

News updates – 13/11/2020

u3a Brand Centre



The new Brand Centre is slowly coming to life with new facilities being added. Recent additions include:

- PowerPoint slides template now available to download (17 different slides);
- Customisation of new logos to include local u3a names (like the Network one above) now available to order (usually only takes a few seconds for them to be ready to download); and
- Two tutorials under the “Get Started” heading to get familiar with how to use the new Brand Centre.

It is necessary to register to use the Brand Centre as it has its own website which can be accessed through the national website or directly at: <https://u3abrand.org.uk>.

Winter Learning Programme

You should have received a copy of this programme as part of a National Office mailing. This is really to act as a reminder to let your members know that there are actually a lot of activities still taking place with more planned for the early months of 2021. For further details go to: www.u3a.org.uk/events/national-programmes.

Poetry Judges Needed

A couple of judges are needed for the National Poetry Competition which closes on 20th November. Anyone interested should contact Jean Hogg, the East Midlands Regional Trustee, for further information. Jean's email address is jean.hogg@u3a.org.uk and her mobile phone number is 07443 221 688. Will you please pass this to Group Leaders of Creative Writing and/or Poetry interest groups in particular and/or your general membership.

As you will appreciate, this is time sensitive.

Improved National Website



Just in case you haven't noticed, the National Website has been upgraded and much improved. There's a great deal of material there to help with ideas for keeping things going in your u3a, such as setting up a Facebook page, running zoom sessions, and much more.

More about Zoom

While we're on Zoom, Paul Martinez of Carlton & Gedling u3a (Notts Network) has produced a video guide to the various ways of using Zoom and YouTube in presentations, some of which you may think wouldn't even work online – but they do. It requires an elementary knowledge of what both platforms are about but is a bit of an eye opener.

You can find the video on Paul's YouTube Channel at <https://youtu.be/6ljnuWq6KzE>.

Localgiving – Request for help!



This is a not-for-profit government initiative that provides support to a wide range of charities by recruiting volunteers and providing an online fundraising platform. They have so far supported over 3,000 small charities and community groups and helped them to raise over £3.5 million.

They are now looking for volunteers to support a range of organisations and try and match the skills and experience of volunteers with the needs of those organisations, and have asked for our help. Further details are in the attached email. The contact is Lauren Swain – lauren@localgiving.org.

Dates for Your Diary

Thursday 14th January 2021 at 10:00am – Engaging With Non-Internet Users

The aim is to get together u3a committee members, interest group contacts and any others (including individual members), to build a toolkit of practical ways to support individual u3as, interest groups and u3a members who are concerned about using “technical” methods of communication.

To make this work we’re looking for those who would like some help and those who can provide help to take part. Although the meeting will be on the Zoom platform, anyone with a phone can dial in to add their concerns and views, or pass them to committee members to pass on for them.

Registration for this event is not necessary to encourage those nervous of technology to contribute. Further details will follow nearer the event.

Monday 22nd February 2021 at 7.00pm – Network “Pub Quiz”

This will be the next in the series of Network Quizzes open to all members of all u3as in our Network. Put the date in your diary now – more details in due course.

Policy Documents – the need to review

All u3as should now have quite a range of “Policy” documents in place and available on your websites. This is just a reminder that they should be reviewed regularly, especially as there have been some major changes introduced over the last 12-18 months that need to be taken on-board.

National Office have produced up-to-date templates for many of these and are now available at: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/advice/all-advice-downloads/keeping-it-legal>

There are templates for:

Data Protection

Diversity & Inclusion

Privacy Policy

Trustee Code of Conduct

Safeguarding Policy & Procedure

Keeping in Touch with Members

We know that it can be difficult to keep in touch with all members during the lockdown period, and that can impact on those living alone the hardest. So here are a couple of suggestions that can be adopted or adapted as you wish.

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

Connect on Thursday/Quiz Hour

This could be a short weekly/fortnightly/monthly chat-session using Zoom as a way of keeping in touch, perhaps as short as 30 minutes. It would be like an online coffee club or afternoon tea get-together or a discussion on a couple of topics suggested by the group. It could even be a short(ish) quiz. Thursday was suggested as it's known to be the day when those living alone feel at their lowest.

We've even created a couple of logos that you might want to use:



If you'd like copies of the logos just drop an email to coordinator@landru3a.org.uk. Variations can also be provided with different wording as required. They are copyright free!

Regional Trustee November Newsletter

Attached is the November Newsletter from Jean Hogg, our Regional Trustee with some additional ideas to make life a little more meaningful for our members during lockdown.

Final Network News of 2020 – Your Help Needed!

The last edition of Network News for 2020 will be sent out around the 14th of December and I'm looking to our member u3as to make it the most useful edition of the year!



We've all had to get really inventive and work hard to keep members informed and involved during the last 9 months. Some ideas have worked way beyond expectations, some less so. As the festive season is a time for sharing, I'm asking you to share the things that have worked well and that other u3as could also try. Please don't write a book about it (not just yet anyway!), just a paragraph with the key points and ideally a name and phone number and/or email address so others can find out a bit more.

Thank you in advance – I hope to be (not literally) snowed-under with your emails. Please let me have your input by Tuesday 8th December so I can collate them ready to send out around the 14th. Submissions to: coordinator@landru3a.org.uk.

*PDF enclosures with this Network News:
 Winter Learning Programme
 Message from localgiving.org
 East Midlands Regional Trustee November Newsletter*

All initiatives are available at: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/national-programmes>. Initiatives are intentionally released on a stagger to keep people's interest and participation over the winter. Events which require members to book are at: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>. The website will be updated regularly so members should be encouraged to keep checking these pages.

1. **National poetry competition.** Nationwide search to find the best poem penned by a u3a member. **Launched 12th October.** 20th November deadline, then judging. Winner announced January 2021.
2. **Programme of free talks** delivered by members (currently being sourced). Talks are released on a stagger so people don't bulk book. Talks confirmed to date:
 - Mayan civilization,
 - How to write your living history
 - Yoga (booking not yet released)
 - Bridge tutorials for beginners and improvers (booking not yet released)
 - Crown green bowling (booking not yet released)
 - Philosophy (booking not yet released)
 - Cryptic crosswords (booking not yet released)
 - Japan (booking not yet released)
 - Other TBC.
3. **Made it! Make it! gets a Christmas update** – people will be encouraged to send in pictures and explanations of how they have made decorations/items for Christmas and the festive season. This will use the same pages with updated wording and a push on social media. **From 12th October, regular weekly updating.**
4. **Poetry reading.** Encouraging members to read their poems aloud. Led by a u3a member. First session **14th October, 2:30pm.** Second session TBC. Booking at: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>
5. **Winter Watch.** Members send in pictures of winter gardens, scenes, animals etc. **Launching 20th October, regular weekly updating.**
6. **Battle of Britain and the Blitz.** Members are encouraged to send in their stories of their experiences/ those of their families and friends. Stories will go up on the website. **Launch date by 23rd October.**
7. **Paint or Draw (POD) - The monthly art challenge.** Similar to u3a Eye. Members send in pictures of their original artwork on a monthly theme. Up to 15 images are chosen for the online gallery. No prizes, just prestige. **Launch date: 26th October.**
8. **U3A Maths Week ("Don't retire from maths – count yourself in!").** Three events planned (publicity released 8th Oct including a prize draw) and booking at: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>:
 - **Monday 9 November 2020, 2pm to 3.30pm** Online talk by Rob Eastaway, "Maths on the Back of an Envelope."
 - **Wednesday 11 November 2020, 2pm to 3pm** Maths problems and puzzles workshop.



- **Friday 13 November 2020, 2pm to 3pm** Maths activities and games.

9. **U3A Radio Podcast** – Second programme to be released **17th November**.
10. **Friday watercolour painters** - A series of five workshops led by a u3a member where participants are shown how to produce a to produce a finished piece of artwork at the end. Pictures of the final artworks to go up on a online gallery. **Starts 20th November. Advertised at:**
<https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>
11. **Programme of ‘external’ talks.** Includes to date:
 - National Gallery – Life and paintings of Artemisia (£5) on 24th November
 - Guildhall Art Gallery – Prerecorded talk about the Romans. Date TBC
 - National Trust – History of the National Trust (free). Date TBC
 - British Library – Christmas literature (free). Date TBC
 - Southwark Cathedral – TBC
 - National Army Museum - TBC
12. **Christmas Choir** – Group carol singing led by the U3A member who led the previous choir sessions. **10th December.** A new weekly choir initiative, working towards a recorded song to start in January 2021.
13. **Ongoing initiatives at:** <https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/national-programmes>
 - U3A Eye – Fortnightly photograph challenge on a different theme each time.
 - Maths challenge – weekly
 - Quiz – weekly
 - Birdwatch – Continuous with weekly updating
 - Creative Covid Collaboration – Members create ‘squares’ to form a digital patchwork. Continuous
 - Ideas to keep learning – weekly
 - Diary – now closed, submissions for each week to the end of July available to read
 - Creative Writing Competition 2020. Winners announced. The 13 regional winners’ stories are available to read
14. **January** - A series of Winter Schools are planned for 11th Jan – end of Feb 2021.



Hello

I wanted to get in touch as you offer such amazing opportunities to retired individuals that want to get involved with active and creative pursuits. I am really keen to see if we can work together to engage members of your network that are interested in volunteering. Localgiving is a not-for-profit and an online fundraising platform that specialises in supporting small charities and community groups across the UK. These are vital grassroots causes that are working on the frontline in the current pandemic and desperately need more volunteers. Localgiving has been selected by the UK government to deliver a new digital volunteering service to specifically meet this need.

Localgiving has supported 3,000 small charities and community groups to raise over £3.5m in response to the current pandemic.

We are now extending our support to help organisations reach skilled volunteers online. This digital volunteering will focus on tasks that can be completed remotely wherever the volunteer is based. This means that individuals can offer up skill sets that organisations may not be able to benefit from locally, including accessing specialist advice or having help with short-term tasks or long-term activities. It also means that there are no risks to vulnerable or shielding individuals as this is not face-to-face volunteering.

Why is Localgiving a great volunteering platform to encourage your network to use?

Localgiving has seen a 400% increase in online donations over recent months, as well as a direct correlation between digital maturity and how well charities have been able to respond to Covid-19. Our thorough research has shown that many brilliant third sector support networks are overwhelmed by the interest of volunteers and are unable to match them all with opportunities. Localgiving is in a unique position to facilitate placing volunteers as we have already gathered hundreds of volunteer opportunities from organisations prior to our launch. This means that volunteers can be matched very quickly into suitable partnerships.

What benefits does volunteering offer for your network?

Your network has numerous unique skills from their working lives and personal interests that could make a vital impact by helping vulnerable people during Covid-19. Giving up a little of their spare time in this way would make a direct and massive difference to grassroots causes. Through them you would be providing a lifeline to communities across the UK, in addition to the amazing opportunities that you are already running for retired individuals.

Is this something that you would be willing to have a conversation about pursuing? If you are interested in working together on this project then please get in touch via lauren@localgiving.org or 07808 889672 and I will forward promotional materials to you.

Best wishes and take care,

Lauren Swain – Volunteer and Partnerships Manager at Localgiving



November 2020

So, here we are, back in lockdown and still unable to meet one another as we would like. If this is not to be a pretty miserable winter, somehow we all need to make renewed efforts to keep things going. Most of this newsletter seems to be a long list of suggestions! I am sure many u3as have good ideas at the moment and I would love to hear from you about them. Network meetings and Newsletters are also very helpful in sharing ideas.

Going Forward Together event

On 28th October over 80 u3a members from across the East Midlands attended our virtual event. It went extremely well and I am enormously grateful to all those who helped to bring it together. A link to the recording of the event is available on the East Midlands website.

<http://www.eastmidlandsu3as.org.uk>

I was sorry that not all those who had booked actually attended as there were quite a few people who would have liked to attend but were too late to book. I hope that everyone who did attend found it interesting and worthwhile.

Support from the Trust

The national website is now much improved and it should be easier to find what you are looking for - ideas, help and advice. Click on the banner saying- 'How to run your u3a: Covid and beyond.' If you scroll down below the current Covid guidance, you will find boxes with all sorts of helpful articles on such things as Hybrid groups (face to face & virtual), setting up Facebook and Zoom or telephone conferences etc. There is also a network Link page now, under 'Support for U3As'.

Under 'Events', you will find there are online talks and courses, by various institutions and U3A members. Please do make sure your members know about these opportunities.

New learning certainly continues to happen. Many of us, including me, are learning new tech skills. I know that some of our members may be nervous but with help and support can be enabled to join in! Members may be tired of only meeting virtually but it is much better than nothing.

Look at the u3a YouTube channel, which has all sorts of videos on it including the 'Life in Lockdown', which is worth a watch!

Support from other U3As

Can I remind you of a suggestion from Edwalton & Gamston u3a, where different groups have combined in several projects? This could be a help if not all Group convenors are happy to use tech, but one of them is.

Some u3as are holding online coffee mornings, Group Leader meetings, and also for new members. Workshops to help members in the use of Zoom are still available.

There has been a tremendous response to the High St Project with over 500 u3as taking part. It is thought that a majority of the country's retail premises will have been surveyed, prior to another survey in a year's time, to assess the impact of the pandemic. U3As are also encouraged to set up linked Shared Learning Projects.

If there are interesting things happening in your u3a that you think are worth sharing widely, please send them to communications@u3a.org.uk for inclusion in the national monthly newsletter.

Membership renewals

I know that this is a big concern for many U3As. For the sake of your members and your U3A I do urge you to do all you can to encourage your members to renew, however you decide to do it. Some U3As have achieved almost full renewals by the simple process of phoning those they have not heard from.

It would be helpful to me to find out, possibly at Network meetings, how well your membership is holding up and if you have any particular problems or suggestions.

EGM

As you know the Third Age Trust had to hold the AGM, this year, completely virtually. This was allowed under special legislation for the current situation. To enable this to happen in future, if necessary, or to enable a combination of actual and virtual, the Trust needs to amend its Articles of Governance. There will be an EGM for this purpose on December 10th and you will receive information about that directly. I do hope that you will all use your vote. Thank you, and thank you again for all you continue to do at this difficult time.

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

Jean Hogg Trustee East Midlands



The Third Age Trust

Tel: 0208 466 6139

www.u3a.org.uk

156 Blackfriars Road, London, SE1 8EN

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