

DOCUMENT STATUS:

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SIGNED	 Jane Austin (on behalf of the Wadhurst u3a Trustees)
DESIGNATION	Vice Chair, Wadhurst & District u3a
DATE OF LAST REVIEW/UPDATE	July 2026 Updated to remove references to Northern Ireland & Scotland charity rules and correct Charity Registration No.
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:	July 2029 (or sooner, if required)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. PURPOSE

To outline the responsibilities of Trusteeship of a u3a.

1.2. SCOPE

Relevant to all u3a Trustees (committee members).

2. TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

The u3a's Committee members take on the role of Trustees of the charity. Committee members are responsible for the governance of the u3a including directing how it is managed and run. The Trustees must make sure that the u3a is carrying out the purpose for which it is set up, and that all resources and funds are used only in furthering its charitable objective. Trustees are collectively responsible for ensuring that a u3a fulfils its charitable objectives and does not stray beyond them. The central purpose of every u3a is educational. Trustees collectively are responsible for the safe custody of members' money. Further information about financial responsibilities can be accessed on the u3a website.

3. TRUSTEE CODE OF CONDUCT

A Trustee code of conduct is an agreement between the organisation and the individual committee member which clarifies the standard of behaviour expected in the performance of their role. It is recommended that u3a committees adopt the relevant Code of Conduct for their

u3a and all new committee members are provided with a copy. The relevant Code of Conduct can be accessed in the 'Running your u3a' section. Please note there are different versions depending on where you are based, and in Scotland if your u3a is registered or unregistered.

4. TRUSTEESHIP (ENGLAND AND WALES)

All u3as are charities whether they are registered or not due to the charitable purpose (object clause) that is contained within the constitution. This status means that all committee members are Trustees. The Charity Commission publishes guidance on the role of Trustees – 'The Essential Trustee' CC3 which committee members need to familiarise themselves with. The Essential Trustee highlights some key areas of Trusteeship which includes:

- Ensuring your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- Complying with your charity's governing document and the law
- Acting in your charity's best interests
- Managing your charity's resources responsibly
- Acting with reasonable care and skill
- Ensuring your charity is accountable

Trustees are also required to sign a Trustee eligibility form to declare their suitability for a Trustee role. The Chair should retain a copy of these forms and ensure new Trustees complete one of these as part of their induction to the role. It is also recommended that u3as refer to the Charity Code of Good Governance as a guide to governance requirements.

5. TRUSTEE INDEMNITY INSURANCE

u3a committees are covered by Trustee Indemnity Insurance provided through the Third Age Trust. The insurance protects u3a Trustees, both individually and as a board, against a genuine mistake or error of judgement providing that they have acted responsibly and followed their u3a's constitution. Where this is deemed not to be the case, Trustees risk being held personally responsible and not being covered by indemnity insurance. Trustees should also be aware that even if an allowable claim is made, an excess will apply. The indemnity insurance will not protect against criminal law.

In the event of any irregularity at either main committee or group level, the Trustees are potentially liable if they have not taken all reasonable steps to minimise risks. Trustees must follow the requirements of the appropriate regulatory authority for their country in relation to any reporting requirements. It is not possible for an individual Trustee to opt out of collective responsibility.

In addition, responsibility must never be given to a Group Leader/Convenor or Group Coordinator to operate a group that is in any way detached from the u3a. Trustees retain overall responsibility of the u3a and its activities. All money collected is the property of the u3a and it must all be accounted for to the membership at the AGM and to the appropriate regulatory authority, as required.

6. COMMITTEE MEETINGS – SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

Trustees are expected to read the agenda and all supporting papers prior to the meeting and strive to attend all meetings.

6.1 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Trustees must declare a conflict or possible conflict of interest at the start of the committee meeting or at the earliest possible opportunity. The Chair will then decide whether to exclude the Trustee from a particular item or even from the whole meeting. In the event the Chair has a conflict of interest, the committee should request the Vice Chair to rule on the matter. If the Vice Chair is unavailable or unable to rule on this matter, then the Chair elected for the meeting should rule on the matter.

6.2 POWER TO MAKE DECISIONS

This rests solely with the committee, as a body and decisions can only be taken as a result of a majority vote in favour by those members of the committee present at the time. No Trustee has the authority to act in isolation.

6.3 CONFIDENTIALITY

In order to ensure all Trustees feel comfortable expressing their views and ideas it is essential that everybody always maintains confidentiality outside the committee. The decisions made by the committee must be minuted and once approved made available to members on request.

6.4 COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

No matter what individual Trustees' opinions or voting choices are, once an item is approved by the committee, all Trustees must accept it as decisive and final and not comment further outside the committee environment. If a Trustee is unable to accept a decision their only recourse, after due consideration, is to resign from the committee.

RELATED DOCUMENTATION

The following link will take you to all the relevant documentation on the website:

[u3a - Support for u3as Landing Page](#)

This includes guidance on:

- The Principles of the u3a movement
- Committee Procedures and Guidance
- Terms of Membership of the Third Age Trust
- Finance guidance and FAQs
- Template policies and procedures -
- Accessibility Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Disciplinary Policy

Registered Charity: 1160124 | Website: www.wadhurst.u3asite.uk

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Environmental Issues Policy
- Trustee Induction

SUPPORT, ADVICE AND INFORMATION

The u3a run a number of online workshops to support Trustees, including 'Running your u3a – Information for Trustees'. More information about these workshops and how to book can be found on the u3a workshops page.

All members can also contact the u3a office for information and advice by calling 020 8466 6139 or emailing: u3a.office@u3a.org.uk.

OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION:

- **Charity Commission guides for charity trustees:**
<https://www.charitygovernancecode.org/>
<https://charitycommission.blog.gov.uk/2017/07/13/the-new-charity-governance-code-essential-reading-for-all-trustees/>
- **u3a Trustee Code of Conduct:**
<https://www.u3a.org.uk/about/about-the-trust/code-of-conduct>