



## Wigtownshire u3a Induction Pack

Information for new Trustees (Honorary Officers and Executive Committee) to enable them to familiarise themselves with their new role, their legal responsibilities, our u3a, and the overall organisational structure of the u3a movement.

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### Introduction

You have become a committee member – Welcome! But you are wondering what you have let yourself in for.

**The most important thing is that the other members of the committee will be happy to offer their support and encouragement as you learn about the running of the Wigtownshire u3a.**

Wigtownshire u3a, like every u3a, is an independent self-governed association with its own constitution.

All committee members automatically become trustees of our u3a.

The information pack is designed to help you understand your role and responsibilities. Please read it and discuss it with other committee members to clarify any queries that you may have.

Wigtownshire u3a is affiliated to the national organisation, the Third Age Trust. Useful information is available on the national u3a website <https://www.u3a.org.uk/> You will need to create an account on the national website to access this information (<https://u3a.org.uk/advice>).

You will need a username – which will be provided by the Membership Secretary (job title, rather than your given name) and you create a 10-character password.

### Wigtownshire u3a Constitution and Committee Structure

The Wigtownshire u3a Constitution sets out the objectives of our u3a and describes the arrangements that should be in place to meet those objectives. It includes information on how the committee is structured and how it conducts committee business.

The committee consists of four Honorary Officers (Chairman, Vice-Chair, Membership Secretary and Treasurer) and up to eight committee members.

The Constitution is on our website: <https://u3asites.org.uk/wigtownshire/links>



## **Trustee eligibility, duties and responsibilities**

Trustees must:

- Be eligible to be a Trustee, as mentioned in the Constitution.
- Comply with the u3a's Constitution, and the law.
- Act in the best interests of the u3a.
- Manage the u3a's resources responsibly.
- Act with reasonable skill and care.
- Ensure the u3a is accountable.

All committee members must comply with the requirements summarised above and meet the eligibility requirements.

## **Trustee Code of Conduct**

U3a Trustees are committed to working together as a team and are collectively responsible for controlling the management and administration of the u3a.

Trustees should make themselves aware of guidance in the Constitution.

Trustees are expected to know, follow, and promote the principles of the u3a movement.

The u3a movement is non-religious and non-political and has three main principles:

### **1. The Third Age Principle**

- Membership of a u3a is open to all in their third age, which is defined not by a particular age, but by a period of life in which full time employment has ceased.
- Members promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging to a u3a.
- Members should do all they can to ensure that people wanting to join u3a can do so.

### **2. The Self-help Learning Principle**

- Members form interest groups covering as wide a range of topics and activities as they desire; by the members for the members.
- No qualifications are sought or offered. Learning for its own sake, with enjoyment being the prime motive, not qualifications or awards.
- There is no distinction between the learners and the teachers; they are all u3a members.

### **3. The Mutual Aid Principle**

- Each u3a is a mutual aid organisation, operationally independent but a member of the Third Age Trust, which requires adherence to the guiding principles of the u3a movement.
- No payments are made to members for services rendered to any u3a.
- Each u3a is self-funded with membership subscriptions and costs kept as low as possible.
- Outside financial assistance should only be sought if it does not imperil the integrity of the u3a movement.

## **Structure of the u3a movement**

The Third Age Trust (TAT) was founded in 1982, to 'enable older people to organise their own learning'. TAT is both a limited company and a registered charity and provides educational and administrative support to local u3a's. It is managed by a National Executive committee. The TAT is the UK's national u3a representative and deals with u3a public relations, as well as producing u3a merchandise.



## **Committee Meeting Minutes**

The minutes of the committee meetings, including AGMs, are available on the website:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/wigtownshire/links>

## **Annual Report and Accounts**

The latest Annual Report and Accounts are available on the website:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/wigtownshire/page/112629> these are password protected, just ask the Chair or Membership Secretary for these details.

Trustees must always act in the best interest of the u3a and the u3a movement, strive to uphold its reputation and never do anything which could bring the u3a or the u3a movement into disrepute or expose it to undue risk.

Trustees must use the resources of our u3a responsibly and only to further our stated charitable purpose.

Trustees are expected to reflect the current organisational policies of our u3a, regardless of whether it conflicts with their personal views.

Trustees are expected to abide by our u3a's governance procedures and practices.

Trustees must never derive any pecuniary benefit (including benefits in kind) from being a Trustee and must notify the Chair of any gifts received.

Trustees should inform the Chair before accepting an invitation to speak on behalf of our u3a.

Trustees are expected to treat fellow committee members courteously at all times and maintain a respectful attitude towards the opinions of others.

Organisational, committee and individual confidentiality must be respected at all times.

## **Insurance**

Charity Trust Management Liability Insurance Cover for our u3a is provided via the affiliation with the national Third Age Trust. An overview of the insurance cover is available on the national website. <https://www.u3a.org.uk/edocman-downloads/insurance-cover-note-2024?highlight=WyJpbN1cmFuY2UiXQ==>

Trustees are covered by this insurance provided that they act within the context of our constitution and act with due care and diligence.

## **Principles of the u3a movement**

### ***Our Vision***

Our Vision is to make lifelong learning, through the experience of the u3a, a reality for all third agers.

### ***Our Mission***

Our Mission declares our purpose as an organisation and serves as the standard against which we weigh our actions and decisions. It is to:

- Facilitate the growth of the u3a movement.
- Provide support for management and learning in u3as.
- Raise the profile of the u3a movement.
- Promote the benefits of learning in later life through self-help learning.



## **Policy Documents**

Wigtownshire u3a policy documents are available on the website:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/wigtownshire/page/132228>

Copies of the policy documents are included in the Induction folder. Generally speaking, by default, all policies are as recommended on the Third Age Trust website.

## **Regular Meetings**

Committee meetings are held monthly, on the second Thursday of each month, at 1pm in the Machars Action Wigtown.

The monthly open meetings for members take place on the last Friday in the month in the Wigtown County Buildings, on the first floor at 10am. Except for September, due to the Wigtown Book Festival and in December it is a Social meeting.

The Annual General Meeting takes place on the last Friday of February.