

u3a H & E Strollers' Group
Report to AGM December 2023

Since the last Report, in November 2022, I am pleased to say that we are now pretty well back to normal post lockdown; both membership numbers and the number of people on our Wednesday walks are increasing and we often have our full preferred quota of 15 on walks

Before Lockdown, we were often getting between 15 and 20 strollers on our walks and on occasions we have had 25, which was beginning to cause problems with cafes etc. So we agreed at a Planning Meeting that the ideal numbers on a walk should in future be no more than about 15; the walk leader will have the final say. (We did have 18 on one recent walk!) We keep a careful eye on the situation, but we feel that we can currently still accommodate new members and indeed we currently have 2 Strollers who are Kings Norton u3a members.

Our walks normally take place weekly on Wednesdays from September until the end of July (except for the first Wednesday of the month, when there is a u3a General Meeting, and at Christmas and Easter there is usually a short break). Around Christmas, we often have a meal out together; in January 2024 for example, we are going to Birmingham College of Food, open to all Strollers.

We have some very pleasant outings using our senior citizens Centro passes (those who can!) on buses and trains, and we always endeavour to use public transport. Although our walks can be anywhere between 2 and 4 miles (usually at least 3) the pace is fairly gentle and the conditions easy enabling people of all abilities to join us. We often see historical, botanical or architectural landmarks along the way.

On the walks, usually at or towards the end, where possible we stop at a suitable venue for a drink, toilet stop, and perhaps lunch or refreshments and there is plenty of opportunity to get to know each other. Members find the walks help them to maintain a good level of fitness and the social interaction is an important and enjoyable part of the activity.

The walks are chosen and voted for at our democratic Planning Meetings held thrice yearly; Leaders and Backups are also chosen/volunteer. We aim to have a mix of local walks and some further afield; some old favourites and some new walks.

A walks programme is produced for each session of walks and distributed to members, and also posted on the web-site, and weekly reminders are also sent out confirming the meeting place, details of the walk etc. A further e-mail is also sent out just before the walk confirming the names of the attendees, and whether the walk is now 'full' (they often are!).

There is a log book maintained by Fiona Lewis, our 'Archivist' – this is where we keep descriptions and photographs of each walk prepared by that week's leader. The current folder is normally available for people to see at the Planning Meetings.

Informal' walks (outside the aegis of u3a) are often arranged, for example during August. Such walks are often a good opportunity to trial possible new walks to see if they may be suitable for inclusion in the official programme.

The coordinator and many of the walkers usually attend General Meetings and are available to talk to anyone interested.

We are happy for people to only walk occasionally and are a very friendly group; new Strollers are all made welcome.

David Hidson – u3a H & E Strollers Coordinator
September 2023