

BALLYMONEY u3a VOLUNTEER POLICY

ABOUT US

Ballymoney u3a was set up in 2015, with membership at the end of that year totaling 50. Now in our 7th year we have approx. 150 members.

The principles of the u3a Movement

The u3a movement is non-religious and non-political and has three main principles:

The Third Age Principle –

- Membership of a u3a is open to all in their third age, which is defined not by a particular age but by a period in life in which full time employment has ceased.
- Members promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging to a u3a.
- Members should do all they can to ensure that people wanting to join a u3a can do so.

The Self-help Learning Principle –

- Members form interest groups covering as wide a range of topics and activities as they desire; by the members, for the members.
- No qualifications are sought or offered. Learning is for its own sake, with enjoyment being the prime motive, not qualifications or awards.
- There is no distinction between the learners and the teachers; they are all u3a members.

The Mutual Aid Principle –

Each u3a is a mutual aid organisation, operationally independent but a member of The Third Age Trust, which requires adherence to the guiding principles of the u3a movement.

As per the above Principles, Ballymoney u3a offers an open and welcoming environment to members regardless of gender, religion, ethnic background, political opinion or sexual orientation. Bu3a provides an opportunity for people to engage in a wide range of activities and to share their knowledge, skills and expertise with others. Members can also benefit from speaker presentations, on varied topics, at monthly meetings, and participate in organized trips.

Purpose of Bu3a Volunteer Policy

Our volunteer policy has been created to show volunteers and potential volunteers that we have spent time and care in planning how volunteers will be welcomed at Ballymoney u3a. It also stresses that all volunteers will be treated in a fair and consistent way. It should help volunteers understand what support is available to them and what they can expect from us.

Vision and Mission for Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to share your enthusiasm, skills and ideas whilst having fun and meeting like-minded people. By volunteering with Ballymoney u3a you will be making a positive contribution to the community in Ballymoney and its environs. Volunteers are vital to our work.

Attracting volunteers and volunteer agreement

We have a range of opportunities for volunteers to get involved in, such as:

- A team of volunteers who work together to provide “refreshments” at our meetings;
- Members volunteer to “meet and greet” those attending meetings to ensure that they feel welcome;
- Many members “share their skills” through participation in the various activity groups; and
- One team of volunteers (environment group) is helping to improve the appearance of local areas by doing “clean ups”, etc.

More information about activities can be found on our website www.ballymoneyu3a.com

All you need to do is become a member of Ballymoney u3a and then participate to benefit our organization, its members and yourself.

Access NI Checks

Some volunteer roles [such as those involving activities with children or vulnerable adults will require an Access NI Check to inform Ballymoney u3a of any criminal convictions that a person wishing to volunteer may have.

Induction and Training

It does not matter, how little, or how much, you feel you already know, as there will be opportunities to learn, and we have roles to suit every level of expertise. “Induction for Volunteers” will be prepared and delivered by one of our Committee. This will include –

- Information about Ballymoney u3a, including our vision, mission and future plans;
- The role of the volunteer;
- Personal introduction to some existing volunteers who can be “shadowed”;
- Relevant policies such as Volunteer Policy, Complaints Policy, Privacy/Data Protection Policy;
- Programme of Activities and Events (which contains useful contact details, etc);
- Information about training and ongoing learning opportunities.

Support

Our Volunteer Co-Ordinator will offer support to you and will remain your key contact throughout your volunteering with us. This will include regular meetings with you to discuss how you are getting on, discuss any training needs and deal with issues which may arise so ensuring that Ballymoney u3a is doing all it can to make your volunteering experience an enjoyable and meaningful one.

Recognition and Reward

We could not do the work we do without our volunteers. To acknowledge this, we will always say thank you and show appreciation for a job well done. There will always be a listening ear or shoulder to lean on. We recognize the contribution made by volunteers and acknowledge this by telling all our members of your valuable contribution.

We will take opportunities on our website, at annual general meetings, and via local and national press to praise the achievements of our volunteers.

Expenses

We value our volunteers and want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. All reasonable out of pocket expenses, if required, will be reimbursed.

In order to claim expenses an expense form is provided and must be completed with supporting valid receipts.

Insurance, Health and Safety, Accidents and Risk Assessment

Ballymoney u3a has a valid insurance policy, provided by our Governing Body, The Third Age Trust, so that volunteers are covered by public liability insurance. Volunteers are advised to make themselves familiar with this document as it covers the volunteering activities you will be taking part in. We will keep reminding you of our Health and Safety obligations. We have clear procedures for accidents and emergencies and will always have a First Aider and Fire Warden volunteering while Activity groups are in progress.

Resolving problems

We trust that you will have a very enjoyable experience volunteering with us. However, if your role as a volunteer does not meet with your expectations, or with the commitments we have made to you, we want you to feel comfortable about letting us know. First of all, talk to the person who leads the team where you volunteer and he/she should be able to sort it out with you before it becomes an issue. If you do not feel that any matter has not been resolved you ought to speak to the Volunteer Co-Ordinator.

Confidentiality

We expect all volunteers to adhere to our confidentiality guidelines, which will be explained to you before you begin volunteering with us and this also includes **use of social media and contact with the press.**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Ballymoney u3a is committed to embracing diversity, promoting equality and inclusion. When representing **Ballymoney u3a** as a volunteer, it is expected that you will support our commitment to promoting equality.

APPROVED BY:

BALLYMONEY u3a COMMITTEE ON BEHALF OF BALLYMONEY u3a.

DATE REVISED/UPDATED: 28 09 2021

SIGNED: CHAIRMAN:

John W D Pinkerton

NB: Signed copy held on file.