



# Resolutions submitted for 2020 AGM of the Third Age Trust

## Ordinary Resolution from the Board of the Third Age Trust

The following ordinary resolution has been submitted to the Company Secretary by the Board of Directors of the Third Age Trust for the Annual General Meeting 2020. It was formally agreed by the Board at the Board meeting on May 14<sup>th</sup> 2020 and is recorded in the minutes of that meeting.

***The annual membership subscription paid by member U3As to the Third Age Trust for each of their paid up members, based on the highest numbers recorded in the previous 12 months, be increased to £4.00 effective from the payment due April 1st 2022.***

## Ordinary Resolution submitted by Chipping Norton & Area U3A

Proposed by Chipping Norton & Area U3A – South East Region

Seconded by Craven U3A – Yorkshire and the Humber Region

***The annual membership subscription paid by member U3As to the Third Age Trust on behalf of each of their paid up members, in April of each year be increased to £4.50 per member with effect from April 1st 2022.***

## Supporting papers

Supporting papers for both resolutions are included in this mailing and all will be available on the website in due course.

## Amendments

Any amendments to proposed resolutions will be required by the **14th August 2020**. Amendments must be proposed and seconded by different U3As. The list of amendments to the proposed resolutions will be sent to all U3As as soon as possible after 14th August 2020. The Board of Directors has the responsibility to examine the amendments, reject any that introduce new matter to or are a direct negation of the original resolution and to arrange amalgamations where appropriate, in consultation with the originating U3As.

Please submit any amendments, with proposing and seconding U3A details, to [agm@u3a.org.uk](mailto:agm@u3a.org.uk).



# Resolution supporting statement

For resolution submitted by the Board of Directors of the Third Age Trust

## Third Age Trust Membership Subscriptions

### What is the Trust Membership Subscription?

Out of each U3A's annual membership fee, £3.50 is paid per member, per year, to the Trust to cover its costs in providing services to U3As. It was last increased in 2010 and inflation has since grown by 29% - equivalent to a subscription of £4.52 today. In 2010 there were 789 U3As with 250,586 members. Currently there are 440,000 members with 1050 U3As resulting in a much heavier workload for National Office staff.

The membership subscription is the Trust's main source of income as it receives no external funding from government or other sponsorship.

### What are the benefits the Trust provides to its member U3As?

Access to a wide range of services and benefits that U3As receive from the Trust including:

- Advice via email, telephone, website, mailings.
- News via U3A monthly newsletter, *Sources Online*, other online platforms including social media channels.
- National Office staff who support and advise U3As and their members on all U3A matters and benefits.
- Various insurance policies covering U3A activities:
  - Public Liability
  - Trustee Indemnity
  - Cyber
  - Tour Operator
- Licences for interest groups to photocopy, play music or show films – either fully paid for by the Trust or available at a discounted cost.
- Through National Office, make available professional advice on issues such as copyright, accessibility, insurance, data protection and equality.
- *Third Age Matters* including *Sources* – national magazine delivered to the individual members' doors.
- *Beacon* membership management system to securely manage and communicate with members - a tool that eases the administrative burden of running a U3A.
- *Sitebuilder* – free to use website platform for U3As to set up a basic website with no hosting costs.
- Support and training to enable Trust Volunteers to provide advice on running a U3A.
- *National Workshop Programme* – face to face and online support for U3A committees and interest groups.
- Annual Conference, in normal years, for networking, sharing ideas, best practice and participating in workshops.
- AGM for U3As to determine how the U3A movement develops.
- National educational and cultural events for individual members.
- Resources for running a U3A – branded publicity materials (standard and editable leaflets, posters, banners etc.) and merchandise items.

- Resources for Learning to assist in running interest groups.
- A collective voice for 'Positive Ageing'.

### What will be the impact of COVID-19 on the Trust's finances?

It is obviously too early to make this assessment. The April 2021 U3A membership renewal rates may be adversely affected; the longer social interaction guidelines delay the resumption of face to face interest groups and monthly meetings. As a result, the Trust's membership income may be lower than in the past. Membership numbers may take some time to recover to 2020 levels, thereby having a permanent impact on the Trust's finances and its ability to deliver a professional service to members.

### What action has the Trust taken to address the impact of COVID-19 on its finances?

Prior to COVID-19, the board decided to recommend to the 2020 AGM that the membership subscription be increased from £3.50, per member per year, to £4.50, effective April 2022.

However, the board recognises that the current crisis will have a negative impact on the financial position of many U3As and that members will be looking to the Trust to examine its finances in the same way that is being required of them.

As a result, the board has now decided to propose a 50p increase in the membership subscription to £4, effective April 2022. In addition, the Trust has already taken measures to reduce its fixed costs, including staffing, and to prepare a new budget for this year that aims to ensure that its finances remain sound beyond the current crisis.

### Why do we need an increase in the Membership Subscription in a post COVID-19 world?

Now more than ever, once U3A activity returns, the Trust needs to invest in refreshing its publicity materials and raising the movement's profile so that it broadens its membership and remains a life enhancing experience for third agers.

The Trust has operated on limited resources during the last decade. Specialist staff are needed to provide the membership with a quality service in a diverse and complex range of areas. Currently, there are 440,000 U3A members supported by the equivalent of 17 full-time staff. This is a member to staff ratio of 25,882 to 1. Similar organisations have a member to staff ratio of around 2,500 to 1.

The movement must comply with Charity Commission requirements and UK legislation - including the legal differences between the four nations. In turn, the Trust is required to interpret this advice to the benefit of all U3As.

There is an urgent need to invest in the website, online learning platforms, streamlined office procedures (including automating accounting processes) and effective communication services so that the current level of support that U3As are entitled to is improved.

### How will the members themselves benefit from the increase?

- More expert help available in the office to answer questions and to deal with problems both by phone and via other channels such as social media.
- A new website and learning platform giving members access to numerous sources of subject information which will, among other learning assets, assist Subject Advisers as well as interest group leaders.
- Easier access for members to brand related resources such as leaflets, customised publicity material and branded merchandise.

The accounts show a healthy annual surplus. Why aren't the reserves being used rather than increasing the membership subscription?

The reserves include a prudential level based on Charity Commission guidelines. The surplus to this amount has been allocated to implement the recommendations of the Trust's medium-term Development Plan announced at the 2019 AGM after two years of membership consultation. Most of the resulting expenditure is long term and includes specialist staffing, premises, modern office systems, etc. The revenue from an increase in the membership subscription is needed to fund these commitments beyond 2022.

After almost 40 years of strong growth in both new U3As and membership, the last ten years have shown a steady decrease in the rate of growth. The increase in membership fell from 10% in 2011 to 3% in 2019. This reduced marginal contribution from new members.

The trends are that U3A membership will not grow, the age profile will be older, and continue to be so in the absence of new recruits unless measures are taken to encourage the next generation of third agers to benefit from U3A membership in the same way that our generation has enjoyed. The funding recommendations of the recently announced Development Plan are aimed at addressing these issues.

Why is the office based in London when other parts of the country would be cheaper?

The Trust has considered a move to another part of the UK. However, there are compelling reasons for a London base. Members consistently point out that London is the easiest, and most cost effective, centre to travel to from all parts of the country. The staff live within the London area. The relocation or redundancy costs associated with moving long standing and specialist staff to another part of the UK are beyond the Trust's resources.

Although the decision on a new location for the office would still favour London, it has been precipitated by the office having to move out of Lant Street permanently in January 2020 for Health & Safety reasons. The move to temporary offices resulted in a greater urgency to find a permanent location. To have considered a move to another part of the UK would have complicated an already difficult situation.

When will the proposed increase in the Membership Subscription, from £3.50 to £4.00 per member per year, be confirmed by the Trust and applicable?

A resolution recommending this increase will be tabled at the 2020 Trust AGM on 29th September and, if approved by members, will be applicable from April 1st 2022 thereby giving U3As 18 months to budget for the increase.



# Resolution supporting statement

For resolution submitted by Chipping Norton & Area U3A and seconded by Craven U3A

## Third Age Trust Membership Subscriptions - why an increase of £1?

- Currently every U3A member contributes £3.50 to the upkeep of the movement each year as part of their U3A subscription.
- This covers the administration of the movement including insurance, licences, advice and support provided by a small staff including training through workshops, annual conference and AGM, cultural and educational events, subject and learning advice etc.
- Last increase was in 2010. This increase would be effective in April 2022 so that U3As have time to prepare.
- There has been a 29% increase in inflation in 10 years – £3.50 in 2010 would be £4.52 today.
- In 2010 there were 789 U3As and 250,586 members. Today there are 1050 U3As and 440,000 members.
- The subscription for the W.I. is £43 per member. They have had a 13% increase in the last 3 years.
- U3A has not increased the membership subscription for 10 years.
- This is the Third Age Trust's main source of income. It receives no external funding from government or sponsorship.
- The most frequent complaint from members is the inadequate website. The staff work tirelessly to improve matters but a new system is needed. Under the Trust's Development Plan there are plans for not only a new website but also a database and content management system and a learning platform. The Trust has to come into the modern age and invest in modern technology so that it can improve office procedures including accounting procedures and provide access to numerous sources of subject information to assist Interest Group Leaders, Subject Advisers and members as well as providing a dynamic, informative website.
- The Beacon system is also being updated. Not all U3As make use of this system but those who do praise it highly but are always demanding improvements, which are costly.
- More staff are needed. The Trust has 19 members of staff for 440,000 members but the W.I. with 220,000 members has 90 staff.
- Staffing has been run on a shoestring for too long.
- Raising the profile of the movement is vital if new members are to be encouraged to join. Growth of the membership has been slowing for several years. The increase fell from 10% in 2011 to 3% in 2019. Recommendations in the Development Plan address this situation so that measures can be taken to encourage the next generation of Third Agers so that they may enjoy the benefits of the movement that we are experiencing.
- £3.50 per year per member is not sufficient to achieve this.
- The choice is to neglect the organisation and let it wither or support it with an increase of £1 per member so that it can thrive.