

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION OF EAST MIDLANDS U3As

None of the co-operative activities referred to or implied in this constitution should in any way interfere with the direct relationships individual U3As have with the Third Age Trust or its National Executive Committee (NEC).

1. Name

The name shall be The Association of East Midlands U3As hereafter called “the Association”.

2. Definitions

2.1 The East Midlands Region shall be defined as the counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Rutland (which will join with Leicestershire for Network purposes – see 2.5 below). All U3As within the boundaries of the Region will be full voting members of the Association.

2.2 The national body, The Third Age Trust, provides the umbrella organisation for the Universities of the Third Age in the United Kingdom

2.3. A Regional Representative Council (RRC) will be set up to support and help U3As individually and collectively and to ensure communications are maintained between the Networks and the Third Age Trust. (See 3 and 5 below)

2.4 The Regional Trustee is the person elected from and by all the U3As in the Region to be their representative on the National Executive Committee of the Third Age Trust.

2.5 A County Network comprises all U3As within that county. Hereafter they will be called the “Networks”.

(Proposed amendment February 2016; additional text to read as follows: Lincolnshire would be represented by three neighbourhood groups due to its geographic size. These are East Lincolnshire, Lincoln and South Lincolnshire. For the purpose of the constitution this arrangement is included within the term “Network”)

2.6 The Officers of the Association will be the Officers of the RRC: see para 5.4.

3. Objects of the Association

3.1. To help further the principles, aims and activities of the U3A movement in the UK

3.2. To help U3As provide educational and recreational opportunities

3.3. To help the U3A movement in the UK to grow by supporting County Networks in their setting up new U3As, whilst recognising that this is only one of a number ways in which new U3As may start

3.4. To provide one means of U3As co-operating and working and learning together

3.5. To administer the election processes for the Regional Chair.

3.6. To help make the Region a meaningful constituency where the candidates for Regional Trustee are known by the electors and the elected Regional Trustee gets to know the U3As and their views

3.7. To support the Regional Trustee in carrying out her/his responsibilities

3.8. To help formulate and to represent the collective views of U3As in the Region for consideration by the NEC

3.9. To consider reports of the NEC and of national activities and to transmit these to U3As as appropriate

3.10. To arrange, among U3As and Networks, cooperative activities such as Workshops, Summer Schools, Seminars or Conferences as agreed by the RRC and to make these known across the Region through various media.

3.11. To support the activities of County U3A Networks

3.12. To provide one means of two-way communication between the U3As and the Third Age Trust's NEC

3.13. The Roles and Functions of both the Networks and RRC will derive from these Objects and will evolve over time and with experience. Roles and functions should be distinctive for the Networks and the RRC. A copy of the current roles and functions will be attached to the latest version of the constitution.

4. Membership

4.1. All U3As within the boundaries of the Region will be full voting members of the Association.

5. Structure and Governance

The structure of the organisation of the Region is based on the following:

5.1. All U3As within a County (see 2.1 above) shall be members of the County Network of U3As.

5.2. The Regional Representative Council (RRC) shall comprise Officers and representatives of the Networks.

5.3. Each Network shall provide two Representatives to the RRC. Representatives will serve for three consecutive years and may be re-elected.

(Proposed amendment February 2016; additional text to read as follows: Each of the Lincolnshire Neighbourhood Group would provide one representative to the RRC.)

5.4. The RRC will, in addition to Network Representatives, include the Chair, Secretary, ~~Assistant Secretary~~, Treasurer, and Regional Trustee.

5.5. As integral parts of the Regional structure Networks shall maintain a permanent existence

5.6. It is recommended that Networks:

- a) meet at least twice per year
- b) invite the Regional Trustee to all their meetings
- c) include Regional and National items on their agenda
- d) appoint a contact person
- e) within the context of a) - d) above, carry out their business as they see fit.

6. RRC Members, Officers and Meetings

6.1. A Chair shall be elected by the Association, to serve for a term of three years. A retiring Chair may be re-elected after a lapse of one year. In the event of the Chair not completing a term of office, the RRC has the power to appoint a temporary post-holder until the next AGM.

(Proposed amendment February 2016; additional text to read as follows: 6.1.a A vice chair should be nominated from the county network representatives to provide cover and continuity in the event of the Chair not attending a meeting.)

6.2. The Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Secretary will be appointed by the RRC, from the member U3As, following each AGM

6.3. Extra, non-voting, co-opted appointments may be made by RRC as required.

6.4. The RRC shall meet a minimum of three times per year plus an Annual General Meeting.

6.5. An RRC meeting quorum shall be not less than 50% of the voting members who shall be Network Representatives, Chair, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, and Regional Trustee.

6.6. An RRC decision shall be taken on a simple majority of votes of members present at the meeting. The Chair shall have a second casting vote.

(Proposed amendment February 2016; additional text to read as follows: To maintain equity across the county networks the Lincolnshire Neighbourhood Groups should have no more than 2 votes on any RRC decision and this will also be dependent on their presence at a meeting.)

- 6.7. A record of the business of the Committee will be kept by the Secretary
- 6.8. Sub-Committees and Working Parties may be set up by the RRC as they see fit with appropriate Terms of Reference and membership for their purpose.
- 6.9. The Chair has the power to act until the next meeting of the RRC, at which he/she will explain his/her action and seek endorsement for it.
- 6.10. Minutes of the RRC meetings shall be made available to all member U3As.

7. Regional Annual General Meeting

- 7.1. An AGM of the Association shall be held normally in the month of July of each calendar year, no more than 14 months after the previous AGM, at which activities and performance of the RRC and the Region shall be reviewed.
- 7.2. Every AGM shall be called by the RRC. The Secretary shall give at least eight (8) weeks' written notice of the AGM to all member U3As in the Region, at the same time requesting nominations for Chair when required.
- 7.3. Accidental omission to give notice to any member U3As shall not invalidate the proceedings of the AGM.
- 7.4. Nominations for election of Chair must be made in writing and must be in the hands of the Secretary at least four (4) weeks before the AGM. Nominees shall be proposed by one and seconded by another member U3A. Candidates will attach to their nomination form, a personal statement of not more than two hundred (200) words.
- 7.5. Should nominations exceed vacancies, candidates will be permitted to address the meeting. Election of the Chair shall be conducted at the AGM by one vote per U3A present at the meeting.
- 7.6. Election of the Regional Trustee will be as specified by the Third Age Trust. The candidate or candidates will be invited to present a short address to the appropriate Regional AGM and to answer questions from the floor by way of introducing themselves to U3As in the Region.
- 7.7. All other business shall be published in the agenda.
- 7.8. Annual and Financial Reports will be presented and considered.
- 7.9. The RRC shall seek approval for the appointment of the examiner of the accounts.
- 7.10. All U3As in the Region will be invited to the AGM and will be entitled to vote on the basis outlined in 7.5 above.
- 7.11. The quorum for the AGM will be 20% of the member U3As.

8. Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)

- 8.1 An EGM can be called by the RRC or by no less than five (5) member U3As who request such a meeting stating, in writing, the business to be considered. The Secretary shall call such a meeting with at least thirty (30) days' notice and the notice must state the business to be discussed.
- 8.2 The quorum for an EGM will be 20% of the member U3As

9. Finance

- 9.1 The Association is funded by the Third Age Trust.
- 9.2 The Association, as a charity by virtue of its link with and funding from Third Age Trust, and by having this Constitution, will deposit its current constitution with the Third Age Trust. Members of the RRC are Trustees as defined by the Charities Commission and are responsible for all monies.
- 9.3 The RRC, with suitable controls, may grant funding to Network/Networks.
- 9.4 The Treasurer shall keep simple accounts to show details of receipts and payments and report financial details at each RRC meeting.
- 9.5 The RRC will maintain a suitable bank account or accounts on behalf of the Association

9.6 The Association may seek and receive additional funding from its member U3As and outside bodies.

9.7 The cost of venues and travel expenses of members, for RRC meetings, will not fall on individual U3As or Networks.

9.8 The financial year will be 1 April to 31 March.

10. Amendments to the Constitution

10.1 The provisions of this Constitution can only be altered with the assent of not less than two-thirds of the member U3As attending an AGM or EGM for which thirty (30) days' notice has been given.

11. Dissolution

~~11.1 Dissolution of the Association can take place only following a national decision of the Third Age Trust on Regional Structures~~

(Proposed amendment February 2016; text to read as follows: 11.1 The Association can only be dissolved by a resolution from the RRC to the AGM. The resolution for dissolution must be passed by a two thirds majority of the U3As present at the AGM.)

11.2 In the event of dissolution, all surplus assets attributable to the Third Age Trust, after payment of costs, should be returned to the Third Age Trust. All other surplus assets shall be distributed amongst the member U3As of the Association, being those that have paid their subscriptions for the 2015-16 year, at the discretion of the RRC.

Appendix 1

Roles and Functions of County Networks and the Regional Representative Council

County Networks of U3As

1. To provide a forum for the discussion of issues of importance to U3As in the Network.
2. To coordinate and initiate the development of new U3As in the County.
3. To enable U3As cooperatively to initiate aspects of learning support by:
 - a. Sharing matters of current importance to them;
 - b. Setting up cooperative ventures;
 - c. Participating in local Shared Learning Projects;
4. To carry out other cooperative activities decided by U3As in the County.
5. To relate to the NEC Representative.
6. To represent its views to the Regional Representative Council.
7. To elect representatives to the Regional Representative Council.
8. To appoint a Network Contact to whom the NEC Regional Representative, other County Networks and the RRC can relate.
9. To contribute to regional means of communication.
10. To complement and extend regional activities e.g. on supporting Group Leaders.
11. To establish such mechanisms as are deemed necessary to discharge their functions and responsibilities. (e.g. the frequency of meetings, arrangements for Chairing meetings and the preparation of Agenda and minutes.)
12. To develop policies and plans as U3As see fit.

Regional Representative Council

1. To provide a knowledgeable basis for elections to the NEC and to undertake the functions of a Region in arranging elections for the NEC.
2. To provide a forum for U3A's views and proposals to be presented to the NEC.
3. To receive reports of NEC meetings and national developments.
4. To organise regionally based events wanted by U3As such as Summer Schools, Seminars, Workshops, and Study Days and Weekends. In particular the Region might offer one-off and pump priming events.
5. To maintain and develop relationships with other regional agencies, such as the Open University, helping U3As in their operation and supporting U3A learning.
7. To develop and review regional policies and plans, where appropriate.
8. To develop means of communication with U3As and Networks including maintaining a distinctive website.
9. To establish a constitution and run necessary bank accounts.
10. To establish working parties to undertake specific tasks.

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