

The Future of the u3a Movement

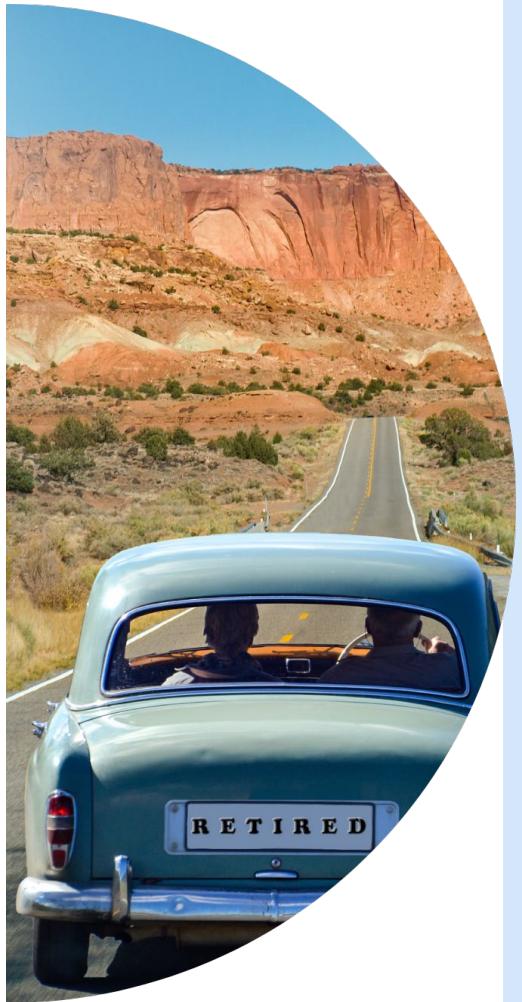
3rd November 2025
YAHR Network

Organisational Change Since September 2024

- 1/3 of the work force in new
- Half of the Senior Leadership Team is new
- CEO of over 8 years has retired
- New Chair
- New Vice Chair
- 5 out of 8 Trustees are new
- New Council – 13 out of 21 are new

So what's changed?

1982



- Retirement usually in mid 60s
- Shorter life expectancy
- Retirement seen as time to 'slow down'
- Lower pensions but lower costs of living
- Landlines and faxes and paperwork
- Fewer opportunities to learn
- Strong tradition of volunteering
- Greater sense of community

2025

- Ageing population – longer retirements
- Retirement age increasing and less formal – 70 is the new 50
- But many now have increased caring responsibilities.
- Greater risk of loneliness and isolation, especially post-Covid
- Smart phones, Zoom, Social Media
- Huge increase in travel and tourism spending amongst over 65s
- Decline in volunteering being seen across the sector
- Society is more diverse in background, culture

Generation X (1965–1980) will be the next generation of u3a members:

- Highly tech-literate
- Grew up with, rapid technological change, globalisation and huge social mobility
- More individualistic, valuing flexibility and variety
- Later and less formal retirement
- Less financially secure in later life
- More care responsibilities – the sandwich generation

Vision & Mission – Draft wording

Our Vision – *the change we want to see*

Our vision is one where everyone has the opportunity to have a positive and fulfilling later life.

Our Mission – *how we will make this change*

The Trust does this by promoting, supporting, and uniting the u3a movement.

The Councils Priorities

- Improving how member enquires are managed
- Supporting Recruitment and Retention of Members
- Reviewing the u3a website
- Communication within the u3a movement

What *might* this mean for the future? – indicative only

We promote a positive approach to later life and help grow u3a membership by

- Developing a better evidence base to show the benefits of the u3a
- Developing campaigns that focus on positive ageing
- Raising our profile by inserting ourselves into the media discourse

We support u3as to be resilient and sustainable by

- Improving u3as ability to find what they need when they need it
- Providing support and training that address the challenges u3as are facing
- Developing services that meet the needs of today and tomorrow

We unite u3as within the movement by

- Bringing u3as together to identify and share best practice
- Supporting and delivering activity and services at a regional and national level
- Adding value to u3a membership