

## **Peer Support Groups**

Notts Network is lucky to have 8 Peer Support Groups (PSGs) running. These groups do exactly what is said in the title: they are gatherings of members from u3as in Nottinghamshire which belong to our Network. Each is “hosted” by a fellow member and the purpose of the group is to support the others by getting together for a meeting and/or setting up a WhatsApp or alternative group.

Everything about the way the PSG is run is determined by the group, so that includes the topics under discussion and the frequency of meetings.

PSGs are invaluable for us all as they provide a source of help and the ability to undertake a quick straw poll of opinion. They can help when working out how to tackle a particular issue. They can be of particular benefit for a new committee member although we must always take care to ensure the advice we are being given is up to date.

### **Chairs Peer Support Group:**

The first zoom meeting of this group after a break is imminent. Those who have signed up to join us include experienced Chairs and newly appointed so that sounds a really good mix of expertise and fresh ideas. Topics listed for future discussion are:

- Recruiting new committee members
- How to increase attendance by younger members at monthly meetings
- Inclusion – approaches for connecting with a diverse membership
- Hybrid main meetings: how to set these up
- Restarting monthly and Interest Group meetings
- How to do a good handover

If you would like to be included contact Rosie Allen at [rosieallen21@outlook.com](mailto:rosieallen21@outlook.com)

### **Publicity Peer Support Group:**

This group has been running for 6 months now and is particularly successful in opening up new strategies for many of us which include considering ways to use social media.

Future meetings are likely to begin looking at ways we can work together to improve our publicity with a Network approach.

Our contact for this group is Chris Niven, Eastwood u3a at [chrisniven1@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:chrisniven1@yahoo.co.uk)

### **Websites Peer Support Group:**

This group ran very helpfully for a while, but it is now felt that there is no need for two PSGs on this topic and so members are welcome to join the Publicity group.

### **Interest Group Coordinators Peer Support Group**

I have hosted this PSG during lockdown. We have held intermittent meetings which have been appreciated by the membership. Around 22 of the Notts u3as have been involved. We have discussed a wide range of topics. Although we probably haven't solved too many specific problems, because the approaches taken by the different u3as to lockdown issues have been so diverse, there has been some useful sharing of information on, for example, Zoom licences and operational issues. The main benefit of the PSG has been in helping all of us to realise that many of the issues that we have battled with during lockdown, such as communications with group leaders, finding out what groups are actually doing, group leaders not wanting to embrace virtual meetings, interpretation of revised Government guidelines on procedures, have all been common to the different u3as and simply exchanging our experiences has been useful. Our next meeting will be in September (date not yet decided).

Contact Joe Colls at [wbu3a,newgroups1@gmail.com](mailto:wbu3a,newgroups1@gmail.com)

### **Speaker Seeker Peer Support Group**

Notts u3a speaker seekers and finders have been recommending good speakers to each other for a couple of years now. The group operates online through a google group.

If your u3a is not accessing all the hot tips from this group, you can join by emailing Paul Fileman ([paul.fileman@btinternet.com](mailto:paul.fileman@btinternet.com)), who is the group administrator.

A further reason to join – if one were needed – is that you will be able to see all the recommendations already shared by the group members.

Paul Martinez

### **Secretaries Peer Support Group**

Hello, I organise the Secretary Peer Support Group for the Notts Network. We have been meeting monthly via zoom since December 2020, and have covered a range of issues and questions, e.g. issues around the new constitutions, recruitment activities, fees, quick ways to approach the admin around meetings.

We have found it really useful to have a group of people with a wealth of knowledge and experience at their finger tips, willing to help with advice. This advice comes back quickly and efficiently, either at the meeting or via our Whatsapp group. As a relatively new Secretary, I personally have found this help really welcome, as you can feel as though you have been dumped in the deep end sometimes! It is also interesting to discover the differences between the groups, and the differing approaches. It makes you realise that for some questions there is not a black and white answer, but rather to decide what works best for your u3a's members.

Now that we are allowed to do more, with the relaxation in the covid restrictions, we have altered the monthly rotation and will now have a break till September, and beyond that maybe meet not quite as regularly, but I am sure it will not cease

entirely. If you are not already part of this group I would recommend you give it a try. We run very informally and our PSG is a welcoming and inclusive forum.

Yvonne Haynes, Secretary West Bridgford u3a [wbu3asec@gmail.com](mailto:wbu3asec@gmail.com)

### **Membership Peer Support Group**

This is a forum where Membership Secretaries can discuss topics and share experience relevant to their role. In addition, this meeting will provide an opportunity for us all to get to know each other a little better. At the first meeting in May they discussed smartcards and scanners.

A WhatsApp group has been set up which members are finding very useful.

A meeting is imminent and if you would like to be included the host is Andy Bebbington of Ravenshead u3a.

### **Treasurers Peer Support Group**

It is with regret that David Vanner, current Chairman of the Treasurers' Support Group and myself have made a decision not to continue with this Support Group for the time being. This is mainly due to the fact that the size of the Group depreciated at each meeting. members were starting to go on their holidays and we were not coming up with ideas for future agenda items to be discussed.

However this does not mean to say that the group is permanently closed and we hope that the Treasurers of all the Network u3as would be willing to review the situation later in the year to see if it is worthwhile the Support Group continuing.

We should be obliged therefore, if you could inform the members at the next Network meeting and ask that when the Minutes go out to all u3as in the Network, that the Treasurers are also informed of the current situation.

In the meantime, if anyone does wish to get in touch about this Group, can they please contact me in the first instance. Thank you.

Margaret Taylor, Treasurer, Sherwood u3a email [cynthiamargarettaylor@gmail.com](mailto:cynthiamargarettaylor@gmail.com)

At the Network meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> July there were expressions of interest in resurrecting this group. If anyone is interested in doing that please copy in [rosieallen21@outlook.com](mailto:rosieallen21@outlook.com) to your email to Margaret Taylor and we will see what we can do.