

**Dawlish & District u3a**  
**Annual General Meeting, Monday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023**  
**Revised Constitution – Explanatory Notes**

On the advice of the u3a National Office to all groups around the country, the Dawlish & District u3a Committee recommends to members that we adopt the new model constitution, substantially as recommended. The National Office has taken professional advice on this model constitution, taking into account a number of legal and other changes which have occurred since our current constitution was approved when we were formed.

Although we are happy with the overall document, the Committee feels that there are some provisions which do not meet our needs, so a small number of adjustments have been made. Text in red indicates the changes proposed and other matters which are largely administrative details. Both documents include explanatory notes to help members understand the detail.

It should also be noted that large parts of the document are unlikely to have any significance for us. These include how to establish a new u3a, and how to wind it up should that be necessary. We are advised to keep these in the constitution. The explanatory notes should also be kept as these may prove useful in the future.

Most of our proposed changes arise from the fact that we are a small u3a and continue to have difficulty in recruiting enough volunteers to serve on the Committee and to take on the responsibilities of an officer. Much as we would like this situation to change (and we continue to urge members to consider how they might contribute) we are realistic enough to recognise that we are likely to continue to find ourselves short of committee members and other volunteers to serve as officers.

To require officers and committee members to stand down after the relatively short periods proposed in the model constitution would create constant difficulties in finding replacements. It is therefore proposed to allow maximum total periods of service to be longer, and for the committee to make pragmatic decisions on these matters to enable the organisation to continue to operate. All such decisions would be under the overall review of members at the AGM.

It is important to note that there is certainly no wish by current committee members or officers to remain in office for extended periods! Quite the contrary. We would all regard it as in the interests of our u3a for there to be a steady refreshment of the committee and team of officers with more members volunteering to take on these roles.

As a consequence of this reluctance of members to step forward, strictly speaking, we are currently not acting according to the existing constitution as we have no Vice Chair. While it would be highly desirable to have more committee members to enable us to elect a Vice Chair, we do not wish to find ourselves in difficulty, so we propose to allow ourselves the option of functioning without a Vice Chair, if necessary, while actively seeking someone to take on this role.

The Committee welcomes the opportunity to answer any further questions at the AGM.

John Vick  
Chair