

## U3A Digital Photo Group Virtual Meeting – 17<sup>th</sup> Dec 2020

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Good evening

Thursday's Zoom virtual meeting went well as Brian & Andrew had done all the organisation, and I was finally able to join in again after our family "trials and tribulations" of the last few weeks (but that are still on-going to some extent) - we had quite a few Apologies for non-attendance and thus there were 9 members on-line.

Prior to the meeting, Brian sent the Committee members the following list of 7 suggestions and comments to the Committee members, and so here are some of my thoughts (other people's views may well differ!) about each of those that he mentioned:

1. BH: Improve meetings by spending more time on photographic topics and viewing photos.  
JEA  
Yes, totally agree, with the proviso that more members can contribute by introducing and leading the discussions etc, *(and so it's not just down to the Committee members)*

**Note:** *now that we appear to have got some of the "bugs" out of running the Zoom meetings, it may be possible to give presentations without necessarily preparing detailed PowerPoint-type presentations - all that might be needed would be to show everyone (by "Sharing" your screen) some relevant illustrative shots that are in a folder on your PC/MAC (maybe using FastStone Image Viewer, etc.), with the presenter giving the voice commentary at the same time. That approach might reduce the time and effort to prepare and deliver them (?).*
2. BH: Ask members to complete a survey on what they want in our meetings. Surveys and comments by members should be discussed by committee members outside the meetings.  
JEA  
At the end of 2016 we circulated a questionnaire of that sort, and I attach the last summary of the results we got as that indicated the level of enthusiasm for particular subjects by the numbers of "votes" for each one .  
QUESTION: Is this something that's you want the Committee to do again, and, if so, what changes in the suggested subjects would you like to see?
3. BH: It is likely that new members will be using mobile phones and tablets to take photographs and would like to know how to crop, re-size, print and send photographs to friends and family, and perhaps enter our photographic competitions. Nowadays not many members would be interested in traditional cameras, lenses, etc.  
JEA  
During the meeting we discussed possible future activities, and it was clear that there is a substantial demand for more info and presentations on photography with phones *(as opposed to cameras as such)* because the majority of shots, Worldwide, are now taken with them – but we will need various members' inputs, in the form of presentations and leading relevant discussions  
Therefore please volunteer to prepare and give some relevant but short (say 10 mins or so, though longer would be perfectly fine!) presentations of various aspects of phone photography!  
– Thus, if you can, please contact Brian and/or myself with your ideas on roughly what you could cover and when  
(and especially if, during the Thursday meeting, you mentioned that you do have some specific ideas)

## U3A Digital Photo Group Virtual Meeting – 17<sup>th</sup> Dec 2020

*(As I said during the meeting, I personally rarely use my phone to take photos because it's not the easiest one for that task, and I find it an "awkward" way of taking shots – so I'm virtually useless in this area!)*

4. **BH:** More time should be spent judging members' competition photographs, rather than this being rushed through at the end of the meeting.

**JEA**

Commenting on and judging members' competition photos was quite easy & quick at the face-to-face meetings at the Church, and it relatively required little time to prepare the "sets" before viewing, and then voting on, them at a meeting was quite straightforward.

However, in the current and on-going situation where we need to use Zoom, pre-meeting preparation of the submitted shots for sharing and then uploading to Google Photos takes quite bit longer (and it's quite easy to make mistakes as some of you have noticed!).

*My own view on this point is that we receive quite a number of voting forms from members who cannot not, for various reasons, log into Zoom meetings, and therefore restricting the voting to only those who can log in could tend to "exclude" those who can't from some of the Group's activities.*

**OTOH, what we could do is to discuss one month's competition entries at the following monthly meeting (e.g. December competition shots would be discussed at the January meeting) to find out from the members as to why they thought the winning shots were chosen.**

5. **BH:** I liked Marilyn's idea to have a presentation of a topic that members could try out and show their results at the next meeting.

**JEA**

I fully agree with Marilyn's comment **because that's what we used to do**, i.e. someone would give a themed presentation and the competition for the next month would on or around that same subject!

**Nevertheless that approach still needs volunteers to prepare and present those themed presentations - see No 3 above.**

6. **BH:** I liked Andrew's idea to re-name the group to U3A Photography, as it places more emphasis on photography.

**JEA**

I must admit I don't think that dropping the word "Digital" from the Group's title would be a good idea because some potential new members might then think that we still operate in the "steam age" and using mainly film cameras!

OTOH, the comments about the need for more coverage of the use of phones as cameras clearly points to this being a "digital age" group, and, because most potential members will have at least a phone with a built-in camera, keeping the word "Digital" in the Group's title should make it clear to them that they probably already possess "kit" with which to start participating, even if they don't have dedicated cameras (*which would almost certainly be digital ones anyway!*).

7. **BH:** I like our competition photos on Google Photos and our method of recording members votes.

## U3A Digital Photo Group Virtual Meeting – 17<sup>th</sup> Dec 2020

JEA

That has become a very good (*if time-consuming for those who receive, check & upload them!*) way of making members' shots available to the whole of the Group – but, w.r.t. Point No 4, if we had to have all the photos up on Google Photos BEFORE each Zoom (or face-to-face) meeting and have the voting at them, it would mean that competition deadlines would have to be *at least* 5 days **before** each meeting, whereas, in the current situation, the submission deadlines are not tied to the meeting dates but only really to getting the Winning Shots off to Eirwen for the u3a Hillingdon Monthly Slide Shows.

Making such changes could therefore severely restrict the “windows” for submissions, especially when the 4th Monday of a month comes very early - *as in February, March, August & November of 2021 when it is the 22<sup>nd</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup>, and possibly for the December meeting as well* – meaning that the shots would have to be submitted by about the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> of those months.

Brian also suggested a time-table “template” for forthcoming meetings, but – given the very uncertain times in which we live – I think that will all depend on how the current Zoom-based meetings are working, and then if and when we can get back to having live “face-to-face” meetings at the Church *or elsewhere*.

### **The “Photography & Video Funnies” Presentation from Janet, Len & myself!**

Well, I *finally* managed to successfully give this presentation – *originally planned for last December's meeting!* – and we all had some good laughs about the shots & videos of both animals and people, AND the (sometimes very dangerous) antics that some “intrepid” people get up to in the process of taking them.

It is in PowerPoint form, but I'm having some trouble making the embedded hyperlinks still work when it's converted to PDF format (as it needs to be to keep the file size down) – hopefully however, I'll be able to solve that in the next few days, and then I'll send it out to you all and also ask Tony to load it up on our webpages.

### **Competitions**

#### **The Themed competition**

Since a lot of the shots in the above presentation involved **Animals, Birds & even Insects**, it was suggested and agreed that they should be the subject of this month's themed competition (and “funny” shots would be very acceptable).

#### **Your Shot of the Month**

This will be for shots from 17<sup>th</sup> Dec to “late in January”, with the same “rules” as before.

Brian has kindly agreed to handle both competitions for the foreseeable future, and so he will be in touch with you all with more details, including the submission deadlines etc., for both.

### **Future Meetings**

The next meeting will again be via Zoom, and kindly arranged by Andrew – the date should be **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January**, and one of the other Committee members, or myself, will provide the details in the near future.

John

**And on behalf of the other members of the Steering Committee: Brian Hillier, Andrew Longhurst & Judy Peddie!**