

NLU3A strategy and policy

This document sets out policy matters that are not covered in sufficient detail by the NLU3A Constitution and sets out the strategy (specific aims and objectives) for the next three years. For ease of reference, matters covered in the Constitution or in Guidance and Advice provided by the U3A Trust (National website) are shown as links to reduce the length of this document.

POLICY

1. Committee

The makeup of the committee, maximum and minimum size to operate efficiently – number required to be quorate, elections, co-options and suspension/disqualification from the committee are covered in Sections 6 and 7 of the NLU3A Constitution: <http://www.nlu3a.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Constitution-2014.pdf> Furthermore, the position of committee members as Trustees is a given once a U3A is registered with the Charities Commission (see: www.u3a.org.uk/advice/trusteeship/194-trustee-code-of-conduct-e-w). Further information is also available on the Charities Commission website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3 .

In addition, the following working practices have been agreed.

- 1.1 Observers** – whilst any NLU3A member may attend a committee meeting by request and agreement of the Committee, the Committee may invite specific individuals to attend committee meetings as observers. Anyone attending a meeting as an observer will not have the right to contribute to the discussion unless invited to do so by the Chair. They will have no right to vote on any matter, although their opinions may be sought. All observers must comply with the rules of confidentiality (see below).
- 1.2 Confidentiality** –In addition to complying with general legal requirements for the protection of personal data (see: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/advice/data-protection/350-general-data-protection-regulation>), anyone attending a committee meeting must respect the potential confidential nature of committee discussions and not divulge any information until the minutes of that committee are agreed and published on the website. Any committee member inviting an observer must ensure that the invitee is aware of this requirement.
- 1.3 Committee succession** – There is advice available on the National website on this: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/advice/committee-responsibilities/211-the-challenge-of-finding-committee-members> . This is something that has challenged NLU3A for some while and has, therefore been included in the Strategy section.

2. Finance

The financial responsibilities of NLU3A are set out in the Constitution: <http://www.nlu3a.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Constitution-2014.pdf> . It is essential that permission should be sought from both the Treasurer and Chair for all expenditure for NLU3A directly attributable to NLU3A activities and two signatures obtained for all cheques prior to incurring that expenditure and invoices/receipts must be presented when making claims. For major expenditure it may be necessary to seek comparative

estimates before permission for expenditure is granted. In addition we need to document who the signatories are, so that all the Committee are aware of that. Current signatories are Leon Levy, Sue Teller, Patricia Isaacs and John Hajdu. Patricia and John are no longer members of the committee and Sue is about to retire. This will be updated once new committee members are in place. **Action required**

3. Health and Safety

There is advice on the National website: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/advice/insurance-and-safety>. In addition, the Committee should consider health and safety in relation to meeting venues for groups and large group events, especially in relation to members with disabilities and mental health issues.

4. Minority groups

There is guidance on the National website: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/advice/supporting-your-members>. People with disabilities are welcome to join NLU3A but where necessary should be accompanied to meetings and events by a Carer (who need not necessarily be a member). See also the section on Strategy below.

5. Access to the Website and Beacon

This is currently limited to a few committee members, under the control of the Webmaster. The Business Manager keeps a record of People who have access, and their passwords.

6. Strategy and Policy document review

This document should be reviewed every three years or as and when a need arises.
Next review due December 2020.

7. Job descriptions

These should be reviewed alongside the Strategy and Policy document unless anyone raises an issue, or responsibilities change.

8. Document availability

The Constitution is available on the website and hard (signed) copy kept by the Business Manager. Copies of this document are electronically copied to all committee members, kept in electronic format by the Business Manager and included in the Information pack for new committee members.

STRATEGY – SPECIFIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS, 2018-2020

- 1 **Committee succession** – Consider having a specific person responsible for recruiting new committee members, including identifying people to fill specific roles. This role could be amalgamated with the role of Business Secretary, (which is considered to be a less onerous role than some committee positions) and/or the role of Vice Chair.
(This is a short term/urgent objective.)

2 Membership

2.1 Optimum size/splitting – Following consultation, the Committee decided a couple of years ago, that once NLU3A neared 800 members, consideration should be given to splitting off to set up a new U3A in another adjacent area. This has occurred once or twice already and other new U3As have also sprung up independently in the last year. In November 2017 NLU3A membership stands at approx. 750. A proposal that we should form two chapters covering i) Finchley and ii) Highgate will be considered further, prior to making any decision about another formal split. (The main difficulty in splitting again so soon is the problems we currently face in sourcing committee members.)

2.2 Minority groups – The issues in serving the needs of and attracting various minority groups (access/health and safety/cultural preferences, etc) are acknowledged. Nevertheless, NLU3A is committed to making all potential members welcome whatever their needs and backgrounds (eg, physical disability, ethnic background, sexual orientation, etc). We will consider these issues and the needs of these groups when devising publicity and setting up events for members and the general public.

2.3 Male/female ratio -In addition to minority groups we will also develop plans to encourage more men to join NLU3A and more, younger retirees.

2.4 Associate membership – We will continue to deduct the capitation fees from membership fees charged to members who wish to join us as their second U3A. We will also further consider the arrangements for one-off arrangements re fees for people who want to attend only one of our groups with other members of the North London Networking Group.

3 Interest groups

3.1 Numbers -We agreed there should be no maximum number of groups but that we will review the groups each year, both in terms of success and venue costs. Also to ensure that the administration of a growing number of groups does not make the work load too heavy for the GO team.

3.2 Starting second and third duplicate groups – this should not be automatic if premises are required but generally OK if held in people's homes. We need to set parameters to review the success or otherwise of all new groups after one term.

3.3 Waiting lists – We need to document who is responsible for this and ensure that all Group Leaders are aware of that. (see items 4.3 and 9.2 below)

3.4 New and different topics – We will continue to review the skills of new members and identify those who might be willing to run groups. We will look again at sources for running more technical/science based groups as this might help the objective of attracting more men to NLU3A.

4 Recruitment

This should be reviewed in the light of decisions made about membership numbers/splitting (see 2.1 above).

4.1 Website - A high percentage of new members come via the website. However we must ensure that the front page of the website is relevant and up to date with current activities and updated on a more regular basis than has been the case.

4.2 One off events – One off events to attract new members require a lot of planning, work and effort. We will review the Open Day format and consider the need for something along these lines for 2018 in the light of decisions about optimum membership.

4.3 Induction packs - We will develop induction packs for new committee members and for Group Leaders. The latter will be primarily for new Group Leaders but will also be provided to all existing Group Leaders, many of whom are unaware of some of these arrangements.

5 Finance

5.1 Accounting software – Once a replacement for Leon has been identified, we will consider, with them, whether or not to utilise Beacon accounting software, instead of Sage (which we think belongs to Leon).

5.2 Funding of trips and events – Most groups do their own accounting (eg, pianist fees for singing; tutor for yoga) and it was agreed that this was acceptable. However, in future, Group Leaders will be asked to keep an accurate record of this and make it available to the Treasurer if requested. This will be included in the Group Leaders' induction pack.

6 Membership fees

These will continue to be reviewed annually. The take up of payment by Bank transfer has been low. We will give consideration to introducing payment by Pay-Pal via Beacon and introducing discounts for payment by our preferred method(s). Also, the introduction of an early-bird discount, which might help encourage members to pay up more quickly.

7 Seeking Members' views about NLU3A

All previous attempts to do this have failed to elicit any quantifiable responses. For **2018** we will ask Group Leaders to seek the views of their members not just about their own groups but also NLU3A as a whole and ask for ideas for improvements. Group Leaders will be asked to provide a formal response to the Groups Organiser about this.

8 Publications

8.1 Emails - We still have a number of people who require printed mail for various reasons and we cannot discriminate by saying no email no publications. However, for the **2018/19** membership year we will insist on new members providing an email address for regular updates, although this could be the email of a friend or family member.

8.2 Postal mailing - We will continue to provide a minimum of three postal mailing per annum (Summer and Winter Programmes and the Group Activities booklet. We will aim to send other information with these wherever possible to reduce postal costs (eg, AGM papers with the Summer Programme.)

9 Website and Beacon

9.1 Monthly emails – It was agreed we should continue to issue monthly emails which are currently read by between 2/3 and 3/4 of members. However, it was agreed that a set of parameters should be drawn up for the provision of input to these to simplify the process for the Webmaster and his team.

9.2 Access to Beacon – Further consideration will be given to providing access for Group Leaders to Beacon (for updating their groups' details) and to the Groups page on the website (as has already been done for one group).