

Report from Regional Trustee (1) October 2018

In my reports I hope to be able to keep you informed, not just about what I do, but also the many activities of the Third Age Trust that are intended to support all of our U3As. I have just spent most of the weekend trying hard to make sense of all that I have done and learnt over the last few weeks and hope that I can pass on the most important. I am very much enjoying the process of getting to know what is happening in our Region and hope I will have met you all soon.

So far, I have identified three different aspects of my role, though I feel fairly sure there may be others.

- a. I am a Trustee for the Third Age Trust, with responsibility for ensuring that it fulfils its core function of supporting the U3A movement and encouraging its growth. I need to report its decisions and actions back to the Region.
- b. I am a member of the Development Sub Committee, which has the specific role of supporting the growth of the membership and all those volunteers working to this end.
- c. I am the Region's representative on the Third Age Trust, with a responsibility of working with others in the East Midlands Region to support and develop U3As. I also need to report on the activities within the Region to the TAT.

Over the last few weeks, as well as attending some meetings in the Region I have had two days Induction in London, attended my first Development Sub Committee (DSC) and also a Network Link meeting. From all of that I will try to pass on some thoughts, which will probably be in a rather random order. I hope in due course that these reports will be well structured, but that will take a bit longer. Please do let me know if there are specific things that you would like to know more about, as well as the sort of events that it may be possible to organise on a Regional basis.

1. Money! There is money in our Regional fund that is available for Network or Regional generated events that have the aim of improving the performance of individual U3As. An easy to organise example would be a meeting of Committee Chairs, Treasurers, or Group Leaders etc from the U3As in your Network. You have probably all done that before but new issues crop up, as well as new people in these posts, so repeating an activity is always useful. The Region could fund room hire and light refreshments. Please let me know if you plan anything like this as I need to approve it.
2. In the last two years, since the appointment of Sam Mauger as Chief Executive, the National Office has been completely reorganised and an enormous amount of work has been done. Much of this, inevitably has been to do with changes to legislation, such as GDPR, and how it affected U3As. The hope is that all that is now dealt with and that their work can now be in more obvious support of the aims of our movement.
3. The Trust has finalised the Development Plan and will now be planning its implementation. One of the main aims is to create a much better online presence, particularly with respect to learning resources.
4. Another aim, which is of relevance in the Region, concerns the growth of U3A membership. Work has been done by the DSC and also by Paul Martinez, a Trust Volunteer in Nottinghamshire, looking at the percentage of the population between 60 and 85, and comparing it with the percentage that are members of a U3A. In most areas that is well under 5%. Whilst accepting that not everyone wants to be a member there is no doubt that there is still huge potential for growth. I would like to see Networks in the East Midlands identifying places where there is potential either for a new U3A, or for encouraging more people to join those already existing. Nottinghamshire has a tradition of doing this which Paul's work is supporting. So far, I am much less familiar with the work of other Networks but look forward to coming to your meetings and learning about all you do.
5. Other aims in the Development plan concern the U3A name, raising the Trust's profile with print and social media and externally.
6. Leicestershire recently held one of the National Workshops, on 'Recruiting Volunteers'. This was well attended and received. Nottinghamshire is due to hold one on 'Communications' and it is fully

booked. These national workshops are fully funded by the TAT and available to book. Details are on the national website, listed under 'Events'.

7. We have a number of Trust Volunteers in this region who have been, or are being, trained in the following areas: Start Ups, Troubleshooting and Training. There are, of course, many other volunteers such as Subject Advisers and Beacon supporters.
8. It has become very common for U3As to receive requests from academics asking for volunteers for their research project. The Research Sub Committee of TAT has been looking at this issue as there is often far from sufficient information given in order for members to decide. For instance, the 'why; what, where and when?'. The committee is developing a check list and I will let you know when this is available.
9. If you have not yet signed up for the national Newsletter, I do recommend it. This is available under the 'Newsletter' tab, again on the website.
10. Do not forget that if you plan a publicity event or open day there is a grant available.

I shall send this report, and future ones, out to all Networks, whether or not you have a meeting in the near future, to keep you informed. Please do contact me about anything of interest or concern.

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