

Comments from those attending the u3a Science Network Meeting on 20 April 2021

Very positive feedback

I belong to the Science Group in Cardiff but have an Arts background but enjoy the challenge. I don't expect to understand every detail. I haven't been to a Science Network event before but thought online was just the thing for a first experience

Can you please ensure that we can see the speaker's mouth - it is most important when your hearing is not as good as it was. The second talk on covid was interesting but I could only see the top half of his face

This online, one day, event attracted people who would not consider the 3 day residential event. I sincerely believe that this offers the opportunity to engage more U3A members with science

Please don't change timings or format

I would like the start time of talks to be announced at the end of the one before, not after the questions

I'm not a scientist and had been wary of attending the Science Summer School....this was a good introduction

Positive feedback

"Darwin the Geologist" presented by John Marriage was first class and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Having heard rather a lot about coronavirus during the last year, I found this presentation less interesting. The presentation on chocolate was interesting and had a general appeal.

Excellent.

The presentation on the covid vaccines was excellent. Very clearly explained and well-illustrated.

The talk on COVID 19 and vaccines was excellent

I thought it would be too long, but spacing out the talks with breaks between them, worked very well. I thought the quality of all the talks was superb. My personal favourite was the Covid talk - very clear and well illustrated.

Good range of topics, as I very much enjoyed one, thought another OK, and was bored by a third.

Something for everyone, as it should be. And we still learn from things we would not expect to enjoy.

Format of the event was about right and well organized. Thanks to all.

Made for a most enjoyable and informative day

Please don't change timings or format.

The event was well run and was well paced. The topics presented were all very different and interesting and presented very well by the speakers. There was enough time to ask any questions after each talk and throughout the session and there were adequate breaks between the talks.

Was better than I expected as in general I am not one who sits and listens to lectures. I prefer interactive events.

A very well organised event with an interesting range of talks and excellent speakers

The 3 topics were very interesting and varied so would appeal to everyone, even if they did not have a good knowledge of scientific matters. The presenters were very professional and their presentations were well illustrated.

3 talks was just about right. More would be too much for any one day, and only 2 would be rather limiting as one of them might not be so interesting/appealing to an individual. Would prefer 45 mins for lunch and perhaps slightly longer breaks. We should not be sitting on our bottoms looking at a screen for too long! I wouldn't mind a slightly earlier start to accommodate the above. Considering the number of participants, and varying degrees of competency with zoom, the day ran fairly smoothly but if giving "helpful hints" on renaming etc, (to go out in advance of meeting) please remember that folks will be using a variety of devices, so need instructions for I-Pads and smart phones too! That which is found on your top left, may be somewhere else to others!

The breaks allowed for food and drinks. With such a big attendance, the control over muting of microphones needs to be in the hands of the host to ensure that presentations are not interrupted.

Overall, I think that the host(s)/organisers did a good job given the varying levels of attendee familiarity with Zoom controls.

As good as it could be in the circumstances but not as good as the real thing
I would not be able to attend a 3 day conference. This was much better for me.

Breaks needed

I belong to the Science Group in Cardiff but have an Arts background but enjoy the challenge. I don't expect to understand every detail. I haven't been to a Science Network event before but thought online was just the thing for a first experience. Attendees did need the breaks, to get up and move around, make a drink, toilet and have lunch. None of the breaks were long. As we were asked to leave the link on during the breaks, I knew some were asking the last speaker questions. I needed a drink and something to eat.

The timings were very good. I think that there should be a break between each new topic.

Visibility of Speaker's mouth

This has been mentioned on a few zoom meetings - can you please ensure that we can see the speaker's mouth - it is most important when your hearing is not as good as it was. The second talk on covid was interesting but I could only see the top half of his face

Fewer talks / breaks

Suggest two talks only - in the morning.

All 3 talks were excellent. Ideally, I would prefer future talks to be limited to two per session and not split over lunch but am happy to adapt to organisers and speakers.

The presentations were very good but too many breaks.

Chat function, attendee details and other admin details

People needed clearer instructions on how to ask a question, as some could not use the chat function. We need to abandon the (laudable) attempt to push people into joining properly with their real names! The one minor criticism I have (and this was mentioned in the session) was that the chat box could only be used to contact the 3 organisers. You could not contact any of the other attendees. For future events, it would be very useful if the chat box could be set up so that the attendees could chat to each other if required. *(We had to take account of the fact that two of the team were checking the chat function so that questions could be put to the relevant speaker. With over 200 members attending, this would have been very difficult if we'd allowed the Chat to Everyone function)*

A lot of time was spent at the beginning of the meeting instructing people to rename and how to do it. Why not try providing links to published guides with the invitation, and setting up the host account to require participants to log with their name into zoom *(Being investigated)*

There were instructions on how to enter your name onto your picture published in advance, but not very prominently. Needs to be easier to find - on the invite maybe! And maybe a condition of admittance. The timings were very good. I think that there should be a break between each new topic.

I enjoyed all the topics and the speakers were very good at presenting their topics. The sub titles were very distracting and prevented me from being able to read/see the bottom part of the slides. *(These can be switched off!)*

I have completed this form once already but have returned for a 2nd 'bite'. The link to 'EVENTS' below tells me about events I didn't know existed (1 black mark) but which took place earlier today, yesterday, etc (many black marks!!!!). If someone wants to tell me I'm doing it wrong.

Booking for the event *(things we'll take note of for the next meeting)*

When it was possible to book a ticket through Eventbrite for the meeting, it would have helped me if an email had been sent out to all those who had indicated an interest. I only realised when tickets were no longer available that I needed to go into the Eventbrite site. However, I did contact the 'host' and was sent the zoom link so was able to join in the very enjoyable meeting. So thanks to all those who spoke and helped to organise.

Found it nigh impossible to find the event later, or any idea of what the subjects were. Why was that not readily available on u3a.org.uk or the science network site?

I thoroughly enjoyed the event and thank everyone involved in the organisation. I have since tried to book a ticket for 11th August but cannot find details on Eventbrite.

The circles wouldn't accept a tick but I would like to register "strongly agree" for all the event questions and a "yes" for recommending to another U3A member. An excellent and very interesting event.

Impact of Q&A sessions

Loved the format and the diversity of the talks. Personally I would prefer the intervals to be kept free from Q&A, using the breaks for questions which I found interesting meant I didn't get a break! Well done to the organisers, speakers and hosts. I would love to have an update from Mike Trevethick at the August and October "meetings". I'm not a scientist and had been wary of attending the Science Summer School....this was a good introduction.

Sorry I had to leave early - about 1 o'clock - something cropped up urgently.

I only attended the morning sessions

Structure

I would like the start time of talks to be announced at the end of the one before, not after the questions - not enough time was allowed for lunch - could have foregone some questions but did not know how long I had got. New topic - the prof from Southampton gave an excellent talk two years ago at Aston - could he be asked for an update concentrating on the economics - money and co2 – if using Hydrogen and electric heat pumps, both of which will require natural gas, either for direct hydrogen extraction or electricity.

Scribbles on the whiteboard!

Is it possible to stop participants annotating the screen? We got a few random scribbles. I struggle with the options in Zoom but it may be buried somewhere. *(This was visible at the start of the session – we'll check the options and make sure people can't annotate at the next meeting!)*

Intolerance?

I was shocked by some of the intolerance shown by some of the members. We are all old people and not all of us are tech savvy: perhaps these people need this sort of event more than others and the intolerance shown by some would make it uncomfortable for such people to join another event. I think the organisers might have spoken up at some point. I am glad to belong to Thanet U3A, where we welcome all, no matter how good or bad our tech skills: and even make it fun and a source for banter as we help our less able colleagues.

We're sorry that you were upset by this on the day and thank you for bringing this to our attention. As it was the first time we had done this presentation format, the organisers were fully occupied in the progress of the day. You will be pleased to hear that we have streamlined some processes (We'll make joining instructions clearer and easily available so that it should help all members to access future dates and increase their enjoyment.)