

On Monday, 16 March 2020, 18:05:04 GMT, David Thornton via Bicester U3A <noreply@u3abeacon.org.uk> wrote:

Dear Members,

Bicester U3A – Cancellation of Interest Group Meetings and Monthly Meetings (w.e.f 16th March)

You will have seen the increasing concern about the corona virus and the ways in which this may affect people of our age group and indeed organisations such as ours.

Until today, the government had not announced measures which immediately affected us. However, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has just announced (16/03/2020 – 16:45) that everyone in the UK should now avoid "non-essential" travel and contact with others and to fight coronavirus.

He said people should work from home and avoid pubs, clubs, restaurants and theatres where possible, as part of a range of stringent new measures. Anyone in the same house as someone who has a cough or fever would have to isolate for 14 days. Mr Johnson also said all elderly and vulnerable people would have to begin self-isolating within days.

In this climate, it is essential that we cancel all Interest Group Meetings and Monthly Meetings until further notice.

We appreciate that this will seriously affect the social life of our members and ask that group leaders and group members consider how social activities can continue without face-to-face contact in order that the self-isolation proposed for our age-group can be alleviated. The Third Age Trust will be providing advice on the subject in due course.

It should be noted that prior to Mr Johnson's announcement our group leaders were canvassing members and making sound decisions about their groups and the safety of their members. Indeed, some of our members were already self-isolating for their own protection.

The Jazz Appreciation Interest Group had cancelled meetings until further notice. The Current Affairs Interest Group had cancelled. The Bridge Groups and the Wider Horizons Groups had cancelled until further notice. Other groups were considering the use of modern technology to hold meetings over the internet.

Group leaders and group members are to be highly commended for these actions.

We have recently been told that Tesco's Community Space is closed until further notice.

Things have been brought to a head in a short space of time.

The committee had assessed the situation as of earlier today (16th March 2020). We had also checked on other U3As – some were continuing with a reduced format; others were cancelling until further notice for the safety of their members.

The decision was that Interest Group Meetings and Monthly Meetings should be cancelled with immediate effect; safety of our at-risk-group was paramount.

The Prime Minister's announcement has justified this approach.

The website will be updated with relevant information. Important announcements will be circulated to members individually.

Please see the following web pages for the latest Government advice on Covid-19.

[Information for the public](#)

[Government response](#)

We wish everyone well through this difficult period and hope that our members and their families get through it safely.

David Thornton – Group Co-ordinator - On behalf of our Committee