



Introduction from Pat Garland, Chair, Scotland.

Welcome to Issue 2 of U3A in Scotland Newsletter. I hope you all enjoyed the festive season and are managing to escape the winter's ills and chills.

Our recent Assembly in Aberdeen, although not very well attended, seemed to be enjoyed by all. Secretaries and Treasurers attended the workshops, Ed Link the new Third Age Trustee in Scotland spoke about the consultation process initiated by the Third Age Trust and Derek Melloy, Chair of Aberdeen U3A gave a very informative talk about the National Conference which he attended in Nottingham in August.

Unfortunately Dumfries are not able to host the proposed March assembly but I hope that many U3A members will be able to attend the meeting in Stirling on Monday 27th February to discuss the Governance and Future Structure of the Third Age Trust. Graham Clark, recently retired Third Age Trust Trustee for Scotland and Immediate Past Chair of Third Age Trust Governance Committee will preside. In the afternoon Ed Link, current Third Age Trust Trustee for Scotland will give us some pointers on "Growing Your U3A"

I look forward to meeting you all then.

Pat Garland, Chair U3A Scotland.

Please ensure that as many of your members as possible have the opportunity to read this newsletter by e-mailing it out, displaying it at your general meetings and putting it on your website.

Contents.

- P2 Appealing to **YOU**
- P2 Scotland & Third Age Trust
- P5 Banner Competition
- P6 Hosting an Assembly?
- P7 Your page!
- P8. Report on 50+ Show

Dates for Your Diary

Third Age Trust Consultation

Monday Feb 27th STEP Building
Stirling

U3A Scotland AGM

Wednesday 7th June **Perth**

Summer School 2018

Sept 21st to 23rd 2018 **Dundee**

U3A Scotland is appealing to YOU

Due to unforeseen circumstances three members of the U3A Scotland committee have had to step down since the AGM, meaning that currently we are functioning with only four committee members, Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and one Committee member. We are particularly interested in acquiring a Treasurer. At the present time Dianne Savage of Edinburgh U3A has agreed to provide email or telephone help with the accounts if necessary until we have a treasurer. Surely out of over 9500 members in Scotland there must be two or three people who would be willing to be co-opted on to the committee to help.

I know there is a lot of talent amongst the members and perhaps someone with a financial background, someone with a publicity background or someone just willing to do their best to help is hiding within your membership. It does not need to be someone from your local committee. It can be any one of your many talented members.

Please appeal to your members and ask anyone interested to contact me as soon as possible. I would hate to see the Scottish Committee fold!

Pat Garland Chair U3A Scotland. u3ascotlandchair@gmail.com or Tel 01382 530972



I make no apology for including the item by Ed Link, Trustee for Scotland, on the next few pages and which many of you will have seen. It may be felt the Third Age Trust is a far-distant entity which has little effect on our day-to-day lives and the running of our individual, autonomous U3As. However, without it, we all would be very much the poorer and any changes may well significantly affect us all. Please do read the article again or, indeed, for the first time! You have all been invited to send representatives to Stirling on 27th February to discuss this. It is the future of *your* organisation which is under discussion.

Please make your opinion heard!

Editor.

Scotland and the Third Age Trust

The Third Age Trust is currently conducting a Consultative Process into its future governance structure and processes. This briefing paper puts this in context and outlines some of the current issues and proposal being considered. It is important that Scottish U3As make their views known and we encourage you to participate in the planned meeting in Stirling on 27th February.

If you are unable to do this you can still make your views known by addressing them directly to the Consultative Team to: graham.clark@u3a.org.uk

Introduction to the Third Age Trust

Scottish U3A, like all 1000 + other U3As in the UK, are affiliated into the federation of U3As through membership of the Third Age Trust. The Trust is both a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee and is the owner of the U3A trademark. Each U3A is a self-managed entity that has agreed to abide by certain principles as part of its membership of the Trust. The Trust for its part provides services to individual members as well as to the Managing Committees of U3As. These services are provided through the staff in the National Office in Bromley, Kent. To pay for these services and towards the management of the Trust, £3.50 of the annual membership subscription of every member is paid to the Trust every year by each U3A. Details of the Trust's expenditure can be found in the audited and published accounts.

The Trust is managed through the National Executive Council, the NEC, which is comprised of a number of elected representatives. All of these representatives are U3A members and act entirely in a voluntary capacity. For representation purposes the UK is divided into 9 English Regions plus Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Each of these 12 'Regions' has an elected representative for a three year term known as Regional Trustees. In addition there is a separately elected Chair, two Vice Chairs and the Treasurer elected annually but for a limited number of years. The previous Chair of the Trust is also entitled to attend plus up to 3 Co-opted Trustees each for a one year term.

The detailed work of the NEC is undertaken by a number of Working Groups and Sub-Committees, each reporting back to the NEC. Sub-Committees are chaired by a NEC Trustee but which can comprise co-opted specialists as well as other NEC Trustees.

The recently elected Regional Trustee for Scotland is Perth U3A and Cupar U3A member Ed Link. As Trustee Ed has a number of duties including helping to start new U3As in Scotland, helping established U3As with any problems they may have and representing Scottish U3As interests on the NEC.

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Do we have the Right Governance Structure?

The current structure of the NEC was adopted in 2008 after approval at the AGM in that year. The U3A movement has experienced quite significant growth since that time, almost certainly by over 50%. The question has been raised that the governance structure is now no longer applicable to such a large dynamic organisation with a turnover of nearly £2.4M. The debate was started in a paper by three previous Trust Chairs and published in Third Age Matters (TAM) some months ago. Further papers have appeared in TAM criticising this proposal as unnecessary on the basis that the present system is 'not broke so don't try to fix it'. Further the Chairman of the Trust Pam Jones, invited every member of the U3A movement to write to her with their thoughts and proposals. This next section illustrates some of the problems and proposals that have been suggested.

Is there a Problem with the Current Structure?

Some of the criticisms of the present structure called the 'Status Quo' issues are as follows. Variable Region Sizes. There is a large variation in the sizes of the Regions by number of U3As. The three big Southern Regions plus London account for about 48% of all UK U3As but with only 4 Regional Trustees with the other 52% of U3As being represented by 8 Trustees. However some 'Regions' such as Scotland cover a very large geographic footprint. There is a general concern that the workload in some Regions is too great for a single Trustee. There is some concern over whether Trustees have the necessary skills and experience to be board member of a large and diverse organisation with a £2.4M turnover. It is claimed that Regional Trustees have 'dual loyalties'. That is, they are Trustees of The Third Age Trust but have pressures to represent the interests of their Regions. It is claimed that the NEC may be too large for effective decision making. There are some criticism about the way the Trustees and Officers are elected and the duration of their tenure.

Some Ideas for Change

Some of the ideas for change that have been proposed are as follows. Some of these may be implemented within the current structure; others may involve radical restructuring.

- ◆ Create an advisory or consultative panel of perhaps 30 or 40 geographic area representatives who elect a smaller number of NEC Trustees from amongst their midst.
- ◆ Changes that result in greater equality of the number of U3As represented by each Trustee. This could be proportional representation, or more Trustees representing the larger Regions or a Trustee representing larger geographic areas
- ◆ Change the tenure period and the number of times a person can be re-elected. Introduce 'criteria' for an NEC Trustee candidature.
- ◆ Reduce NEC size by only having one Vice-Chairman and no immediate past-Chairman
- ◆ Reduce the activities undertaken by the Trust and hence of the Trustee workload.
- ◆ Increase the number of paid specialist staff and/or volunteers in the Regions

The National Office circulated a Survey to all U3As in the summer of 2016. In furtherance of the Consultative Process a meeting of all Scottish U3As is being planned for 27th February 2017. This meeting will be chaired by members of the Consultation Team.

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Consultative Process

The NEC formed a Consultation Team to consult with as many U3A members and regional groups as possible. This process should be completed by Easter 2017. A report will be presented to the NEC by May 2017. If only minor changes are proposed then these will be presented to the AGM in 2017. If major changes are proposed these will be debated at the 2017 AGM and if there is a consensus on such proposals they will be submitted to the 2018 AGM.

What does this mean for Scottish U3As?

Scottish U3As represent around 5% of the total number of U3As in the UK. The percentage by individual member is probably even smaller, perhaps as low as 2%. Nevertheless Scotland has its own Trustee, as of course do other Regions with relatively small membership. On the other hand Scotland has by far the greatest land mass and travelling distances throughout the land. Further, Scotland has its own unique cultural identity and social and legal system. The U3A movement is a collective self-help endeavour open to all who are no longer in full-time employment. It is a long tradition of such collective organisations to help with the allocation of resources on a needs basis. Hence there are more reasons than just numbers that determine how a body such as the NEC should be made up. The NEC is the body that determines how its collective resources are allocated and hence its make up should reflect the wider needs across the UK. The Consultative process is your opportunity to make your views known. So we appeal to you to take ownership of your U3A in the wider movement and not just your local activities.

Edward Link

7.11.16

The Scottish Committee is considering buying a banner similar to the one displayed at our meetings but with a more Scottish flavour. To this end we are holding a competition for ALL U3A members to create a design for this banner. There are a few parameters which must be met.

The banner measures 2m by 80cm so a scale drawing would be appropriate.

It must have the U3A background colours

include the words “**U3A in Scotland**”

include our website details www.u3asites/scotland

include our charity number SC030370

Please send designs to Joyce Kennedy u3ascotlandsecretary@gmail.com
or at 3, Smithy Lane, Balmullo, St Andrews, KY16 0FG no later than end of April
and perhaps we would have the new banner in time for our AGM in June.

There will be a small voucher prize for the selected design.

Find us at u3asites.org.uk/scotland

WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO HELP?

One of the main roles of the U3A in Scotland Executive Committee is to organise a minimum of two study days (known as All Scottish Assemblies) each year. In 2016 we also added a Summer School to that list. This was such a success that in 2018 we will return to the same venue in Dundee.

The other events are not so simple. Over the last few years in response to Member U3A's requests, we have moved the venues around the country rather than sticking to the 'central belt'. By doing this we hoped to make it easier for people from more Member U3As to attend. We have had some very successful events in Eyemouth, Haddington, Oban, Perth, Stirling and most recently in Aberdeen.

Hosting an AGM or an Assembly

Whilst it does involve a little work for the host U3A, it carries no financial implications. U3A Scotland oversees all the organisation and is responsible for publicity (before and after the event); producing delegate name badges; signage; booking speakers; organising and confirming delegate bookings; plus covering the cost of the venue, refreshments, lunch and speakers expenses.

Some of that cost is met by a grant from Third Age Trust, the remainder from your affiliation fees.

Funding by the Trust is dependent on the main focus of day being related to the running and organisation of our U3As. The final amount has to be approved by the Trustee for Scotland and there is a predetermined limit for the venue and catering.

The role of the host U3A is to

identify a suitable venue which will then be visited by the Events Organiser;

identify a suitable local caterer at an agreed cost per head;

provide travel directions to the venue and

provide 3 or 4 helpers for the event. Depending on the venue this could involve helping with registration, refreshments, lunch etc.

The venue itself can be crucial to the success of the event. It must therefore:

be easily accessible by road or rail; have adjacent / nearby parking; be disabled friendly (including adjacent parking); have good sound systems, hearing loops, projection equipment and IT facilities;* have one large room (approx 40-60) + 1 or 2 smaller rooms for workshops; have a friendly, open space suitable for refreshments and lunch.

* whilst the availability of an in-house fixed sound system is advisable, it may be sourced separately.

We would love to hear from any U3A which feels able to offer to host an event. It would be helpful to have a list to which we could refer. It would make such a difference if we could advertise the venue several months in advance of a meeting as this would give Member U3As time to discuss it at Committee Meetings and notify all their members - something that we know from feedback, does not always happen because of limited time. Those of you who have attended previous events will know what a positive experience they can be - learning from each others' experiences (good or bad!), making contacts, sharing information and ideas and meeting friends, old and new.

Please help us to support you, by volunteering to host a future event. It only takes an email to myself - address below - or if you want to have more details and answers to questions, why not give me a ring on 01890 781517.

Kath Payne, Vice Chair / Events Organiser
u3ascotlandvicechair@gmail.com

Find us at u3asites.org.uk/scotland

500th member joins Bearsden and Milngavie U3A

Bearsden and Milngavie U3A has reached a new milestone since it was set up nearly three years ago, with the enrolment of its 500th member. When we started in December 2013, we had no idea that we would find ourselves with such a large and successful group less than three years later. Our members now organise and take part in almost 50 different activity and interest groups.

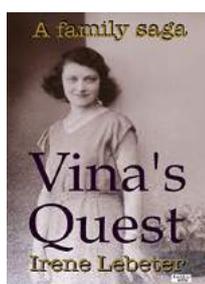
Photo- showing left to right:

Mary Kennedy, Committee member; Janet Holland, Chair; Sheila Wilson, 500th member;

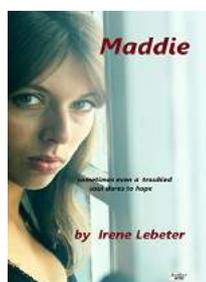
Elaine Miller, Committee member



Members' Publications If you have published and wish to let other members know, please contact the Editor, address below.



This, the first novel by Irene Lebeter, a member of Hamilton U3A, tells of one woman's search for her roots. Available from Amazon in both Kindle and paperback formats.



Irene Lebeter's second novel, published 2016. A journey through Glasgow in the 50s and 60s . Available from Amazon in both Kindle and paperback.

This is **YOUR** newsletter—please send any item/photograph you wish publicised to the editor.

There is a distinctly better chance of it being printed here than in Third Age Matters!

Send to: u3ascotlandnewsletter@gmail.com before cut-off date of 5th May 2017.

Glasgow 50+ Show offers an opportunity every year to promote the U3A in Scotland to the general public. This year was no different and our stand was fully manned over both days of the show on Friday 25th and Saturday the 26th November.



Both days start at 9:30 with doors open to the public. No sooner are the doors open than folk are stopping by to find out about the U3A. Many visitors said that they have heard of the U3A but didn't know much about what we do. Quite a few knew someone who was already a member. Even those who knew nothing about the U3A were keen to know more. All the U3A volunteers who came and helped on the stand had an enjoyable if busy time. There was no shortage of people to talk to.

In a way the U3A stand was a bit of a refuge. Being a 50+ show there were stands for funeral services, mobility aids, the making of Wills, and various health issues common amongst older folk. And why not have a free hearing test while you're here? So by the time they got to the U3A stand it was a joy to see lots of pictures of older people enjoying life.

This year we had fliers for local Scottish U3As and this proved very useful as many people expressed an interest in finding out about their local U3A. It was surprising how far some people had travelled to come to the show. But most people were from Glasgow and the surrounding area. It was therefore very noticeable that we do not have a U3A in Glasgow. As it happens Glasgow was the first place in Scotland to set up a U3A over 30 years ago, unfortunately it folded about ten years ago. So I am pleased to say a number of people left their contact details for us to follow up with regards to restarting a U3A in central Glasgow.

There will be a 50+ Show again next year so if you are able we will once again be looking for volunteers to help man the stand. Here's hoping we can be more positive about a Glasgow U3A.



Elizabeth Hutchings from Edinburgh U3A and Pamela Davison from Bearsden and Milngavie U3A enjoy a chat with visitors to the stand.

Ed Link

Third Age Trust Trustee for Scotland