

Chairs' Forum: Third Age Trust's governance proposals

March 2024 survey

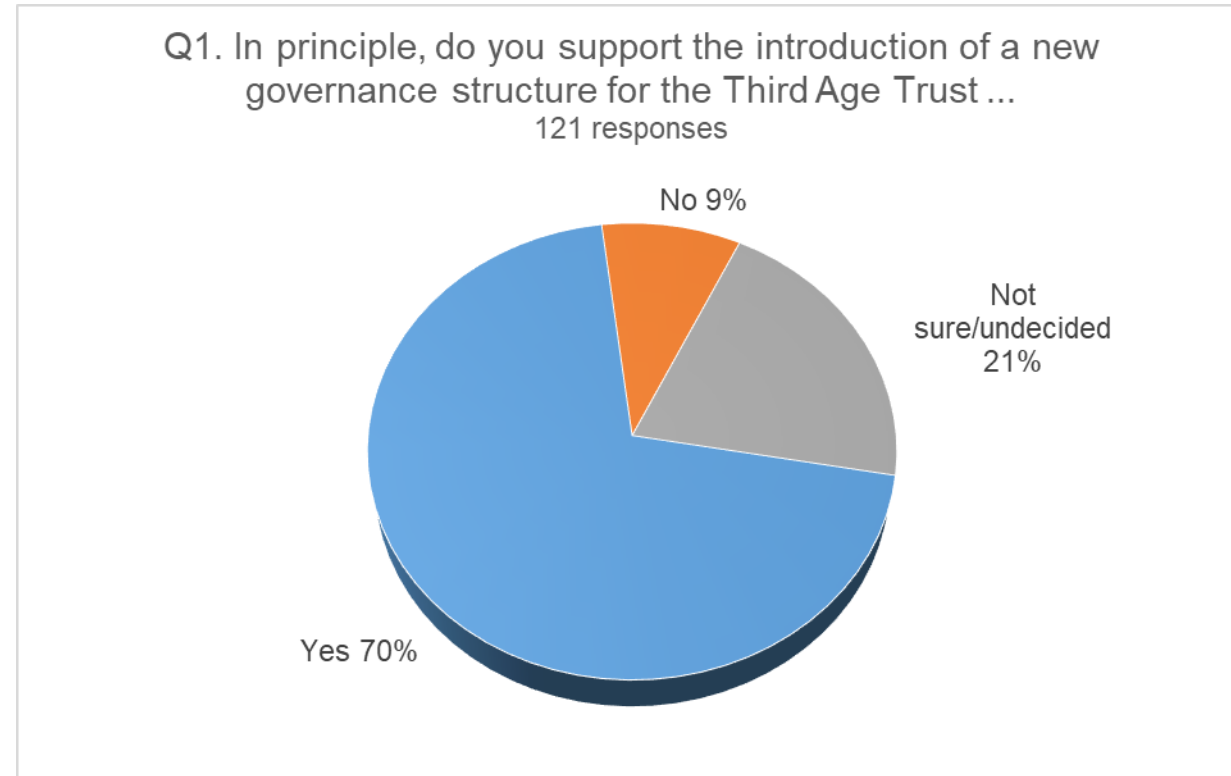
121 responses

(28% response rate)

Over two-thirds are in support of the principle

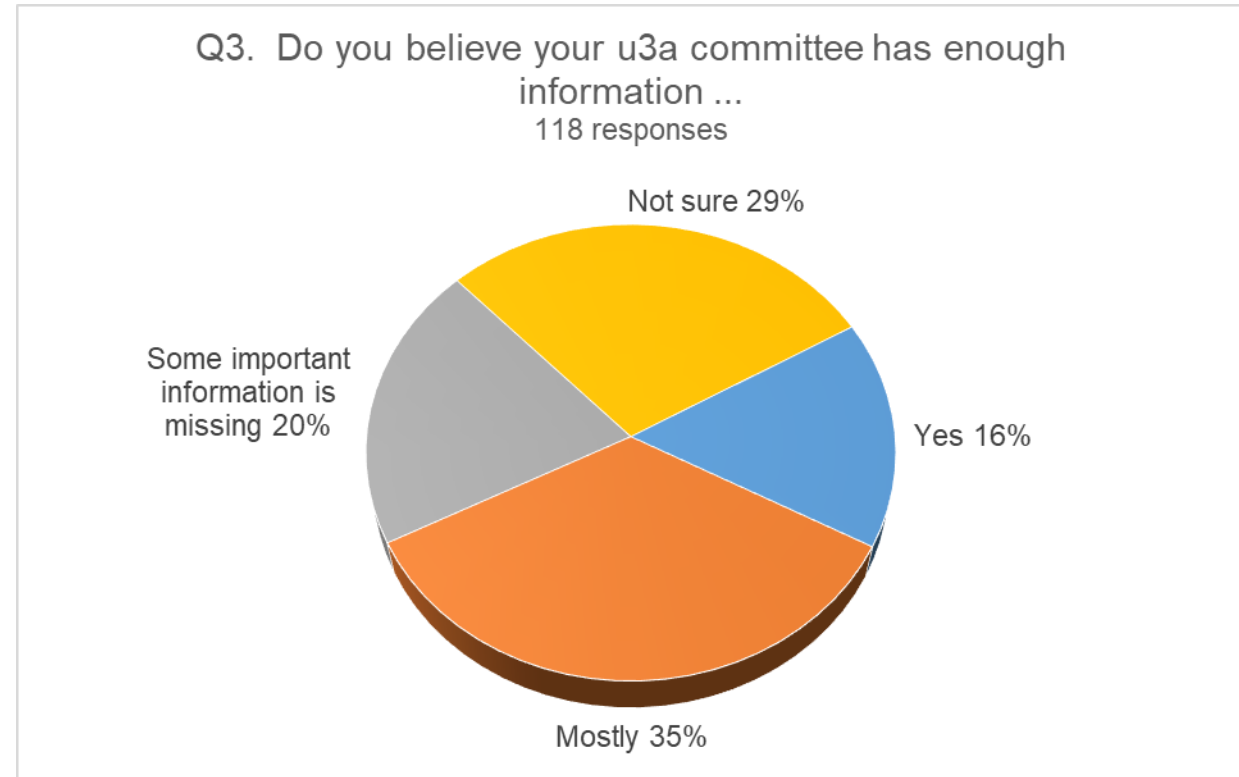
Q1. In principle, do you support the introduction of a new governance structure for the Third Age Trust comprising:

- A smaller, skills/experience-based Board elected by u3as nationwide that approves the annual budget and strategy, and is focussed on oversight and compliance; and,
- A Council, elected by regions, nations and networks, focussed on identifying u3a-related issues, and contributing to the development of the u3a movement's future strategy and the Trust's annual budgeting process



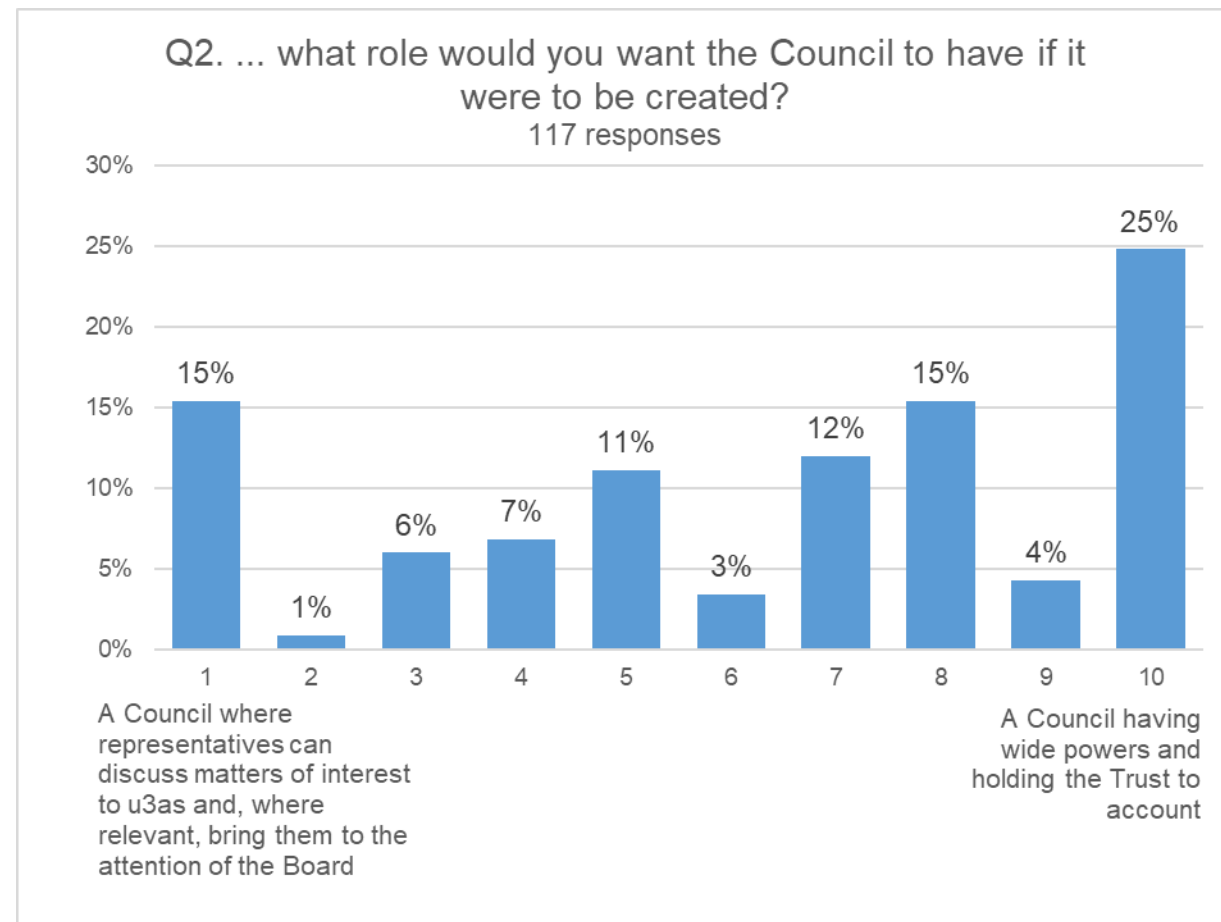
Half believe they have enough or most of the information to make a decision

Q3. Do you believe your u3a committee has enough information about how the proposed governance structure of a Board and a Council will work in practice so as to decide how to vote on it at the October AGM?



Not quite half want the Council to have significant powers (scores of 8-10)

Q2. Whilst there are a range of overlapping possibilities, two differing views of the role of the proposed Council are beginning to emerge. Recognising that the Board is legally accountable for the activities of the Third Age Trust, what role would you want the Council to have if it were to be created?



Summary

1. More than two-thirds of respondents, in principle, are in favour of the proposed new governance structure (70%) but a significant number are not sure or are undecided (21%)
2. Half believe they have enough or most information (51%) but a significant number say they do not have the information needed or there is some important information missing (20%)
3. Not quite half want the Council to have significant powers (scores of 8-10; 44%) and a quarter want a Council having wide powers and holding the Trust to account (score 10; 25%)

Key areas where more information is needed

"A clear short summary from the board why the change is needed and what benefits are there for individual u3as."

"What powers this new council will have and how much influence they will have."

"Much clearer and more complete information about how members of the Board and Council would be recruited/selected/elected and about the role and delegated authority."

"How the Council intends to feed back its decisions and actions in response to questions posed by u3as."

Benefits to u3as of the proposed changes

"A clear short summary from the board why the change is needed and what benefits are there for individual u3as."

"Short bullet point highlights of pros & cons. Features that will be lost vs those gained."

"The proposal should show how the Third Age Trust will realign such that its core purpose is support and promote u3as."

"A strategic plan showing how these proposals make the organisation fit for purpose."

"A simple, accessible guide to the proposed changes."

Authorities, decision-making, and accountability of the Council and Board

"Clarify the specific authorities and responsibilities of the Council versus the Board, ensuring there's a clear understanding of each body's role."

"Detail the decision-making process, including how money will be spent and how the two bodies will interact in decision-making scenarios."

"Greater clarity about the two-way communications between the 2 bodies and the opportunities to influence either of them."

"Clearer information on the future accountability of TAT to the Council representing member u3as."

Composition of the council and election of representatives:

"Address concerns regarding the proposed size of the Council and whether a reduction in number or representation from each of the 12 regions might be more effective."

"There should be more than 3 representatives from networks."

"Much clearer and more complete information about how members of the Board and Council would be recruited/selected/elected and about the role and delegated authority."

"Details about the process for the Regional and Network elections."

Communication between the Council and u3as

"How the Council intends to feed back its decisions and actions in response to questions posed by u3as."

"Absolute clarity of the lines of communication involving the Council, the Region, and the u3as."

"In future, it would be good to see more information on the Trust website not just about future strategy, but also what the plans are to achieve it, and what progress is being made."