

Paddock Wood u3a Trustee Code of Conduct

Introduction

A Trustee code of conduct is an agreement between the organisation and the individual committee member which spells out the standards of behaviour expected from Trustees.

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.

Trustee Code of Conduct

- 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 and the requirements of the Charity Commission as regulator.
- Trustees are expected to know, follow and promote the Principles of the u3a Movement (available on the u3a website) at every opportunity.
- Trustees must always act in the best interests of Paddock Wood u3a and the u3a Movement, strive to uphold its reputation and never do anything which could bring Paddock Wood u3a or the u3a Movement into disrepute or expose it to undue risk.
- Trustees are expected to use Paddock Wood u3a's resources responsibly and only to further its stated charitable objects/purposes.
- Trustees are expected to reflect the current organisational policy of Paddock Wood u3a, regardless of whether it conflicts with their personal views.
- Trustees are expected to abide by Paddock Wood u3a's governance procedures and practices.
- Trustees must never derive any pecuniary benefit 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.
- u3a Trustees must work together as a team and are collectively responsible for controlling the management and administration of the u3a.
- Trustees are expected to always treat fellow committee members courteously and maintain a respectful attitude towards the opinions of others.
- Organisational, committee and individual confidentiality must be respected at all times.

Committee Meetings – specific requirements

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

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 the Chair has a conflict of interest, the committee should request the Vice Chair to rule on the matter. If the Vice Chair is unavailable or unable to rule on this matter, then the Chair elected for the meeting should rule on the matter.

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.

Confidentiality

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

Collective 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. If a Trustee is unable to accept a decision their only recourse, after due consideration, is to resign from the committee.

Trustee Indemnity Insurance

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 u3a's 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.



In addition, responsibility must never be given to a Group Leader or Group Coordinator to operate a group that is in any way detached from the u3a. Trustees retain overall responsibility of the u3a and its activities. 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.

Declaration

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

20 November 2023