



U3A East Midlands Trustee

Newsletter



August 2020

Back in March I do not think that any of us imagined that this situation would go on for as long as this. It has not been at all easy and I know how much many of our members are longing to return to normal routines.

During the last few months, many U3As across the Region, have been in touch with others in their Network or neighbourhood group. Newsletters have been circulated and issues raised and discussed. Now Networks are beginning to hold virtual meetings. E Lincs was the first group to do this and it went very well. Notts. Network held one yesterday with 37 people taking part, and were joined by national Chair, Ian McCannah, who gave an update on the Trust development plan. U3As reported on how they are coping with the current situation. It was particularly good to hear about the very pro-active Groups coordinators at Beeston U3A who have encouraged and supported so many of their group convenors to use zoom for their groups. Leicestershire Network have a similar meeting planned.

This has emphasised just how important Networks are in providing mutual support.

Latest guidance

Do read the latest guidance carefully in relation to the opening of groups and where they can be held.

What next?

- What do your members value about their U3A? How can you maintain this?
- Are you open to new members?
- What ideas do you have for the future?
 - Could you consider a 'fusion' approach, a mix of virtual and actual?
 - Could you have a 'buddy' system for helping more members to engage with the internet?
 - What sort of events might be possible?
 - How can you persuade more members to become involved?
- Use the national website for advice and suggestions
- Keep an eye of Facebook's 'Keeping in Touch' page
- Circulate the national newsletter

Exciting Project!

The National U3A High St Project is being launched, by Peter Cox, from North London U3A, to track the changes to our High Streets, that are being accelerated by Covid -19. The project is being

managed by the Trust's Research Committee. The plan is to produce a landmark report for publication by the Trust in 2022, so helping to raise the U3A's profile in our 40th anniversary year.

The idea is that many U3As will become involved in their own community. The Project will begin with a quick survey to provide a baseline at the beginning of Lockdown in March 2020, against which we'll be able to measure the changes. The timescale is of necessity short because the situation is changing rapidly. We aim to produce a report for the Board by the end of December 2020 that describes the pre-Pandemic state of Britain's shopping locations. In early 2022 we will then be able to construct a final report that looks in depth at the impact of the pandemic, as part of wider research. We would ask participants to choose a small number of shopping streets in their locality. That may mean for example a main street, a local parade, and a small centre, and more information about this will be sent to those who register their interest. Participating U3As will need a team of 5-10 volunteers with a leader who is happy to coordinate the work. Please send the coordinators contact details directly to Peter. Peter Cox coxpetern@gmail.com)

I do hope that many U3As in the East Midlands will enjoy taking part in this interesting and worthwhile project. This should result in a report of real significance, in time for our 40th Anniversary.

Many thanks!

Trust U3A

Early on in lockdown, more than 20 U3As in our region reported that they were closed to new members. Across the country many more said the same and so the Trust made the decision to set up Trust U3A, which already has 200 members, to cope with the demand from people wanting to join. Of course, those people are told about their local U3As and encouraged to join when it is possible, but this online version is proving popular.

I do hope that the situation in those U3As is now much more open and welcoming, even though our general meetings are not possible. Many U3As have done a fantastic job keeping in touch with their members, encouraging and supporting groups to run virtually and producing fascinating and stimulating newsletters, full of news, competitions and puzzles.

Post lockdown driving

A suggestion has come from the Institute of Advanced Drivers. They are offering a 'webinar' (so many people can partake). This could be something that many U3A members, who may not have driven much at all for several months and now lack confidence, may be interested in. Please let your Network contact know – by Tuesday 11th August - if you would like to make this available to your members. I will be sent a link to the sessions, which can then be circulated.

The dates being offered are: 10am Tuesday 18th August and 10am Wednesday 26th August.

The session is in 3 parts:

1. Are you ready to get back on the road? Many people will only have taken short trips on local roads or may not have driven at all. It's estimated that half a million people have taken their cars off the road during lockdown (SORN).

2. Is your car ready for the road? How to carry out a Health check for your car.
3. Are other people ready for the road? Observation skills will be very important: cycle lanes will have appeared; there'll be more pedestrians and people jogging; people stepping off the kerb to observe social distancing; more people speeding. How to **Observe Anticipate Plan**

East Midlands Conference – 30th October

There is still no decision about whether or not this will be held. It is hard to know what the situation will be by then. The planning group continues to keep the situation under review. Watch this space!

I now have a Regional Support team, made up of experienced Trust volunteers with a great deal of experience of U3A. It is a strange time to be starting to work together, as we have only met together virtually, but the plan is that the team will support the work of the Trustee across the Region, sometimes deputising for me, but also working with others to start up new U3As, support existing U3As and helping with regional events. This team will also enable there to be greater continuity when a new Trustee takes over.

So from me, and them – Many thanks to you all for everything you continue to do.

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