

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

NORTHWEST REGION

NEWSLETTER JULY 2017 No 47



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ACTING CHAIR'S MESSAGE



Since our previous newsletter in May, I have attended the North West Region Conference & AGM held in Manchester on 7th June and “Learning in the Future” event which was held in Warrington on 21st June. Both of these events are reported on in more detail elsewhere in this newsletter. However, I would like to draw your attention to a few items.

At the AGM & Conference, I attended a session by John Ellison, our national treasurer named “Top Tips for Treasurers”. Some of the many points that I picked up are well worth sharing with you.

- If your U3A offers a discount membership to people who are already members of another U3A, you should check that the other U3A is paying the capitation fee for them. Whilst both U3As are not required to pay for the same person, at least one of the U3As must pay.
- Some U3As have received invoices for using images in their newsletters and other publications that are copyright. Don't assume that because it is “on the Internet” you can use it without charge. You cannot, unless it specifically says that you can.

- Don't hold information about your members that you don't need to, for example bank account details.
- All monies in a U3A, belong to the U3A and not the individual interest groups.

Following the AGM, we still do not have a Chair. In the interim, I have been asked to continue as acting chair. If you are interested in joining the regional committee in any capacity, please get in touch with me. If you would like to attend a regional committee meeting to see how we operate, I will be delighted to see you.

Our Summer School will be held at Newton Rigg College in Cumbria from Tuesday 29th August to Friday 1st September. However, registration is now closed. We have 107 members from 51 U3As studying a choice of 9 different subjects. All of these are record high numbers. If you missed the opportunity to attend this year, look out for when we announce next year's Summer School.

Our programme of events for the coming 12 months is taking shape. You will find details of some of these events in this newsletter.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "N. D. Stevenson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined.

Neil Stevenson

TRUSTEE NEWS AND TOPICS



It was great to see so many people at the Regional AGM and Conference this year. It's never easy to please everyone at an event like this but I am sure you all appreciate the work which the Regional Committee put into organising it. The breakout groups were intentionally short so as to allow as many people as possible to attend in the limited time available. They were 'taster sessions'. If you want to know more, please ask and it can be arranged.

Amongst the problems we have are suitable venues. These need to be near to public transport, accessible to as many people as possible from around the Region. So far, Liverpool and Manchester have proved the better options but we would like to bring events further north into Cumbria or south into Cheshire. As yet we have not been able to find anything in these two Regions which fits the bill so if you know of a venue near main transport routes which can house around 100 people plus several breakout rooms please let us know so that we can bring events closer to you.

Our workshops, seminars and conference discussion topics are chosen as a result of suggestions made by the U3A members and we are always open to more ideas. There are also

events run by the networks which are often open to the wider region.

Over the coming year we hope to organise some Regional events aimed at supporting management as well as to host some of the National workshops which are currently being planned by the NEC.

From the Trustee's perspective I also hope to organise some committee forums at various points around the Region as people have expressed an interest in sharing good practice and exchanging ideas at the committee level. Some groups have also suggested they would like to take part in subject networks. Again, this would need to be spread around the Region but I am always open to new ideas. Please contact me if you have a subject group which would like to network with other groups. Languages, drama and music seem to be the favourites at the moment so I will begin work on this as soon as I can.

Sadly, I will miss the Regional Summer School this year as I am obliged to go to the National AGM, but I can see that it has proved to be even more popular than previous years. So, once again, congratulations to the Regional Committee members and the U3A members who have offered their services as Tutors to run the groups.

As my first year reaches its conclusion I would like to thank everyone who has supported me and I look forward to working with you again during the next two years.

Gill Russell

NW Regional Trustee

TRUSTEE PRACTICAL TOPICS

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Many of the questions which reach national office or the Regional Trustees are about problems with members. Most grievances are caused by a lack of understanding of the U3A ethos and can be easily resolved with a friendly discussion, sometimes with a third person who will ensure neutrality and keep the discussion focused.

However occasionally, a resolution is more difficult and the situation requires a more serious approach which might include disciplinary action. Following a recent meeting of the NEC at which this was raised, I thought I should remind you that if you need to take action there is an advice sheet in the Committee Reference File detailing the process. It describes the various steps which must be taken and it is important to follow these carefully so that you don't miss a stage. For example, you should not issue a level two or three warning without first issuing a level one warning and at each level the subject of the complaint should be offered the right to appeal. If the process is not followed and a stage is omitted the subject of the disciplinary action could make a complaint. In this event, there is a danger that the omission could negate your Trustee Indemnity Insurance.

Please don't hesitate to contact me for more advice if you need it.



VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Some new volunteers have recently begun training for the start-up process of new U3As. There will also be training for supporting existing U3As and for helping to run workshops. At the moment, most of our volunteers are from the centre of the Region and it would be great to have people from more areas. If you would be interested in receiving training in the future please let me know.

NW REGIONAL COMMITTEE

WEBSITE REGIONAL SPEAKERS LIST

Please note that the speakers on the list are NOT approved by the Regional Committee. We do not book them or negotiate fees. The list has been created from recommendations made by U3As but the Regional Committee has not vetted them in any way. It is important that individual groups contact the speakers to determine suitability and cost. If you have enjoyed a speaker not on the list, please contact myself or a member of the Regional Committee so their name can be added.

NW REGIONAL REPORT OF EVENTS

AGM and CONFERENCE, MANCHESTER MEETING HOUSE, 07/07/2017

U3A North West Region Regional Annual General Meeting, if you weren't able to attend here's a summary.

On 7 June 2017 I attended my first AGM since joining the North West Region Executive Committee of U3A at the AGM in 2016. The Committee always makes it an interesting day where U3A members can find out about how other U3As do things, can learn more about good practice and listen to interesting speakers. This AGM was no exception and I found the day flew by as I drank in as much of the offerings as I could.

In order to ensure variety, there were four choices of Breakout Sessions on offer. If the two I attended were examples then I'm sure there other two will have been good.

- Top Tips for Treasurers
- The Beacon System
- Being a U3A Trustee
- Singing

I chose the second and fourth groups to attend.

Beacon Management System

This session was led by John Kaye, Furness U3A, who gave a presentation using the system to demonstrate. I was very interested in seeing this demonstration as I myself have been a

Membership Secretary in my own Wyre U3A and have thought for a long time - There must be a better way! Sure enough there is!



The Beacon system has been designed and originally built by U3A Members with some help latterly from Professional Developers. As such the product is ideally suited for its purpose – managing the Data for U3As' membership, finance and groups. Users can access the data at the touch of a button and individual limits on what information can be searched are set to a person's User Profile. All I can say is that Beacon, compared with paper information, leaves it standing and makes the job so much easier. Of course there will be a learning curve for setting up the system, and for those who use it, but I think it would be well worth it and support is provided.

Singing

I sat with two ladies who couldn't drag themselves out and stayed for a second hearing! As soon as the Bolton Singing for Pleasure choir sang the first harmony, Morning has Broken, I knew why. The choir's voices had me close to tears at their magnificence. They continued to keep me under their spell as they sang more renditions and two solos – a very worthy performance.



After lunch (you could bring your own or go out) we all were treated to a very amusing talk by **Neil Smith** “**Have Guitar Will Travel**”. Apart from turning down the chance to play with the Beatles on parental advice Neil, had a number of hair raising near misses with various dark individuals and we should count ourselves lucky he was there to tell the tale! A very entertaining talk which I feel I can recommend to you.



YOU WON'T SEE NEIL SMITH ON THE CROSSING, HE REJECTED THE BEATLES!

The NW Region was very pleased to welcome the Chair of the National Executive Committee, Pam Jones, who had been invited to spend the day with us. Pam stood up and congratulated the Region on the success of the day, the enthusiasm shown by all attendees and Speakers/Singers and said how much she had enjoyed the day. Pam holds the view of a U3A which is a feed upwards

organisation, and it was good for attendees to hear that their views are valued.

AGMs are never the most fun but I have to say that the final hour of the day was just this. It was spent reporting to those attending on the NWREC activities and reports for 2016 through 2017. Our Acting Chair Neil Stevenson led us through the agenda, which can be viewed on the Website, in excellent style which all U3As could happily use as an example.

A really enjoyable day with very pleasant company!

(Jacqueline Owen, Committee/Publicity)



CROSS FLOW OF INFO

There were recently two NWREC workshops.....

LEARNING IN THE FUTURE GATEWAY, WARRINGTON JUNE 21 2017

Well, I discovered that Learning in the Future could now be called MOOCs or Massive Open Online Courses! This message was delivered on the above date to thirty five people who attended the learning opportunity set up by the North West Regional U3A Committee and organised by Neil Stevenson.

The speaker came from Perth U3A in Scotland and was Ian Hunt. Ian had done a lot of research to find out how MOOCs had begun. He was able to relate that the first MOOC was posted free on the Internet in 2011, by an American University lecturer who decided to share, for free, what she had been delivering on that day. This was quickly supplemented by others who posted their information on the Web for free, well mostly so. I think the thing that grabbed my attention was to see a slide of people in Africa working on, what we might even now call a bit old fashioned, large black laptops and accessing free learning/information from their web searches. Ian was passionately enthusiastic about what he was delivering and gave some detail on what can be achieved and that "courses" can suit personal choice and are for everyone, not just U3Aers.

The review of the day found that 84% of attendees said it was good or excellent. Ian had worked so hard on finding information and wanted to ensure that this was shared with us so he brought many slides with facts. Some of the audience would have liked Ian to tell us about what he had achieved with MOOCs in Perth U3A but maybe this can be achieved once people return to their own society,

though a quick thumbs up might have made it easier! I have heard that some U3As are already working on MOOCs and if you are one of them and already on this journey you might want to share this with the North West Region via the Trustee, Acting Chair or Newsletter Editor.

Here are some suggested ways forward and you may wish to take a look at www.futurelearn.com

- Meet group leaders members to discuss experience and set up a group for MOOC
- Use of the foreign language MOOC
- Use of MOOCs in specific groups, for downloading

Let's hope committees of U3As are aware of MOOCs, as one of the many ways to move forward.....

(Jacqueline Owen, Committee/Publicity)



Charity Law and Finance May 19 2017

with John Ellison, National Treasurer was held in Liverpool and very well attended. People told Gill they found the information very useful and John has offered to run this again in the north of the Region whenever we can fix a date and venue.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

REGIONAL WORKSHOPS

Inclusiveness Awareness Day - October 7th.

Venue: The Gateway, Warrington from 10.30 – 3.45. This is a repeat of a previous event which members asked us to run again. It is aimed at looking at ways members can stay involved when they have disabilities such as mobility, hearing and vision loss. The guest speaker will be Steve Binns who has spoken at many of our groups in the past. Steve is blind from birth. He has worked as a Blue Badge Guide, which will form the focus of his talk, and has been an archivist for Liverpool City Council.

Music event – Provisional suggestion: date and venue to be confirmed. This will probably be held in Liverpool in December and will include a performance by Andrew Wilde, supported by the North West Music Trust, and a chance for music groups around the Region to come together and perform for each other. Andrew has been a guest at many U3As and has an excellent reputation for his presentation and performance. If you have a music group and they would like to be involved please let me know as soon as possible so plans can be started.

gillruss71@gmail.com or
gillian.russell@u3a.org.uk



February 2018 'Your Best Ever AGM'. Come and join Much Wittering in the Marshes as they prepare to hold their AGM – and spot the deliberate mistakes. This workshop is being repeated by popular request. More details in the next newsletter.



THE Workshops will be organised by NW Region and/or Networks. Details will be available in future newsletters Flyers and on the website in due course. All of our workshops are developed from members' suggestions, which we welcome.

AROUND THE REGION

FORTHCOMING EVENTS



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

CONFERENCE: Thursday 26th October

from 10.00 - 4.00

Cost £15 for U3A members, £20 for
non-members

Lancaster and Morecambe U3A are hosting this conference at the Banqueting Suite in Lancaster Town Hall. This is a different room from the one previously advertised but is in the same venue.

A programme, and registration form, are available from either the Lancs-Morecambe website or the NW Regional website:

www.landm-u3a.org.uk

www.u3asites.org.uk/north-west

You can also contact the organiser, Gill Baynes, at

lm3alialiaisonresearch@gmail.com

The event is being offered to all members of North West Regional U3As and the programme consists of a series of short

presentations about various aspects of active ageing, treatment and intervention for dementia and the role of medical screening and pathological testing.

There will be stalls with information about various support organisations and an opportunity to make a donation to Cancer care.

LANGUAGE WORKSHOP



This is being organised by John Eakins from Grange Over Sands, with help from a small committee, and will be offered first to the Cumbria network and other nearby groups. It will be held at the Lancaster Friends' Meeting House and will provide an opportunity for language group organisers and members to exchange ideas. A flyer will be available shortly and will be circulated as soon as possible.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Based on a previous article in *Third Age Matters*, and questions Gill gets asked when she visits U3As, she is going to try and include some *Frequently Asked Questions – and their answers – in some of our future newsletters.*

CONSTITUTIONS

Why do we need a Constitution?

This is a management document which is required by Charity Law. It states your Charitable objectives and is a requirement of your membership of the Third Age Trust.

Yes, but we don't have to follow it do we?

Oh yes, you do. This is a legal requirement. If you do anything which goes against your Constitution there is a serious risk that you will not be complying with Charity Law. Of particular importance are your Committee requirements and their terms of office. These are often overlooked because of the difficulties of finding willing volunteers.

CHARITABLE DONATIONS

Can we raise money for another Charity?

NO. Your Constitution says you can only donate to another Charity with the same objectives as your own. If you hold a fund raising event for another Charity this would go against your Constitution and therefore would contravene Charity Law. In this case, the event would not be covered by your U3A insurance and any problems would be the sole responsibility of the Trustees (Committee members).

Please remember that Trustees have COLLECTIVE responsibility for all decisions made.

If we have a collection for tea and coffee and find we have in excess of our requirements can we donate that excess to Charity?

NO. That money has been paid by the members for the benefit of your U3A and therefore cannot be used for another purpose.

Is there ANY way we can collect money for another Charity?

You can put a box on a table with the name of the Charity and tell members it is for voluntary donations. This money can then be taken to another Charity. At no time can it go into any of your accounts or be shown as a donation from ...U3A. It can be given as a donation from the members of....U3A.

What about Guest speakers who ask for a payment to Charity in lieu of their fee

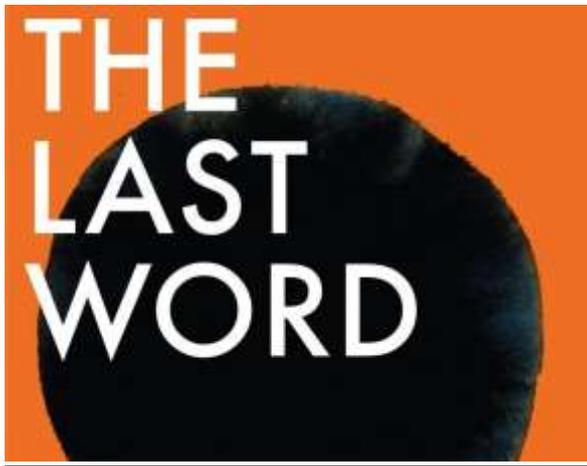
This is acceptable as you are paying the speaker and it is THEIR choice to donate the money. However you should record the payment as given in lieu of a speaker fee and ask the speaker to sign a receipt to that effect.

NB: The only time you cannot do this is if the speaker is a U3A member. Payments cannot be made to any U3A member other than reasonable expenses, regardless of which U3A they are visiting.

LATE MEMBERSHIP FEES

I forgot to pay my membership fees on time. Am I still a member?

Most groups allow a 'period of grace' for lapsed payments. This will be stated in your Constitution and is often 2-3 months. If you are within that period you are still a full member of your group, entitled to attend meetings and interest groups and you have full voting rights. Just make sure you know when this period ends because once the time runs out, your membership goes with it!



FROM NW REGION'S TRUSTEE....

– my daughter once sent me a birthday card which had the greeting I'm sure many of you have seen: 'Growing old is inevitable. Growing up is optional.'

I asked a friend if this meant I could now enter my second childhood. She asked me 'Did you ever leave the first?' Probably not! U3A is keeping me young at heart even if I have to confess that I could have a one-person percussion band when I creak downstairs each morning. During the next few weeks I know that many groups will be taking a break, If you are attending the National Conference and AGM, come and find me for a chat. If you are attending the Regional or National Summer Schools I hope you find the courses enjoyable and informative. Whatever you do, stay safe, stay well and have a pleasant summer.

WE HOPE YOU HAVE FOUND THIS INFORMATION USEFUL, THANK YOU FOR READING THE NWREC JULY NEWSLETTER.