

Cheltenham U3A Environmental Policy

Purpose

Most u3a members will be aware that there are environmental impacts of our day-to-day activities such as climate change, biodiversity loss and the environment as a whole. This equally applies to the Cheltenham U3A activities and hence there is a requirement to address the issue of environmental impact.

This policy document has therefore been produced to provide guidance on how the committee suggests environmental issues be considered and dealt with within the activities of our u3a. It is via this policy statement that environmental issues will form part of our planning, decision making and day to day activities.

Scope

This policy applies to all members of the u3a. It should be considered when carrying out any u3a activities such as meetings and group activities and any supporting actions related to these activities (such as travelling to meetings and events).

Where possible, we should encourage venues and any supporting third parties to follow the guidance provided within this policy document, if they have none in place.

Aims of this policy

The aims of this policy are as follows:

- To support the committee in ensuring that our activities are appropriately environmentally friendly;
- To ensure that individual members understand the issues and play their part in minimising their adverse impact on the environment;
- To consider the creation of a new “Environmental Group” which would discuss the topic, consider how to reduce any adverse impact of our activities and make recommendations back to the committee via a dedicated “Environmental Officer” (who may also be the Group Leader).

An additional aim of this policy is for members to take its recommendations away and apply them in their everyday lives to reduce their impact on the environment.

Putting it into practice

The environment is impacted by a wide range of our activities. It is not possible to identify all of the means of reducing our impact on the environment but the following are examples of what should be considered:

- Conserving energy, saving natural resources (such as water) and reducing waste.
- Minimising waste and consider recycle and/or consider re-use where possible.

- Considering our outdoor activities (walking and nature groups for example) and how to minimise their environmental impact.
- Encouraging the use of public transport, walking, cycling and car sharing.
- Considering the use of technologies such as “Zoom” as an alternative to face to face meetings to reduce the amount of travel.
- Venues - enquiring if they have environmental policies and following these policies.

These are a few examples will help us to consider in what other areas we can reduce our environmental impact.

The Environmental Group

It is proposed that a new “Environmental Group” be formed to specifically focus on the topic of “environmental issues”. These are often related to the negative aspects of human activity on the environment and natural world and cover topics such as climate change, pollution, drought and biodiversity loss.

These topics could be sources of discussion for the new group. In addition the new group would monitor the activities of the u3a and report back to the committee via a dedicated “Environmental Officer” (who may also be the Group Leader) and provide recommendations as to how we could modify our activities to minimise their environmental impact.

The main aims of the environmental group will be to focus on these issues and to provide support/promote positive steps to minimise the impact on the environment. In addition the group would help to improve the u3as knowledge and understanding of the topic in order to continuously reduce our environmental footprint.

Supporting Information

There are numerous sources of information available on the topic of “The Environment” and how to minimise our impact. The following is a sample of the some sources.

The Third Age Trust Climate Change and Environment Subject Adviser, **Frances Halliday** and can be reached at: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/subjects/climate-change>. You can find out about the u3a Climate Change Network, led by Frances, here: <https://www.u3asites.org.uk/climate-change/welcome>.

The Climate Coalition is a UK’s largest group of people dedicated to action against climate change: www.theclimatecoalition.org.

Climate Change Committee

An independent organisation, established as part of the 2008 Climate Change Act, it reports regularly to the UK parliament, and the devolved governments on progress in tackling climate change. It is also acts as an independent advisor on the impact of climate change on all aspects of living in the UK: <https://www.theccc.org.uk>.

The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. It prepares comprehensive **reports** on

climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for reducing the rate at which climate change is taking place: <https://www.ipcc.ch/>.

Local Government will have policies related to the environment. <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/what-local-government> and we encourage you to research what they are doing in your area.

The Wildlife Trusts are a grassroots movement where members and volunteers work together with local Wildlife Trust to make their local area wilder and make nature part of life <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/>.

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