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Pilot Council

Summary Report of 22nd May 2024 meeting

This may be shared with all u3a members. It is recommended National & Regional Trustees distribute it to all u3as in their area for information and engagement.

Please note that official notes are the true record of discussions and decisions taken at Pilot Council meetings. This is a brief summary of the main topics discussed and should not be taken as an authoritative statement. If you require any further detail about any item, please contact your National / Regional Trustee.

This was an online meeting with all regions and nations represented with the exception of the East of England. The main topics were as follows:

- **500K -** Liz Drury made a detailed presentation on the progress of the various initiatives under this project, including publicity on Boom Radio and social media platforms. It is all looking positive at the moment. It was agreed that more statistics are needed to properly assess the progress of the project and noted that the annual return for 2023 is not yet complete as not all u3as have yet submitted their data. It was proposed that Liz's presentation be made available to u3as. She agreed to make some additions to cover the resulting lack of commentary.

- **New u3a Start-ups.** John Russell, a very experienced start-up volunteer (whose latest u3a became a full member only last week) gave a presentation on the various pitfalls to be expected during the start-up process and made some suggestions as to how these might be alleviated in future. Work has already been done on this by the Member Services department and the Board approved new procedures a few months ago. For example, immediate access to Beacon and SiteWorks is a great help for fledgling u3as. However, it was agreed that there is more that could be done to encourage new start-ups and to further explore some of the alternatives to increasing membership such as satellites. The various problems encountered were discussed in the light of experience and it was acknowledged that banking and finance in the first year is the major hurdle in most cases. It is a subject that any future Council (if formed) may need to look at in more detail. Member Services were asked to provide data on the number (if any) of failed new start-ups.

- **Bank signatories.** As a result of the above discussion a recommendation was made to u3as in general, that if you wish to change the authorised signatories to your bank account, make sure you have the new signatories accepted underline before you remove the old ones. Banks are notoriously slow at approving new ones but will remove old ones instantly.

- **Fit For The Future**. The consultation period is now finished and an analysis of all the resulting comments has been produced by a small working group, verified by independent members and submitted to the Trust Board, the

Steering Group and the Pilot Council. The email address of governance @u3a.org.uk is still operational. The Board will make its final decision on whether to propose a resolution to the AGM at their meeting on 19th June.

Pilot Council considered a large number of draft papers detailing proposals which need to be considered if a change of governance is to be proposed. These included, terms of reference for the Council, the formation of a Nominations panel, the election process for both Board and Council members, as well as several others.

Almost all of these are still very much draft proposals but two decisions have been made: the next Pilot Council meeting scheduled for September will be the last. If the formation of a Council is proposed and approved, then the election process will begin after the AGM with a view to the Council becoming operational at the start of the new financial year in April 2025. The second decision is that, for the time being, Network Link will be represented on any future Council only by the appointed Chair. It is agreed that the present varied structures of the many networks around the country make a fair and democratic election impossible.

It was explained that, although a Council could be formed under the existing Articles, a change is required to enable the new smaller Board of Trustees to be elected by the whole membership (as opposed to regionally as at present). It therefore makes sense, at the same time, to formalise the existence of a Council so that it cannot be disbanded by a future Board without going back to the members at an AGM.

It was understood that if the Board decides to go ahead with these proposals, then the resulting resolution to the AGM will be relatively simple – a short list of amended Articles. All the details set out in the draft papers will be distributed to u3as following the 19th June meeting but will not require an AGM vote.

Pilot Council members recommended that, in addition to all the detail, in which not all u3as may have the time to engage, a short summary is produced encapsulating the main points. It was also suggested that a short, punchy video could be made to go on the website, explaining the advantage to u3as of the proposed changes. It was also considered that, if the Board decides to go ahead, then a further series of presentation to Nations, Regions and Networks might be beneficial. The Steering Group and the Board will consider these recommendations.

- **Date of Next meeting:** 18th September in London, venue tbc.

SB -24th May 2024