

As at 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021 Epsom & Ewell had 921 members

Thank you to the 166 members who took the time to complete our survey, that equates to approximately 18% of our members.

The results made interesting reading and hopefully will enable us to move forward and provide the groups, events, outings etc that our members have requested.

Results of the survey are as follows:

### **Membership**

What is your current age?

50-55	56-60	61-65	66-70	71-75	76-80	81-85	86-90	91-95	95+	Prefer not to say
0	5	14	37	53	31	15	8	0	1	2

How many years have you been a member of Epsom & Ewell u3a?

Less than 5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21 + years
84	55	17	9	1

### **Disabilities**

Do you have a hearing impairment?

Yes	No	Prefer not to say
28	136	2

Do you have any visual impairment?

Yes	No	Prefer not to say
12	151	3

Do you have any mobility needs?

Yes	No	Prefer not to say
15	145	6

### **Comments**

24 members commented

Please ensure enough disabled bays at venues. Can all communications be in a legible font.

Having to queue at Bourne Hall is a problem for less able members.

### **Response:**

Bourne Hall has disabled bays. All communications are typed in normal fonts and we try not to use too many overly artistic ones. When we return to Bourne Hall we will look at how to resolve the queueing system.

## Diversity

Do you think we have a broad diversity in our membership, i.e. gender, race etc. or do we need to improve?

Yes we do	No we don't and should improve
104	45

## Comments

48 members commented

Quite a few members commented on the ethnicity aspect of this question, only two mentioned gender and only one mentioned disability.

## Response

Ethnicity is a difficult challenge and no one actually offered any solutions to this problem. We do have quite a mix of members from various cultures and from our observations it is in line with the local community. The issue of getting more men to join is something the chairman is keen to address. The disability is an area to look at as we return to normal meetings. Zoom has actually been very useful for some members who are no longer able to attend meetings through disability.

## Interest Groups

Where would you prefer to meet?

In someone's home	In a venue	Venue and home	No preference
10	41	57	57

How many interest groups are you a member of?

1	2	3	4	5+
70	36	25	10	5

Have your interest groups been active during lockdown? (Tick all that apply)

On zoom	On email	On WhatsApp	All of the above	Other
66	45	11	9	21

What are your interests? (Tick all that apply)

Languages	Arts	History	London Walks	Country Walks	Card/Board Games	Exercise/Croquet Bowls/Tai chi	Other
32	39	17	41	41	10	8	17

For indoor groups – Do you meet in homes or venues?

Homes	Venue	n/a
58	40	49

Do you think our membership fee should be increased to cover the cost of venues for groups to meet post covid rather than members' homes?

Yes	No	Not bothered
33	62	67

Would you be prepared to pay a fee to attend a venue rather than a membership increase?

£1	£2	£5	Would not want to pay
37	69	27	22

## Comments

75 members commented

Some members commented that they already pay for groups to meet at the Longmead Centre and the Jazz group with live music, tai chi and croquet. The general consensus appears to be that members do not want an increase in subscriptions as not all groups need a venue, ie walking groups and it would be unfair for them to cross subsidise other groups activities. There is also concern about covid safe environments when we get back to meeting properly.

## Response

It was interesting to get the feedback and some members requested that we see what other local venues are available for groups to use for a small fee. For those of you who have read this month's chairman's update you will see that we have joined with the local community of Ewell to try to save Glyn Hall which was bequeathed to the community for educational purposes for the local community with an emphasis on the senior members so in line with u3a ethos. If any members would like to join the Ewell Changemakers group, please go to our website groups page and sign up to help.

Have you ever been a group leader?

Yes	No
45	119

If the answer to the above is No, can we ask why?

Not confident enough to lead a group	Not happy with people meeting in my home	Have downsized and no longer have the room	Not interested in being a leader	Prefer not to say
18	6	13	66	13

Do you think our range of groups is diverse enough, i.e., does it cover your personal interests to your satisfaction or could we add more?

Diverse enough	Would like more groups	Groups I want are full
113	28	11

## Comments

34 members commented

We have a suggestion that maybe some groups should have joint group leaders or that the role of group leader should be for a set period not indefinite. Some members have also mentioned that they have suggested groups that have appeared on the potential groups list and nothing has come off them yet, ie ballroom dancing, bird watching, rescue dogs, modern jazz. People have also requested more singing groups, yoga, Pilates, antiques and more local walking groups. One member also commented that they'd like more card and board games but the current groups are either full or on conflicting days so not viable to attend.

## Response

As we get back to 'normality' our group coordinators will try to contact members who have expressed an interest in new groups and we will attempt to get some new groups underway. The immediate problem that is thrown up is who will lead a group and where will they meet which is something members need to think about when they request to join groups if there is no current availability. We are willing to help new groups start but members must equally do their bit to help.

## Website

How often do you visit our website?

Often	Rarely	Never
63	90	11

Do you find our website informative?

Yes	No	n/a
137	2	25

Is our website entertaining?

Yes	No	n/a
81	13	66

Is our website easy to navigate?

Yes	No	n/a
126	1	33

Have you looked at the potential new groups list on the website?

Yes	No	n/a
109	47	9

Are there any changes you would like to see on our website?

Yes	No
7	133

## Comments

**13 members commented**

Generally, the comments on the website were positive with just a few comments regarding getting used to the website as it changed and one member commented that they didn't like the music accompanying the slide shows on the website. Another member raised concerns regarding members not on the internet and whether they were being kept updated. We also had a request to make sure that a link to the website was put at the bottom of all emails to make it easier for members to access.

## Response

As with all new ideas they do sometimes take a bit of getting used to. We will take on board the issue with the music, however it was only one member who commented and there is always the mute bottom as an option if you want to watch but not listen. Members on the internet is quite a problem and we are trying to find cost effective ways to address that problem.

Do you read the Chairman's monthly update?

Yes	No	n/a	Not interested
150	10	2	0

Do you like the new format?

Yes	No	n/a
122	1	34

## Monthly and Mid-Monthly Speakers

Do you intend to attend the monthly talks at Bourne Hall when it is safe to do so?

Yes	No	Maybe	Never attended
72	15	57	21

When do you think you will feel ready to return to Bourne Hall or other face to face meetings?

After June/July	In the Autumn	Next Year	Not sure	n/a
69	45	15	27	9

Are you happy with the current programme of the first Monday of the month at 10.00am or would you prefer us to review this?

Happy with Monday morning	Would prefer Monday afternoon	Would prefer a different day of the week	Would prefer an afternoon meeting rather than morning	n/a
93	11	17	23	22

Would a change of day or time influence your decision on whether to attend or not?

Yes	No	Maybe	Not bothered
44	52	45	22

Do you think there should be more evening meetings i.e., pre-recorded talks, quizzes etc.?

Yes	No	More talks	Quizzes	No preference
26	48	9	12	69

## Comments

**21 members commented**

**Most members seem to feel that they would be ready to get back to meetings as this lockdown ends in July and certainly by the autumn the majority were in favour. The most popular day and time for talk remained Monday morning. A member suggested a series of talks on zoom that reflect Exploring London for those members not yet ready to travel. One member commented that they could not attend a monthly talk and were disappointed that it was not available on recorded for later viewing. There was a suggestion of talks about different artists. A member commented that Bourne Hall is not a friendly venue. There were also requests for evening quiz nights, dances, more natural history talks, a video of Andre Rieu.**

## Response

**We are hopeful that meetings should be able to go back to Bourne Hall later this year. We anticipate using the large hall downstairs which has plenty of disabled access via lifts and staircases for the more able bodied. There is a large stage area which would make it easier for members to see the speaker, we will need to check whether the hearing loop is active in that hall for members with hearing impairment. We anticipate the meetings staying on Monday mornings as that is the most popular choice but we will possibly continue with some other mid-month talks as they have proved quite popular during lockdown and by using YouTube pre-recorded talks the diversity is really good and the cost to our u3a is zero. The issue of recording talks for members to see later is not an option as the talk is the intellectual property of the speaker and as with any live show if you cannot make it on the day that is unfortunate but we cannot record live shows without the consent of the speaker. Hopefully if we use the large hall there is the facility for us to offer members tea and coffee which would make it a more sociable event.**

Would you be interested in being able to have the choice of attending Bourne Hall or logging in for the monthly speaker events?

Yes	No	Zoom & Bourne	Maybe	Not interested
40	32	39	43	10

Have you attended any mid-month talks during lockdown?

Yes	No	Not interested
58	101	3

Do we cover your interests in our current presentations or do you have other preferences?

Yes	No	Not interested
109	14	26

### Comments

**15 members commented**

**Some members are saying they are zoomed out and want face to face meetings.**

### Response

**There is a mixed response to hybrid meetings but we intend to investigate whether or not the cost justifies the attendance. Zoom has proved useful during lockdown and during the winter months may suit people if the weather is bad or if they are slightly unwell but could do with something to cheer them up and the chance to interact with other members albeit from a distance. Members with mobility issues have also benefited from zoom and many u3a's are intending to continue using it as part of their diversity and inclusion policy.**

### Travel and Trips Out

Do you go on the coach trips?

Yes	No	Sometimes	Maybe
47	49	49	19

Do you go on the short break holidays?

Yes	No	Sometimes	Maybe
34	98	10	21

Do we offer outings that interest you?

Yes	No	Not interested
129	6	21

### Comments

**18 members commented**

**In general members are divided on whether they want to go on outings with other senior members of the community or whether they would rather go with family. The variety of outings currently on offer had been well received. We also have a request for a trip to a large recycling plant and trips to nearby towns. Also, a suggestion that members who are new or don't know many people can state that on the booking form so that they can be buddied up for the trip and start to make new friends. Also, a request for not too many long coach trips.**

### Response

**The buddy system for trips is certainly an area to look at as we have new members and also, we have noticed that the London Walks that Rosie and Sue initiated at the request of members during their time on the committee are proving popular under Irene's term and we will have to book multiples of Blue Badge Guides in order for all members to enjoy the experience and Irene has already arranged for 3 guides for Legal London and 2 for**

Westminster so each group is no bigger than 20 members. The request for trips to nearby towns may well be something that the new Town Study group will cover once we can get started. Trips to Recycling plants are certainly something other u3a's have done and we will contact them to see which plants are the best to visit and if they have current contact details.

Do you find it easy to book the trips you are interested in?

Yes	No	n/a
80	17	61

Does the change of pickup points affect your decision on booking day trips or short breaks?

Yes	No	Not bothered	Don't do trips
33	89	15	25

**Comments**

**47 members commented**

Some members had difficulty with the new booking system and there were some issues with whether or not outings were going ahead, mainly this was down to covid related issues. The change of pick-up points has caused controversy and some members are very happy with the new arrangements as the pickup is nearer to them and some are obviously unhappy as they can no longer walk to a pick-up point. A few members mentioned that we are Epsom & Ewell u3a and queried why were we picking up in Worcester Park.

**Response**

Covid had caused a lot of problems for Irene and the travel team. We're not sure if members are aware of how much background work needs to be done in order to facilitate a day trip, short break etc but it is not an easy task and has been exacerbated by the current ever-changing situation. Some members have been very understanding where others have been frustrated by the events that we have very little control over. The pick-up points we were aware would be controversial as it meant quite a change for some members. However, there was a sound plan behind the changes and a lot of thought went into how to adjust things. It was felt that the current pick-up points were too numerous and not as safe as they may have been a few years ago and although The Spring at Ewell has been popular the road is narrow and busy and the residents and shop owners are already unhappy about the quantity and speed of traffic using the village as a cut through. Several members mentioned the cost of parking and getting to the pick-up points which we will review. One interesting point that a few members mentioned was why were we picking up in Worcester Park as we are Epsom & Ewell u3a but as far as we are aware no one had ever queried why we picked up in Ashted. The reason for the change to Worcester Park is based on a study of members postcodes and the nearest available pick-up points. For the afternoon tea we are trialling pick-ups in Worcester Park and Ewell West station which will appease some members local to Bourne Hall. We will of course keep this matter under review, however as you will note from the survey results 89 members said the change did not affect their decision to book and a further 15 weren't bothered one way or the other, also the current trips on offer are fully booked and some have a waiting list. We will never be able to please all members but we will do our best to keep your opinions in mind and review regularly.

## **Social media**

Do you use Facebook?

Yes	No	Have done	Would be prepared to look	Don't like social media
57	80	9	12	8

If you are a Facebook user, do you share posts with other friends?

Yes	No	Don't use Facebook
41	41	72

## **Advertising**

Have you noticed our advertising in the Chessington Chat and Epsom Connections magazines?

Seen in Chessington Chat	Seen in Epsom Connections	Don't receive these magazines	Have not noticed
9	45	79	35

## **Sharing Resources**

Are you aware of the additional offering from other u3a's?

Yes	No	Have not used	Not interested
77	35	48	4

Do you think we should continue this idea in the future if available, depending on other u3a's and what they are offering?

Yes	No	Not bothered
111	6	43

## **U3A National office**

Have you ever looked at the National Office website?

Yes	No	Was not aware of it
47	87	29

Have you signed up for the National u3a newsletter?

Yes	No	Was not aware of it	n/a
49	68	40	6

If you have visited the National Office website, did you find it easy to navigate?

Yes	No	Not easy to navigate	Never visited the site
24	19	4	107

## **Third age matters magazine**

Do you receive the magazine?

Yes	No	Not sure
149	7	6

If you do receive the magazine, do you actually read it?

Yes	No	Sometimes	Do not receive it
99	9	42	6



## Committee

Do you know who your committee members are?

Yes	No	Some of them	n/a
27	38	95	2

Do you feel you are kept informed of committee decisions?

Yes	No	Sometimes	Not bothered	n/a
83	8	45	13	13

Have you had contact with any committee members over the last twelve months?

Yes	No	Not sure	Regularly	Occasionally
64	69	13	1	14

Would you ever consider attending a committee meeting as an observer?

Yes	No	Was not aware I could	Not interested
20	67	46	25

Would you be interested in becoming a committee member?

Yes	No	n/a
4	133	19

Would you be interested in helping the committee in any other way?

Yes	No	n/a
31	75	41

## Comments

**33 members commented**

Comments were varied in this section and covered several areas. One issue had obviously been around being kept informed of the current situation with days out etc which changed constantly over the months, hopefully we have now got to a stage where things will settle down and we can get on with going out and about. Very few members were interested in becoming committee members which is not good as without a committee we cannot function. One member commented that since starting to receive the Third Age Matters magazine they had started to receive a lot more advertising targeted by age related companies and was concerned that they're data had been shared. This is NOT u3a policy. Our database is solely used by our u3a for communicating with members and the third age trust operates in a similar manner.

## Response

Obviously over the past year the committee have not been very visible personally but we have tried to keep in touch via zoom, email etc. it has been a very trying year and we're hoping to get back to proper meetings soon which will certainly make life easier for Irene and the travel team and Jenny and Brenda as group coordinators. Although very few members were interested in joining the committee, we feel that may be because they see it as a job. The reality is that the committee meet 6 times a year for approximately an hour each time to discuss what they've been doing on their particular area. It's not actually that onerous a task and there were some members who said they were prepared to get involved in other ways than being on the committee so we will investigate how more members can play a part without too much call on their time. We have had members offer to help at Bourne Hall in the meet and greet team and hopefully when we get back if we use the large hall we will need helpers with tea and coffee and directing people in the car park, safety hi viz jacket with u3a logo are at the ready and we also have hi viz wet weather clothing for our typical English weather,

## Our U3A

Do you feel you are kept informed?

Yes	No	Maybe
154	0	9

Do you receive too many emails?

Yes	No	Not bothered
12	130	18

Do we have your current email address on our system and do you inform the membership secretary of any changes?

Yes	No	Nothing has changed	n/a
122	1	38	2

Do you know who to contact if you have a query?

Yes	No	Maybe	n/a
90	14	56	2

Is there any information you feel we have not communicated to you that you need to know about?

Yes	No	Maybe	n/a
3	123	19	13

### Comments

**13 members commented**

The inevitable question arose of how do we keep in contact with members not on email. There was also a question which related to the High Street Project.

### Response

The High Street project was on our website at the beginning of the year on the events page with a link to the National Office website. Unfortunately, we are well aware from the survey that not many members log on to the National Office website and have therefore missed a lot of events that they have organised during lockdown.

With regards to keeping members who are not on email informed this is an ongoing concern. We have to be inclusive but the dilemma is as follows: all members pay they same fee for annual membership. Members on the internet pay a monthly fee to their internet provider and therefore have an additional cost that keeps them in touch. Members not on the internet pay the same annual fee, however if we send out regular updates to them via Royal Mail that is an additional cost to our u3a that comes out of central funds. Some u3a's have taken the decision to charge an extra fee to members not on the internet to cover the postage and printing costs which have gone up substantially recently. In the same way that the question of should we raise fees to cover venues for groups was not well received how do we cover the additional cost of postage without either increasing the fees to all members or just the 10% who don't pay for internet coverage? Your ideas would be welcome, we discussed at committee whether a buddy system could be put in place whereby members with internet who lived close to members without could share information which is very much inline with u3a policy of by members for members.

Would you recommend our u3a to a friend?

Yes	No	Maybe	n/a
145	0	17	1

### Comments

**20 members commented**

Members mentioned a range of areas such as we need to support each other as per the original objective of one of our founders Dr Eric Midwinter. We had positive comments regarding how our u3a had kept members in touch during covid where unfortunately some others hadn't been so proactive. One member commented they have friends that don't want to join as they find the organisation 'too snooty' and others who are put off by the word

University. The Jazz group gets a lot of praise due to Mike Stevens being a very proactive leader. We're also perceived by some to be too serious.

### Response

We have tried as a committee to keep members involved and engaged during this very strange time. We understand that some u3a's have not responded to the technological challenges and we believe that we have been lucky to have had committee members and group leaders and their members who have embraced the challenge and gone up a very steep learning curve. Some of our group leaders have been incredibly pro-active and we are grateful for their input.

The issue regarding whether we are 'too snooty' and too serious is one we are working to address bearing in mind that the strapline for the u3a is Learn, Laugh, Live and we hope to gradually embrace this concept more in the future, however there are always some groups that will traditionally be on a more serious theme.

### Visibility

#### Comments

145 members commented

Most members seemed to have joined via word of mouth from a friend. Some people saw an advert at the local train station, leisure centre or library. One member found us online when researching university places for their daughter. One member joined after meeting one of our members doing a recce in a bluebell wood for their walking group and got chatting. We also have comments regarding whether the age range is a good or bad thing bearing in mind that we range from mid-fifties to one hundred. Compliments were also posted for Marian one of our Bridge group leaders. Some members also commented that we were may be offering too many different potential groups.

#### Response

In general, your comments have been positive and hopefully we can continue to entertain members as well as educate in a fun way. The decision to set up the potential new groups list was in answer to a couple of members whose current interest was not catered for. We therefore researched what other u3a's currently offered so that we knew what was feasible and also where we could ask for advice on how groups had been set up. We did draw the line at the Brick Group who have learnt about all the different types of bricks that have been used globally in the past and currently and can now identify different types of bricks and their manufacturer when on a day trip out and about.

Retirement holds so much potential to fill the gaps that we have missed over the years with things we want to do and places we'd like to see. Hopefully all with the help of our u3a friends.

Thank you to all the members who contributed to this survey. We will continue to evaluate your responses and see if there are other areas that we can improve and grow.

If you have any other feedback, you can contact me via email [epsomchair1@gmail.com](mailto:epsomchair1@gmail.com)