

u3a Epsom & Ewell

Learn, Laugh, Live

<https://u3asites.org.uk/epsom-ewell/home>

Email enquiries to: u3aepsom@gmail.com

Hello Friends.

I hope you are all well. Last month I spoke about the positive hope that was on the horizon in the form of a COVID-19 vaccine. I am really happy to tell you now that over 50% of our members have completed the vaccination survey on our COVID-19 page of the website and advised that they have had their first vaccination. Some have been given their second but this is currently less than 10%.

The survey allowed for comments to be added by members and the general opinion is that both the major vaccine hubs at Nonsuch Manor and Epsom Downs Racecourse are very efficient and a lot of praise also goes to Fitznell's Manor.

I would like to thank those members who have completed the survey and for the encouraging comments that have been left that show that such a massive programme as this can be organised in a very efficient way. However, some of our members have expressed concern about the purpose of the survey and I would like to address these concerns if I may. It is an on-going challenge for me as chairman to try and keep as many members engaged and involved with the things we are doing; it is also very apparent that throughout this pandemic some members have become increasingly isolated from the main body of our organisation so are maybe not always aware of what is happening in the wider community.



Important: Your u3a needs a SECRETARY

In the last month there were three emails from National Office. The Secretary role requires someone to forward these to the relevant committee members. The secretary also attends bi-monthly meetings with the team currently on zoom.

[Any member is welcome to come along as an observer, next meeting is March 4th](#)

Important Announcement Membership

The usual fee of £15 per person will become due on 1st April 2021 and will be valid for 12 months.

Please ensure you renew promptly to enable Peta our membership secretary to have accurate records to submit to National Office on 1st April.

Thank You

There are so many rumours and so much misinformation that can cover the facts and this is increased at a local level. So, the purpose of the survey was not to gather any dark data on who has had the vaccine and who has not or to enable us to circumvent Government guide lines but to provide a positive picture of how the vaccine is being rolled out across our membership in the hope that this will provide some comfort to those who are anxious about the future.

Throughout this pandemic, when we have tried to provide updates on lockdowns, regulations and restrictions, whether as a result of our own research or that of the National U3A we have always advised that the Government updates are paramount and we will not encourage or allow our members to return to normal U3A activities until we are permitted to or our members are ready to do so.

Website Event registration

I have decided to change the way our members register for events on our website after consulting with other u3a's on some enhanced Zoom facilities. Some members may have already noticed the changes. The new method is far more efficient and less time consuming for our committee members. The new form will give the event date, time and place and will require the member's name, email address and U3A, once the registration button is pressed an email confirming your registration and containing all the meeting details on how to join is generated. We hope this will address the query that some members raised that they did not receive a confirmation email when they booked and then were not certain of their place being reserved. A second reminder email will be sent out as per usual 24 hours before the event.

Sharing U3A resources

We are currently in the process of forming an agreement with likeminded U3A's to open up our talks and mid-month meetings and some groups to members of other U3A's within the Surrey Network who are willing to reciprocate in the same way. Members will be able to see what is available and who to contact via the Surrey Network website. Some of these opportunities are already on our own website and have vacancies.

New Members Coffee Morning

On Wednesday March 10th we will be holding a New Members Coffee Morning on Zoom.

If you are a new member who has not yet attended one of our coffee mornings or you have friends who are interested in joining the u3a please register to attend the event using the Event Registration form on the Events page

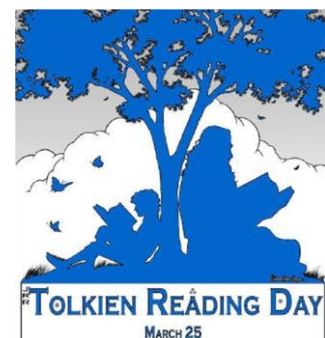
Tolkien Day

Mid-Month event

Thursday March 25th

Tolkien Day is celebrated on March 25th as this is the day the ring was destroyed therefore completing Frodo's quest.

Booking via the Event page



Membership renewals.

As you will recall our committee took the decision last summer to defer membership renewals from September to March this year giving members 6 months of free membership. Ever since we re-started our program back in July last year using the Zoom platform, we have added more and more events, we were hoping that by September/October of last year some of our external activities could resume within government restrictions. Sadly, this was not possible as the second lockdown was implemented, we were forced to reschedule our virtual world and move back inside once again. Subsequently we had to suffer lockdown number 3 but we were not deterred and kept on looking for more virtual events that would entertain, amuse and challenge our membership. We hope that we have managed to engage and entertain as many of you as possible and that you will wish to renew your membership.

Travel and Events

Unfortunately, but not surprisingly we have had to postpone some events that involved social mixing. Wherever possible we will reschedule these events for later in the year. The Travel Team Leader (Irene Moore) is staying in contact with the tour operators and guides and will keep our members up to date via the website with all the latest decisions as we go forward into the summer. Please check the website as the Llandudno trip has had to be cancelled, we will try to reschedule maybe next year. Also, the Legal London trip for May will hopefully be rescheduled for October and the June trips and events Irene is currently working on to reschedule.

All monthly speaker meetings will be remaining as per programme and we will keep the website updated with the venue for events to enable members to know if an event is online on Zoom or hopefully later in the year an actual face to face meeting which would be a treat.

****Membership Renewals are due****

Our membership secretary is sending out renewal requests at the beginning of March. Please assist Peta as much as possible by paying online if you can as this is the simplest method, don't forget to quote your membership number as a reference in order that she can send out your new membership card promptly.

Alternatively, you can pay by cheque the amount of £15 per member and post to her at the following address: Membership Secretary, Epsom & Ewell u3a, 7 Christ Church Mount, Epsom, Surrey, KT19 8LU.

Groups

New groups are being added to our Groups page and are in yellow as they have vacancies. The one group that is of particular interest is the 'Garden Project Group'. So, what's this all about then? We are in the process of building a cooperative relationship with Go Epsom, Epsom Rotary, Thames Link Trains and a few of the Epsom and Ewell councillors.

The theme of the project is 'The Borough in Bloom' and it is through this project that we have been invited to promote the Epsom and Ewell U3A presence. For the National U3A movement, this will be a chance to celebrate our U3A day with online videos, public garden displays and community fairs. Of course, all this will be carried out with strict adherence to Government guide lines and restrictions but hopefully, the restrictions will be gradually lifted and some of the events that require social mixing will be able to take place later in the year.

We will be holding an open meeting on Wednesday March 17th in the hope of attracting the gardeners, artists and crafts people among our members. Details of the meeting and a registration form are already on the events page of the website and I would appreciate as many members as possible coming up with ideas and hopefully getting involved with making those ideas happen.

When I look at what we have achieved in less than twelve months and what we have in store for our members going forward I realise how lucky I am to have such a pro-active team around me and how our current membership fee still represents incredible value for money in a time when so many institutions are struggling or no longer running and is a prime example of members working hard for members.

Your committee will continue to monitor our progress out of lockdown and back into the freedoms we all enjoyed in the past and update our website accordingly.

In the meantime, stay positive, stay safe and take care out there.

Best wishes

Tony Skelton

Epsom and Ewell U3A Chairman.

Website

Our Epsom & Ewell website administrator is constantly changing the content and information displayed to keep it as dynamic as possible and our website has received a few encouraging accolades from other U3A's up and down the country.

We're also very pleased with the number of members who are starting to actually look at the website on a more regular basis.

Don't forget that the Home Page will change on the first of every month.

January was the events for the year, February was the month of Love, not all hearts and flowers but lots of things in your life that you may love.

Check out March and let us know what you think.