

MINUTES	
Meeting Title:	<b>COMMUNICATORS PEER GROUP LAUNCH MEETING</b>
Date/ Time:	<b>1<sup>st</sup> February 2021, 2.00-4.00pm</b>
Venue:	<b>Via Zoom</b>

**The event was attended by 36 members, representing 22 u3as (50% of u3as in London)**  
**See Appendix for details**

	TOPIC	ACTION BY
1.	<p><b>Introduction</b> (Derek Harwood)</p> <p>A brief introduction to London Region Peer Groups, and why this particular group was set up. Click on link to view <a href="#">presentation</a></p>	
2.	<p><b>Communicating with members</b> (Jenny Wilson)</p> <p><b>First Breakout Room</b> report back session in summary:</p> <p>The overriding agreement was that the Newsletter/Bulletin is vital as the main method of communication, which goes to ALL members, and it is a retention tool.</p> <p>Often repeated concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulties experienced in getting contributions for content</li> <li>• GDPR &amp; copyright worries raised</li> <li>• Distribution mostly by email; some website and social media</li> <li>• Reaching off-line members and those who prefer a paper copy - printing &amp; postage costs, using members to deliver; some charging for print copies (disadvantageous to those who can't afford digital)</li> <li>• Some referencing to costs of colour print copies, using professional companies</li> </ul> <p>Other discussion points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some felt colour needed to be more appealing</li> <li>• Length &amp; how often – 4 pages to 28, weekly to bi-monthly, no right way. Lots of sharing of experience &amp; practice with regard to frequency, length etc.</li> <li>• Discussion about the reach &amp; purposes– was the document purely for members and seen as a retention tool? Was it also a recruitment tool? Was it on the website?</li> <li>• Discussions led on to other forms of communication – FB, Twitter and some feeling they needed help</li> <li>• General feelings that the newsletter / bulletin could usefully include puzzles, jokes, etc.</li> <li>• Communication needed to be <b>optimistic</b></li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for a <b>professional looking</b> document was raised</li> <li>• It's desirable to include info &amp; links to other u3a events – LR, National etc</li> <li>• Some references to needing to get up to speed with social media (although there were different reasons – ranging from we are getting left behind, to might be a good recruitment tool)</li> <li>• Some discussion outside the remit about maintaining communication with members by phone, buddy systems, AGMs, TAM and so on.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p><b>Your u3a Newsletter</b> (Rodney Fox)  Click on this link to view the <a href="#">presentation</a>. Points raised during Q&amp;A:  Click on this link to view <a href="#">sample newsletters</a> submitted by u3as  Concern about static membership numbers -- use of Newsletters/Bulletins, Interest Groups booklet for Recruitment -- GDPR concerns if documents left in public places; remove personal emails/use alias emails plus other solutions suggested</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar problem on websites – general 'freephone' enquiry number and email address</li> <li>• Issue by email most popular; concern about those without internet often unable to afford postage; some u3as include cost in membership fee to spread the cost; buddy system; 'Postal Plus' for those who have email but also want printed copies (Croydon)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Forward Planning</b> (Jenny Wilson)  <b>Second Breakout Room</b> report back session in summary:  How best to help each other? What topics should be included in future Peer Group meetings? Broader than Newsletters. Suggestions for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to stimulate more use of Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)</li> <li>• How to get the most from your website</li> <li>• How to get more from Zoom (e.g. Breakout rooms, online quizzes, 'Shows' etc)</li> <li>• Hybrid meetings (mix of physical &amp; online)</li> <li>• Developing &amp; using publicity materials</li> <li>• Working with Press &amp; Radio</li> </ul> <p>Points raised during discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Websites need to be used more -- some not consulted much at present due to lack of activity.</li> <li>• Websites good for public facing and internal communication. Need to separate. SiteBuilder doesn't allow this but Beacon2 will have website capabilities</li> <li>• Build reciprocal links with other websites e.g. local 'What's On' sites</li> <li>• Need to improve IT skills e.g. for email bulletins/online newsletters; encourage use of Zoom and WhatsApp.</li> <li>• Now easy to attend online activities of other u3a groups; the Trust u3a gives members more option for activities, online</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hybrid meetings – good for inclusion of dispersed/marginalised groups, but how to manage? Different audiences likely for live/online meetings (Zoom better for small groups?) Zoom popular so here to stay; hybrid probably something for the future.</li> <li>• Social media e.g. Facebook to advertise externally what u3a does but there’s little interest amongst members; some prefer Instagram so different sub-groups; need more training on how to set up &amp; use social media (closed/open).</li> <li>• Outreach – collaboration with other relevant organisations e.g. to improve diversity (e.g. ethnic diversity) in recruitment</li> <li>• Publicity materials -- new branding easy to incorporate</li> <li>• GDPR</li> <li>• Copyright (e.g. images)</li> <li>• How to contact the press for a successful outcome (little experience); currently not many local newspapers being produced</li> <li>• How to advertise through councils (there is usually someone responsible; also websites);</li> <li>• How to tap into ‘social prescribing’ for extending the u3a offer</li> <li>• Neighbourhood mailings, including advertising, for recruitment</li> <li>• Open Days -- possible Zoom open day; using the ‘pop-up’ idea in empty shops (invite local press)</li> <li>• Virtual coffee mornings open to public as recruitment opportunity</li> <li>• Getting group leaders to be more responsive in communication</li> </ul>	
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>Wrap-up</b> (Derek Harwood)</p> <p>Ideas for taking the Peer Group forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Volunteers required for ‘steering group’ to help Jenny &amp; Rodney to plan future programme. Please email if interested.</b></li> <li>• Good suggestions from this meeting for topics – more welcome</li> <li>• See Shared Practice Guides on <a href="#">Sharing</a> page of London Region website. e.g. SPG011 on Copyright. Should there be an SPG on Newsletters?</li> <li>• Frequency of meetings – most other peer groups bi-monthly</li> <li>• <b>Date of next meeting in 2mths: 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021 14.00-16.00 (login from 13.30) Agenda to follow.</b></li> <li>• All presentations /documents from Peer Group meetings can be found on the <a href="#">Sharing</a> page of London Region website</li> </ul> <p><b>Contact:</b> Rodney Fox, London Region PR Advisor <a href="mailto:PR.lru3a@gmail.com">PR.lru3a@gmail.com</a></p>	

**APPENDIX**

**ATTENDANCE**

<b>u3a</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Role</b>
Barnet	Christine	Senior	Newsletter Co-editor
Beckenham	Elizabeth	Tarrant	Newsletter Editor
Bromley	Sandy	Boden	Chair
Bromley	Alan	Davis	Editor
Crouch End	Graham	Bennett	Vice-Chair
Croydon	Jenny	Wilson	Chairman
Dulwich & District	Neil	Abrahams	Zoom and Facebook
Dulwich & District	Rona	Black	Vice Chair and Newsletter Editor
Dulwich & District	Liz	Day	LRU3A Learning Development Coordinator
Dulwich & District	Richard	Elliott	Communications Secretary
Ealing	Derek	Atkinson	Chairman (for Ed Baker, Communications Officer)
Ealing	Jurek	Narozanski	Co-opted for my IT experience
Hackney	Henriette	Roelofs	Newsletter Editor
Harrow	Stephen	Dorff	Newsletter Editor
Hillingdon	Rodney	Fox	Communications & PR
Hounslow	Sally	Eggett	Newsletter Editor
Islington	Derek	Harwood	LRU3A Vice Chair and Webmaster
Islington	Vivek	Nanda	General Member
Islington	Anne	Weyman	Communications Team Coordinator
Kingston	Susan	Hinchliffe	Editor: newsletters and bulletins
London South East	Roger	Mead	Newsletter editor / Chair Communications Team
Merton	Trevor	Gray	Newsletter Editor
Merton	Alain	Hendrich	Communications Co-ordinator
Merton	Catherine	Ware	Former Newsletter Editor and Publicity Officer
Mill Hill	Victor	Brilliant	Zoom Hosting
North London	Marion	Fitzpatrick	Events Co-ordinator
Northwood & District	Alan	Lester	Vice Chairman and Newsletter Editor
North London	Leni	Green	editor of our magazine, The Northern Line
North London	Michael	Johns	Business Secretary
Palmers Green & Southgate	Pam	McAthey	Publicity Officer
Palmers Green & Southgate	Richard	Russell	Newsletter editor
Stanmore & District	Frimette	Carr	Communications / Minutes Sec
Upminster	David	Morrison	Newsletter Editor
Upminster	Richard	Strauss	Website
Waltham Forest	Christine	Farnes	Publicity
Waltham Forest	Dorritt	Okoye	Zoom Account holder

Apologies: Redbridge & District - Howard Mather, Publicity Officer

u3as not represented: Abbeywood & Thamesmead; Bexley; Brent; Dagenham; Enfield; Hammersmith & Fulham; Hampstead Garden Suburb; Haringey; Havering; Hillingdon South; Kenton & District; Norwood; Orpington; Richmond; Sidcup; Sutton; Tower Hamlets; U3A in London; Wandsworth; Wanstead & Woodford