

Role description – Chair

Category: Recruitment

1. Document purpose

To outline the role and responsibilities of a Chair.

2. Role summary

- To provide inclusive and democratic leadership of the board of Trustees (the committee).
- To ensure the committee fulfils its responsibilities for the overall governance, strategic direction, financial stability, administration and sustainability of the u3a.
- To ensure the u3a applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its charitable objects/purposes, abides by its governing document (the constitution) and complies with charity law and other relevant legislation.
- To ensure the u3a upholds the guiding principles.
- To oversee adherence to the terms and conditions of affiliation to the Third Age Trust.
- To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the u3a.
- To safeguard the good name and values of the u3a organisation.

3. Main responsibilities

Please note, the specific tasks listed below are in addition to the statutory requirements and responsibilities of trustees of charitable organisations in the UK as laid down by the relevant regulatory bodies. Some u3as may decide to delegate some of these tasks to other members of the committee e.g. the Business Secretary.

3.1. Committee meetings

- To plan the meeting agenda in advance with the Business Secretary and agree on any papers to be circulated with it.
- To chair committee meetings ensuring that:
 - the meeting starts and ends on time.
 - all necessary business is covered.
 - discussions involve everybody and are not dominated by a few people.
 - discussions remain focussed on the stated agenda items.
 - clear decisions are reached following a unanimous or majority vote of the committee.
 - a timetable for implementation of actions/decisions is agreed.
- To be impartial and encourage objectivity in decision-making.
- To encourage all members to put forward new ideas and initiatives for discussion.

- To provide a casting vote in the event of an equal split.
- To agree the annual cycle of dates for committee meetings.

3.2. Annual General Meeting (AGM)

- To write a Chair's report for the Annual Report and Accounts and ensure the final draft of the Annual Report is presented to the committee for approval in good time prior to the AGM.
- To chair the AGM ensuring that the business of the meeting is conducted according to laid down procedures and any existing standing orders.
- To arrange an induction for newly elected Trustees so they start with a sound knowledge base.
- To ensure the bank signature mandate is updated as required.

3.3. Governance

- To ensure the committee complies with its constitution and remains focused on the u3a's stated charitable objects/purposes and its aims.
- To facilitate the committee to determine the strategic direction and short and long term aims of the u3a, set its policies, define its goals, set targets and evaluate performance.
- To ensure the u3a applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects/purposes.
- To ensure that the u3a abides by the guiding principles and ethos of the u3a movement.
- To protect and manage any property and assets belonging to the u3a.
- To ensure that all Trustees clearly understand their duties and responsibilities and can make best use of their particular skills so they can become fully engaged and involved.
- To ensure all board decisions are implemented in a timely manner.
- To ensure that the committee reviews activities once they have taken place, to highlight what if anything can be learned and improved.
- To develop a strong team ethos within the board and maintain positive working relationships dealing with any conflicts which arise quickly and constructively.
- To encourage the committee to review its own effectiveness and consider whether individual roles can be better organised and/or distributed.
- To ensure the committee reviews risks on a regular basis and puts measures in place to mitigate any which are identified.
- To discuss succession planning and ways of encouraging members to volunteer for the committee.

3.4. Finance

- To ensure the committee agrees and regularly reviews an appropriate level of reserves and where funds should be placed.
- To ensure financial transparency through detailed disclosure of financial information to the committee.
- To be constantly aware of the financial position of the u3a through regular communication with the Treasurer.

3.5. Members of the u3a

- To ensure the u3a has maximum impact for its members.
- To ensure new members are welcomed and supported and understand the ethos and self-help nature of the organisation.
- To ensure that all possible methods are used to achieve the best level of communication possible between the committee and the members.
- To establish a procedure for members to provide feedback, raise issues and suggest new initiatives to be brought before the committee for discussion.
- To ensure all volunteers feel valued and supported.
- To ensure that the committee regularly reviews its structure, ways of working and relationship with the membership.
- To attend u3a functions and host monthly meetings as required.

3.6. External contacts

- To liaise with local organisations and to be the first point of contact.
- To attend network, regional and national meetings as appropriate.
- To be a spokesperson and an ambassador for the u3a ensuring that the local community is aware of what the u3a is and does.
- To represent the u3a at external functions, meetings and events.

3.7. On completion

- To carry out a comprehensive handover to the new Chair.

February 2025