



U3A WestNet

(Bradford, Craven, Keighley, Ilkley & District, Settle U3As)

'OPEN DOOR' ARRANGEMENTS FOR U3A MEMBERS

Representatives of the WestNet U3As met in January and March 2016 and proposed a move towards more reciprocal collaboration between our organisations. The aims of this are to improve the experience for all our members and to optimise the use of scarce resources.

The following protocol has been discussed and approved by the constituent U3As and communicated to all Leaders

PROTOCOL FOR RECIPROCAL ARRANGEMENTS:

- 1 To avoid confusion and/or problems, it would be helpful to develop common practices so all know how the system should work;
- 2 The system can apply to our Interest Groups, monthly meetings and other events;
- 3 **For all Interest Groups – the Leader has total discretion about whether their group can accommodate an increase in membership or has space for guest visitors on an occasional basis. There will be no control of Groups by the local committees;**
- 4 Members should always contact the Leader of a Group that they wish to attend – **before** attending. They should not just 'drop in' on an *ad hoc* basis;
- 5 Leaders may wish to prioritise membership for their own U3A. This can be done by limiting external access until after a stated cut-off date or any other suitable system;
- 6 U3A members may request access to Interest Groups of another U3A within WestNet, on the understanding that **this would not necessitate them paying the local/host U3A membership**. They would expect to pay the same Group subscriptions, or other fees that are paid by the existing Group members;
- 7 Members may request attendance at a couple of Group meetings as a 'Guest' (making any appropriate payments) but it would be expected that, after a finite period, they would become full members of the Group and pay normal subscriptions;
- 8 All such members would be covered by the normal, National U3A insurance;
- 9 If space within a Group is limited and the applicant has to be denied access, it is expected that this would be done with normal courtesy and the applicant may be added to any Waiting List operating for other local members;
- 10 The above arrangements would also apply to monthly meetings, Study Days and Summer Schools – as appropriate and managed by the event organiser(s);
- 11 The system can be reviewed in the future to ensure that it is working well, to everyone's benefit and that any practical problems are minimised. This should probably be done after at least a year of operation; and
- 12 If any problems or issues arise through these Open-Door Arrangements, then this should be dealt with via the procedures of the host U3A of the Group concerned.

It is hoped that these arrangements will offer increased opportunities to our members to join Groups that may not be available locally; it might also help Leaders to ensure that they have better numbers for events to cover costs and improve the learning experience for all.