

## **How the Cotswold Link is run**

### **Cotswold Link Organisation**

The Cotswold Link (the Link) is a network organisation, affiliated to the Third Age Trust, for local u3as located in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Membership is not compulsory, however, all local u3as in the Cotswold Link area are free to join, even if they are also members of another network.

### **Aims**

- To further the exchange of experience and knowledge between local u3as.
- To act as a conduit of information between local u3as and National Office/Regional trustees.
- To initiate and support cooperative activities where economies of scale would justify such an approach.
- To assist with formation and support of new u3as.
- To forge and maintain links with other educational and Third Age organisations.

### **The Committee**

1. The Cotswold Link is run by a committee of up to 6 members, three of whom are the officers: Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.
2. All members of the committee are elected to a particular role for 1 year and shall be eligible for re-election, with a maximum of 4 re-elections being possible.
3. Committee members standing for election to a role for the first time at the AGM should be proposed by one member u3a and seconded by another.
4. Committee members standing for re-election to a role at the AGM can confirm their willingness to stand and do not need to be proposed and seconded.
5. Committee members may serve, in any capacity, for no more than five years continuously.
6. In the event of a vacancy, a member can be co-opted to the committee or from one committee role to another.
7. Co-opted members shall stand for election at the following AGM.
8. If no others are willing to stand, a retiring committee member may be co-opted on to the committee for a maximum of one further year.

If possible the three officers should come from 3 different u3as and this also applies to the other three committee members.

## **Finance**

The committee can request financial assistance from time to time by means of a modest levy per member u3a. Any proposed changes to the levy are discussed and agreed by a simple majority of those present at the autumn half yearly meeting.

The levies are intended to provide cover for minor administrative costs and any advance expenses for events. Activities organised by the committee should normally be self-financing. Small grants may be applied for occasionally to defray the costs of general meetings and study days.

## **Functions of the Committee**

- To report regularly to and consult with Cotswold Link u3as.
- To represent the views of Cotswold Link u3as at any meetings of networks and/or regions.
- To arrange the following activities, as required:
  - Cotswold Link general meetings, including the AGM
  - Study Days, Open Days and Social Events
  - Other events, which further the aims and objectives of the Cotswold Link.

The committee can delegate and/or co-opt other individuals or member u3a to organise such events.

The committee can set up any sub-committees it thinks appropriate.

- To act as a focal point for new or potential u3as, in support of the regional trustee.

## **Role of the Chair**

- To chair meetings of the committee and the Cotswold Link u3as.  
The chair shall have a casting vote in committee proceedings.
- To promote co-operation between member u3as.
- To assist in the setting up of new u3as.
- To act as spokesperson and contact for information on regional u3a activities with both the regional media and other similar organisations promoting education and activities for Third Agers.

## **Role of the Secretary**

- To take the minutes of both committee and Cotswold Link u3a meetings, circulating and storing as appropriate.
- To maintain records of all member u3as and contacts and to circulate this information to member u3as.
- To collect information from and disseminate information to u3a contacts.

## **Role of the Treasurer**

- To maintain records of income and expenditure based on a calendar financial year and report to the AGM.
- To recommend to the committee and Cotswold Link u3a meetings any need for levies.
- To seek approval in advance from member u3as for any significant expenditure that would require an enhanced levy contribution.
- To apply for grants from The Trust for activities such as Study Days.
- To operate a bank account with signatories to be members of the committee – two out of three signatories to be required on any payment.

## **Cotswold Link u3a meetings**

The Cotswold Link AGM will usually be held in March.

Cotswold Link u3a general meetings will be held at least twice a year, usually in March and September.

Meetings will usually be in-person on a rotating member u3a basis. The schedule of host u3as is determined in advance.

At an in-person meeting voting will be by a show of hands.

All member u3as are entitled to send two delegates to an in-person meeting.

The committee can increase the size of the delegation if circumstances allow.

All delegates may speak at the meeting but each member u3a has only ONE vote.

The agenda for the meeting shall be set by the committee but is expected to include a section on airing and sharing. This section is designed for member u3as to put forward suggestions, problems, ideas etc with a view to seeking or providing mutual benefit and assistance between member u3as. The Committee shall decide whether such a discussion is open ended or on a fixed topic(s).

The current West Midlands and South West u3a Council representatives, will be invited to attend the meetings to report to the member u3as on current regional and national matters and seek any issues which need to be taken back to the Council.

## **Communicating with member u3as**

Each member u3a will be asked to nominate a Cotswold Link representative, who will receive all information pertaining to the Link for distribution to their own committee and any other interested parties in their own u3a. It is anticipated that these representatives will attend the AGM and half-yearly general meetings or, if this is not possible, will send a deputy.

## **Hosting a general meeting**

Member u3as are asked to host the general meetings in turn, by providing and paying for a venue and by providing refreshments, including lunch if appropriate. The budget for refreshments should be agreed in advance with the Link committee, with the cost to be met by the members attending. Any small profit, after paying for the venue and catering, is to the benefit of the host u3a. The Link committee organises the receipt of entries, books the speakers and meets their costs.

## **The Special Interest / Study Day**

The Link organises a special interest / study day, usually in July, open to all members of Link u3as. Member u3as who volunteer to host the day are asked to book a venue and organise catering. The budget for the venue and catering should be agreed in advance with the Link committee. The Link committee organises the speakers and the receipt of entries. In this case the Link pays all costs and retains any small profit on the day or bears any loss.

## **Sharing a group activity**

In the interests of sharing and perpetuating the aims of the u3a movement, the Link has set up a reciprocal agreement between its member u3as. Any member of a Link u3a may attend one group activity in another Link u3a, without having to become a paid member of that other u3a. General meetings of a u3a do not count as a group activity. Session fees for the group activity will still apply. This is an entirely voluntary agreement between Link u3as and although it is hoped that all will participate, the independence of any dissenting u3a is recognised.