

**NOTES FROM MARGARET TAYLOR ON THE NOTTS. NETWORK MEETING 26.04.17.**  
**ON COMMUNICATION**

Attending – Jeremy Lloyd, Rosie Allen, Rita Foulkes, Margaret Taylor, Peter Edge, Margot Gale, Jane Pavier and 41 representatives from 21 U3As.

Apologies were received from Bingham U3A, Newark & District U3A and Jenny Greaves.

Apologies also for the microphone system not working as efficiently as usual as the gentleman who usually sets this up was on holiday.

This meeting was aimed at Communication and it was a pleasure to welcome Sam Mauger, the Chief Executive of the Third Age Trust to come and speak to us. This was the first meeting of a Network attended by Sam Mauger and she explained that she was very new to the post of Chief Executive of the Third Age Trust but was looking forward to working together with its members.

To start the conversation she gave a brief description on her previous roles and experience and the role of the 7 staff members at National Office. She highlighted the different reasons why members contacted National Office – information on insurance and whether some groups were appropriate due to the Health & Safety aspects, interpretation of the Constitution, members wanting to set up new U3As, people wanting to join their local U3A and troubleshooting any problems at individual U3As. She explained about the “shop” where the biggest seller by far was the diary and the “Resource Centre” which was full of information which could be downloaded to help U3As. Their work also included the annual Conference, Workshops and Summer Schools.

She explained that telephone calls and emails were varied and that it had been decided to employ a part-time person on communication whose 3 main tasks would be:-

- Working with the Trust to enable them to have better communication methods
- Working with U3As
- Helping everyone to publicise the U3A

Part of this process would be the “mailings” sent to Business Secretaries and Sam asked the Notts. Representatives to consider alternatives to the “paper” copies sent out, perhaps to start using email bulletins. Several other suggestions were put forward – improving on the web site, having on line questionnaire which should be short, useful but relevant, using social media e.g. Face Book and Twitter and updating information held at National Office especially in leaflet form. The format of the information could be reviewed with the “Administrative” side of information only being sent to the Business Secretaries with other information being sent in alternative ways.

However the same problem kept arising that if the contacts did not pass on information Committee Members and Membership did not know what was happening outside of their own individual U3As. It was clear that some U3As did not know about the National Web Site, the “Blue Book” of information which all Chairmen had received and one member admitted that she was not aware of the information sent to Business Secretaries.

It was stressed that it is not the National Office's intention to tell U3As what to do etc. but it was evident that sometimes little or no information was getting to all members. How can this be achieved in the future. Sam asked for any ideas and suggestions be sent to her.

After the break Rosie Allen and Paul Martinez gave short presentations on what impact the opening of a new U3A near to them had on their individual U3As which were very well received.

Rosie also advertised the roles of the Regional Volunteers who are currently being trained. They could choose between Opening new U3As, Organising Workshops, Troubleshooting problems within U3As or doing the whole three sections. More volunteers are needed and anyone interested should get in touch with Jane Pavier, the Regional Trustee or any Network Officer.

Following on from the previous presentations Sam spoke about how new U3As came about and how "new" members came to U3As. Do U3As raise the U3A Profile? It was mentioned that an edited version of the DVD from National Office could be shown at Coffee Mornings, word of mouth usually meant that membership of a U3A was on-going, could more publicity be put in hospitals and/or Doctor's surgeries as most U3As dealt with keeping fit and active, National Office should be putting out publicity nationally as well as U3As doing this on a local basis. Sam agreed that the profile of the U3A movement should be raised so that there should be more telephone calls about joining the U3A and everyone should be aware of the U3A as they are with other organisations e.g. Samaritans, Mind, Age UK etc.

As someone said at the end the U3A is a "youth club for recycled teenagers".

Sam was thanked for coming and taken for lunch before her journey back to London. Following a letter of thanks Sam's response was that "it had been a pleasure to be with you and meet members who are full of enthusiasm and ideas and is looking forward to lots more work with you in the future".

Extra items –

Information on a display at Mansfield Museum when 7 U3As in the Mansfield Area, the North Notts. Neighbourhood Group, helped in a community project on Health & Well Being. This was well publicised in the last News Bites which has recently been circulated.

Leaflets regarding Reboot – a survey being carried out by Nottingham University re stress and anxiety were distributed following the information recently circulated from the Network.

The Officers are hoping that members will bring ideas and recommendations to the next meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> July on how to improve communication especially to and from and Network and to ensure that the contact representatives are passing on information to Committee Members and Membership of their individual U3As.

Some recommendations already received:-

- When emailing or replying please put on name of your U3A
- Please update all contacts to the Notts. County Contact when there are any Committee changes and/or Network Representative changes.