

Beccles u3a – Codes of Conduct

For Members

u3a members are expected to conduct themselves within the movements “guiding principles”. They are also expected to treat each other with dignity and respect.

The member Code of Conduct clarifies the standard of behaviour expected as a member of a u3a.

- ◆ Members are expected to know, follow and promote the Principles of the u3a Movement at every opportunity.
- ◆ Members must always act in the best interests of Beccles u3a and the u3a Movement, strive to uphold its reputation and never do anything which could bring Beccles u3a or the u3a Movement into disrepute or expose it to undue risk.
- ◆ Members are expected to use Beccles u3a’s resources responsibly and only to further its stated charitable objects/purposes.
- ◆ Members are expected to reflect the current organisational policy of Beccles u3a, regardless of whether it conflicts with their personal views.
- ◆ Members are expected to abide by Beccles u3a’s procedures and practices.
- ◆ Members are expected to treat each other with dignity and respect at all times.

For Trustees

Requirements of a Trustee

1 Trustees’ responsibilities and duties

A 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

2 Trustees 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.

- ◆ u3a Trustees must work together as a team and are collectively responsible for controlling the management and administration of the u3a.
- ◆ A u3a is advised to adopt a Trustee Code of Conduct which is an agreement between a u3a and individual committee members which clarifies the standard of behaviour expected in the performance of their role.
- ◆ Trustees should make themselves aware of guidance from their charity regulatory authority. This is recommended whether or not the u3a is a registered charity.
- ◆ Trustees must read the Charity Commission leaflet CC3 entitled 'The Essential Trustee – what you need to know, what you need to do' which can be downloaded from the Charity Commission website
- ◆ Trustees must comply with charity law (as required by the relevant regulatory authority).
- ◆ Trustees are expected to know, follow and promote the principles of the u3a movement.
- ◆ Trustees must always act in the best interests of the u3a and the u3a movement, strive to uphold its reputation and never do anything which could bring the u3a or the u3a movement into disrepute or expose it to undue risk.
- ◆ Trustees must use their u3a's resources responsibly and only to further its stated charitable purpose.
- ◆ Trustees are expected to reflect the current organisational policy of their u3a, regardless of whether it conflicts with their personal views.
- ◆ Trustees are expected to abide by their u3a's governance procedures and practices.
- ◆ Trustees must never derive any pecuniary benefit (including benefits in kind) from being a Trustee and must notify the Chair of any gifts received.
- ◆ Trustees should inform the Chair before accepting an invitation to speak on behalf of the u3a.
- ◆ Trustees are expected to treat fellow committee members courteously at all times and maintain a respectful attitude towards the opinions of others.
- ◆ Organisational, committee and individual confidentiality must be respected at all times.
- ◆ All committee members must satisfy the relevant regulatory body's requirements for being Trustees.

3 Trusteeship

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:

- Ensure your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- Comply with your charity's governing document and the law
- Act in your charity's best interests
- Manage your charity's resources responsibly
- Act with reasonable care and skill
- Ensure your charity is accountable

Trustees are also required to sign a Trustee eligibility form in order to declare their suitability for the 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 www.charitygovernancecode.org as a guide to governance requirements.

4 Indemnity

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 u3as 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.

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. 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

5 Committee Meetings

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

5.1 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 that the Chair has a conflict of interest, then the committee should request the Vice Chair to rule on the matter.

5.2 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.

5.3 Confidentiality

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

5.4 Corporate 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.

6 Declaration

Current and newly elected Trustees should be asked to confirm their acceptance of the code which should be minuted. Alternatively you can ask each Trustee to indicate acceptance by signing and dating a copy which should be kept on file.