

U3A Science Network Meeting Workshop

Ways in which U3As can reduce the negative impact on the environment

In the December 2018 National Newsletter, under the heading **Using Plastic**, Sam Mauger wrote:

National Office has been contacted by U3A members who are concerned about the use of plastic. The Trust would like to share your ideas and thoughts on the use of plastic and its impact on the environment and would love to hear from U3As who may currently be developing policies on how they use plastic.

We hope to send out guidance to all U3As based on your programmes and good practice.

In the April 2019 Newsletter, the following appeared:

U3As are also promoting being environmentally friendly with some U3As working to develop ideas to share with the movement to minimise our carbon footprint.

The workshop on the Environment

The workshop was designed to enable a number of useful suggestions to be fed back to the Trust and to persuade U3As to follow as many of them as they can. Sam's initial request arose from a really big study into Plastic which will be one of the items under discussion but other items include:

Eating meat, Packaging, Plastic bags, Plastic bottles, Pollution from vehicles, Reducing power usage, Solar power, Water usage in the UK, Wood burning stoves

Some statistics were created on the above headings and the task for each table was to:

- Share any actions being taken by your U3A in response to Sam's question
- Discuss the topics you've been given and identify actions you and your U3A, their families and friends could undertake
- In the light of the statistics, assess the impact you might make and identify actions which are needed by other agencies
- Create a bullet point for each of your proposed actions
- Present the main points from your table to the whole group

Actions being taken / proposed by U3As in response to Sam's questions

U3A should push forward a national policy at a local level

U3As to lobby MPs locally and nationally & harvest the experiences and time of members. Need to be proactive. Look at WI approach – mandates and campaigning. Everyone should email MPs about these issues

Educate our own U3A groups

Encourage young people, especially grandchildren, to re-use or recycle and not to waste anything

Events organiser arranged to send mugs to recycling plant. It's a Must for all U3As to co-operate with other agencies

Chester organised compost collection from house

Swindon Climate Action network lobbied MPs in London. MP will report back every 3 months to say what is being done to work towards carbon neutrality by 2050

Meet MPs as U3A representatives to monitor what is being done nationally. Lobby them for changes in national planning, to provide guidelines for builders to incorporate energy saving and introduce energy regenerating technology

As a U3A, boycott retailers who insist on using single use plastic

Have more talks on reducing the use of plastic

Thanet: no plan, still using paper for newsletters. Some members have a mixture, some email

Solihull: if member not on email, arrange buddying with other members

Getting the message out there

Raise awareness at U3A meetings

U3As to survey local stores to see what they are doing and publicise (3)

Lobby MPs, government on lack of tax on aviation fuel, fracking, expansion of Heathrow

Get Tree Preservation order on your trees

Could the Trust supply re-usable bags to the membership?

The biggest thing U3As should do is to educate on all items suggested

Recycling? Why not re-use or cut down?

Reduce our use of plastic so that recycling is the **last** resort: First Reduce, Second Re-use, Third Recycle

Packaging: re-use existing plastic, especially single use plant pots, cups, bottles

Carry your own re-usable shopping bags with you

Make recycling labels understandable and develop a standardised national scheme, local systems are all different

All packaging should be identified for recycling

Deposits on glass and plastic bottles

Take packages back for refilling

Promote compostable wrapping (TAM wrapping is recyclable)

Make things from recyclable plastic

Cut down rather than exclude meat, eat less meat, (4)

Survey what's available and make sure members know about it

Personalise it

Promote water butts for gardeners

Don't leave taps running (3) especially when cleaning teeth or washing hands

Reduce making paper copies of information

Alternatives

Convince people that it affects them personally, eg how much plastic do you have in your body/

Encourage use of paper where appropriate

Encourage people to drink tap water rather than bottled water

Use mugs instead of plastic cups, Use own mugs for drinks

Use metal bottles rather than plastic

Return plastic wrappers to the supermarket (many)

Buy unpackaged food from supermarkets

Encourage Supermarkets to take back plastic and batteries

Don't tarmac front gardens for parking cars

Steer clear of pollutants: use clothes made of natural fabrics -cotton, viscose (bamboo), wool

3 nearby U3A have decided to pool resources for monthly meetings every 2 months, venue is on bus route and aware of pollution

Birmingham post war introduced electric waste collection vehicles, buses running on methane

Plan disposal of rubbish

Adapt as much as you can

Use scrap paper and envelopes for short term information

Water usage: investigate availability of grey water, insulation

Use of public transport and car sharing encouraged. Always tell members how to reach venues on public transport or by car sharing

When booking events and courses, ask venues about their recycling policy so waste can be properly disposed of

Power and water usage:

Encourage turning thermostats down, turn off lights in rooms not in use

Solar power: experience of a number of members on how this can be worthwhile

Solar a good investment for south and west facing buildings

EDF batteries

Use LED lights (5)

Use shared transport

Car share, cycle and walk (3)

Be advocates and lobby MPs to manage cycle lanes

install a smart meter and save money, use less water

Use less palm oil

Get MOTO to have a vegetarian day

Local power generation , heat pumps

No polybags in Lyme Regis

Changing to more energy efficient equipment but CHECK FIRST to assess the cost and change involved. Analyse and evaluate before you make a change.

Some Good News

Government proposal to replace gas for central heating by low carbon heating systems in all new houses built after 2025. House builders supported the initiative but care needed as alternative heating systems are often more expensive and less efficient