this will be discussed at the next Steering Group meeting, (as there are GDPR implications, and the Council has not been formalised). A recommendation will be made and brought back to a future PC meeting. It was noted that there is a Facebook page (FFTF) where members can sign-up to, as it is a discussion forum.

(Action)

Agenda Item Two: Council Representation. (Group Discussion/Feedback)

Group One:

- Not all u3as pass on messages to committees/members, via Regional Trustees.
- Member Recruitment: blueprint, start with what might be improved. Large majority on the Council to be elected – discuss this and u3as have a say.

Group Two:

- Getting u3as a voice.
- Making it worthwhile.
- Local u3as don’t feel part of the bigger picture, more local a little island.
- Individual members don’t have idea of committee structure.
- Local newsletter, encompass national news.
- Not all u3as contribute to TAM matters.

- Represent: election is a long process, better idea of the Pilot Council.
- Trustees doing a good job to 'spread the word', representative – supporting a volunteer.
- 'Pilot' is a confusing name – another name.

Group Three:

- Opinions: step before that, don't acknowledge a link to the Trust.
- Acknowledge a link to another u3a, not part of the National body.
- Apathy.
- Important to listen, regional focus groups, not able to engage everyone.
- Broadcasting – all one-way, not a conversation, 2-way communication.
- Surveys: establish the relevance of the topic, why the information is wanted.
- Recruitment: clear roles and training.
- Representative views: will be hugely valuable.
- Regional election, how do they represent. Is it regional or urban size, background or just regional?
- Aware: distance to travel.
- 2 Reps per region – elected somehow.

Group Four:

- FFTF Facebook – useful 2-way conversation.
- Message: existing communication channel, newsletter, push that, every member can join.
- TAM – bigger communication channel, signpost is a 2-way communication.
- Face-to-face communication, telling people what is happening (hymn sheet), consistent i.e. presentation agreed to send to u3a, via Trustee (a reference.)
- Recruitment: Council members, flow from first point – awareness. Look at the role, less onerous and more attractive.
- Balance: board member/regional representation. Regional representative: elected to speak on behalf of the region. Turn u3a voice for the region.

Group Five:

- Communication: problem, multiple channels. Prioritise the discussion points, how do we know what they are.
- Need to communicate what our members are thinking. Advice Line might help. Summary from website, click on, help with this.
- Need to understand our members. Input from multiple sources – help to concentrate on.
- Sending to individuals. Networks: commitment to it, support/advocate networks.
- Noticeboard – monthly meetings.
- Recruitment: role has to be clear. Regional Trustees' role is quite un-popular. Communicate: role to be more exciting. Not Regional Trustee to be PC

representative. Elected. Council role/board role clear. Council role to be attractive and clear.

- Personalities: What has the Council got.
- Website: submit ideas via this, not easy to see information about the Council – a channel to do this.

Agenda Item Four: Advertising and Promoting the Movement Nationally

Why:

- Purpose, increase name recognition
- Diversity
- Increase membership
- Attract a younger age group
- Distinct – attractive u3a
- Image, not have a distinct and attractive image, i.e. appear stuffy, old fashion.
- Promotion poster, done via ClipArt.

What:

- Brand Centre: new brand, attractive. Need to register before accessing the Brand Centre.
- Brand not sold to u3as.
- New brand – colourful.
- Need to reinforce the value of the umbrella organisation.
- Social Media: attractive/active.
- Partnership – dynamic
- Charles/Camilla/Idris Elba – patron/ambassador
- Recognition: participate in the aging debate.
- Image: now and in the future.

Agenda Item Five: Research the demographics of our current membership and what encourages/prevents membership.

- CEAC undertakes research on a 10-year cycle. This was five years' ago need to commission another one, as the world has change. Results – ageing membership, image – grey hair (prevents membership).
- Stock photos – reinforces image.
- Research between 60-70, saying wrong for them, average age: 74.
- Change promotion/image
- How to promote differently, i.e., French conversation, walking groups.

Agenda Item Six: Attracting a more Diverse Membership

- Define what is diversity; education, age, gender?
- Reach out to publize u3a, using various channels, different ways to reach people.
- Find examples of u3a who have been successful and how they did it.

- U3a Haringey, did a survey, results from it. u3a belong to another minority and why they joined.
- Use other organisations, have meetings with them and learn from them.
- Let people know we are there – make a loud noise.
- Explain what u3a stands for.
- Avoid making impression u3a for older people.
- Funds might be available, where venue may not cater for access needs etc – can promote this.
- Website – positive image, different approach for local areas.
- Provide publicity in other languages
- Haringey/London u3a leaflet – include in the notes of the meeting. (Action)

(NB: It was noted that the research, mentioned above, the results are on the Trust's website.)

Agenda Item 7: Paid Tutors

- This financial advice is on the website.
- Strongly against it.
- Learning organisation.
- Not employing someone.
- Advice: physical activity – employ from gym and has own insurance.
- At the beginning had paid tutors.
- Independent charities and followed the advice and recommendations, I.e. national insurance/tax.
- Insurance, UK tax paying and tax reference. Public liability insurance on an annual basis.
- Independent committee to decide.
- Growth – looking for this, groups like this is an opportunity, gyms don't do 'age friendly'.

Discussion points from the feedback:

- The discussions taking place re next generation, may involve 'paid tutors'.
- Turning u3a into a different way.
- Legitimate payment – where do you stop doing this.
- Future list of discussion: paid tutors, to be included at a later date.
- Boundaries already exist on this subject.

Agenda Item 8: National Awareness Campaigns.

- People ask what u3a is.
- In order to explain u3a, ten minutes to explain, too long.
- Get u3a to 'trip off the tongue'.
- National awareness – boom radio.

- National awareness – in fragmentation of audience. National activities need to be persistent.
- Ambassadors – good way to promote u3a, their profile.
- Focus – local basis I.e. focus groups I.e. bridge, could it be a national activity I.e. pickle boarding (?) – good way to increase membership.
- Community resilience – contributing to the debate and contribution national/local level.
- Community venues becoming expensive or lost venues. u3a participating with their councils and national level. Got to be more meaningful u3as, key integrative approach. National promotion plan and timing, what we can do now, next year and year after. Consistency/persistency.

In summary:

- Clear and concise profile – one sentence; more detail; more detail.
- Concise: different audience; campaigns; plans.

Agenda Item 9: Festival Presentation

Margaret Fiddes provided an overview of the festival planned for July 2024, at York University.

The following emerged from the discussion:

- A communication plan has been agreed to promote the event to the u3as.
- WhatsApp group will be set up to help with the planning of the event.
- Looking at a name for the event, to attract the national press. PC members were encouraged to put forward suggestions. (Action)
- The Quilters' Guild is based in York, and it was suggested that they could be approached to participate in the craft programme.

Agenda Item Ten: National Strategy

Sam Mauger gave an overview of the background and progress made regarding the national strategy, under the following headings:

- Background
- Challenges
- Four strands of the strategy
- Membership inclusion
- Four cornerstone elements
- Emerging and;
- Next Steps.

Agenda Item 11: u3a Courses Paper

Members considered the paper prepared by Richard Peoples and in principle, they supported the content of the document. It was agreed that a recommendation is made by the PC to the Trust Board to promote this concept to u3as.

(Action)

Agenda Item 12: Developing a National Speaker List

Members felt that developing and managing a list, was not doable and they saw the problems involved. Therefore, they did not endorse this concept.

Agenda Item 13: Visits by senior people in the Trust to local u3as.

It was noted that some Trust staff have attended meetings/event locally and that Liz Thackray has visited most of the regions. The response from the PC to this proposal was to encourage them to invite their Regional Trustee to events.

Item 14: Social Prescribing.

There was discussion around this subject, and it was noted that the Trust Board has set up a Working Group on this.

There was also an additional discussion regarding dementia, as some u3as are experiencing issues from members who have dementia and are impacting on the group. The following action points were agreed:

- SB to set up a working group, consisting of PC members to consider this matter and make recommendations.
- To have this as an agenda item at a future meeting.

(Action)

Agenda Item 15: Feedback on format for the day

- Cabaret style layout was preferred,
- All meeting notes to be distributed to attendees, along with copies of presentations
- In-person meeting, preferred to on-line.
- Positive meeting, good agenda and contributions from members.
- Good discussions and decision making.
- All papers to be circulated in advance of meetings.
- Venue: may need to consider a different one.