

Network News



News updates from Leicestershire & Rutland Network of U3As – 01/08/2020

Introduction

Welcome to this first edition of Network News. This is the new way we will pass information to our Network members, albeit on an irregular basis. Sometimes there may only be one item whereas other times, like now, there may be several. By not having it at regular intervals it means we can pass information to you as soon as we get it.

Network Co-ordinator

My name is Roger Prescott of West Leicestershire U3A and I took over the role from Cynthia Baker during July. I'm looking forward to meeting all the network members at our October meeting, hopefully in person, but who knows? I'll be your main contact with the Network – my contact details are at the end of this newsletter.

Network Quiz – Diary Date

It looks unlikely that we'll be able to get together in person for an autumn quiz-night so we're planning a Quiz-by-Zoom on Wednesday 23rd September starting at 10.30am. It should finish about 12 noon and there will be a 15-minute coffee/comfort break midway. Later this month we'll send further details and ask for those wishing to take part to make contact. It will be on an individual basis rather than the normal teams.

Autumn Meeting – Diary Date

Our Autumn meeting is scheduled for Friday 30th October starting at 10am. We've been extremely fortunate to get Ian McCannah, the current Chairman of the Third Age Trust, as our guest speaker. Ian's talk, delivered either in person or by Zoom, will be "Where will the U3A movement be post Lockdown?" with time for questions afterwards. Plus all the usual updates, of course.

Webmasters Seminar

We are in the process of arranging a seminar for Webmasters. Several have expressed an interest so far but it's not too late for any additions. It will be in the autumn and probably by Zoom so travel ceases to limit attending. Some experienced webmasters would be especially welcomed to help those new to the role. To add a name just use the contact at the end of this newsletter.

Activities During Lockdown

A huge thanks to all those who have responded so far with details of how you've been keeping your U3A alive during lockdown. Attached is a brief resumé of the replies so far, but this is a working document so if you've not yet responded there is still time before the final and more detailed document is produced later this month. Replies to the Network Co-ordinator please.

And Finally...

We've had a request for help from a PhD student at the University of Hertfordshire – details are on page 3. Please pass this on to your members as I'm sure some will enjoy taking part.

You can contact the Network Co-ordinator in the following ways:
Email: coordinator@landru3a.org.uk **Phone/text:** 07984 400605
Website: <https://u3asites.org.uk/landr>

Summary of Activities during “Lockdown”

Communication Methods

A whole variety of different methods have been deployed to keep in touch. Here are some of the methods used and the uses they have been put to:

- * WhatsApp Groups (various groups just to keep in touch);
- * Email (Living History, Needlecrafts – sharing ideas, Poetry Appreciation);
- * Zoom/Skype/FaceTime (Committee Meetings, Quizzes, Book Group, Current Affairs Group, Science/Technology Group, Spanish, French Conversation, Music Group, full monthly meetings including speakers/musical performances, History Group, virtual coffee morning);
- * Phone calls (to more isolated members);
- * Socially distanced outdoor meetings (Gardening Group, Walking Groups);
- * Cards and Letters (just to keep in touch);
- * Various Internet & TV Programs (using iPlayer and various similar methods);
- * Phone (French conversation group);
- * YouTube (Ukulele Group sharing individual performances); and
- * Website (Adapting a Newsletter to an online magazine plus weekly news-sheet).

Problems encountered

- * Some groups have members that are spread widely across many villages/hamlets where internet connection is not good;
- * Outdoor trips restricted by the availability of public toilets and groups limited to 6 coupled with the need for social distancing;
- * Some members with hearing loss sometimes have a problem keeping up with the conversations on online sessions; and
- * Online meetings being interrupted by family members, phone, doorbell, pets, etc.

Groups that have restarted (albeit with restrictions):

- * Golf;
- * Table Tennis (from August 7th);
- * Photography (projects completed and emailed to Group Contact); and
- * Walking Group (socially distanced, of course).

This is a fairly brief summary based on the responses from groups so far. As more responses arrive this working document will be added to and re-circulated, so please keep your replies coming but to the following email address: coordinator@landru3a.org.uk

If you'd like further details about how various groups have used some of the diverse methods, send an email to the address above and I'll try to put you in touch with the U3A concerned.

A new online study on everyday memory in the general population

Invitation to take part in a survey about everyday memory errors across the lifespan

- ❖ Do you know how good your memory is in everyday life?
- ❖ Can you tell us how often you forget to do things (e.g., make a phone call) or facts and episodes from your past?
- ❖ Do you know how good people are at these tasks in age groups other than yours?

The research team at the University of Hertfordshire (UK) invites you to take part in a new online survey that focuses on people's everyday memory errors and their knowledge and beliefs about the frequency of these errors in different age groups.

The study can be completed from a laptop or mobile phone and takes about **30-40 minutes** to complete. **No identifiable information will be collected.**

The link to the survey can be accessed by clicking on the link below:

https://herts.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3eZn0v07OxIj2fP

This study has received ethical approval from the UH ethics committee.

Protocol Number: LMS/PGT/UH//04180

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact the principal investigator below:

PhD Student Brigita Brazauskiene at b.brazauskiene@herts.ac.uk

Thank you.



U3A East Midlands Trustee

Newsletter



August 2020

Back in March I do not think that any of us imagined that this situation would go on for as long as this. It has not been at all easy and I know how much many of our members are longing to return to normal routines.

During the last few months, many U3As across the Region, have been in touch with others in their Network or neighbourhood group. Newsletters have been circulated and issues raised and discussed. Now Networks are beginning to hold virtual meetings. E Lincs was the first group to do this and it went very well. Notts. Network held one yesterday with 37 people taking part, and were joined by national Chair, Ian McCannah, who gave an update on the Trust development plan. U3As reported on how they are coping with the current situation. It was particularly good to hear about the very pro-active Groups coordinators at Beeston U3A who have encouraged and supported so many of their group convenors to use zoom for their groups. Leicestershire Network have a similar meeting planned.

This has emphasised just how important Networks are in providing mutual support.

Latest guidance

Do read the latest guidance carefully in relation to the opening of groups and where they can be held.

What next?

- What do your members value about their U3A? How can you maintain this?
- Are you open to new members?
- What ideas do you have for the future?
 - Could you consider a 'fusion' approach, a mix of virtual and actual?
 - Could you have a 'buddy' system for helping more members to engage with the internet?
 - What sort of events might be possible?
 - How can you persuade more members to become involved?
- Use the national website for advice and suggestions
- Keep an eye of Facebook's 'Keeping in Touch' page
- Circulate the national newsletter

Exciting Project!

The National U3A High St Project is being launched, by Peter Cox, from North London U3A, to track the changes to our High Streets, that are being accelerated by Covid -19. The project is being

managed by the Trust's Research Committee. The plan is to produce a landmark report for publication by the Trust in 2022, so helping to raise the U3A's profile in our 40th anniversary year.

The idea is that many U3As will become involved in their own community. The Project will begin with a quick survey to provide a baseline at the beginning of Lockdown in March 2020, against which we'll be able to measure the changes. The timescale is of necessity short because the situation is changing rapidly. We aim to produce a report for the Board by the end of December 2020 that describes the pre-Pandemic state of Britain's shopping locations. In early 2022 we will then be able to construct a final report that looks in depth at the impact of the pandemic, as part of wider research. We would ask participants to choose a small number of shopping streets in their locality. That may mean for example a main street, a local parade, and a small centre, and more information about this will be sent to those who register their interest. Participating U3As will need a team of 5-10 volunteers with a leader who is happy to coordinate the work. Please send the coordinators contact details directly to Peter. Peter Cox coxpetern@gmail.com)

I do hope that many U3As in the East Midlands will enjoy taking part in this interesting and worthwhile project. This should result in a report of real significance, in time for our 40th Anniversary.

Many thanks!

Trust U3A

Early on in lockdown, more than 20 U3As in our region reported that they were closed to new members. Across the country many more said the same and so the Trust made the decision to set up Trust U3A, which already has 200 members, to cope with the demand from people wanting to join. Of course, those people are told about their local U3As and encouraged to join when it is possible, but this online version is proving popular.

I do hope that the situation in those U3As is now much more open and welcoming, even though our general meetings are not possible. Many U3As have done a fantastic job keeping in touch with their members, encouraging and supporting groups to run virtually and producing fascinating and stimulating newsletters, full of news, competitions and puzzles.

Post lockdown driving

A suggestion has come from the Institute of Advanced Drivers. They are offering a 'webinar' (so many people can partake). This could be something that many U3A members, who may not have driven much at all for several months and now lack confidence, may be interested in. Please let your Network contact know – by Tuesday 11th August - if you would like to make this available to your members. I will be sent a link to the sessions, which can then be circulated.

The dates being offered are: 10am Tuesday 18th August and 10am Wednesday 26th August.

The session is in 3 parts:

1. Are you ready to get back on the road? Many people will only have taken short trips on local roads or may not have driven at all. It's estimated that half a million people have taken their cars off the road during lockdown (SORN).

2. Is your car ready for the road? How to carry out a Health check for your car.
3. Are other people ready for the road? Observation skills will be very important: cycle lanes will have appeared; there'll be more pedestrians and people jogging; people stepping off the kerb to observe social distancing; more people speeding. How to **Observe Anticipate Plan**

East Midlands Conference – 30th October

There is still no decision about whether or not this will be held. It is hard to know what the situation will be by then. The planning group continues to keep the situation under review. Watch this space!

I now have a Regional Support team, made up of experienced Trust volunteers with a great deal of experience of U3A. It is a strange time to be starting to work together, as we have only met together virtually, but the plan is that the team will support the work of the Trustee across the Region, sometimes deputising for me, but also working with others to start up new U3As, support existing U3As and helping with regional events. This team will also enable there to be greater continuity when a new Trustee takes over.

So from me, and them – Many thanks to you all for everything you continue to do.

I can be contacted on: jean.hogg@u3a.org.uk or phone: 0744 322 1688

Jean Hogg East Midlands Trustee



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