

MINUTES	
Meeting Title:	COMMUNICATORS PEER GROUP MEETING
Date/ Time:	12th April 2021, 2.00-4.00pm
Venue:	Via Zoom

	TOPIC	ACTION BY
1.	<p>Introduction (Derek Harwood) Derek welcomed everyone present. The event was attended by 33 members, representing 23 u3as (52% of u3as in London). See Appendix for detail.</p>	
2.	<p>Public Relations/Publicity Part 1: A PowerPoint presentation had been prepared by Rodney Fox and Julie McCarthy, PR Advisors for London. The first section covered the following topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • u3a (London Region) – steady growth to ‘full’ capacity with waiting lists, relying on publicity by word of mouth. • We are now experiencing retention and recruitment difficulties, with falling numbers of new members and younger (55+) and newly-retired members. • Many are not renewing their memberships “because of Covid” • Few people know about u3a due word of mouth publicity. • Competition to u3a is growing, especially via the Internet, which is attracting younger members. • U3a ‘Pathfinder’ programme now called ‘Recruitment’ programme – see u3a Sources website for various elements of the Recruitment Toolkit including several ‘How to’ guides to help with recruitment and retention. Click here for Introduction & Index • PR/Publicity – difference between the two. • Messages for attracting younger, more diverse target audiences • Channels: Word of Mouth, Local Publicity, Social Media, Website • Use branding guidelines • Sue Stokes leading on U3A Day • A Public Relations Handbook published for u3a PR Officers by Network New South Wales. Suggestion that it would be useful to have one for London <p>First Breakout Rooms (facilitated by Jenny Wilson): Attendees were put into 5 breakout rooms and asked to discuss the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Will Facebook ads feature in your recruitment campaign? 2) What will be your target audience? 3) What will your messages be? 	

	<p>Report back session in summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not many people have experience of Facebook except with family/friends • Facebook not popular -- there's a 'prejudice' against it • Recommend a public page (cheap and can target); closed groups for communicate group members • Currently websites are mainly communicating with members (not external target audiences) • Problem of linking your public page with others – may get unwanted ads • Facebook advert not the same as a Facebook Page • Ads need good graphic design, but skills not easy to find amongst members – consider this a professional job (one-off payment); consider sharing a Facebook advert with neighbouring u3as; could national office create a branded template? • Adverts should direct to own website – make sure own website attractive & welcoming (compare with other websites) • Need to refresh the information quite frequently (e.g. events) • Need to ensure that target audiences actually see and act on adverts 	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Public Relations/Publicity Part 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News media • Paper and electronic • Current shortage of alternative affordable options. • NB: Coverage of available media channels may not line up with U3A areas • Local papers shedding journalists so not keen on press releases – prefer a story with photos after an event • ‘South London Press’; Newsquest both cover South London • Consider developing a relationship with Evening Standard; Metro • Local Media.co and Rohxhill (used by National Office) to help with targeting • ‘Nextdoor’, a website/app; NeighbourNet (Twitter); The London Newsnet (Twitter) • Posters at overground stations (not underground – too expensive) • Local radio stations ‘mostly ethnic’ • Radio London, Capital Radio etc • You and Yours’ national connection with u3a (national office via Liz Drury) <p>Second Breakout Rooms (facilitated by Jenny Wilson)</p> <p>Attendees were asked to discuss 3 areas we can explore further at future meetings</p> <p>Report back session in summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local radio links – hospitals could do an interview with u3a • Raising awareness very important – local & national • Professional skills lacking -- need ‘How to’ session for Facebook; also for making websites more attractive to potential members • Would need someone to keep things going after set-up • Use other organisations for signposting to local u3as e.g. Age UK; local councils 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talks from people in the media telling us what interests them and which channels best for reaching different people • Branded press release template required • u3a Day publicity – National Office should provide leaflets for local u3as to hand out or (or template or local u3as to adapt) and Facebook advertising 	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Wrap-up (Derek Harwood)</p> <p>There was a reminder that the Recruitment Toolkit has a number of ‘How to’ guides to help with recruitment and retention, including using social media such a Facebook, (How to set up and advertise), Website (How to transform your website) and other aspects of using digital media (How to get and keep website and social media traffic; How to measure the effectiveness of your digital media. All this information, and more, is available on the Sources website in the Recruitment section. Click here for Introduction & Index</p> <p>Date of next meeting: TBA</p> <p>All presentations /documents from Peer Group meetings can be found int the Communicators Peer Group section of the Peer Group Networks page, which is accessible via the Sharing page of London Region website</p> <p>Contact: Rodney Fox, London Region PR Advisor PR.lru3a@gmail.com</p>	

APPENDIX

ATTENDANCE

u3a	Name	Surname	Role
Beckenham	Elizabeth	Tarrant	Newsletter Editor
Bexley	Sandra	Goulding	Chairman
Bromley	Sandy	Boden	Chair
Bromley	Patricia	Apps	Exec Committee Member
Crouch End	Graham	Bennett	Vice-Chair
Croydon	Jenny	Wilson	Chairman
Dulwich & District	David	Beamish	Business Secretary
Ealing	Derek	Atkinson	Chairman
Ealing	Edward	Baker	Planning & Communications Officer
Hackney	Barbara	Patilla	Membership Secretary
Hammersmith & Fulham	Neville	Rowden	Groups Coordinator
Harrow	Anne	Gerrard	Vice Chair
Hillingdon	Rodney	Fox	Communications & PR
Hillingdon	Hilary	Place	Newsletter editor
Hounslow	Sally	Eggett	Newsletter Editor
Islington	Derek	Harwood	Chair + LRU3A Vice Chair & Webmaster
Islington	Vivek	Nanda	Course Coordinator + LRU3A Comms Coordinator
Islington	Anne	Weyman	Communications Team Coordinator
Kingston	Susan	Hinchcliffe	Newsletter and News Bulletins Editor
London South East	Roger	Mead	Chair Communications Team
Merton	Alain	Hendrich	Communications Co-ordinator
Merton	Catherine	Ware	LRU3A Talks Coordinator
Norwood	David	Reeds	Group Leader
North London	Leni	Green	Magazine Editor
North London	Michael	Johns	Business Secretary
North London	Michael	Lewin	PR & Publicity (co-opted)
Orpington	Jo	Walters	SLP Coordinator, London Region
Palmers Green & Southgate	Pam	McAthey	Publicity Officer
Palmers Green & Southgate	Richard	Russell	Newsletter editor
Richmond upon Thames	Julie	McCarthy	PR Advisor
Stanmore & District	Frimette	Carr	Communications / Minutes Sec
Tower Hamlets	Jane	Earl	Membership Secretary
Upminster	David	Morrison	Newsletter Editor
Upminster	Richard	Strauss	Website
Waltham Forest	Christine	Farnes	Publicity
Waltham Forest	Jane	Harrington	Secretary & Website Editor

Apologies:

Henriette Roelofs – Newsletter Editor & Communications;
 Redbridge & District - Howard Mather, Publicity Officer

u3as not represented: Abbeywood & Thamesmead; Barnet; Brent; Dagenham; Enfield; Hampstead Garden Suburb; Haringey; Havering; Hillingdon South; Kenton & District; Northwood & District; Sidcup; Sutton; Tower Hamlets; U3A in London; Wandsworth; Wanstead & Woodford