



October 2020

First of all, I do want to thank all of the Committee members and group convenors who have been working so hard for the last few months to keep as many U3A activities going as possible. I have heard from many of you, with both successes and challenges, and it is really appreciated. Some groups are finding very innovative ways of meeting, and I particularly like this account of a wine group meeting at Sutton Bridge.

In order to maintain the social interaction yet keeping group size under 6, the membership, currently 8 would be split into two groups and meet at each of two members' houses, preferably in the garden, weather permitting but if not inside observing social distancing and other requirements. In order to maintain overall linkage a Zoom Link would be established to enable a cross group discussion of the wines provided.

This apparently worked very effectively and will be repeated. Of course, part of our region is now in Tier 2 restrictions which is making things even more challenging. It may not be perfect but meeting virtually is certainly much better than nothing and I am pleased that many U3As are continuing to encourage virtual meetings for groups and for their main monthly meeting.

GOING FORWARD TOGETHER 28th October 10.30 – 12.30

This event is now almost fully booked, which is wonderful. I have been asked if it can be recorded and I am hoping that this can be done and made available to those of you unable to join.

Third Age Trust AGM

This was held, as a virtual event, on 29th September. I am sure a lot of you attended as more than 700 members did! It was a very complicated event to arrange but ran smoothly. 6 new Trustees for the Regions were introduced and a motion passed to increase the subscription to TAT to £4 from April 2022. This is the first increase for a decade. I know members sometimes feel frustrated at the length of time it takes office staff to reply to queries. The truth is that the office has a very small staff for the number of members we have. This increase will allow the organisation to move forward by improving the infrastructure technologically and administratively.

If you have any feedback about the way the AGM was managed please let me know, as that will be helpful for future arrangements.

Networks

Almost all of the Networks in the region have now had, or have planned, virtual meetings. These have been extremely helpful in sharing information between U3As. Communication between U3As

about AGMs, keeping interest groups going, Risk assessments and other issues continues to be supportive and helpful.

Network Link

A virtual Network Link meeting was held on the 13th October. Attendance was much larger than at previous actual meetings and it was really good to see 6 out of the 7 East Midlands Networks represented. I am sure they will report back to their Networks.

National website

Do keep an eye on the website and on the monthly newsletter. New initiatives are planned for the winter, which sound very interesting, as well as more virtual events. The upgrade of the website continues, so it does look different but should become increasingly easy to use.

There is a lot of awareness that the winter ahead will be difficult. A working group, led by Michaela Moody, is discussing ideas for alleviating the darkness! Perhaps your U3A is planning some sort of winter festival?

I look forward to joining some of you at your Network meetings. Please do continue to stay safe and well.

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