

u3a East Midlands Trustee

Newsletter

June 2022

I am writing this during the Jubilee weekend but also at the end of Volunteers Week, which makes it a very suitable time to thank you all for everything you continue to do to support the u3a movement through your own u3as and Networks. I know that some of you have held 'Picnics in the Park' this week and hope that you enjoyed them whilst also raising the profile of your u3a.



u3a week

The next opportunity for publicity and events is u3a week, which runs from September 17th – 24th, giving you the opportunity to plan your event at a convenient time for you. I know that some of the Networks in the East Midlands are planning joint events involving most of their u3as. Northamptonshire is involved in 'Walk a mile a member' and both Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire are planning events involving the passing on of a beacon. I really look forward to hearing more about those and it would also be wonderful to hear about events happening in other areas.

We are now fortunate to have a PR Adviser, Diana Lucas, from Northampton u3a. Diana has a great deal of experience with PR and you can contact her on:

pr.eastmids@u3a.org.uk

At the moment she would prefer to be contacted by email or to speak by phone or virtually, and would also be interested to meet groups of Publicity officers. She has spent a great deal of time looking at many of your websites and has asked me to pass on the following advice.

Advice on websites

After a quick look at every website on the region (over 100) I can see how you all present yourselves and where you are located. Whilst there are some excellent websites, I have the following significant observations:

- There is little recognition of the different audiences your websites are there to attract. Everything is there for everyone (the world) to see including tea making and unapproved minutes. I noted only three sites that actually considered this, where members sign in for access to additional information.
- There are numerous websites still using the old u3a logo. The strange thing is that some have used the new logo on their newsletter or vice versa. If everyone consistently uses the new branding across all materials it bonds the u3a organisation as a collective. Diluting the brand has the opposite effect.

- There are some whose colours, choice of fonts and in one case language ‘May we remind you ...’ are not just off putting but also make your content inaccessible to some audiences.
- Some sites had a great welcome; ‘Great you’ve found us!’ ‘Try before you buy’. Others sadly either gave no enticement to join or it was not easy to find joining instructions. You all need members to survive so it should be in your face on the landing page.
- There are 12 websites that are not secure sites, i.e., do not have a padlock on the address bar. This means they can be hacked. A particular concern as you are publishing peoples’ contact details and also this does not give a visitor confidence that they can safely do business with you.
- A general point – Content must be up to date. It is better to have less content than show a message in late May that says ‘Latest News: Hope to see you in February’.

Diane Lucas June '22

Network Link

The next Network Link meeting is on June 22nd. I do hope that someone from every Network attends as these are very helpful sessions. There has been a request to discuss how u3as prepare for an unexpected emergency, such as the illness of a Treasurer. Please bring your suggestions!

SPRING QUIZ GOES INTERNATIONAL

The 5th Zoom Quiz arranged by Leicestershire & Rutland Network of u3as, and the 3rd run in conjunction with the Northamptonshire Network was very successful. Wings were spread even wider and all u3as in the East Midland Region were invited to take part. And they certainly did! What I wasn't expecting was those taking part from Scotland, Austria and Dubai!

Around 100 members battled it out over 8 rounds of 10 questions each round which ranged from ‘The Written Word’ to ‘Ireland’ and ‘All About Chocolate’ to ‘Music Intros’. Some took part on their own, some as duos and some as teams of up to 4, with a handicap system to even things out. The very worthy winners (duo) came from Oundle u3a in Northamptonshire.

Feedback indicated that the quiz was enjoyed by all, with requests for a further one later in the year. It really was great to see members from all over the Region having an enjoyable evening together yet apart! Do watch out for information about the next one.

Roger Prescott Network Co-ordinator Leicestershire & Rutland Network

Anniversary certificates - Do contact the u3a office if you would like an anniversary certificate.

Support for u3as

A great deal of work is taking place to improve the national website, including the Advice section. You should find it easier to find what you need! Also do remember to keep looking at the ‘Events’ tab for details of workshops and other learning events.

Two notices from non_u3a organisations you may find interesting.

Family History conference – poster sent separately. Sept 17th Buxton. U3a members have attended in the past.

Festival of Arguments 13/18 June <https://www.practicaethics.ox.ac.uk/festival> If you are interested in discussions on Ethics, follow this link.

I can be contacted on: jean.hogg@u3a.org.uk or phone: 0744 322 1688

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The Third Age Trust

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