

To: All Members of Stroud U3A

Stroud U3A December 2020 Newsletter

Christmas Message

What a year! This time last year we were thinking that 2020 would be dominated by Brexit but even then, we were hearing alarming news of the spread of the virus in China & other countries. Two lockdowns and a lot of worry later, we are about to go into a Christmas break when there are still many problems with the virus in different parts of the UK & anxiety levels are unsurprisingly high. There is a light at the end of the tunnel in the form of vaccinations but that will be the other side of a New Year lockdown. Our overriding concern in all this, is that you stay safe and can become part of our relaunch in the Spring. The term 'Spring' is a variable term, as it may be midsummer (depending on the pandemic situation and vaccination progress). Our initial 10-point plan to get things going again is shown below.

Stroud U3A Relaunch Plan

1. **Restart Physical Committee Meetings**
2. Review all learning from the last year
3. Consider All Suggestions for New Initiatives
4. Recreate Speaker Programme
5. Agree Draft Relaunch Plan
6. **Hold Group Leader Meeting**
7. Finalise Relaunch Plan
8. Restart Monthly Meetings
9. **Restart Activity Groups**
10. Launch Advertising and PR Campaign

The list is not time ordered. Many of these activities will take place simultaneously. The timescale for all this is of course dependent on government guidance at the time and how much notice of changes we shall be given. However, there will be no restriction on individual groups restarting activities in advance of the U3A relaunch date and if group leaders would like to make changes, now is the time to consult with your members and ask them for their ideas. We shall keep you updated on progress via monthly newsletters.

At the online AGM, we talked about the possibility of playing ball games on the common and then going for a pint. If you have any other ideas on new group activities or ideas on how to recruit new members or indeed ideas about the relaunch plan itself, please do make your thoughts known to us at ideas@stroudu3a.org.uk or call 01453 767850.

Buddy System

This was also mentioned at the online AGM. To get this going, we would like to hear from any of our members who have email whether they would be prepared to print out an extra copy of our monthly newsletter and deliver it to another member who does not have email. If you are prepared to do that then please do let us know at chair@stroudu3a.org.uk

Poetry Booklet

Over 20 years ago, Stroud U3A published a couple of booklets of poems written by members of the Poetry Workshop, led by Sheila Simmons, herself a published poet. Sheila and some of the other poets are sadly no longer with us but thanks to Naomi Hull, one of the founding members of our U3A and thankfully very much still with us, we are going to produce a third booklet of poems, most of which have not been published before. They will form a truly delightful collection, reflecting on nature, our area, memories of the past and much more.

If you would like a copy of the booklet, would you let Isobel Hié know isobel.hie@outlook.fr This is so that we know how many copies to have printed. A minimum donation of £2 per booklet when ordering would be appreciated please.

Some Christmas Jokes!

What did Adam say the day before Christmas? "It's Christmas, Eve!"
How did Mary & Joseph know Jesus' weight when he was born? They had a weigh in a manger!
Why is it getting harder to buy Advent calendars? Their days are numbered!
What did Santa say to the smoker? Please don't smoke, it's bad for my elf!
What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations? Tinsilitis!
How will Christmas dinner be different after Brexit? No Brussels!
When is a boat just like snow? When it's adrift!
How does Darth Vader enjoy his Christmas Turkey? On the dark side!
What do monkeys sing at Christmas? Jungle bells!
Who do Santa's helpers call when they're ill? The National Elf Service!

More Seriously Elif Shafak – How to stay sane in an age of division

This was sent to me by Ulla Talbot. Very many thanks, Ulla. Towards the end of the book, it includes the following statements – which are quite thought provoking!

[Do not be afraid of complexity.](#)

[Be afraid of people who promise an easy shortcut to simplicity](#)

We do hope that you are able to enjoy yourself at both Christmas and New Year and after such a crazy year, we are really looking forward to enabling you to have a full and active membership of Stroud U3A in 2021.

Our very best wishes and a very **Happy Christmas!**

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Breaking News The U3A Social History Group meets on Zoom on alternate Thursdays at 2.30pm (Next one 7th Jan 2021) If you haven't tried Zoom, it's easy, no computer skills needed. Please contact Pauline Stevens pauline@stevensonline.org.uk