



**MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER**  
(Registered Charity Number 1179094)

**AUGUST 2021 EDITION**

**Chair's Update**  
From Pauline Palmer

I have just attended the u3a Regional quarterly meeting. It was set up to discuss the insurances that we have as a national and independent u3a. I'm pleased to say that we as a u3a are still covered with the same insurance that we have always had. We also discussed claims made, those that were upheld and those claims that were lost. One of the most important things that I noted was that those claims that were not upheld were mostly where a risk assessment had not been made. I know that all of our groups have made risk assessments to keep our members safe as they have opened up but what was made clear was that as members we must follow venues' rules but also if a group leader wishes to add to those rules within their risk assessment they may do so. Members must follow their group leader's recommendations.

All of you will have had an email asking if you are attending the September monthly meeting at the Stella. I know many of you are concerned that we have seen increasing cases in the region of the Delta variant of Covid. It seems that the numbers are falling, but who knows what will happen over the next few weeks? I wanted to assure you that we will take the utmost precautions to ensure your safety at the meeting. If you attend and do not feel safe, then let me know personally as I want you all to be comfortable and safe and I need to know your concerns.

I will be undertaking a risk assessment of the venue which I will share with you all before the meeting so that you know what is expected. I understand that you will each take responsibility for yourself and will make the decision whether to attend nearer the time. Whether you attend or not, I want you to know that you are all extremely valued members of Washington Village u3a and I hope to see you in person, at if not at the first meeting, then perhaps the following meetings.

The speaker for the September Monthly Meeting on Thursday 2nd September is Linda Davison. Her talk is 'History of Comedy'. Linda has been to our monthly meeting before. Her talk then was 'The Percy Family of Northumberland', which was very popular with members.

I hope you read the Northumbria Messenger. If you do you may have read that I am part of an events sub-group. This looks interesting with the first event being held on the 13th October

2021 with a take-over day at the Great North Museum. I will keep you informed of details as they are released and I may be asking for help with some of the events.

I would like to finish this with again thanking group leaders and members of the Committee who have kept our u3a vibrant during this difficult period. We are not out of the woods yet but we are moving forward

Take care and I am looking forward to seeing you all in September

### **Money & Membership Matters**

From Lyn Bossons (Treasurer and acting Membership Secretary)

Despite a few 2020/21 members resigning or allowing their membership to lapse I am pleased to report that we now have a total of 176 members for the current, 2021/22 membership year. Of these 176 members:

- 92 (52%) are individual members whilst 84 (48%) are joint members
- 63 (36%) are male and 113 (64%) are female
- 94% can be contacted by email
- 73% paid by BACS, 16% by cheque and 11% by cash.

The membership fees received have placed the WVU3a finances in a healthy position and I anticipate our reserves to be around £3200 – £3600 by the end of next March.

Since WVU3a started in 2014 the fee for new members joining during, or after, October has been set at half of the annual fee. However, irrespective of when a new member joins, WVU3a is obliged to pay a number of fees to the Third Age Trust (e.g. subscription to TAT, Beacon licence, distribution of the Third Age Matters magazine); these add up to £7.60 per member, so only charging £7.50 (the current rate) does not even cover these fixed charges, let alone a contribution to all the other costs (speakers, refreshments, etc.) that the new member would benefit from. The Committee has agreed therefore that from the next membership year the mid-year joining fee will be raised to £10.

Please remember that when we resume live monthly meetings (from September) there will be no £1 subscription though you will still need to register your attendance, for insurance purposes. The full costs of monthly meetings (speakers/entertainment and refreshments) are included in your annual membership fee.

### **PR Update**

From Tania Le Marinel

You'll have seen the recent article about Washington u3a which appeared in the June edition of Washington Way free magazine (which was circulated to 20,000 households locally) and result-

ed in 4 enquiries from prospective members. We'll be doing another article for the September/October edition to coincide with returning to face-to-face meetings (fingers crossed).

The 2021 u3a Day celebrations were a success with hundreds of events taking place across the country - approximately 10% of u3as took part. Hopefully next year's event to celebrate 40 years of the u3a will be even more successful. At the moment there are discussions about the actual date for u3a Day in 2022 – there's some debate about several things: whether it should be held during Volunteer's Week, whether it should take place just before the Queen's Platinum Jubilee weekend and public holidays, or whether it should be a week rather than just one day. The proposed date – Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2022 – won't be confirmed until u3as have been consulted, possibly via survey, so watch this space for more information.

U3a branded merchandise is now available – bunting, t-shirts, mugs, caps, etc., - through the Brand Centre on the u3a website. Feedback from some u3as is that the merchandise is too expensive (and a lot of u3as sourced merchandise locally for u3a Day) but if you'd like to 'fly the flag' for u3a you can order them direct <https://u3abrand.org.uk/> (you will have to register to sign in).

The u3a is considering running some I.T. training sessions on how to link and schedule Facebook posts, how to post YouTube videos and link them to Facebook and websites. I'll let you know when this becomes available for anyone who is interested.

### **Group News**

From Richard Sidney (Group Co-ordinator)



Some members of the **Whats App Art Group** enjoyed another meeting on the Green at Washington Village on 21 July.

Members of the Painting & Drawing Group are welcome to attend these monthly meetings. The next one is planned for Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> August. The theme for this month's art challenge is 'Change'.

Frank Carroll has volunteered to take over as lead of the **Photography Group**.

Pauline Palmer has volunteered to lead the **Day Trips Group**.

A group leader is still required for **Film Appreciation**. Could anyone interested in leading this group or wanting to know more about what it entails, please contact Richard Sidney for more information?

**Bowling Group:** Whilst Thursday Bowling continues to thrive; Friday Bowling has been suspended due to dwindling demand. Friday bowlers are very welcome to join Thursday's group. If demand for Friday Bowling increases, it is possible for the group to re-start.



As you'll see from this photo, **the Walking Group** enjoyed a 6 mile walk in and around Lumley Woods earlier this month.

A further walk was undertaken on 30<sup>th</sup> July. A 6.5 mile circular walk starting at Rainton Meadows Nature Reserve.

Please note: If you wish to join a group, please first contact the group leader to see if there are any spaces and for any further details that are not published. Just go to the relevant group's page and click on the link in the right hand column to contact them.

### Members Liaison

You can contact Marie via the link on our u3a website

### Our Village in Bloom



Wow! Washington Village has been invaded with many busy bees over the past weeks and days leading up to 'Judgement Day' for the winner of the Best Village in Bloom Competition 2021. We are waiting in anticipation for the forthcoming results. Our village looks absolutely magnificent, so much work has gone into the beautiful arrangements. They deserve to win so much. It's such a shame the post box hat was stolen and not returned. Good luck 'Bloomers', we hope you win and retain the title.

I feel so much has happened since our last Newsletter. Normality is stepping up. Groups are opening up and moving forward in a positive way. Many are still quite cautious and wearing masks as a precaution and still lots of sanitizing going on. It is good to see people getting out and about socializing again.

We had our first Bingo night at Whiteladies last week. It was good fun, good to laugh, and be with friends again. We are moving forward to a new normality. Coming out of lockdown restrictions can be quite daunting, and oh dear, poor little old me realized I was not returning to 'my normality' by returning to my work. After being forced into early retirement at the start of lockdown because I was in the vulnerable age group (over 80's). After 55 years in nursing, my career has come to an abrupt halt. If it weren't for the restrictions imposed, I would still be working, doing what I loved doing all of those years. It's too late to start setting up again. Coming to terms with retirement has been a hard blow for me to accept and I recently had a meltdown which lasted a couple of weeks. I was feeling oh so sorry for myself and OMG having to accept the reality, that I was now classed as an "old lady in retirement"! Well, I may be an old lady, but I am not an old-fashioned lady. More like a thoroughly modern Millie. Well, in my head I am and I will keep thinking that way. I don't think I am alone in that either. However, I soon realized that life in retirement must go on. I have so much to be thankful for, my good health, my recent weight loss achievement, which has brought me fitness and a new lease of life. As we all know, many people don't make it this far. I am so grateful and appreciate when I open my eyes each morning to another new day. Where there's a will, there's a way to new openings in life.

September will bring along new openings with our return to our first live members' meeting. It also falls on my birthday, so how's that for timing? It will be so good to be together again. Our Committee are working so hard to get this safely up and running to keep us all safe and happy on this special opening day. I feel I must say a huge thank you to the Committee, on behalf of us all, for the dedication shown by each and every one of them and especially Pauline, our Chair for her positivity and determination in directing and planning throughout this last 18 months to keep our Washington Village u3a very much alive. What a team! What a fantastic Committee! Every credit to them.

Don't forget, we do still have vacancies for Committee members and I know there are members out there who would be an asset to the Committee. So please, if you have a spark of interest, come forward! We need more help and welcome new ideas.

I sincerely hope all our members who have been affected in any way by this dreadful situation we have been through, are regaining their strength and hope you make a full recovery. Times have become a little more anxious with the virus spreading to the younger generation now. Vaccinations appear to be doing their job and hopefully will bring Covid under control in the coming months.

Stay strong, stay safe and most of all keep smiling through. I am so looking forward to seeing you all again and hand on heart, can truly say all our Committee are too. I am continuing as

Members Liaison, so please keep me updated on anyone who would welcome a 'thinking of you' card from me.

As always, my warmest regards,  
Marie