

MINUTES	
Meeting Title:	GROUPS COORDINATORS NETWORK (CGNet) MEETING
Date/ Time:	7th October 2020, 10.00-12.00
Venue:	Online meeting with Zoom

	TOPIC	ACTION BY
1.	<p>a) Attendance</p> <p>There are now 61 registered members of GCNet, with 50 having a current or former Groups Coordinator role, although titles vary and may be combined with other roles. In 11 cases where no Groups Coordinator has been nominated, U3As have been represented by other roles such as Chair, Delegate, Secretary. See table in Appendix.</p> <p>The meeting was attended by 20 members of the CG Net representing just 16* of London's 44 U3As. Apologies received from 6 representatives.</p> <p>Liz Day chaired the meeting. Guest speaker: Michaela Moody, Trust Volunteer and member of the Trust's Beyond Lockdown Working Group.</p> <p>*A check of the Mailchimp report indicates that the email was sent successfully to 64 names on the database. There were no bounce-backs, but only 44 people opened the message, and only 21 clicked on any links.</p> <p>A reminder: Please check your junk/spam folders regularly. If you are unable to attend a meeting, please send apologies to Rikki. If you are no longer the relevant person to attend these meetings, please send Rikki the correct name/contact details of the person(s) who should be representing your U3A.</p> <p>If you are new to the network, you will find all previous Meeting notes and relevant background papers on the Sharing page of the London Region website.</p> <p>b) Minutes 01 July 2020</p> <p>In summary, the discussions had largely focused on results of the survey carried out in June indicating that a number of U3As had used Zoom and similar technologies innovatively to keep their members active in one form or another. However several groups were struggling and had closed down. There had also been a feeling that a number of GCs felt marginalised and communications with their Group Leaders/Convenors and Committee were not always supportive of the GC role.</p>	ALL
2.	<p>Your Role and Job Description:</p> <p>2.1 <u>Feedback from the floor about the national Groups Coordinator Role description, and how this compares with what GCs are actually doing</u></p> <p>In some cases all GCs are members of the Committee; in others one, or none. In some U3As with many groups the role is split between several</p>	

Registered Charity Number

1186441

	<p>GCs with responsibilities for different types of group enabling closer communication with individual groups e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Islington (JA): 82 groups, 3 GCs -- Older groups; Newer Groups; MOOCs • Dulwich & District (DB): 100 groups, 4 GCs in Subject divisions • Merton (CW): nearly 100 groups, 6 Section Leaders by Subject/Activity Type, represented on the Committee by an overall GC. <p>2.2 <u>Sharing roles & communication channels with other Committee members</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U3A in London (AM):180 'courses'/groups – some long-term, some shorter). The structure is different from most U3As with one overall GC working with a team of volunteers. Having a permanent 'campus' enables members to get to know each other more easily and there is no shortage of volunteers to run courses and help with administration/coordination. • Croydon (CM): 69 groups -- each of the Committee has been asked to contact some Group Convenors directly (monthly) • Redbridge (MH): about 80 groups. Communication with Group Leaders through monthly emails. • In some U3As Hall booking/venue hire is handled by the Treasurer. <p>2.3 <u>Induction and Succession planning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nobody mentioned a formal process for induction or succession planning as such, but the 'handover' or 'training' period in some U3As is quite long. • Upminster U3A (NL): due to lack of volunteers to formally take on the GC role, a 'caretaker' GC is temporarily in place. • A number of U3As have produced a handbook or 'Welcome Pack' for Group Convenors/Leaders which is useful for Groups Coordinator. • Although we don't all do things the same way a guide is always useful to know you are heading in the right direction. • Dulwich & District (DB) agreed to share a copy of their handbook although currently being updated. <i>[see attached]</i> • It was pointed out that handbook contents do vary and need to be revised from time to time. • It was agreed that a 'checklist' of standard contents should be compiled for the next GCNet meeting. Everyone asked to send suggestions to Rikki Wallman rwallman@hotmail.co.uk 	<p>DB</p> <p>ALL</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Working with your Convenors/leaders</p> <p>3.1 <u>Meetings with Group Convenors/Leaders since Covid – issues discussed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some GCs had actioned virtual meetings with their GLs; others where scheduling them. However most were in contact with their "team" either by 'phone or email at least monthly. The main stumbling block is still those not willing to learn new IT skills. • Direct 1-2-1 contact with GLs seemed to work better for some than communicating by email or Zoom meetings. • SE London (SM): some "live" meetings had been organised on request of GLs, but despite conducting risk assessments and organising the meetings according to Covid-secure guidelines, members backed out, too scared. • Sutton (ME): A link was sent to GLs for Zoom tutorials but only 3 joined • Redbridge (RW) held a Zoom meeting with GLs in April and 40 members attended, about the same as face-to-face meeting (50% of the number of group leaders). • Kenton (LB): had invited all GLs to meet via Zoom. Word spread to members and now about two thirds of groups are meeting on Zoom, realising that the pandemic is likely to continue for months. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hampstead Garden Suburb (DB): a Group Leaders meeting on Zoom worked well, with about 50% attending. Now most groups that are active use Zoom • Islington (JA): About 50% groups are meeting on Zoom/25% in person – in gardens, and reluctant to meet indoors. All groups have fewer people meeting. Committee members have been allocated Convenors to telephone, and Zoom meetings are being held with breakout rooms to encourage more discussion. • Crouch End (DP): The majority of groups have been Zooming or meeting in gardens over the summer. There was a concern that some members were meeting as informal 'friendship groups' outside the U3A structure, and the Committee can't be responsible for them. [note insurance issues]. • Dulwich & District (DB) was experimenting with Zoom meetings with Coordinators, splitting them into sections so they get to know GLs better. • There was a general feeling that it will become harder to meet in person now that we are going into the colder months and can't meet outdoors because of the weather. • It was felt that all Group Coordinators should be on their Committee <p>3.2 <u>Actions taken as a result of the Survey</u> In addition to the above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Islington (VN): There is a 'blended learning' experiment with London Metropolitan University to reduce the 'digital divide'. As part of their course, some students are designing programmes with some people (U3A members) attending in person and some Zooming in. • Islington (JA): AGM being held online • Sutton (ME): 2 Committee meetings had been held on Zoom, and this had encouraged other meetings to be carried out virtually. • Where GCs are having difficulty gaining information and support from their Committee, they were advised by Michaela Moody to contact Jane Bailey, national Advice and Volunteering Manager: jane.bailey@u3a.org.uk 	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Planning for the Future</p> <p>4.1 <u>What are your priorities for the winter, and how are you planning to achieve them?</u> There was no time to discuss this</p> <p>4.2 <u>Keeping your groups going and re-invigorated</u> Michaela Moody gave a PowerPoint presentation entitled 'Planning for the Future', outlining the Terms of Reference and recommendations of the Third Age Trust's Beyond Lockdown Working Group. The working group is part of the Trust's Development Committee. Liz Thackray has been collecting ideas from U3A members during Lockdown. This has been uploaded to the Sharing page of the London Region website.</p> <p>At the crux is "maintaining a balance between the more traditional and emerging virtual opportunities to promote inclusion and ensure that existing members are encouraged to continue their membership".</p> <p>Many of the issues identified by the Working Group have already been discussed by the GC Network including the general nervousness of IT and on the other hand a nervousness of meeting others in person, especially indoors during Winter. However, the presentation suggests various ways to improve communication and share good ideas. A number of different channels and techniques are mentioned. It was recognised that</p>	

	<p>committees often block national communications and there's a need to reach individual members more quickly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another document shared by Michaela has also been uploaded to our website there was not enough time to discuss: After discussions with Interest Group Co-Ordinators by a member of the BL Working Group. <p>People now realise that COVID won't be over soon and there is a concern about perceived external competition which is likely to increase. Michaela mentioned examples Age UK, Clicksilver, abilitynet and several others. An essential message is that there is a real need to drive activities to keep u3a alive.</p> <p>Questions/Comments to Michaela:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the suggestions connected with Preparing for Winter was to promote activities for Christmas, but this idea should be amended to be inclusive and diverse. • How can a 'hybrid' meetings be organised? • What is U3As Unique Selling Point (USP) – We are about Learning but how do we differ from other similar organisations? • What is the difference between the Virtual U3A and the Trust U3A? How long is it anticipated that the Trust U3A will exist, and might it have a negative impact on the recruitment and activities of existing individual U3As? 	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Regulations, documentation and Advice</p> <p>5.1 <u>What documentation has your U3A produced to support your role and inform Convenors of theirs?</u></p> <p>See Section 2.3 above</p> <p>5.2 <u>Consider National Office Guidelines</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See latest advice that has been uploaded to the Sharing page of London Region website: Advice for Re-starting Interest Groups <p>5.3 <u>What are the implications of these for your U3A activities</u></p> <p>Not fully discussed. Ideas suggested for next GC Net meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RW): Checklist for Groups Coordinator/Convenor 1handbook' • (JA): Support for U3As • (VN): LRU3A support for U3A committees. Committee buddying, especially by neighbouring U3As 	
<p>6.</p>	<p>What other support can this network provide?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steering Group to meet late November to plan an Agenda for a future GC Network meeting in January. 	<p>Steering Group</p>