

May 2020

Dear Members

As I write this letter to you it is another sunny day, blue skies and the birdsong is particularly beautiful. We might be forgiven for thinking that all is right with the world - but only momentarily. In the last week or so however we have been given a very small light at the end of a very long tunnel so there is hope on its way!

With this in mind, I would like to give you an update on the work going on behind the scenes to ensure that our U3A continues to thrive as best it can in the present circumstances and the planning underway for that glorious day when we can begin to meet again.

A large percentage of our groups have found innovative ways of keeping going via Zoom/email/Whatsapp and phone calls. Various online tutorials, classes and talks are being shared and there are virtual social get togethers. The additional newsletters sent out with any information we think might be useful plus quizzes and of course the "funnies" have proved extremely popular. For those few members who are not online, newsletters are periodically edited, printed and posted out to them.

Now is the time to look to the coming new U3A year, and we have already begun! Contact is being made with all Group Leaders via Zoom or email and virtual meetings will be taking place in the near future. The focus will be on how can we vary and adapt our planned programme if required, bearing in mind the constraints and uncertainties about the future. We will all do our utmost to provide as much as we can for our members whilst following the Government guidelines. It goes without saying that the safety and wellbeing of our members is paramount.

Whilst a small group from our committee are working with the Group Leaders, another working group has been formed that will focus on monthly meetings, use of venues, keeping members in touch and a host of things we have yet to think of. This is the time for creative thinking!

The Annual Booklet/Programme will be available online via the website from mid July. We have decided that this is the best way forward in the present circumstances. A hard copy booklet would be out of date by the time it was printed and posted to you and by publishing it online, you will be able to see at a glance what has been planned to be on offer for the coming year. As there will be unavoidable changes, regular updates will be available on the website and through the group leaders.

We have decided to postpone the August "10th Anniversary Celebration Day" as this would have resulted in a very large gathering of members which at this time is not permitted. You will receive a letter in June from those on the committee who have been working on introducing our online renewal and membership payment scheme. This will give you information on how and when to renew your membership or become a new member. The vast majority of us are familiar with using online payment for online shopping and this is no different. If you have any concerns, please do not worry, we will have a team ready to assist and advise you, we will only be a call away and the details of the advice team will be included in the June letter.

Sorry this is rather lengthy but now you know as much as we do! My thanks must go to the committee for all their hard work during these testing times and also to our Group Leaders for all their support in trying to keep all the group members together.

My very best wishes to everyone and keep safe.

Helen