

NETWORK LINK MEETING

17TH MAY 2019 11.00am-3.30pm

At the National Union of Journalists Office
Headland House, Acton St., London WC1X 9NB

NOTES

1. Welcome & Apologies

Hilary Jones, Vice Chair of Third Age Trust and Chair of the Network Link meeting, welcomed all present. Ian McCannah had sent apologies.

2. Information on various topics:

Hilary Jones

- 1) Agenda: There had been some queries about the lack of an Agenda before the meeting. A show of hands indicated that most people would like one, but Hilary explained that development of the Agenda was rather fluid. Although the request for ideas is sent months in advance, some responses only trickle in just before the meeting. Agendas would be disseminated in future, but probably quite close to the meeting.
- 2) Venue: hire of the NUJ venue was about 1/3 of the cost of the Wesley Hotel venue; hence the change
- 3) Minutes: to be emailed to everyone in the Network Link contacts database. Please inform Hilary directly if there are any changes to your contact details.
- 4) Next meeting:
Date: 23rd October 2019 (to be confirmed)
Location/Venue: Suggestions had been made that locations should alternate between London and somewhere further north. It was agreed that the next meeting would take place in Manchester. Venue to be confirmed.
- 5) National U3A Newsletter: this monthly email contains both national and regional news and information, and is the most direct form of communication with individual U3A members. Networks are urged to encourage all their members to subscribe to it via the national website: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/newsletter> where back issues can also be viewed.
- 6) Network Link web pages: this new facility is available via the Advice section on the national U3A website. <https://www.u3a.org.uk/advice/network-link> (NB Log in with your name and password to access the Advice section). At the moment you can see a map and list of all the networks and their member U3As. There is also a link to all the regional and network websites using Sitebuilder. The available information will build up over time. The meeting's presentations are now up on the site for reference.

- 7) Networking Publicity Flyer: at the last Network Link meeting, various options were discussed for a flyer to be produced by National Office to highlight the benefits of networking and encourage more U3As to participate in networks. Feedback was requested by Auriol Ainley (Regional Trustee, West Midlands) who offered to design a new flyer. Very little feedback was received, but a post-card has been produced which will be available at the national Conference and through the Online Shop.
- 8) Various leaflets: the following leaflets were available as handouts at the meeting:
 - a. Tea with Barbara: leaflet produced by former national Chair, Barbara Lewis, about her appeal fund for the support of U3A start-ups.
 - b. U3A Robots Constructors' Challenge: flyer describing the new competitive initiative for those interested in the construction of small robots.
 - c. Social Prescribing: flyer advertising U3As as partners in social prescribing initiatives. Available from the U3A Online Shop

3. Presentation on various topics:

Sam Mauger, CEO of Third Age Trust

Sam gave an update on a number of topics that people had wanted to know about.

- 1) Constitutions: National Office has developed the following model constitutions:
 - a. Unincorporated Association: Most U3As fall into this category in which legal capacity is vested in a collection of people (Trustees). The previous edition (2012) was updated in 2018 to include the new Object Clause with a wider definition of education, including social activities, plus some other clauses agreed with the Charity Commission (CC). The new model is lodged with the CC. It has been available since January for new U3As, and will be available for all U3As in the Advice section of the national U3A website soon. Also relevant to Scotland and N. Ireland. Check with Sam before submitting constitutional changes to the CC.
 - b. Charitable Incorporated Association [previously Charity Limited by Guarantee]: This makes the U3A into a legal entity, a corporate body with legal capacity to do many things in its own name and contracts don't depend on individual Trustees. Examples: to employ paid staff; deliver charitable services under contractual agreements; enter into commercial contracts; own freehold or leasehold land or property. Scottish model being finalised. Not yet available for N. Ireland.
 - c. Networks: A model constitution was being developed for networks and would be available soon. The idea was to include things that networks would like e.g. access to the Beacon licence; Public liability insurance certificate.
 - d. Charity Commission Scheme to change the Object Clause: 744 U3As are on the scheme, and about 200 are not yet decided or complete. Because the CC is short of staff, changes are taking a long time.

When changing Terms of Office in a constitution, it is possible for officers to serve the balance of time or must they re-start from 0.

- 2) Use of Trust logo: the U3A logo is becoming useful to private companies for advertising, and there have been some incidents of misappropriation abroad. The Trust has therefore registered both the logo and the term 'U3A' in the UK for protection.

Networks are not part of the Trust structure, but National Office was producing a document for use by networks to provide evidence of formal association, enabling networks to use the Trust logo. Variations on Trust logo by individual U3As or networks to be discussed later.

There would also be a licence that could be signed by networks with constitutions, enabling them to undertake joint ventures with the Trust.

- 3) Beacon upgrade: Sam gave a short history of Beacon to date. Initially developed by John Franklin of Cheltenham U3A and adapted by a few overworked volunteers. John then gave the Trust a licence allowing the software to be further developed and adapted for a wider range of applications. Adam Walton was appointed to work on software development with the Beacon Working Group comprising the NEC + U3A members. There have been 3 reports on consultations, and tenders are to be invited in the Autumn. The new system is to be piloted with U3As in the spring. A team of 50 Trust volunteers have been trained to help with installation and training. Further information about Beacon is available under Resources on the website.
- 4) Learning Resources update: The U3A Resource Centre has included a sizeable but underused lending library of DVDs on various subjects as well as U3A resources such as reports of Shared Learning Projects and other research. The Resource Centre is being upgraded. Subject Advisers have been consulted about the resources they require. The DVD collection is being assessed and updated, and there is a move toward acquiring and developing and more digitised resources to be made accessible via the U3A national website. Individual U3A members are invited to recommend resources. The work is being driven by The Learning Working Group, one of the three working groups involved in the Trust's Development Plan. Questions/suggestions to: Sal Cooke, Chairman sal.cooke@u3a.org.uk 07872 943933 or Doreen Raine: doreen.raine@outlook.com

4. **Trust Volunteers and Workshops:**

Sophie Wellings, National Advice & Volunteering Manager

1) Trust Volunteers

There are currently about 270 Trust Volunteers listed in the database, undertaking various support roles for U3As such as

- Start-ups
- Trouble shooting
- Beacon
- Subject Advisers
- Research Ambassadors
- Shared Learning Project Coordinators
- Training workshops
- Events (e.g. Summer Schools)
- Communications (Liz Drury needs help with internal and external comms)
- National Office support

Sophie said she was looking to expand the number of roles.

Regional Support Volunteers provide support to Regional Trustees. The induction is slightly different. Regional volunteers may also have other Trust volunteer roles.

Eleanor Hazlewood had been hired as the new Volunteers Officer.

To enquire about support from any volunteers, contact National Office or your Regional Trustee.

In order to improve the support and value of Trust Volunteers, the Trust was planning to participate in the Investors in Volunteers programme. It takes about 12 months to achieve the quality kitemark. <https://iiv.investinginvolunteers.org.uk/>,

2) National Workshops

The list of national workshops is available online via the Events page of the U3A national website. The workshops are run by Trust volunteers. They are very popular but maximum capacity 50 people. There are about 2 per month. Anyone can suggest a new topic. Evaluations are read in detail and suggested improvements taken seriously.

A new development being considered is the 2-hr 'Bite-Size' training session that could be integrated into a network meeting. Topics are various.

All national workshops are funded from Sophie Wellings' budget, not the budgets of Regional Trustees. They are free of charge to attendees. Anyone can request a national workshop in their area. One- or two- weeks' priority may be granted to a regional booking to give local U3A members priority booking, but otherwise they are open to all U3A members.

5. Research Network:

- 1) Overview: Carole Chapman, National Coordinator of Research Ambassadors & Research Coordinators. carolecpc99999@googlemail.com
Carole gave an overview of what is meant by research/enquiry-led learning in U3A, and the support provided by the Research Network at national, regional and local levels. Advice and support at regional level is provided by Research Ambassadors and SLP Coordinators, who are Trust Volunteers. Research Coordinators support projects at local levels (networks and individual U3As). Key resources mentioned were the guide [Getting Involved in Research](#) (available free of charge from the Online Shop) and the [U3A National Research Database](#) recording a large variety of projects. For contact details and further information see the Research Network pages under Resources on the national website : <https://www.u3a.org.uk/resources/u3a-research>
- 2) Shared Learning Projects: Jennifer Simpson, National Shared Learning Project Coordinator. jdsimpson057@gmail.com
The SLP format of enquiry-led learning was developed back in 2002, and there have been many such projects conducted on a huge variety of topics. The general format involves a team of U3A members from different U3As, exploring a specific topic, proposed by a U3A or by an institution (such as a museum, gallery, stately home or university) and normally there is a set time span and a practical outcome that is beneficial to the community. SLPs are particularly valuable for a Network as it is a way of bringing a Network together. The Wales Coastline and Borders Celebration SLP was an example of bringing a large region together using a single theme that all members could take part in. Jennifer mentioned three ongoing SLPs offering opportunities at a national level:
 - The Cary Ellison – talent scout --theatre programme collection
 - What will become of our High Streets?
 - Chartist women – researching the women who bought shares in the Chartist Lottery.

2022 will be a special year: 40 years of U3A in the UK and 20 years of SLPs
All networks were urged to develop projects on a theme of 40 years.

6. Trading Company:

Jeff Carter, Chairman of U3A Governance Sub-Committee

There are rules and regulations regarding the income that charities can raise by selling things, and the Trust has reached the limit on this. Annual income that is not part of U3A membership income is over £85k. e. g. TAM (sales), Beacon (licence fees) and the Online Shop.

The Trust has therefore decided to establish a trading company entitled Third Age Trust Trading Ltd. This will be a wholly- owned subsidiary of the Trust with the Directors being the same as those of the Trust. The only difference will be the logo "Third Age Trust Ltd". This could be a good source of revenue as all profits will be fed back to the Trust as a charity. The company will not be allowed to make a loss.

U3A members will be asked to suggest products that they would like but caution is also required with regard to companies that want to market via the trading company (e.g. insurance and holidays), and care needed to avoid endorsement of products or services that could damage the image of U3A. Direct contacts must have a commercial arrangement agreement.

A question arose over Riviera Holidays' approach to U3As offering donations as a reward for their holidays sold to U3A members. A commercial arrangement agreement is required. Ask Sam for advice.

7. Discussion time:

Attendees were asked to discuss the following topics with others at their tables, with the Trustee at their table acting as rapporteur.

- a. Some U3As don't join a network and some U3As don't communicate with anyone. How can we help/encourage them?
- b. How do you fund your networks?
- c. The overarching intent of the Development Plan (DP) is to develop the movement. How can your network help in this goal?