

Points Discussed at the Network Link (NL) Meeting – 21st November, 2017.

- Of the approx. 70 U3A Groupings in the UK, 42 accepted the invitation to attend the meeting, 14 declined and 14 did not respond.

13 of the 16 National Executive Committee members attended, including the Chair, two Vice Chairs and the Treasurer, together with five senior members of National Office, including the CEO.

- The meeting was the first time that the Trust had met with the Chairs, etc of Networks across the UK.

- The purpose of the meeting was to improve both intra-Network communication and that between these groupings and the Trust.

- As far as individual groupings are concerned, the development of a NL does not, in any way, change the existing relationship with their respective Trustees.

- The meeting started with a short presentation on the main features and characteristics of U3A Groupings. Each attendee received a hard copy of the presentation. Electronic copies are available on request.

- Following the presentation a number of issues were discussed:-

- Communication. Ways to improve this between groupings and the Trust included, all Office mailings being sent to a contact in a grouping, members of a grouping being encouraged to register for the monthly Office Newsletter – contact Liz Drury (elizabeth.drury@u3a.org.uk)

- There was a limited discussion on the pros and cons of an on-line forum, specifically for groupings to communicate with one another. No conclusion reached.

- The pros and cons of having a bank account / constitution were discussed. Small groupings tend not to be this formal but larger ones, having to book halls etc, find that to be more formal is an advantage.

- There is no standard constitution for groupings. It was left to the next meeting to discuss producing a template constitution.

- Some Groupings are registered as a charity as their income exceeds the £5,000 threshold.

- Advice was given on the criteria for groupings to receive funding from the Trust, via the Regional Trustee budget. Broadly speaking, if a grouping arranges a Workshop, the purpose of which is to assist attendees better manage their U3As, Trust funding is available. The Trust will supply the Workshop leader so as to ensure that information provided is consistent to all U3As across the UK. In contrast, if a Workshop aims to improve the knowledge of an individual member, such as one on the Art of the Impressionists, this will be self, as opposed to Trust, funded. Speak to your Regional Trustee if in doubt!

- The Trust has details of the membership of individual U3As but no details of the U3As in a grouping, the members they represent, those U3As not in a grouping, etc. It was agreed that a short questionnaire would be produced in the New Year asking Networks to provide this information.
- A vote was taken as to whether or not the attendees wished to have a second meeting of groupings. The vote to do so was unanimous.
- Four names were proposed for the name of the group. The vote resulted in "Network Link".
- The meeting agreed to meet in May 2018.
- Attendees were asked to nominate venues across the UK for this meeting. Nine cities were proposed. After seven were eliminated London was chosen over Birmingham.