



Northern Ireland Region Newsletter

Welcome to the Northern Ireland Region Newsletter.

In this Newsletter I shall remind you of some of the key issues that the Third Age Trust addressed during 2010, as well as drawing your attention to their website. I also hope to tell you a bit about the work of the Northern Ireland Region Executive Committee.

The Third Age Trust

Some of you will remember that Mike Long spoke to us at the Spring meeting about *Growth Matters*. This booklet examines the advantages and perceived advantages of not setting any limit on membership growth and also offers options to U3As approaching capacity; examines what U3As can do if they wish to split their own U3A into two independent U3As based in separate locations, start a new U3A or decide to start a satellite adjoining their own and; looks at other factors caused or exacerbated by membership growth.

While most of our U3As are small or medium sized, but may become bigger, there are a few that might already be facing some of the problems that this booklet addresses.

At our recent Autumn meeting Terry Hardie spoke about *Guidelines on the Role of Regions in the U3A Movement in the UK*.

Among the objectives and activities that he mentioned were –

- Ensuring that there is a forum for all regional member U3As to exchange ideas, discuss problems and issues and seek help at individual U3A committee level;
- Liaise closely with the Regional Trustee to ensure that all issues, ideas and concerns are widely communicated in the region both to and from the Trust and regional member U3As;
- Help the EDC in the region and the Regional Trustee to form a regional development team to create new U3As;
- Help set up a communications strategy to enable all regional member U3As to become aware of activities in the region.

Most recently the Trust asked U3As to complete a *Survey on the present and future support of U3As by the Third Age Trust*. I hope you all took time to complete the survey.

Can I also remind you that the Trust has a website: www.u3a.org.uk. Within this website is a members' area. I would encourage you to

login, it is not difficult to do. You will find lots of very useful texts on topics such as information for treasurers, insurance matters, data protection, an equal opportunities policy declaration and capitation fee and multiple U3A membership.

Executive Committee

This year, for the first time, the Executive Committee drew up an operational plan for the period 2010-2012. This was seen by the Trust as a pilot exercise. It was circulated to all U3As and the Regional Committee approved it at the Spring meeting. Since then the Executive Committee has been working to meet the objectives in the plan.

Towards the end of last year the Trust asked regions to submit a budget for the financial year 2010/2011. The Committee prepared a budget and in January 2010 submitted it, through the NI Trustee, to the Trust for their approval.

Because we had been asked to submit this budget it meant that we did not have to ask our U3As for a contribution towards the running costs for the Region.

While our budget of some £2,000 was eventually approved, the Committee, and indeed the Trustee, has had difficulties in obtaining the actual funds from the Trust. At this point in time we are still waiting for the balance of our budget to be paid to us.

Together with the help of Foyle U3A and individual members of other U3As the Executive Committee organised the AGM and Spring meeting, the Autumn meeting and an afternoon for members to discuss the role of U3A committees.

The Executive Committee has supported the NI Trustee who is our link to the work of the Trust. The Committee has also supported the EDCs in their work to set up new U3As.

I hope that this has given you some insight into the work of the Third Age Trust and the Northern Ireland Region Executive Committee in 2010.

I wish all our U3As a very successful 2011, and look forward to seeing you at the AGM and Spring meeting on 13 April, hosted by Erne U3A.

Sandra Foster
Secretary to the NI Region
January 2011