

# NEWS BITES! DEC. 2019

*Sharing ideas across 34 U3As in Nottinghamshire*

## Peer Support Groups

If your U3A would like to host a Peer Group event please contact Paul Martinez [pkmartinez14@gmail.com](mailto:pkmartinez14@gmail.com)

To All U3As—It would be great, in 2020, to have some news from around the County. If you put on a special event or have some interesting news to share, please send a small article and photo to Newsbites—email at the bottom of this page.

### Nottinghamshire Network of U3As Arts Festival

The Nottinghamshire Network of U3As is planning an Arts Festival to take place over one full day in August 2020. The exact date is yet to be decided. The aim of the Day is for our members to present to each other, to celebrate and to enjoy our many and varied Arts Activities. A planning team has started work to achieve this, led by Rosie Allen.

**At this stage we are asking each U3A to look at their various Arts activities and suggest one or two aspects that they would like to demonstrate in some way or other.**

We are looking for a large venue that can be used flexibly, and we are thinking in terms of individual U3A workshops or displays in and around the venue, as well as a day-long programme of 'entertainment' which is Art focused, such as singing, acting, talks, and so on.

To help you think about this, we list below the kind of Arts activities we are looking to include, and the ways in which they might be presented (you may of course come up with additional ideas).

Possible Content: Dance, Art, Photography, Literature, Poetry, Drama, Music, Singing, Crafts, Creative writing, Comedy.....

Possible Presentations: short Workshops on 'how to', Stall type Displays, entertainment on stage at a specific time, opportunities to try something out, demonstrations, etc.

It would be helpful to have a specified link person in each U3A who the planning group can liaise with and who can take responsibility for seeing that their U3A delivers on proposed activities.

So, please could you forward the following information **by the beginning of January:**

- The name of your link person with contact details including your U3A name.
- Your initial thoughts and ideas on Arts activities you could demonstrate.

N.B. Don't feel that anything needs to be well thought out yet, we are looking for initial ideas

Emails, please, to Rosie Allen: [rosieallen21@outlook.com](mailto:rosieallen21@outlook.com)



### October Ageing Conference

#### Summary of the two keynote talks

In October, The Nottinghamshire Network of U3As held an Ageing Well Conference in association with the Nottingham University School of Psychology

Paula Moran kicked things off by bringing us up to date with current research on cognitive abilities. To summarise, in a normal healthy brain, our vocabulary continues to increase until around the age of 70, brain cells (grey matter) do decrease in older age but not by nearly as much as once was thought. White matter, where the pathways are, continue to increase until age 50 and, although they can then decrease, the hippocampus continues to produce neurons. These connections between brain areas are probably more important for cognition than the number of brain cells and they can be strengthened by learning (new learning like a language is preferable to repetitive brain exercises). Interestingly it has been found that older people use greater areas of their brains when doing a task rather than a small focused area as in younger brains, showing that the older brain can be exercised to compensate for its natural ageing.

After lunch the second keynote speaker was Eef Hogervorst, Professor of Psychology at Loughborough School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences. On her subject of Dementia, Eef signposted a list of things we can do to limit the risks of this disease (we cannot of course change some risk factors such as genetics). Essentially what are risks for the heart are also risks for the brain – diet, weight, high blood pressure, diabetes etc. On the positive side she gave us some pointers for a healthy lifestyle – sensible diet based on leafy green Mediterranean food, cycling and dancing are better for memory than is Sudoku, and a mix of strength and stretch exercise works best. Simple and easy exercises can be found on the internet – The BBC Couch Potato website, The Arthritis Foundation website has a series of seated exercises and a guide for walking with arthritis, and also google Eef Hogervorst to find her 10 minute Yoga routine on UTube.

