

Devizes & District U3A – change to Objects clause of constitution

The National Office of the U3A is recommending that all U3As in England and Wales change the objects clause of their constitutions to ensure that all their activities are charitable and therefore covered by the u3A insurance. Activities that are not within the Objects clause of a U3A are not charitable and members undertaking them are not covered by insurance.

Existing Objects clause

- (i) To advance the education of the public and in particular the education of middle-aged and older people who are not in full time gainful employment within the area of Devizes and the surrounding district.
- (ii) The provision of facilities for leisure time and recreational activities with the object of improving the conditions of life for the above persons in the interests of their social welfare

This clause was based on that included in the U3A model constitution at the time when Devizes & District U3A was formed in 1996. It has remained unchanged at national level until now.

Proposed new Objects clause

The advancement of education, and in particular the education of older people and those who are retired from full time work, by all means including associated activities conducive to learning and personal development, in Devizes and its surrounding locality.

Reason for the change

There has been confusion in some U3As as to whether all activities come within the objects and therefore are charitable and, more importantly, are covered by the U3A's insurance. An example given by National Office is luncheon clubs which are social and could be argued do not come within the previous model Objects clause.

Outcome of discussions between National Office and the Charity Commission

National Office has had detailed discussions with the Charity Commission over a considerable period to try and agree an Objects clause that will encompass all the activities that U3As usually provide. The proposed new clause has been agreed with the Charity Commission who agrees that the proposed new wording does meet this aim.

Advantage of using the proposed new clause

The clause has been so worded as to include all activities that are currently undertaken by U3As across the country. Therefore it will cover all the groups that we currently have and will mean that there can be no argument as to their being charitable and members taking part in them being covered by the U3A's insurance.

In addition whenever a charity wishes to change its Objects clause it has to seek the consent of the Charity Commission.

The Charity Commission has agreed that U3As that adopt the proposed new clause can take advantage of 'block' consent through National Office which means we would not have to apply separately.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Devizes & District U3A approves the change to the Objects clause in the constitution and adopts the model agreed between National Office and the Charity Commission.