

LONDON REGION GROUP COORDINATORS NETWORK (GCNET) SURVEY June 2020

The survey form was designed by the GCNet Steering Group with the aim of quickly gathering some background information as a basis for discussions at the GCNet meeting on 1st July 2020.

The GCNet Steering Group found that the survey raised many questions which readers might like to consider, and on reading the survey responses yourself, you might well find more:

- What do the responses indicate about keeping the U3A 'Active'? How many groups, and what activities? What do you consider as 'Active'?
- How are interest groups managing virtual learning? Are there some real successes and what are the challenges?
- How well are Groups Coordinators (GCs) communicating and getting responses from the interest Group Convenors/Leaders, so they know what is happening? Is this mainly generated by the GC or is it a two-way street?
- How well are GCs communicating and being supported by their committees?
- How will U3As encourage groups to pursue their activities together in the future?
- What is the role of GC? What further support do GCs need to fulfil their role successfully? Where might they find the required support?

NOTES ON DATA ANALYSIS

Some respondents commented that they had found the form too long and detailed, and it was difficult/too time consuming to complete – partly because of the questions, and also because the respondents evidently didn't have the requested information to hand. As a result, not everyone completed the form or answered every question.

However, responses were received from 25 U3As (57% of London's 44 U3As). Very many thanks to everyone who did respond.

This is primarily a 'qualitative' survey with open questions, rather than a 'quantitative' survey drilling down to the details of what's going on in a very structured and precise way. It's true that the questions were long and contained a number of loose sub-questions. The resulting freestyle replies (and non-replies) are quite informative as they are, but the sub-questions have been made into sub-headings where possible for the purpose of collating and analysing the responses in a bit more detail.

For the number of active groups (Q.1), the we didn't think to include a definition of 'active', so the responses need to be treated with caution – especially the figures for end of May which in many cases may only mean 'keeping in touch' rather than pursuing the group's normal activities. Figures also appear to be estimates due to increased communication difficulties during the Lockdown situation. A few respondents had given a range of numbers, so the median figure was used for simplicity.

For the rest of the questions, the text was cut and pasted from the original responses into an Excel workbook with column headers reflecting the questions as far as possible, although some responses spanned more than one question so judgements had to be made as to which was most appropriate column. The Excel column headers form the headers in this Word document, but a copy of the original survey form is in the Appendix.

The text for this Word document was created by filtering on the relevant columns in the Excel document, and then a bit of editorial tidying up (grammatical & spelling). Names of respondents and U3As were considered irrelevant to the overall results and have deliberately been omitted from this document

SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

Keeping up Momentum:

- Statistics on the number of interest groups 'active' before Lockdown and then at end of May indicate significant drops. As indicated in the Notes on Data Analysis, no definition of 'active' was given in the survey, so these figures need to be treated with caution, especially the figures at the end of May.
- More successful groups: those that are socially orientated and academic discussion groups, and where the Group Convenors more tech-savvy
- More challenged groups:
 - Groups where social distancing is difficult e.g. physical activities; board games; music/singing; crafts (dependent on materials provided by Group Convenor)
 - Indoor groups dependent on members' homes or rented halls
 - Group Convenors not confident with virtual gatherings or lacking the equipment (e.g. older computers lack camera/microphone)
 - Variety of technologies and difficulty of finding suitable experts to help
- Strategies discussed with Committee: There has not been much strategic discussion. GCs have been trying to contact Convenors, giving advice if requested and providing news and ideas via newsletters and the website. Several U3As have promoted Zoom as a way of activating groups
- Committee Support: level of support variable
- GC encouragement of innovation & development: Keeping in touch regularly with Group Convenors essential to provide encouragement and support but often met with no response. Sharing news and ideas by emails, newsletters.
- Balance between support/control: Emphasis is on support if requested, no pressure or control.
- Successes: Helping some Group Convenors and members to embrace new technologies; increasing use of videoconferencing (especially Zoom) has helped to revive some groups and start new groups
- Challenges: Several new GCs having difficulty learning the role and finding their feet, especially during Lockdown; some lack of committee support and unresponsive Group Convenors; resistance to new technology by Committees, Convenors & members; difficulty finding volunteers to lead groups or take on the GC role.
- Further support required: Several said no support was required; others were struggling and would like more sharing of information about issues and good ideas, more recognition and understanding -- GC Network has been helpful; help also needed with finding more volunteers/ succession planning.

Online communication:

- The most active/successful groups are those that are embracing communication technologies. This includes various physical activity groups.
- Order of popularity: 'phone, email, WhatsApp and, increasingly, Zoom. Zoom accounts:
- Several U3As have purchased Zoom Pro' accounts for use by their groups (one U3A has managed to get 70 groups up and running on Zoom in a short period); others are managing with Zoom basic accounts which are free.
- Feedback from Group Convenors on using online technology: While some Group Convenors and members are reluctant and some need help, those who are using online technology, especially Zoom, are mostly very positive about it.
- Percentage of groups not using technology: average seems to be about 15-20% (some much higher), primarily due to reluctance of both the Convenors and members. Some GCs offering encouragement and training, but more support and encouragement required.
- Training: basic training needed to encourage participation; more advanced training required for hosting groups, especially screen-sharing to incorporate presentations, videos etc. plus managing discussions and breakout rooms. Training also required for administration of shared Zoom accounts
- Online Group Convenors meetings: very few so far.

Planning for the future:

- Return to live meetings: Most members will want to return to live meetings but are likely to resist for fear of infection. Government guidelines on social distancing currently preclude meeting in members' homes and small venues, travelling on public transport. Initially many felt the restrictions would be short-lived, but it is now expected that the situation could continue into next year, although there is much uncertainty which makes planning difficult.
Smaller groups may be necessary. In the meantime, it will be important to embrace communication technologies as these have shown to be an effective way of maintaining contact and for many groups to keep active.
- A hybrid scenario of live and virtual activities may be necessary, an advantage being the potential for retention and even growth of groups and membership, and more inclusivity. There is the additional benefit of savings on venue hire.
- There is a clear need for more training in communication technologies for all members, Group Convenors, GCs, and committees.
- There is a need for induction, training, and support; also better two-way communication between GCs, Convenors, and committees
- More guidance in working within the regulations-insurance cover etc.
- There also a need for more strategic discussion about the way forward

LONDON REGION GROUP COORDINATORS SURVEY FORM

Name:

U3A:

Role title:

Are you a member of your U3A committee?

KEEPING UP MOMENTUM

1. Number of active Interest Groups in your U3A (a) before Lockdown and (b) end of May
2. What groups do you feel have had more success in keeping their members active and why?
3. What type of groups do you find have experienced more challenges and why?
4. What strategy have you discussed with your Committee for maintaining momentum and what support are you receiving?
5. How, in your Group Coordinator role, can you encourage innovation and new developments?
6. How, in your role, do you keep a balance between support and pressure/control?
7. What have been your successes as Groups Coordinator?
8. What have been your challenges as Groups Coordinator?
9. What further support do you need to fulfil your role as Groups Coordinator?

ONLINE COMMUNICATION

1. How many interest groups are using communication technologies to keep active? Please indicate in order of popularity e.g. 'phone, email, WhatsApp, FaceTime, Zoom, Skype, Google Hangouts, WhyPay, Flickr etc.?
2. How many interest groups use Zoom basic (free) and Pro' accounts (purchased by your U3A)?
3. What feedback have you had from Group Convenors about conducting on-line meetings?
4. Have you held an online Group Convenors meeting? What % attended? Which issues were discussed and what was the feedback?
5. What % of interest groups do you think are *not* embracing new technology? Is this due to reluctance of the Group Convenor or group members? What are you doing to overcome this?
6. Are you receiving adequate training for hosting online meetings -- by whom? Would you be confident enough to demonstrate to your Group Convenors how to host on-line meetings? If not, what support would you need to enable this?

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

1. How do you see the future of activities once Lockdown is over?
 - a) Difficult to return to live meetings and events-- members still worried about infection
 - b) Members eager to get back to live meetings, but maybe in smaller groups/social distancing
 - c) 'Mixed economy' hybrid groups – some live meetings + enabling online participation
 - d) An increase or decrease in number and size of groups?
2. What strategies and actions have you discussed with your Group Convenors and Committee?
3. What specific tasks do you have planned?
4. What support would you like to see from National office and London Region going forward

SURVEY RESPONSES

KEEPING UP THE MOMENTUM

1(a) Interest groups active before Lockdown	<i>Approx.</i> No. of Groups	1(b) Interest groups active end of May	<i>Approx.</i> No. of Groups	<i>Approx.</i> % drop
Barnet	206	Barnet	110	47%
Beckenham	59	Beckenham	7	88%
Bexley	50	Bexley	4	92%
Bromley	78	Bromley	?	?
Crouch End	92	Crouch End	70	24%
Dulwich & District	97	Dulwich & District	50	48%
Enfield	38	Enfield	38	0%
Hammersmith & Fulham	21	Hammersmith & Fulham	0	100%
Hampstead Garden Suburb	70	Hampstead Garden Suburb	40	43%
Harrow	91	Harrow	38	58%
Hillingdon South	14	Hillingdon South	0	100%
Hounslow	26	Hounslow	10	62%
Islington	85	Islington	60	29%
Kenton & District	25	Kenton & District	12	52%
Merton	94	Merton	47	50%
Mill Hill	49	Mill Hill	10	80%
North London	100	North London	25	75%
Redbridge & District	83	Redbridge & District	25	70%
Richmond	150	Richmond	30	80%
South East London	70	South East London	10	86%
Sutton	59	Sutton	58	2%
Tower Hamlets	13	Tower Hamlets	3	77%
U3A in London	170	U3A in London	170	0%
Upminster	56	Upminster	54	4%
Wandsworth	51	Wandsworth	51	0%
Wanstead & Woodford	60	Wanstead & Woodford	17	72%
<i>Approx. Total</i>	1893	<i>Approx. Total</i>	939	50%

KEEPING UP THE MOMENTUM, cont'd

2. More successful groups & why
a) Socially orientated groups are keeping active - e.g. 7 out of our 9 Book Groups are meeting online. Virtually all the language groups are meeting successfully online. Several groups that you wouldn't expect to be able to meet online are doing so just for a natter! b) Specifically: Art history, Book groups, Language, Theatre, Gardening, Grandparents chat, History I-Pad users, Jewellery making, Music appreciation, Play reading, Poetry reading. Science and technology, Shakespeare reading, Upcycling, Wine appreciation.
It's where the Group leader is au fait with technology, and at least some of the members are prepared to give it a go
Reading Group, Embroidery group, History group – all able to function via email or Zoom or sending items by mail
Those whose leader and members are internet savvy. Some members don't have email addresses, and some don't have smart phones.
Craft, Literature (books & writing), History -- groups using WhatsApp & Zoom [see Online Comms]
a. Spoken word groups: e.g. Play Reading, Poetry, Discussion Groups, Languages; b. Visual Groups: e.g. Art, Art Appreciation, Photography; c. Technology aided groups: e.g. Crosswords, Quiz, Scrabble, Maths
Although some of our Leaders have made contact with me others have chosen not to. One leader of a Book Club is reviewing on line. Another who leads Freedom Pass outings is looking to do virtual walks online. Others have just been checking on their members health. I run the Fringe Theatre Group and always forward all the online freebies the Theatres offer which a lot of my members are grateful for.
Groups that could lend themselves to being more successful: Language conversation groups discussion groups (including play-reading), exercise groups (e.g. tai-chi) or one-on-one board-games (e.g. chess). Obviously, these groups can be comfortably arranged using video group calls or online software (e.g. chess.com or lichess.com).
Current Affairs, Languages, Play reading, Book Groups, Carers Café, Photography, Shakespeare, Art, Crime Club. These groups have good group leaders with good solid support from their members. Some members have joined groups that they did not belong to before lockdown
Those whose leader has knowledge of computers or who has a group member that is.
Book groups and discussion groups are used to taking turns in discussion and have moved easily onto Zoom.
Creative writing, play reading. Zoom works well with smaller groups of people.
Discussion groups and language groups able to use Zoom/Skype for meetings.
Discussion groups, all those that are structured academic topics, e.g. psychology, history, politics
Partly the nature of the group, discussion type groups but more particularly the group leader's ability and willingness to try Zoom or some other virtual way of meeting.
Languages, book groups, discussion groups
My understanding is that groups are not active, but the leaders are keeping in touch through emails and what's app. messages.
Those that have been active on Zoom
None in particular. Many Group Leaders have worked in different ways to maintain contact.
Those which meet inside which involve discussion or learning which can use zoom.
Learning groups. They can liaise using technology.

3. More challenged groups & why
Apart from Bridge, all the games groups have had to stop. Outdoor activities groups have stopped although the bowls group have just re-started.
We have Group Leaders who don't have internet connection, nor a smart phone (and, possibly, not even a mobile)
Walking groups and those that meet in leaders' houses, as impossible to keep distance of 2 metres
Very large groups held in halls with outside speakers
Sports/exercise-- affected by closures of sports centre & outdoor spaces; also theatre, cinema, visits – affected by closures & transport
a. Music Groups: e.g. Music, Singing, Guitar, Ukulele, Opera appreciation; b. Outdoor Groups: e.g. Walks, Cycling; c. Sporting: Tennis, Table Tennis, Boules; d. Tactile Groups: e.g. Bridge, Mah Jong, Wine appreciation; e. Location Groups: Architecture, Cinema, Theatre, Meals, Gallery visits
Groups that are social (e.g. walking, cinema/theatre visits) or require a physical presence (e.g. walking or bridge). The reasons are obvious.
They have not been able to resume as they were held in local halls. Some group leaders have paused their groups saying they will resume in the Autumn. However, I have had conversations with them explaining that lockdown could continue beyond this winter and if they could consider resuming their groups online in the Autumn.
Much activity now depends on availability of technology, enthusiasm of group leaders/participants, and of course some groups need to meet in halls etc. which naturally are not available currently.
Clearly activity groups have experienced difficulties, but I have found some inventive ways of overcoming them.
Sharing memories and Latin because the group leaders are not prepared to use Zoom, even if someone else is happy to provide active coaching and support
Physical activity groups were suspended from the start of lockdown, as were groups where the leader or other members were unable or unwilling to use available technology.
Crafting groups, papercraft, marquetry, embroidery, each group tends to share the equipment brought by one person, not all members have the materials. However they are all doing their own thing and sharing the results on WhatsApp. Card and board games obviously require close contact around a table
Obviously, the outdoor ones because of social distancing, the cinema/theatre groups, those that meet in cafes. I have now heard of two outdoor groups who are restarting- Nordic Walking and River Walks. It will be interesting to see how they fare and whether people are bold enough to join them, though they have obviously been in touch with their members.
Obviously physical activities such as Badminton, Zumba etc and also some board games groups
Mainly outdoor activities with larger numbers.
The book group intended to continue using Zoom but this proved not to be possible as the group leaders partner works from home and they do not have sufficient broadband capacity to enable them both to work at the same time. The lunch group cannot continue owing to the closure of venues during lockdown. Similarly the cinema group cannot continue owing to the closure of venues. The walking group cannot continue as walkers would need to use public transport to get to and from the walks and would need to keep 2 meters apart whilst walking.
Those that are run by leaders not on line
Examples would the Beer Tasting, Singing For Fun, Theatre Visits, Coffee Morning Groups where physically getting together is an integral element of the Group.
Groups which are outdoors such as walking groups and London walks
Outdoor activities and social gatherings. Lockdown.
Art, Art Appreciation, Gardens, Walks, Singing, Ukulele, Lunches (Sunday and Wednesday), Bowling, Short Mats Bowls, Crafts, Board Games, Outings, Skittles and Theatre Outings. Either unsuitable, or lack of interest in using digital technologies.

4a) Strategy discussed with Committee
a) Zoom Pro licences offered to all groups. b) Weekly emails sent to all members from our Chair, are full of optimism, enthusiasm and online activities, e.g. visiting theatre, opera, ballet on line, with up to date info c) Barnet newsletter editors encouraging all members to write a short para on lockdown experiences for publication
I haven't discussed such a strategy. (a) I am doing a daily e-mail to all our members, plus a daily nature e-mail to those who request it, plus a weekly 'garden outing': that's taking me 8 to 10 hours a week and that's quite enough of my time thank you (b) people are stressed enough – I am not going to stress out my Group leaders any more by bothering them (c) we did write to them at the start, plus we did arrange that everyone who had not provided an e-mail address was phoned, plus I set up Facebook page.
Encouraging leaders and giving advice where requested
Showcase Zoom Events; Encourage use of technology; Share best practices; Regular newsletters; Conveners' Meeting (online); Feedback requests from Conveners
Just to make sure I contact Group Leaders to find out how they are getting on which I have done but I don't know how to encourage others to read their emails or reply
We haven't had a committee meeting yet since lockdown. We will have our first Zoom meeting in July.
I write extensive, regular, and detailed reports for our Exec. At the beginning of lockdown, I was writing weekly updates. I saw my role as trying to ensure that we kept groups in our U3A continuing throughout the Summer. Most of the group leaders have been brilliant and supportive of my role and of the Chair. I have also tried to initiate more new groups.
Persuading as many group leaders as possible to use Zoom and taking out a Zoom Pro subscription. Committee supports this
We offer advice and support to groups on ways of continuing to function and technological help if needed.
Nothing happened in my U3A until the GL zoom meeting and the delegates zoom meeting. Now it seems to have become the focus. I had a group leaders meeting on zoom and since then more are joining and embracing the new technology. I do feel however that it has been my initiative that has got the ball rolling
Encouraging groups to find ways of meeting, enabling leaders, increasing the number of newsletters.
We are producing a 'Keeping in Touch' newsletter fortnightly that we are sending our electronically. It is proving very popular and we took the decision to keep it 'Covid free' so all the articles are written by members on positive subjects and memories. We try and reach those not on email by asking members to print off and post/delivery to members near to them. Unfortunately, we have over a 100 members not on email.
Not sure who should be initiating this. !!!
I haven't [discussed a strategy], although the Committee is kept apprised of all Group-related initiatives.
We have been sending out weekly newsletters and are holding our monthly meetings on Zoom.
Due to have a committee meeting shortly using Zoom
4b) Committee support
Great support-Groups able to be reimbursed for Zoom Pro, lots of info. on website.
Other than the Chair I do not feel supported
I have been group coordinator for a while now but have myself not been so active in the role owing to various factors. I have had a great deal of help from our Hounslow Committee and hope to get more involved now.
Constant discussion particularly with the Chair and the Committee member who has taken on responsibility for Zoom. Regular discussion with 'new groups' coordinator'
I chose not to be part of the executive committee although I have attended a couple of meetings.
We stay in touch with all our members who are not on line
Support would be forthcoming if requested

KEEPING UP THE MOMENTUM, cont'd

5. How can you as Groups Coordinator encourage innovation & Development?
This will need to be revisited after lockdown and when I am overall Groups' Coordinator.
By example. My Fridays daily e-mails to all & sundry is around technology – I have done one on Zoom, one on WhyPay, think I did WhatsApp; now we do Q&A – though the Qs are few & far between.
Keeping in touch via email
This is largely left to Group Leaders.
Gaining support from Exec Ctee, regular emails to Conveners, updating in monthly Bulletin which goes to all members via website.
a. Sharing best practices e.g. Some language groups are thriving, but others have not been able to; b. Sharing innovative ideas e.g. How Ukulele and Opera groups work around Zoom musical restrictions. c. Encouraging the use of U3A Keeping in Touch.
At the monthly U3A meeting I have a table set out with a Group Wish list. Lists of Groups needing more members and enquiries from New members. I have started Two Groups -- a French Group and an Art Group which have been very successful. I have over twenty people in the pipe line for a second walking group for which I was about to set up a meeting (after our New Members meeting booked for the 27th March which of course didn't go ahead) To find a leader for this group as none I had spoken to wanted had the time to lead. This has been my biggest difficulty.
It's currently impossible at the moment
I try to think laterally, and try and be creative, giving ideas to group leaders and encouragement particularly those group leaders who were not so willing to resume their groups. I do initiate quite a few groups and do ask for members to take over and facilitate them, but only member has done so, i.e. Jazz group
Highlighting groups' successes in the Bulletin, sending out emails with information, phone calls.
By sharing with group leaders and members what some groups have been able to do to keep their groups going to spread ideas.
I am giving ideas to the group leaders of "thinking outside the box" and adapting their normal structure. Brain storming at the end of the group leaders meeting was useful for idea too
By offering support and suggestions of ways to maintain contact.
This is my second year in my role and still learning my role. Our committee doesn't feel comfortable with Zoom meeting.
One of our committee members is always willing to help
By talking to and supporting/encouraging anybody who has a suggestion for a new Group. However, I will be stepping down as Group Coordinator at our upcoming AGM after three years in the role. I might however take up a Group Development Officer role, leaving the new Group Coordinator to run with the existing Groups.
I keep in touch by email and have encouraged as many groups as possible to use zoom.
New to the role
n/a

KEEPING UP THE MOMENTUM, cont'd

6. Groups Coordinator balance between support/control
This will need to be revisited after lockdown and when I am overall Groups' Coordinator.
By providing what I would wish to receive – which is minimal control, and support available as & when
By just providing support where needed
Contact GL's regularly to see if there's anything they want/need and make them aware of any new developments e.g. Beacon, offering training where required
Sometimes with difficulty particularly now Lockdown is easing-- what groups can and can't do. Rely on good relationships with Conveners --they are now feeling under pressure from members to get things going. Certainly not much appetite for groups meeting in homes but rather for sports activities, walks both of which very popular.
We continue to offer support e.g. Zoom training and requesting feedback.
No Pressure, Support as required.
I undertook this role just before lockdown and I therefore haven't had much chance to think about this.
I always support the group leaders and keep in constant contact, mainly by email. I don't believe in exerting pressure on the group leaders, particularly as many of them are facing challenging situations and some have had the virus; some still suffering the aftereffects.
I tend to avoid pressurizing coordinators. Try to be supportive and encouraging. Appreciative of any effort being made to keep in touch with group members.
By impressing on people that technical support is available to run Zoom meetings and to offer coaching but knowing when to step back with those who really reject the offers
I feel that I can only contact group leaders a certain amount of times, I can suggest ideas to them but don't feel that I can keep asking what they are doing within their groups to keep the group active. A couple of times is enough
Using knowledge of different leaders, listening to responses.
We have encouraged use of and training on Zoom, supported those members who find using technology difficult and generally been on hand to help.
Still early stages!!
We keep in touch with as many members as possible every week
Pressure/control - I do not and would not use the former and very little of the latter, just being available to support Group Leaders if/when necessary at their request.
I just make suggestions, I do not pressure group leaders to carry them out.
Support would be determined by the convenor and committee members always available to offer advice.
n/a

KEEPING UP THE MOMENTUM, cont'd

7. Successes
It was reported in committee meeting that as many new groups have been set up as those groups which ceased to operate due to various reasons during last year.
During lockdown? The daily e-mails, particularly the technology aspects
Holding group leaders' meetings, encouraging leaders to attend new members meetings
Keeping in touch with Group Conveners, encouraging use of video conferencing-particularly Zoom.
a. Organising Showcase Zoom event; b. Encouraging more groups to try Zoom; c. Started online ' FutureLearn' groups and meet on Zoom to discuss progress.
The French and Art Group which were both running well
Our U3A is 3 years old, and I am the third person to hold this post with very little input and poor inactivity from the previous postholders. Since starting in this role in February I have issued a termly forum for Group Leaders; a Handbook; Safeguarding Policy and Procedure document and Guidelines to support the group leaders. I also established a Report Proforma, to ascertain feedback for Spring 2020. I keep in regular contact with the group leaders and support any new group leader with induction and ongoing support. I also arrange Group Teas.
Emails and phone calls are well received. Meetings for conveners. Biannual lunch.
Getting so many groups going using Zoom; getting some people to use IT for the first time to join Zoom meetings, with patient coaching; starting with some groups meeting via Zoom in April and then using their success to encourage other groups to reconvene using Zoom too.
I have one group leader, who ran two outside groups, who was self-isolating. She lives alone in a flat with her cats and would not go out at all. Her mental state was very low, and we were all getting worried about her. We invited her to various zoom meetings, but she never joined us. One day I must have just caught her at the right moment (or my gentle persuasion) we (my husband and I) talked her through setting up the zoom ap. She is now joining many zoom groups, feeling much better, actually venturing out for short walks and is our MAC zoom guru. She is like a changed person
Helping to set up about 7 new groups.
The satisfaction of assisting with new Group start-ups and the enjoyment of working with a great bunch of Group Leaders.
I have held 2 social meetings a year in which group leaders can get to know each other and can discuss their successes and modus operandi with each other. New group leaders can see how successful groups work and feed off each other.
Setting up new groups
n/a

KEEPING UP THE MOMENTUM, cont'd

8. Challenges
As a member of the Groups Committee only, as I am not yet overall Groups Coordinator, challenges (before lockdown) have been finding sports halls for walking netball and badminton. But this could have been resolved had the Coronavirus not hit.
We've just got a new chair & everyone is finding their feet
Meeting all group leaders as some are reluctant, probably because they have been successfully leading their groups for up to twenty-seven years
Learning about what the role entailed and maintaining contact with some, less communicative GL's
Still to come. Personally finding this the most difficult time as things beginning to 'open up' but Government guidance is such that there are things we just can't do.
a. Keeping in touch with groups and Conveners who don't respond; b. Encouraging Conveners to keep in touch with members who do not have access to technology.
I am new to the Enfield U3A committee and Group Coordinator. I have found it a lot more than I expected but have tried to meet the challenge. Before becoming a Committee member and then a Group Coordinator I had successfully run Enfield's Fringe Theatre Group for 3 years, the only contact I had with the previous Coordinator was asking if I could set one up. I now have 50 members and would like to open a 2nd group but cannot find another person to lead. I had previously belonged to another U3A's Fringe Theatre group and thought -- Why not take it to Enfield now I had learnt, through using, how to lead it. Unfortunately I didn't have that experience with the Coordinators job and feel at times like this, totally inadequate.
Lack of support and understanding from our Exec. Excluding the Chair.
Responses to questionnaires and email requests hover around 50%. Attendance at meetings for conveners also around 50%. Some well-established groups are hermetic.
Uncertainty about when we will be able to resume meeting face to face and how that might be managed – will we be able to access bigger rooms, still have some members joining virtually, have some smaller groups start first or groups that aren't meeting via Zoom.....?
I am sorry but at the moment I don't have enough information to fill in your survey
Each group autonomous and don't necessarily let us know precisely what they are doing, despite being urged to do so.
Getting members to accept and use on line communications. We have about 1/3 of our members not on email and more who are on email only through their phones not devices. Our "age population" is towards late 70's and early 80's, this is our 25 th year, so many of the original members are now quite elderly and can't manage new technology. Thankfully many have family members who are seeing the usefulness of on line communications and are helping to set up zoom for them
Try to gain the full support from members and the committee for the use of "Beacon" system. 3 of the long-lasting committee members decided to retire and hard to find volunteers to fill those positions.
The difficulty in finding members willing to take on the leadership of potential new Groups.
It has proved difficult to persuade members to set up new groups as many members lack confidence. Before the lockdown I was intending to visit every group in our U3A but have had to put that on hold
Getting returns from Conveners
n/a
We do not have email listings for our members as many of them do not use computers, WhatsApp, FaceTime, Zoom nor may I say, wish to use them. Whilst some of our members may use these facilities it is unlikely that the majority would be interested in doing so. We are really restricted because of the lockdown, the inability to hold meetings face to face, either Committee or otherwise, the availability of venues, and, of course, most of our members will be in the vulnerable and/or shielding groups.

KEEPING UP THE MOMENTUM, cont'd

9. Further support required
This will be made clearer when I take on the role
A very easy / maximum one-page on how to get the best out of Mail Chimp; same again for me to circulate, on how people get e-mail out of Spam (an issue as it will vary per provider – obviously, I have already sent guidance). FYI one evening Google mail decided I was sending spam, so I had to switch to Mail Chimp then & there: I have not made time to look at any of their tutorials. For most people, the Mail Chimp is going into spam: I have contacted a number of people & asked them to spread the word about this, plus it is in our June printed newsletter. Also: less from 'head office' in seeming to make this a job (I do check with both Group Leaders & the committee that everyone is happy with what I do – and what I don't do).
None at the moment
Probably will be more obvious as rules continue to be relaxed but there is much confusion and need to be inclusive.
Sharing good ideas
By being allowed to employ Teachers who are not U3A members to take classes and be paid for their experience. Learning how much we can deviate from the constitution at the request of our members. I have heard another U3A does something like paying for a keep fit teacher. I put it before our committee to be told "It is not in the constitution" We have no keep fit other than walking groups. Help. Having enquired of another U3A how they get away with paying for classes the answer was "We do what our members want".
More recognition and understanding of the effort and pivotal role that I put into my work, which is daily and at least 30 hours a week. U3A Groups Coordinators are I feel one of the most challenging roles in U3As. Group Leaders can be difficult and challenging at times, but they all know me and the Chair very well and in general are supportive. One of the biggest challenges is trying to enlist members to volunteer which is a real uphill struggle.
Do not know
I have tried to set up a planning group of conveners (to forward plan with me). I think it would be useful but so far little interest has been shown.
Hearing about good practice from other groups
To share experiences, ideas and issues with other group coordinators.
None, see 5. Although I will, of course, be available to provide the new Group Coordinator with any assistance required.
I found the meetings of group coordinators very helpful to share best practice.
n/a

ONLINE COMMUNICATION

1a) Interest groups using communication technologies
Info unavailable
No idea
Not known
Groups are using phone, email, WhatsApp, Zoom has become very popular for group discussions and language groups
Crafts (WhatsApp, Facetime, Facebook); Languages (Zoom); Literature (Zoom); History (Zoom); Music (Zoom, private Facebook); Art & Photography (Zoom, blogs); others (blogs, Newsletters, Zoom)
Zoom, email, WhatsApp, Phone, Facebook (impossible to assess how many of each).
I have only heard of one
There seems to be a reticence about using modern technology (I have polled members about this, but the response was poor). (I have even had a member being confused about Zoom stating he didn't want to use Chinese technology. I understood this to be a fear of 5G and Huawei, but I have no idea how this connects with Zoom, which would almost certainly be used over Wi-Fi) A lot of our members either do not feel comfortable using computers or only use computers in libraries for reading emails. I set up a private Facebook group for our members after lockdown, but the take-up was depressingly poor with almost nobody (apart from myself) posting articles. We will be using Zoom for our next committee meeting, but I will be surprised if we reach a quorum even though I am more than willing to offer technical support.
Zoom is the most popular, as our U3A purchased a licence for our use. One person uses Skype, one uses WhatsApp, another leader uses email.
Many of our interest groups use different communication technologies such as phone, email, Zoom etc.
All
About two-thirds of the active groups use Zoom or other on-line communication and the rest email and WhatsApp. A handful maintain phone contact for social reasons.
I have tried to encourage groups to use virtual devices but some of our most successful groups are active ones - i.e. outings/visits/travel/walking, which of course are on hold at the moment.
All group leaders (or vast majority) keep in contact with their members by phone or e mail, many use WhatsApp
We are using Zoom to run our poetry, jazz appreciation, and classical music groups, the latter being a new group which started during lockdown. We're also using Zoom to hold committee meetings and are continuing to use email to keep in touch with members and alert them to opportunities for continued support and development.
About 35 on Zoom so far, 4 or 5 on Skype, Vimeo and 2 or 3 on email or by phone.
In total, I don't know.
We have a WhatsApp group for all members to join.
Phone, Skype and Zoom
None

ONLINE COMMUNICATION cont'd

1b) Order of popularity
Certainly two groups use Zoom. The committee are using WhyPay.
Not known
Email, phone, Zoom, WhatsApp, Face Time, Skype, Flickr.
As far as I know one
I have a private Zoom account that I will be using for committee meeting.
Zoom most popular See 1a)
1 Zoom, 2 email, 3 Skype, 3 WhatsApp
More than 50% on Zoom. Almost all are in communication by email or What's app. A couple keep in touch by phone.
Zoom 9, e mail 3
Zoom, email, WhatsApp
Committee has just acquired Zoom Pro and is being very readily taken up.
Zoom accounts for 17 groups at this moment, excluding committee meetings and group leader meetings
1. Zoom, 2. Skype 3. email, 4. 'phone, 5. WhatsApp, FaceTime
Most groups are using Zoom, then WhatsApp, then Email.
Mainly by email & WhatsApp
Zoom, Skype, Vimeo, email, 'phone
probably phone, email, WhatsApp, Zoom, Telegram, 'At Home'
Phone email zoom

ONLINE COMMUNICATION cont'd

2a) No. Groups using Zoom Basic
2
In the groups I liaise with, around 10. Leaders either use the basic or paying for it themselves and charging members if they would normally contribute to room rental.
21 Groups using Zoom Pro –monthly receipts reimbursed by CEDU3A. Further 9 Groups using Zoom basic –free.
About 45
A few use basic Zoom.
None -- we are discussing it
26 use our Zoom Pro account (this includes monthly meeting and special meetings)
Not known - our model is that groups must meet their own costs.
None
So far, only 3 or 4 use our Pro account, but it's fairly new. Most use the basic account. About 6 have paid themselves for the extra time because they also use Zoom elsewhere.
None. Of the two Groups using Zoom, one does not pay and the members of the other contribute to the charge. This is less than the normal monthly hall rental
Of the 15 + groups using zoom and our monthly meeting we use the 40 minutes free
2
2b) No. Groups using Zoom Pro
We currently have 70 groups using our Zoom Pro account. Roughly there's 20-30 more groups using Zoom Basic or already have access to their own Zoom Pro e.g. all the Pilates Groups where the instructor provides Zoom Pro)
No Pro licence has been purchased
1
Majority are using Pro
21 are using their own account, of which most are the free basic account.
All use Zoom Pro
17 group leaders are using zoom pro but others are using basic accounts, but I don't always know about these
25 using Zoom but our U3A has decided not to pay for Pro accounts. Individuals have purchased them, but I am not sure of the %.
None

ONLINE COMMUNICATION cont'd

3. Feedback from Group Convenors about online meetings
Info unavailable
From one Group Leader – that Zoom works for Mindfulness & they offered to start another group. One of our Book groups use it. Bridge group plays online. And some groups keep each other entertained by sending round jokes, amusing videos, satire and other comments - and I have been told that yes, most are extremely political.
Mostly reluctant
Those who know how to use it are quite happy.
Very positive particularly from Book Groups, Language groups and Wine tasting Groups. Also Art-more focused and enabling more frequent meetings.
Mixed, but mainly positive and considered to be the next best thing to live meetings. Some prefer shorter meeting, more frequently due to the intensity of online meetings. Some frustration at online procedures (muting, passwords, 40-minute limit). However, some innovative uses of Zoom e.g. Maths puzzles, Crosswords with Guardian online, cycling videos, Wine tasting from home, sharing DVD and music tracks, Ukuleles on Zoom. Some groups have increased their active membership as members do not have parking, travelling, caring responsibilities, and have the time. Reports of member who is delighted to join several Zoom groups as they have mobility difficulties and were previously unable to attend live events.
The one group that used Zoom had a member who knew about Zoom and set up 2 meetings and decided to set up more. There were 3 attendees on the first one 5 on the second it was enjoyed by those that attended.
Almost none although the play-reading group convener has just asked about hold a small meeting (less than 6 members) socially distanced in her garden.
I sent an email to all the group leaders continuing with our Summer Online programme asking feedback about how they are coping with their groups. Some have not responded. Those that have, have had a positive experience, although some members still need to understand Zoom Etiquette, even though I sent them a document about this to circulate to members in their groups.
Most have been very positive. When a convener has felt unable to manage, in many cases another member/members of the group have stepped in to manage Zoom. They have appreciated support offered by one member of the Committee in setting up and operating Zoom.
Getting better now members are familiar with how to use the technology and understand behaviours needed by individual participants to have for successful meetings
Although Zoom can accommodate large gatherings, it's best for just a handful of participants. Some discipline/rules are needed to stop participants talking over each other, for example.
They have been pleasantly surprised with the response from their group at the meetings and this means that word is getting around about the new way of meeting
A little – one gave up using Zoom as so little response, but he tried very early on. Others have been more successful, especially as members themselves become more familiar with the platforms.
Not much, they all seem OK
No problems
The feedback has been very positive from those using zoom
Approx 5% of non-contact activities happy to use technology, many convenors accommodating member who do not have access to technology.

ONLINE COMMUNICATION cont'd

4a) Have you had an online Group Convenors' meeting?
No. One is being arranged for September 2020
Not held. I contact the Group Leaders by e-mail 4 times a year for the newsletter, then for the Programme (so starting October), then for the annual lunch (so January) – and I always double check with group Leaders & ask if people would like more contact: they say not, honest injun'
No
No
No. Communication by email and web.
Yes - 1
No
No (for the reasons mentioned above). Also, as I am new in this role, I am an unknown quantity for most convenors.
No
n/a
Not yet. Planning one for the end of June
No. we are in touch with group convenors individually
Yes
No
n/a
No
I have not yet held one, but I shall do so in the near future.
No
4b) % attended?
42%
I have 63 group leaders 37 attended the meeting 59%. This is a similar number to when we have meetings in halls.
4c) Issues discussed
Their current activities. How they were coping with lockdown. Use of technology;
To discuss possible ways forward – new ways of meeting, setting up new groups, different kinds of study groups for changed times, succession planning.
We discussed what the committee has been doing over the past months to keep in touch with our members. We discussed groups thinking about adjusting the way they plan their group. On line communication and our "administrator". We focused quite a bit on publicity and how to get people in our area to know that we are still open for business
4d) Feedback?
Nice to see each other and share experiences.

ONLINE COMMUNICATION cont'd

5a) % groups NOT using technology
Info unavailable
Most of them. I am doing nothing to counteract this: some of our members have no computer, many no smart phone. My gut feel is those that are tech literate are in the minority – though the view of others on the committee are that many are far too astute to give our details to social media and other IT companies (especially Facebook and Google) and many are not going to use Zoom after the data security issues. For info: we have around 300 members, & around 235 on e-mail. I set up a Facebook page – we have 30 members on it; yep, you read that right. And yes, I have – for some years now – offered to talk people through any issues with their phones, and broadened this out to other IT areas: very few people took me up on this offer (what, around 10 people over 3 years). The majority of our members are happy with e-mail – hence why I decided to do a daily e-mail. Note that, about 5 years back, I did a check through all closed groups to see who did what: some members are in many groups – but the majority of members didn't belong to a single group; I could only conclude they joined for the open groups such as outings, theatre, walking for fitness, General Meetings
Probably around 10%. Not much I can do, as they do not possess computers and often cannot use email anyway
Probably about 15% but difficult to estimate because many groups have used WhatsApp for some time.
About 16 Groups (16%) Interest group which are not embracing technology and for whom it is a practical possibility;
99%. Yes, I will try to look into this
100% for both convenors and members. Seriously, it's like banging your head against a brick wall to convince them otherwise.
There is only one lady that is only keeping in contact with her members by email... A few group leaders are reluctant to continue their groups because of the new technologies
60%
There is some reluctance from about 15% but ...
About 15%
About 24% of the groups are board and card games, crafting, film groups, dinner groups, walking groups. There are also some group leaders with old laptops which either have no microphone or camera and it's too difficult to host a meeting on a mobile...
More than 50%. Probably a mixture of GC' not initiating meetings, the nature of the groups themselves, and members not responding to requests.
We are doing what we can to encourage convenors to use online facilities, but some are reluctant to do so. I do not feel we should pressure those who don't want to communicate that way.
I got the feeling our leaders don't feel comfortable using the new technology. Only one group showed some interest.
About 30%
I don't know. However, an on-line Group was set up on Telegram and out of some 525 members only 40 signed up for it and less than 10 now use it. Whilst 96% of our members have computers of one sort or another and use email it is only for the basics and most are reluctant to do more.
Approximately 20%. Some of our members are not conversant with zoom or lack confidence. Other groups such as lunch groups ambles etc museum visits and outings cannot operate on Zoom.
100%. Many of our members do not use computers or, may I say, wish to use them. The same can be said for WhatsApp and FaceTime and Zoom. Whilst some of our members may use these facilities it is unlikely that the majority of our members would be interested in doing so.

5b) Due to reluctance of Convenor or group members?
Part Convener, part members;
All of the other Group leaders have readily embraced the new technologies.
Mainly because they think technology cannot be used, e.g. groups that require members to touch each other, indoor activity groups such as craft and art (although Life Drawing is successful) music, dance, and sports
Reluctance of convenor
It is the members, not the conveners reluctant to use technology.
Both.
5c) What are you doing to overcome this?
? Oh, I am a 'bodge it & see' fella. And yes, I have hosted an online meeting. And yes, I have offered to take people through this via the Friday daily e-mail: resulted in *1* person taking me up on the offer for Zoom, no one for WhyPay. I am not looking at Skype – I get errors in trying to download the software. Then again, U3A offered some Zoom tutorials – one of which sounded good / easier than me working it out (sharing slides); ah – they were for 10 people at a time, so all tickets gone.
c. See answers to Momentum questions 7 & 8
I have offered all of them training as we have a Group leader who teaches Computing at a local school and has offered help to anyone that needs it
Publicising success, gentle persuasion
By impressing on convenors that technical support is available to run Zoom meetings and to offer coaching but knowing when to step back with those who really reject the offers
Those group leaders using on line communication have invited their waiting list members to join on zoom. Have also advertised in the newsletter that any member interested in joining an existing on line meeting should contact the group leader and if there is space on their screen (!!) they can join the meeting. This might be different to what they normally go to but they are getting some structure back in their lives
I and other committee members are encouraging both by increased emails and by word of mouth GCs to try new methods.
6a) Adequate training?
a) We had and are having enough support. c) Some groups have set up their own Zoom groups. d) Some groups are using WhatsApp Video link.
No training received
It all depends on how confident the users are and whether they have suitable resources
All very DIY but guess demography of our U3A is such many familiar with technology and prepared/able to share expertise
Yes
No none
I worked as a software engineer for over 40 years and am quite comfortable with modern technology. I have no need of training.
No
Yes
Not sure
Yes

ONLINE COMMUNICATION cont'd

6b) Training by whom?
Excellent training for hosting on-line meetings given by a committee member very well versed in technology and in training group leaders. An amazing feat of organization by this committee member. b) As U3A uses Zoom-pro, our "tech savvy" committee member who set up Zoom Pro was the "host" and conveners and people in groups operated on the same level, able to mute and show themselves but not others. Worked very well, hand signalling used to indicate person wanted to speak.
Committee and members
n/a
We are lucky to have Vivek to lead on this. Success is largely due to his enthusiasm.
On line help, and we have created a technical support team
My husband is the administer for zoom in our U3A and has been in touch with Vivek on many occasions. I went on a session with Liz Thackery yesterday and did find a few new tips

6c) Confident to demonstrate to Convenors?
Yes
I do host quite a few online meetings, as I am a Group Leader for approx. 7 groups. I have basically taught myself.
Yes
I am still coming to grips with the technology but enjoy using it but at this moment would not feel confident in any demonstration of on-line meetings and have not held any on-line meetings myself yet
Yes
My knowledge is OK, and I could help others.
I have learned to use Zoom by trial and error and would feel I could help others to use it.
I have not sought training and whilst I would not be confident to host on-line meetings, I have people available with considerable knowledge to assist me.
I can use zoom but would not be confident enough to show others how to host meetings. It would be very useful to have a demonstration on hosting Zoom.

6d) Training support required
n/a
But I would like to have advanced training with Zoom and its administration, especially on how to incorporate PowerPoint in a Zoom meeting, and also the administration.
I really need the advance sessions. This one was for beginners which I don't think I am anymore. I would like to have a better understanding of some of the more specific options on zoom, e.g. chat rooms, polling.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

1a) Difficult to return to live meetings -- fear of infection
From groups I am in, happy to meet up again and/or continue using modern technology. Grouping and distancing depends on government advice and Covid activity in the future
Yes
Probably
Who knows? I think most members enjoy the social contact so will want to return to live meetings but the degree of anxiety they experience will depend upon how nervous they are as individuals and what health conditions they and their partners have.
Very much so particularly in senior age group-the vulnerable and shielding
This is the most likely scenario.
Yes
I can't see any meetings taking place until very late in the year at the earliest. I think most of members will still be fearful of going out.
This is difficult to predict because of the nature of this virus and conflicting advice given to the public. Personally, I cannot see how members can return to live meetings in halls and homes. Scientists are saying there will be another wave in the winter with the virus, and as our members are in the older age group many will not want to take any risks.
It is difficult to know what will happen after lockdown and matters will have to be discussed with all concerned.
Particularly in members' homes and if pubs etc. are closed. There will perhaps be reluctance to travel by public transport.
Yes
I'm expecting it to be a mix of the above.
We are thinking ahead to life after lockdown but feel that there are too many unknowns, particularly for our age group, to take this very far at the moment.
I think that there will be a lot of resistance to gathering in groups for the remainder of 2020. It has become really important that on line communication is embraced in order to keep our members and get new ones.
Definitely: this is becoming increasingly clear – at first I think many GCs felt a short break was OK before business as usual, but the realization that “normal” life, especially for our age group, is not going to return anytime soon, is encouraging more to use other ways of meeting. We on the committee need to be available to facilitate this.
The discussions continue, but our U3A relates more to your point 1.a The feedback we are getting is that a lot of our members will be reluctant to use public transport and therefore unable to get to meetings.
It depends what is meant by “once Lockdown is over”, but until the risk of infection is effectively eliminated and/or a vaccine becomes available there will be a great reluctance to attend live meetings and travel on public transport.
I think most members will be keen to return to live meetings as we have many members who live alone and will be very lonely at the present time. I think at first it will be necessary to keep to social distancing which will make it difficult for those groups who meet in homes. It may be necessary for those groups to keep meetings on line or meet in back gardens. In the long term we may need to use more halls where social distancing can be maintained. We will need to carry on frequent handwashing, using gel and using antibacterial wipes before meetings. It will take time, but Eventually I believe most members will return when they realise we are taking all precautions.
Yes. Most of our members will be in the vulnerable and/or shielding groups.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE cont'd

1b) Live meetings (maybe in smaller groups)
Yes
Probably
Particularly among younger members. In itself difficult to manage in a way which is seen to be inclusive.
Yes, eager to get back to live meetings, but very wary due to age profile and uncertainty over government's policies.
Yes
We are a small U3A and our groups are small in any case. We are just hoping the situation will have changed by November or December so that we can hold an AGM although, constitutionally, we don't need to hold an AGM until April 2021.
Some long-established groups of 'friends' are eager to get back to 'normal'
Yes
The soon groups are "live" again the more we can plan for the future.
Question of transport as there will be a greater reluctance to use public transport.
Smaller groups. Concerns of using public transport.
Yes

1c) Hybrid
Cannot say
ooh, this will be a problem, as per above: some not tech savvy, some have no wish to use Zoom etc
Probably
A probable scenario. But still have sports groups, theatre groups, outing groups etc. to consider. Will not work for all groups.
Good idea in theory, but more difficult to implement due to practical and technology issues.
I think we can forget about any online participation.
However, this could be an opportunity to be creative and look at other groups that could evolve using online portals
Probably
Executive committee is going to encourage this.
Yes
Some existing groups may well be split into live and virtual sections.
I feel that many groups will remain on zoom or have hybrid meetings. Some on line and some in person
Not sure about this.
Yes, encourage online participation
Whilst increased online participation can and perhaps should be encouraged, my belief is that what our members want far, far more is face-to-face socialising.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE cont'd

1d) i Increase/Decrease in group numbers
It really is impossible to say at this point in time.
Both
Decrease
Probably a decrease in the number of Groups as online meetings lack a social side to them.
If we decreased the size of our groups any further, they would be non-existent.
I feel there could be decreases in some groups. e.g. physical exercise.
This is a worry. More if there is a general fall in membership of the U3A. Particularly as an Open Day is out of the question.
Both
Possibly with an increase in the number of groups. Two or three were about to be launched when lockdown began and hopefully will start up if any degree of normal life returns.
I cannot see how we will be able to sustain the number of interest groups that we have currently as our numbers on renewal I think will go down by 50%.

1d) ii Increase/Decrease in group sizes
It really is impossible to say at this point in time.
Both
Probably a decrease –social distancing, public transport, sports centres limiting numbers, venues limiting numbers to maintain social distancing.
Who knows?
Decrease
Both
Those groups on line might well attract larger audiences as space in someone's home is now no longer a factor. With the cold and dark winter nights I feel that members might well prefer on line that going out in the cold, damp, and snow. In a way this is encouraging members into a "lazy culture".
Decrease
As and when things return to normal, I see no reason why there should not be an ongoing increase in the number of Groups, as indicated above we have several in the pipeline.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE cont'd

2. Strategies & actions discussed with Group Convenors & Committee
Currently not my role
none to both – though likely to start in June
Little discussion/awaiting gov't directions
Some reference to managing the return to 'normal' in stages. As yet a view in Committee that things will return to what they were before Lockdown. Difficult to envisage what the new normal is going to be and a route to take.
Mainly how to increase the use of Zoom and other technologies.
Only about payment of membership due in August
None so far
The Chair devised a Survey which was sent to our members a few weeks ago. Many have not answered the survey, but those that have say they highly rate our U3A. Some say though that they are too busy connecting with family and friends during lockdown to actively engage with other activities. The Chair is now working on a Strategy Plan and that will be discussed with the Exec. We have also conveyed that for the future, i.e. the rest of this year we might have to continue with our Online programme, and that seems to be accepted by everyone.
Still under discussion. Perhaps some different types of groups and certainly more 'hybrid' groups.
There is also the issue of whether the premises we use will have larger rooms available for U3A to use or whether they will be allocated to other users. We also have a custom that all our meetings have a refreshment break in the middle which members enjoy but we think that will have to change to require people to bring their own .
None at this stage.
The Committee is now discussing holding our Monthly Meetings online, and we have changed our subscription date from 1 September to 1 January 2021, thus giving our members a three-month payment holiday.
Since the LRGL zoom meeting the actions have been involved with setting up on line communications and gradually encouraging members and leaders to give it a go. Hence purchasing the zoom pro account. The strategy really is to advertise all the active groups, in our twice monthly newsletter, encourage members to join some groups and spread the word. WE have had 1 committee meeting on Zoom, and another is coming up next week, so no doubt there will be more discussions about our future planning
Still thinking through this one.
For the future we are uncertain. Our committee is still talking about the future and one concern is excluding those who don't use technology.
We haven't had a meeting recently
We will have our own problems as we do not meet in people's homes. Social distancing will be almost impossible
None, had it not been for coronavirus, I would already have been in contact with my replacement GC and probably arranging a Group Leaders' meeting to introduce him/her. As eight of the nine members of our committee, including all the Officers, will be standing down at the forthcoming AGM, it will be up to the new GC/Committee to decide on the way forward.
We have not yet had a discussion on this this will be a discussion for our next committee meeting.
Due to meet this month to discuss strategy
n/a

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE cont'd

3. Tasks
Currently not my role
2 daily e-mails, 1 weekly e-mail, + continue with Facebook
Inform group leaders both individually and via the monthly Newsletter
Am still trying to get my head around the new Government Regs. and how they apply to different group activities.
a) Possible Open Meetings with guest speakers on line Zoom or Webinar; b) Another Showcase Zoom Event; c) Coffee Mornings on Zoom
To have our New members meeting and try to get the 2nd walking group up and running
None so far
Long term strategic planning with the Chair "The Way forward", will be circulated to our Exec. for comment and additions. The short-term plans appear to be online. Also trying to sustain our U3A membership and develop new partnerships and even a different cohort of members.
None
Group conveners meeting, Special executive committee meetings, Subcommittee meetings.
Nothing specific yet – just an awareness of the tricky issues we will face dealing with a long transition back to normal
None at this stage.
To encourage the group leaders to try on line communications, think of different ideas for their groups, e.g. virtual museums tours instead of actually going there, then chatting about them.
Nothing specific at the moment except for an increased frequency of the newsletter to keep members interested.
We were due to have our AGM, so I feel everything will depend on that.
Passing over my responsibilities to whoever the new GC is and possible taking on a role as Group Development Officer as mentioned above.
To liaise with home groups to find out their plans and work out a strategy.
To be discussed at committee level

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE cont'd

4a) Support from National Office
I think we have had that for holding our AGM. And I have seen it for Zoom Pro. Would be good for what people are going to do about membership fees. And for risk assessment forms for when we re-start.
That will depend on what happens during the next few months – e.g. Covid largely gone; another wave of infections; a viable vaccine. Ask me again when it is all over.
More guidance in working within the Regulations-insurance cover etc.
Easing up on regulations to enable us to go forward with other groups requested by members. All I would like to do for our members is create the other groups I have on their wish list.
Mainly ideas sharing. Also production and sharing of good promotional material.
Sharing what other groups are doing to get round the challenges. As there are over 1000 U3A groups in the UK, has N.O. considered negotiating lower ZOOM PRO and WEBINAR add-on plan licence fees with Zoom Video Communications, Inc.
I think it is important too to have brain storming sessions from other U3A with ideas for “thinking outside the box”. What have others done to encourage the walking groups to be active? Apart from recommending you tube exercises. How have others got over trying to play scrabble or Rummikub, etc. WE need to share our ideas. Yes it does go into TAM and no doubt on National web page, but this has to be vocalized to the wider community as not many members think about the generic website
Not sure- suggestions and a view of what is likely to be the reality for the foreseeable future?
Currently, nothing additional to what is currently being provided.

4b) Support from LRU3A
Currently not my role
a) Sharing guidelines and advice; b) Sharing resources e.g. Zoom Professional; c) Sharing Webinar of professional or celebrity guest speakers.
I'm not sure how to overcome the reticence from our members to use modern technology even if support were offered
Personally, I would like to receive more personal communication and recognition.
Detailed step by step guides to using Zoom as Participant and Host. The London Region documents are too complicated and do not have pictures (screenshots) at each stage. Many of our members have very basic computer skills.
It will be interesting to know what other London groups are planning to do and what may be gained from their experience.
No thoughts at this stage
I feel I need to raise with the committee first before I can comment on it.
Some suggestions as to how we return to normality.
Will response to question 4 after our next committee meeting