



Northumbria Region u3a

Inaugural Zoom Regional Support Team Meeting

6th January 2023

From 14.00 – 16.00

Present: - Cecilia Coulson (CC), Ted Watt (TW), Mo Brown (MAB), Peter Barnett (PB), Mary Dunning (MED), Pam Turner (PT), Mike Wallace (MMW), Sandi Rickerby (SR), Mary Barlow (MEB)

Apologies: - Ann Carr (AC), Malcolm Wilkinson (MW), Derek Reynolds (DR), Maureen Taylor (MT), Jane Mathieson (JM), Kelvin Rushworth (KR),

Welcome: - Cecilia welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes and Matters Arising: - As this is the first meeting of this team there are no previous minutes.

January Quarterly Meeting: - This will be a Zoom meeting and held on Monday 30th January. The meeting will commence at 10.00 and finish at 13.00.

10.00 Start. CC will welcome everyone and give a report.

This will be followed by a report by SR on the Northumbria Region.

11.15 – 12.30 Alan Warmesley will give a talk on Development and Strategic Planning and where the trust is heading. Any questions you may have please give them to CC a.s.a.p.

12.30 – 13.00 Catherine Butcher will give a talk on Voice.

We will not be taking names beforehand of those intending to join the meeting. Joining instructions will be found in the Beacon Newsletter sent out by PB to all Chairs, Secretaries and Others.

MAB will take screen shots so we will know who is attending. CC will ask members to add their name and u3a at the bottom of their screen.

MAB will assist anyone having difficulty joining the meeting and her mobile number will be included in Newsletter.

PB will look for questions typed in Chat.

Regional and Individual u3a Websites: - PB is updating the website on the new server. MAB said that she had copies of some items and would be happy to forward them to PB if required. There is no possibility of recovering photographs or any uploaded files from the previous site.

There will be a new system called WordPress introduced this year (2023) and training will be available from TAT. At the moment we are unsure if photographs and documents will be

transferred to this site and therefore how quickly we need to encourage u3as to update their websites.

MAB said the programme was almost ready and is being tested at the moment. It is expected information will be available shortly.

The Role of the Regional Support Team (SR): - Not all u3a Regions are set up in the same way as ours or have Support Teams.

The aim of the Regional Support Team is to support the Regional Trustee

The national body is looking at ways of reducing their workload together with how staff along with both short and long term working groups interact and support each other.

Our Regional Trustee is on the Board of Directors and on various other committees including Finance, Push Back Agenda, Hadrian's Wall Project, Digital Working Group, Research and Shared Learning to name just a few. She also attends meetings, conferences, and prepares podcasts. This leaves insufficient time to undertake the work required within the region.

She feels more time is required to support individual u3as, training, development initiatives plus recruitment and retention of members and organise events such as a Creative Writing Study Day. Also, time is needed for supporting networks and promotional and publicity work.

The Hadrian's Wall Project has had members up from London to look at what is accessible and available plus a risk assessment has been done. To date they have had 500 enquiries from around the UK on the project and a pack is being prepared. It is hoped to attract many members from outside the region.

The support required is fluid and one way members of the team can contribute is to visit u3as to show that the committee is available and accessible.

A regional toolkit could be compiled and u3as could volunteer by joining a pilot scheme such as setting up a Regional Creative Writing Network or one on Geography.

This is a new team which needs to develop and work together, ask questions of each other, suggest ideas for this year and the future which can be discussed and acted upon.

MAB gave a brief outline of how the Support Team developed from Regional Volunteers to Trust Volunteers to the Regional Support Team.

CC informed the meeting that she has monthly meetings with SR who has a budget for learning.

Shared Learning Projects – Voice has invited u3as to use their premises for meetings, but costs are unknown at present.

MAB mentioned that the IT Network originally met monthly but has for some time met weekly.

There is now a North Northumberland Network covering Wooler, Alnwick and Berwick.

MAB asked would the Creative Writing Group be able to prepare a press release. CC said she would ask the group.

At one point we had twelve Creative Writing Groups in the region but through time some have merged, others have ceased operating however 10 are still flourishing.

CC said she preferred if this team could meet in person in the future and it was suggested that we look at venues in the north and south of the region which is accessible for everyone. CC and MAB are arranging to meet and look at using the Angel View Inn for the next meeting possibly in two months' time. It was agreed that the Regional Support Team members meet monthly, for 3 months, as there is so much to discuss. The team could then revert to 2 monthly if they feel they have got on top of the many issues.

Analysing the six questions asked at the Bowburn Quarterly Meeting.

CC read out the six questions and the analysis KR had prepared of the responses.

CC had previously emailed the Regional Committee with a list of the u3as in our region and PB post meeting emailed the list to all members of the committee. It is hoped that members of this committee can get out and show themselves and be proactive.

Feedback from Networks – It was suggested that we ask them to furnish the committee with copies of reports/minutes so that we are aware of what is happening in the area.

Workshops – We need to define requirements. Who would take them plus where and when. Ideas please for our next meeting.

We were unable to complete the analysis due to time constraints and will continue at the next meeting.

Details of the next meeting will be emailed to all members in due course.

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