

AGENDA ITEM 3 - SECRETARY'S REPORT

The aim of my report is to keep the U3As in the Notts. Network fully informed from one Network Meeting to the next.

Since October Jeremy Lloyd, Karen Taylor and myself have met on a monthly basis to look at how best we can improve things within the Network. From January 2016 we hope to continue to have monthly meetings until we are confident that the Network is well on track with the aims of the Network being uppermost. Jenny Greaves, the Vice Chair is also attending these meetings. Other members with individual expertise will be invited to attend future meetings as and when. A brief overview of what has been discussed since the October AGM is as follows:-

Future Strategy

Following a request at the October Meeting the Officers have started a 3 year plan **Appendix 1** which is attached. As you can see there are areas where the Network themselves need to have an input and approve suggestions made by the Officers and throughout 2016 it is hoped that the plan will become much clearer and more concise. I will update the plan for every Network meeting so that all member U3As are aware of the current situation.

Following last year's survey it is also planned that a short questionnaire will be circulated in the near future to all U3As asking what Workshops and/or Round-The-Table Discussions would like to be organised in the future.

Development Team

Unfortunately some trained members of the Development Team have left due to personal reasons and therefore at the moment there are very few people left to undertake the necessary work entailed. It is hoped that more volunteers will come forward from the Network to help if only for a few hours to relieve some of the pressure that this Team is under. Karen Taylor has to be thanked for her hard work over the last few months but she also has now decided to take a few steps back in certain areas. Chris Shaw, a member of the Development Group, has kindly volunteered to assist Karen and be trained in the role of Education & Development Officer. The Officers hope that the Network will give their support to Chris.

Karen's term of office is due to end in October of this year so this is the time that if anyone else would like to be considered as the Education and Development Officer in the future, experience can be gained by helping now.

Part of the work carried out by the Officers was to draw up the Terms of Reference for the Development Team. **Appendix 2** is attached for your information. **I am hopeful that the members attending the Network meeting on 20th January 2016 will approve this document.**

In the future the Officers will be looking into How Does the Development Team work? What training is needed? What impact will the new paid teams have on volunteers? Where does the Region etc. fit in? There appears to be some "grey" areas and it is hoped that once information is known that more members will feel able to come forward to help.

Meetings

In an effort to make the meetings less busy I have asked the contributors to email their written reports. This will mean that their reports can be circulated to the member U3As prior to the meeting so that everyone will have ample time to read the documents and come back with prepared questions. The Chair will then ask if the Network approves the reports which I will minute.

This hopefully will leave more time at the end for Round-The-Table Discussions or other information to be given which is relevant to the Network.

Sub-Committees

As you can see from the spreadsheet there are certain areas where the Officers feel that more time should be spent outside of the meeting. Therefore, I am asking that the Network approve the sub-Committees. If anyone feels they can help please let me know.

Role of the Regional Trustee

Although there are now “paid” support teams to help in the development of new U3As it is still up to the Regional Trustee and other volunteers to ensure that these U3As become viable and grow to their full capacity.

Therefore I would like the Network’s approval that Regional Trustee be invited to attend the quarterly Network meetings, Annual General Meeting and all Development Team Meetings – giving a written/verbal report which appropriate. I would also like approval that the present and future Sub-Committees can approach the Regional Trustee for information and advice if necessary. I would also like approval that all Minutes (including those not yet approved) and other information connected to the Meetings can be emailed to the Regional Trustee prior to the Network meeting.

If Network is in agreement I will email Jane Pavier, the recently elected Regional Trustee and inform her of your decision and will continue to invite her to attend any of the above meetings, if she is available.

Have you time to help? Please see Agenda Item 7

Some roles need to have back-ups in case of emergencies etc. and I am asking if you as representatives of your U3A can help. If not personally do you know someone within your own U3A who may be willing to undertake these roles if necessary.

Obviously this is very important as circumstances can change quickly and there is a need for continuity which has recently happened with the Education & Development Officer.

Regional Representative Council Representatives

The Officers have noticed that there is no Election Process agreed and in the past two Network members have just volunteered to attend the Regional Representative Council, with an “alternate” to attend to cover sickness or absence.

Kath Oakley stepped in to cover Jane Pavier when she took over as Regional Secretary, taking over Jane’s term of office which ended in July 2015. Karen Taylor was the “alternate” with Mary Mitchell the other representative, whose term of office ends in August 2016.

At the Network AGM in October 2015 Karen Taylor volunteered to be a full Representative with Mary, leaving the “alternate” position available which Liz Wilson volunteered for.

Unfortunately, Kath Oakley, who was not present at the AGM, contacted Network confirming that she had, prior to the AGM, requested that she be allowed to put herself forward as a self-nomination for the “Alternate” role. However this was not brought to the attention of the Network in October.

Karen Taylor has now resigned with immediate affect which leaves a vacancy.

Mary Mitchell, the other RRC Representative has informed the Network Secretary that she too will be standing down when her term of office comes to an end in August 2016 although in the meantime is still attending the RRC Meetings, the next one being on the 3rd February 2016.

Due to the above circumstances and the fact that there is no defined process to elect Representatives, the Officers felt that there should be an election process. I am, therefore, attaching **Appendix 3**, for Members to discuss and agree the wording at the meeting on 20th January. Once agreed I will send to all U3As for approval and start the process for nominations. I trust that Network will agree that an election process is required and approve this action.

Finally I would say that both Jeremy and I are always available if you wish to contact us to discuss any of the issues raised at meetings.

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Margaret Taylor, Secretary

20.01.16.