



News updates – 14/12/2020

It's Christmas – but not as we know it!

Please forgive me for starting the last Network News of 2020 with something a little bit festive and reflective – socially distanced of course! It's been an unprecedented year – most of us didn't know Zoom existed last January, now many of our u3a activities wouldn't be happening without it, and we've all become "seasoned users" by necessity. Previously unused words have entered our vocabulary (and Dictionaries) such as lockdown, furlough and support-bubble. But my favourite new word has to be anthropause, defined as "the global slowdown of travel and other human activity and the subsequent welcome consequences, such as a decrease in light and noise pollution". Mind you, it's not the easiest word to fit into a normal conversation. Shame!

If we are to adopt one message for our members this holiday season, can I suggest –



**'TIS THE SEASON TO
BE JOLLY CAREFUL!**



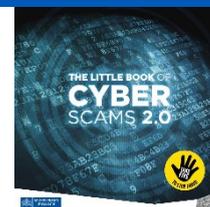
I know someone called Boris has recently used it but, like me, he's borrowed it from elsewhere! I hope you are all able to enjoy a peaceful festive time with (limited) family and re-charge the batteries ready for, what could be, quite an interestingly hectic New Year.

Thank you for the support you've given to your Network during 2020. All being well, 2021 will be a year of even greater co-operation and exciting new experiences both from a national and more local perspective, especially when we're able to meet face-to-face once again. P.S. We still need a Secretary on the Network Committee – any volunteers?

Little Book of Scams – New Edition



There is now an updated version of the above and its companion edition, the Little Book of Cyber Scams, which actually makes fascinating reading. You can download these and other booklets and leaflets from the Met. Police website at www.met.police.uk/littlemedia.



Previously Circulated Information

The following message comes from Jean Hogg, Regional Trustee:

"You may recall that I recently circulated a link to a video made by Paul Martinez about using Zoom and YouTube.

Sadly, there are still some copywrite issues with this video so I need to ask you not to view or circulate it again at the moment. Many thanks,
Jean"

News From Around our Counties

You may recall I asked what was happening in u3as around our 2 counties. The only one I've heard from so far is Glenfield u3a, so here's what's happening there:

Membership & Groups Activities – Membership has been extended at no cost to April 2021 and to date only two members have said they will not be renewing. Nineteen of our groups have found ways of meeting; whether in small socially distanced groups; by Zoom or WhatsApp.

10 Year Celebrations – Although our planned 10th Anniversary Celebrations have been rescheduled to 2021, we were able to go ahead with a celebratory tree planting at the Glenfield Millennium Green.

Christmas Festivities – We have distributed an 8-page special Christmas Newsletter to members and will be holding a light hearted and festive Zoom meeting to get us in the Christmas spirit on the 17th December.

Website COVID Page – we have added a COVID page to our website, for news and as a place for members to share their ideas and information.

Thanks go to Mike Barber – Glenfield Chairman

Third Age Trust EGM – 10th December and Chairman's Update

For those of you who either were unable to join this meeting or simply decided not to, you'll find some notes on the proceedings enclosed. Ian McCannah (TAT Chairman) followed the EGM with an update on TAT activities including a new initiative that will need 10,000 volunteers to make it work!

Help needed from your Speaker Finder/Programme Organiser

Enclosed is a letter from Judith Harriman, our Network Chairman, asking for some help from your Speaker Finder/Programme Organiser. Would you kindly pass the letter on? Thank you.

And Finally...

That's it from your Network for 2020. It just remains for us to wish you all a safe, peaceful and hopefully enjoyable festive season, and hope we can all look forward to queueing for our anti-Covid vaccinations early in the New Year, and get back to our u3a version of normality!

*PDF enclosures with this Network News:
TAT EGM & Chairman's Update Notes
Letter to Speaker Finders/Programme Organisers*



Find out more about your u3a Network on our website: <https://u3asites.org.uk/landr>
To contact the Network please email: coordinator@landru3a.org.uk

The purpose of the EGM was to amend the TAT constitution to allow General Meetings (including AGMs) to be held:

- a) Fully in-person; or
- b) Fully online (i.e., a virtual meeting); or
- c) A hybrid of both options.

This was a legal requirement as the current exemptions on holding General Meetings other than in-person expires on 30th December 2020, with no indication whether the dispensation* will be extended or not.

Important factors for consideration were:

- a) The holding of an AGM (next TAT AGM due August 2021) is a legal requirement;
- b) Twice as many members attended the virtual AGM as have ever attended an in-person AGM;
- c) It is important to increase democracy of, and access to, such meetings; and
- d) There has been a suggestion that future meetings could be a hybrid making the most of both options.

52% of u3as were represented at the EGM either by an online presence or by proxy votes vested in the Company Secretary. The meeting was declared quorate.

The motion was carried by 1,112 votes in favour, 2 against and 3 abstentions.

The meeting was formally closed at 10.24am.

*Granted under Schedule 15 of the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020.

Address By Ian McCannah – TAT Chairman

During 2020 Ian had asked u3as to contact him with observations and suggestions about the best ways for the movement as a whole to emerge from COVID-19 suitably invigorated. He provided a synopsis of the response together with comments about some action taken or planned as a result.

- ❖ There has been a great divergence of reactions to COVID. Many u3as have adapted extremely well whereas at the other end of the scale, some have almost closed down.
- ❖ Technology has been a massive help but cannot replace face-to-face contact.
- ❖ U3as will need to be attractive to the new demographic of those recently retired or having been made redundant with little work prospects ahead.
- ❖ Beware the digital divide – u3as need to consider how technology can best be used in the future taking account of loneliness and isolation especially when health related or lack of available transport. Don't have too much dependence on technology alone.
- ❖ There is a new significant pool of 50s and 60s that need to be targeted.
- ❖ Consider different methods of increasing u3a awareness, such as talking to councils about empty shop space being used (free) as a pop-up information centre.

- ❖ How best to use local social media to promote u3as, such as What's App groups, Facebook groups, etc.
- ❖ The national TAT "Keeping In Touch" Facebook page will continue and be developed further.

Other Comments and Answers to Questions Asked

- ❖ A Public Relations committee has been formed and regional PR advisers are being recruited from the membership to increase the profile of u3as.
- ❖ More workshops to be arranged about holding virtual AGMs to include how different systems work especially for voting.
- ❖ Membership average ages have increased from 72 in 1999 to 74 in 2019 – known as the result of a limited membership survey carried out every 10 years and done to give a high level of statistical accuracy.
- ❖ More groups could consider meeting in the evenings and at weekends to attract some of the greater numbers now working part-time.
- ❖ Those isolated at home through health, being carers or remoteness could be attracted by adopting a hybrid approach to some activities, including monthly meetings. Some former members who have not renewed membership may be unwilling to meet in large groups or use public transport and could be tempted back by a hybrid approach.
- ❖ There won't be any national advertising on TV or in the press to increase the u3a profile as TAT do not have the financial resources to fund this. There will, however, be increased activity using free media such as Independence Age who provide free space in their magazine for us to promote u3a awareness. It's largely down to individual u3as (or groups of u3as) to make use of this particular facility.

Slow Ways Project

Ian McCannah introduced this topic. Someone called Dan is leading this project to map all the footpaths in the UK. He will be looking for 10,000 volunteers to make this work and it's thought that u3a's 1,500 walking groups could make a considerable contribution to this project. More details will be available early in 2021.

Roger Prescott
Network Co-ordinator – Leicestershire & Rutland Network of u3as
10th December 2020

Dear Speaker Finder

Several Leicestershire and Rutland u3as in our Network use their own members to give talks at meetings. It would be useful if we could pool this resource.

Could you please ask any members who have spoken to your u3a if they would be willing to speak to other u3as in our network?

We are not able to give a fee for these talks but travel expenses can be claimed by member speakers.

If any speakers are also able to use Zoom that could be noted as well.

Please email me with any speaker information at judithharriman1@gmail.com

Best Wishes

Judith Harriman

Chair of Leicestershire and Rutland Network of u3as.