



London Region of U3As

Hello u3a colleagues,

PR, Publicity and Outreach

Welcome to the New Year with this the sixth of a series of regular mailings aimed to help our u3as explore ways to progress in image building and recruitment.

With a role of PR/Publicity/Media Adviser for the u3a London Region, it is my intention to send out a regular mailing to those with a role related to PR and Publicity, and also the Chair of each u3a. I will provide information on national and Regional PR and publicity initiatives, interesting examples of Outreach activities, etc. I would like to include examples of **your** activities that may be of interest to your fellow London Region u3as. **This only works if your u3a participates!**

Please note that earlier editions of these PR Mailings are now available on our London Region Website. You can find them at:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/london-region/page/110690>

U3a 40th Anniversary

In 2022, u3a will celebrate its 40th anniversary and a number of national events are planned throughout the year. Don't forget to blend these in your own u3a activities for image building during the year.

u3a UK 40th Anniversary events include:

Round Table Discussion: May About the original u3a Vision and whether/how this has changed will be recorded and made available, 40 years after the first u3a was established at the Easter School in 1982. Participants will include Eric Midwinter (the remaining Founding Father).

Anniversary Quilt ‘reveal’: June

Any individual member, interest group or u3a has been eligible to enter an Anniversary Quilt competition (deadline was November 2021) to create blocks for a 40th anniversary quilt on the topic of Positive Ageing. The completed quilt will be revealed on Wednesday 1 June.

u3a Picnic in the Park: June

Over the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee weekend (Thursday 2 – Sunday 5 June), u3as will be encouraged to hold picnics (in a park, on a beach, in a woodland, in a street, on a hill, beside a lake etc) to celebrate not just the Queen’s Jubilee but also the u3a’s 40th birthday.

‘Open for Business’: July

A Webinar will be held on the u3a High Street project, which will promote the results of surveys - carried out by over five hundred u3a members - of High Streets across the UK and describe the changes which have occurred over a 12-month period.

‘Futures, Foresight and Horizon Scanning’: July

The u3a Science Network will host an anniversary meeting in July to highlight u3a scientific activities and take the opportunity to engage the scientific community.

‘Positive Futures in Older Age’: August

This project started between u3a Edinburgh and the University of Stirling to demonstrate the impact older people can have on the community. Short stories will be collected from members from which

plays will be written and performed at the Edinburgh Fringe and a London theatre.

u3a UK AGM: October

A hybrid streamed event on Thursday 6, to show how the profile of u3a locally, regionally, nationally and UK-wide can be raised further in the next 40 years.

u3a Wood 'reveal': November

The u3a Wood was launched in September 2021 with the intention that u3as would plant 5,000 trees as a contribution to the environment and the community. The wood will be 'revealed' in Tree Week, 17 - 25 November, showing how many trees have been planted by u3a members.

Working forward with a theme

Lats month I mentioned Croydon u3a getting an excellent seasonal article into the East Croydon Community Organisation, it nicely tied a Christmas theme with membership of Croydon u3a, with this header picture:.

CROYDON U3A – THE GIFT THAT GOES ON GIVING

Nov 22, 2021 - by eastcroydon - in Business, Environment & Recycling. -



They then adjusted the focus to beyond Christmas, and have moved forward into the New Year with:



CROYDON U3A - THE GIFT THAT GOES ON GIVING

Once the Christmas decorations are down and the tree has been recycled, what is there to look forward to? How about joining Croydon u3a and enjoying a gift that goes on giving all year round?

Evening and weekend Meetings?

Perhaps a bit too heavy for the current environment, but thinking longer term some u3as are considering having meetings in the evenings, or at the weekend. This will likely increase their attractiveness to more potential members, perhaps younger members. Worth considering? What are your thoughts?

Running a stall at a u3a Event

Last edition we had some interesting observations about running a u3a stand from Chris Farnes and Ruth Peattie from **Waltham Forest u3a**, which ran a joint event with **Redbridge u3a** in November.

I have now received this update from Howard Mather from the Redbridge "side"

"Following the initial activity in November you mentioned in your last note, the two u3as "went again" for the Redbridge leg in even worse weather conditions than the first collaborative event.

There are many essentials to cover in preparation for such an event, (In addition to Chris and Ruth's), many seem obvious but are worth repeating:

- Bright colours of all displays

- large u3a banners
- lists of group activities, laminated for discussion and loose leaf to take away
- Membership forms and pens
- Quality leaflets with bold, simple messaging of "our" value proposition.
- Copies of the u3a's Newsletter
- Post activity event for new members and/or interested people to attend, open meetings, coffee mornings

However, the single most important element is getting a local dignitary to attend, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, MP, Leader of the Council, local celebrity, etc. if you have one. For me the instant the Mayor of Redbridge arrived and posed for photo's the job in the cold was done and the real work to get this into the public domain just began.



These joint outings with Waltham Forest u3a are as worthwhile as they are enjoyable, the only aspect I would change is doing them in warmth and sunshine!

Thank you for comments and ideas Howard.

Collaboration between u3as

The joint activity at local event stalls mentioned above raises the issue of u3as working together. Many u3as are members of local Networks, and often do work together in a variety of ways. However, this is often against a backdrop of individual u3as functioning as islands, almost viewing neighbouring u3as as “the enemy” in a fight for members, and claiming their territory.

It doesn't need to be like this.

What if you were really working with your neighbouring u3as to raise the u3a image across your local communities and attracting new u3a members?

What are your thoughts?

Your u3a Website

The start of a New Year is an opportunity to **refresh your u3a website**. Especially, imagine you are a potential new member for your u3a, is the website as welcoming and informative to you as a new visitor as it might be? Maybe at least update the Welcome page photo and related text (some date back to 2021 and beyond!) and get rid of outdated ‘clutter’.

If you want to think more about the issue of maximising your website, then the attached documents may give you some ideas.

Please ignore the ‘sales pitch’ and frequent references to ‘fundraising’ and ‘funding’ in them, as they are written with conventional charities in mind.

Working with the Local Media

One method we should be using to help **improve our u3a image and gain new members** is to gain coverage in our local media. We have already announced the first **Public Relations** (previously called the Communicators) **Peer Group** meeting for 2022, which will take place via zoom at 2-4 pm on Monday February 7th. This will include **several workshop discussions**, with the participation of an experienced journalist, focussed on **how to write effective press articles for**

maximum impact. Contact me if you want more detail about this event.

Unique Sales Proposition

In the last couple of editions of this mailing we have laid out a possible **generic Unique Selling Proposition, USP** for our u3as in the current environment, especially bearing in mind a need to recruit a younger and more diverse membership. We have had several responses for change / improvement, and the latest proposed wording is from our own Catherine Ware:

X u3a is a MEMBER LED organisation for people who are NO LONGER WORKING FULL TIME but wish to REMAIN ACTIVE. We offer the chance to pursue a DIVERSE range of activities at VERY LITTLE COST in a SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT. We favour meeting FACE TO FACE but also take advantage of ON-LINE opportunities to help us share our interests and keep us involved and in touch with each other.

What do you think of this? Do let me know!

That's all for now. I hope something within the content of this mailing gives you some pause for thought. Let me know if I can help you!

Very best regards

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