

How to guide: Using Facebook adverts

Introduction

2.5 million people use Facebook every month¹ and it's acknowledged by many reputable sources as the world's most cost-effective way of advertising digitally. It can be an easy, cheap and effective way of recruiting new u3A members. Your budget can be as little as £10. **You will have to pay for advertising on Facebook**, but *you are in control of how much that payment will be.* .

This guide explains how to create Facebook Ads, and gives a case study from a u3a group that used them successfully.

The advantage of Facebook Ads is that you can see how many people (with Facebook accounts) your advert will reach, before you decide to spend any money. You can literally see what you will get for your budget, and Facebook will not exceed that budget. Facebook will send your advert to a targeted audience that you have defined, and let you know how many people respond. How many responses you get depends on the quality of your advert.

Section 1 explains how to set up and send a Facebook ad.

Section 2 describes how to design a Facebook ad.

This guide is our first draft. We will be collecting feedback in order to create an improved version for use by u3as. Your experiences of using the guide are of vital importance. **Please send your suggestions for improvement to Jean Jackson at feedback@u3a.org.uk.**

You could literally write a book on why and how to promote something via Facebook, and many people have. But the best way of finding out what you can do is to search **Facebook help**, because **Facebook is constantly evolving and updating its advice.**

Types of Facebook ads: things to think about

Some types of Facebook ads work only on mobile devices; if you choose those that work on all options, you will reach more people.

Adverts with movement attract MUCH more attention, so although image ads are Ok, video or slideshow ads attract much more interest: video dominates the internet.²

The easiest way to create a quick video is to film a clip of your team in action, using a phone. You'll need their permission to use their image. These days you may have to gather individuals' videos taken on phones. Make sure they hold their phones horizontally, not vertically, when filming.

¹ Hootsuite/We Are Social quarterly guide, [Digital 2020 October Global Statshot Report](#)

² Hootsuite Annual report on the latest global trends in social media, 2020

If you don't want to create video, create a slideshow from your images or photographs. Slideshow ads use much less bandwidth³ than video so load well for people *with slow internet connections*. You can create slideshows via Google docs or PowerPoint, etc.

When you create a Facebook Ad, make it very clear what action you want people to take. Ideally, offer more than one option about how they can respond, e.g. "send for more details", and offer the opportunity to attend an event or meeting.

P.S. Make sure the ad's "on-brand", i.e. use your u3a logo, new colours etc.

Planning your promotional campaign

STEP 1: Define what you want to achieve, quantify it if you can, be specific.

- e.g. Recruit at least 10 more u3a members - **OK**

The more specific you are, the easier it is to plan appropriate action. It makes it easier to think about your audience and what might appeal to them, e.g. if you have spaces in your gardening group, then you might focus your efforts on that and change your aim to

- Recruit at least 10 more members for our Gardening group – **BETTER**
(*we can start a second group if we over-recruit*)

STEP 2: Work out what your offer is: what makes it attractive?

Gardening Group benefits – what's most attractive to new members?

- Cheap weekly meetings - £2/session; central location, easy to get to
- Garden visits, Gardening talks
- Exchange plants; plant sales
- Is part of a local group (u3a) with more interest groups that you can join

– if you have related groups e.g. like a "Garden visits Group" or "National Trust Outings" then mention them – your advert needs to be as attractive as possible.

STEP 3: Who is your target audience? Age, location, interests? You have to specify the characteristics of the people who will receive your Facebook advert.

Age range You need to define the range of ages of the Facebook users to whom you want your advert to be sent.

Location: within driving distance of OurTown – 10 miles? (you may need to know the nearby villages' or suburbs' names) Increase this to widen your audience.

Interests : look at the options that Facebook offers under the **Interests** tab.

³ **Bandwidth** is the amount of information that an internet connection can handle per second.

STEP 4 Set your budget and schedule

Facebook is great at maximising your investment and controlling spend for you. You set a budget (£10 is a likely minimum – try it and see what returns you get) and Facebook will keep you to it. You can adjust it daily if you want to.

BUT bear in mind that Facebook charges your account each time an ad is **delivered** to an account, not necessarily looked at. Some of the accounts may be dormant.

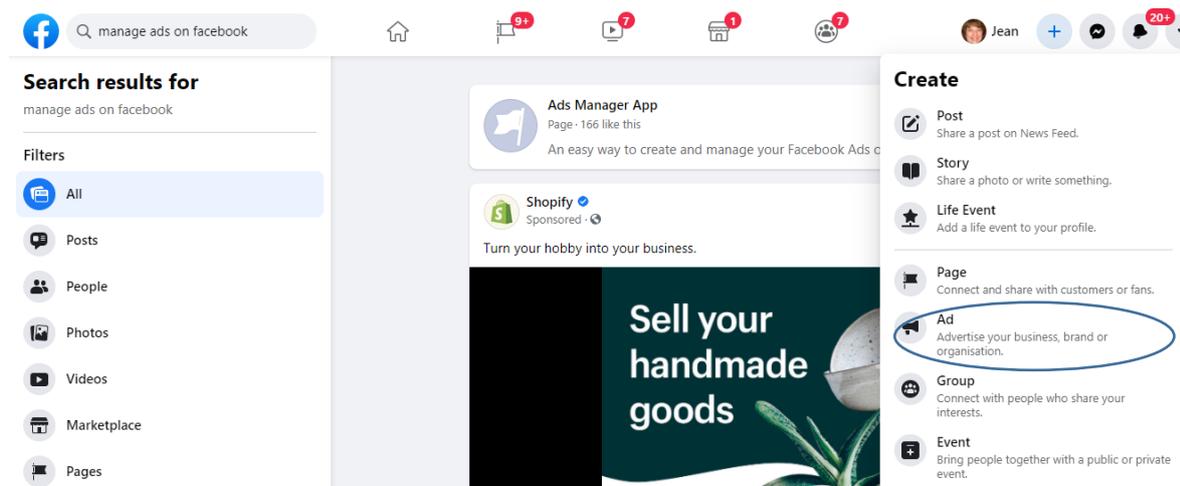
Keep an eye on your ad as it's running: if it's not getting the results you'd like, you may want to edit it or upload a new ad. How much you spend is entirely a function of how many people to whom you are advertising, with the characteristics you have defined.

A step-by-step guide to creating and sending your Facebook ad

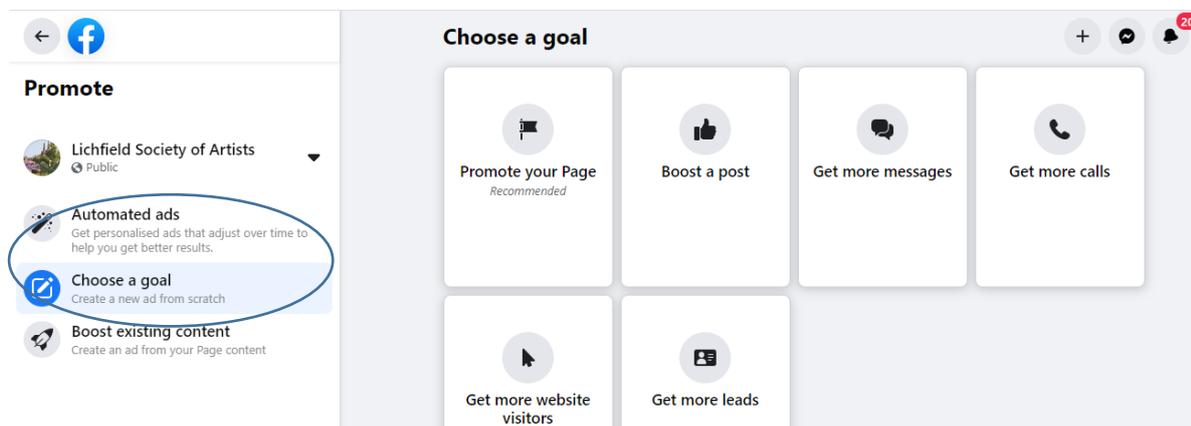
NOTE: You need to be a Facebook Admin to set up the ads. You'll need to use **Facebook Ads Manager**, so if you get stuck, that's the help to look for.

Find **“Manage Ads”** in the drop-down menu on your Facebook account.

Where that is can vary according to how your page or group is set up, so look around your Facebook account menu. Usually you press the **Plus sign** next to your picture to bring up the **Create** menu – you'll see **Ad** there.



Create either an Automated ad (Section 1 of this doc) or a new ad (Section 2)

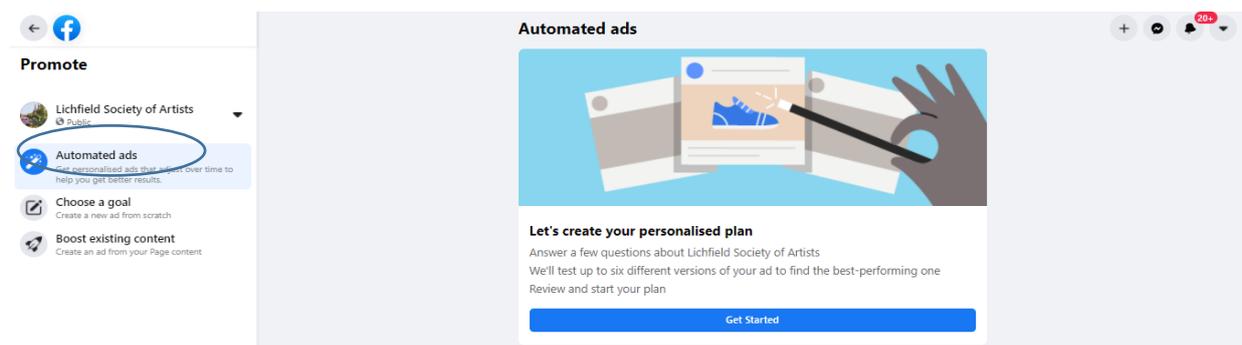


SECTION 1: Step by Step: create your Facebook ad

Automated Ads

The easiest way of creating an effective ad campaign on Facebook is via **Automated Ads**. Facebook will ask you questions and offer you options. This guide helps you think through in advance what your responses may be to the many questions asked.

Click Automated Ads, answer the questions, and most of the work is done for you – although you still need to decide what your ad’s message is.



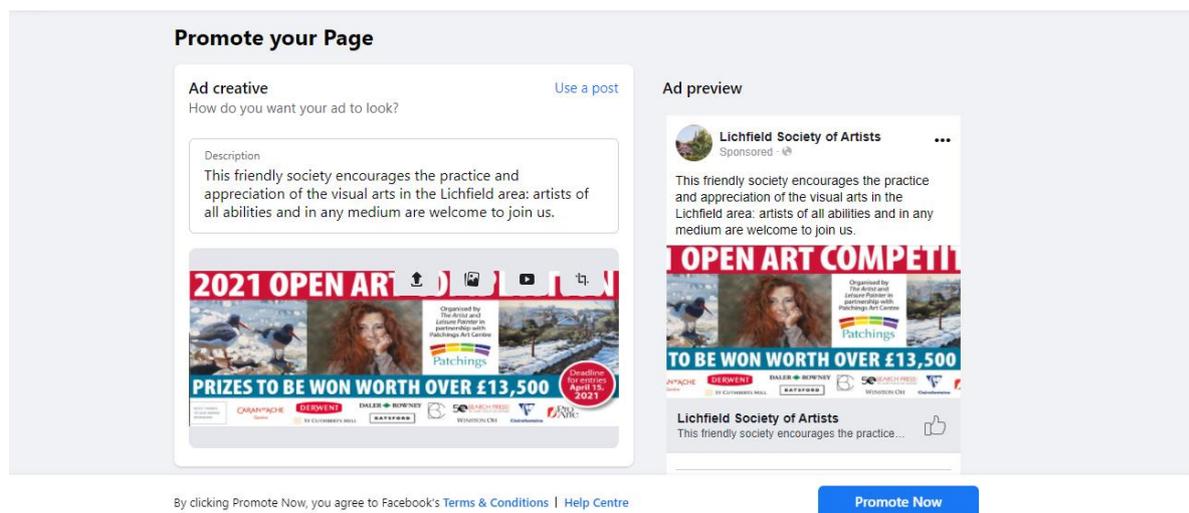
Creating a Facebook Ad

Facebook recommends that you use a Page, or a post on a Page, as an advert.

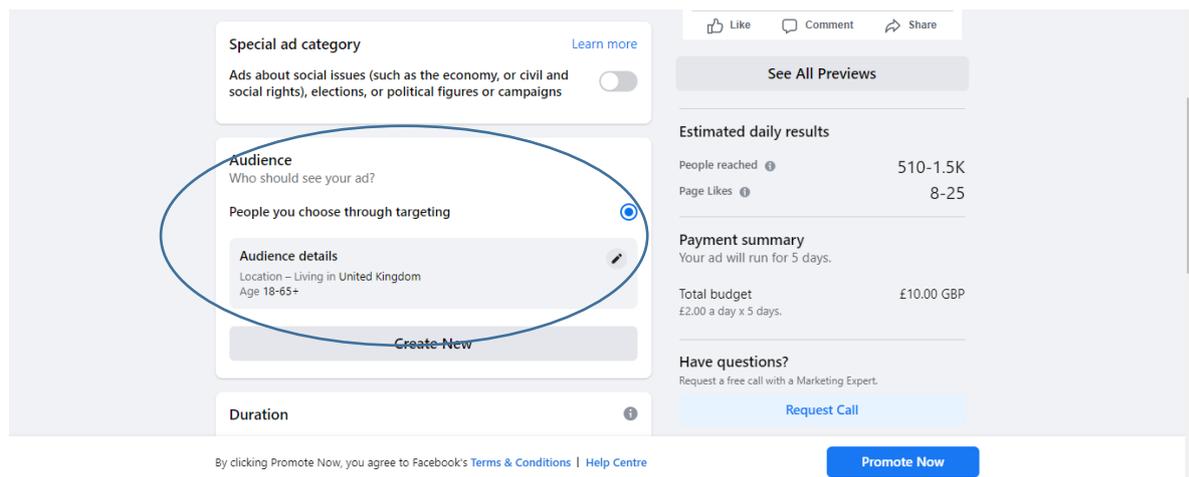
You might want to set up a special Page, linked to your Facebook Group, to attract people who you want to respond to your advert. It might be a Page for a special event. Bear in mind that Pages are open – anyone can see them and join in what happens there, whereas your Group may be closed to anyone who isn’t a u3a member.

Information on designing your Facebook ad is in Section 2.

Facebook shows you how your ad might look, based on a Page:

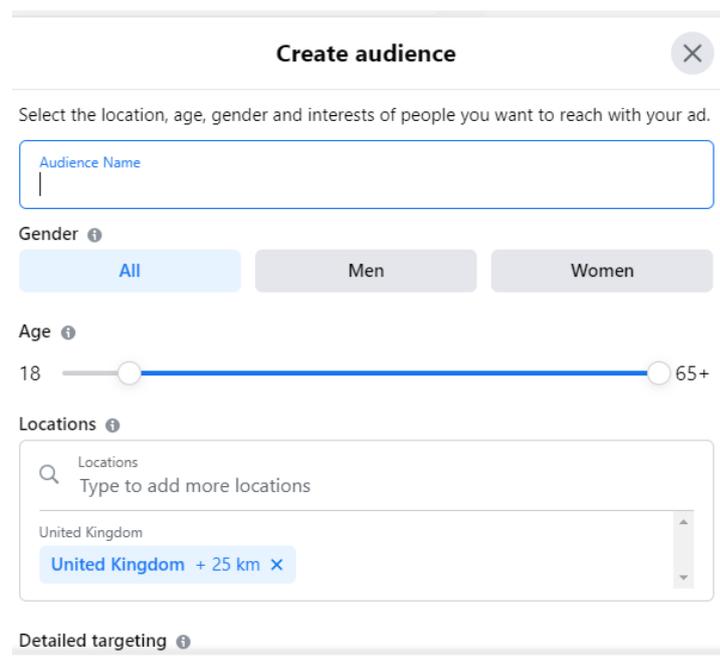


This is how further down this section looks ...



You choose the **Audience** for your ad. To the right, you see the options offered by Facebook. In this case – and the projection will vary depending on your group - it says if you run an ad for 5 days and spend £10, then this is your likely reach: 510-1500 people. You can even request a free call with a Facebook Marketing Expert to find out more – see “Request Call.”

Click on **Create New**.



You can see the options to Create your audience.

The primary options are location and age group. Don't be offended that Facebook doesn't recognise age beyond 65 – at the moment this is a standard marketing age-category. In future the over 65s may be subdivided by age group, but not yet. You search for information that's recorded in Facebook. As you make your choices, look at the audience size indicator on the right of the screen, showing your potential reach.

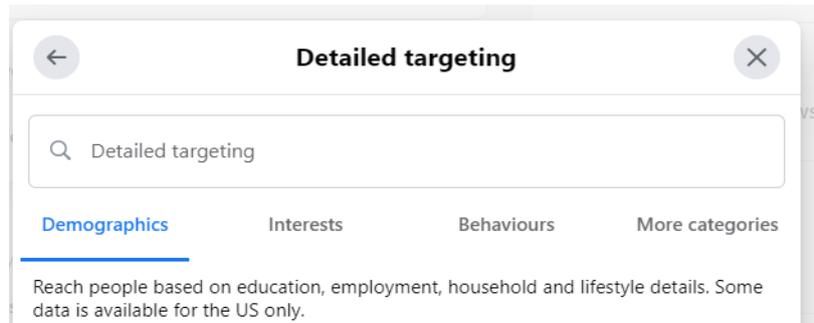
NOTE: Targeting is a blunt tool: many Facebook accounts are dormant, yet your ad will still be sent to them if they meet your criteria. From 1000 people you might get a 5% response, i.e. from 50, then maybe 15 will follow through. You need big numbers.

Be realistic about the response you expect. It's likely to be 2%-5% of the total.

Detailed targeting

As you can see, there are other options but let's keep it simple and work through interests. You can include people based on the **interests** that they recorded on their Facebook account. The more targeted your offer, the more likely it is to succeed.

“Join our u3a gardening club” is a more targeted offer than “join our u3a”, as you can then target exactly the kind of people whose **interests** match what that group offers.



Business and industry

Entertainment

Family and relationships

Fitness and wellness

Food and drink

Hobbies and activities

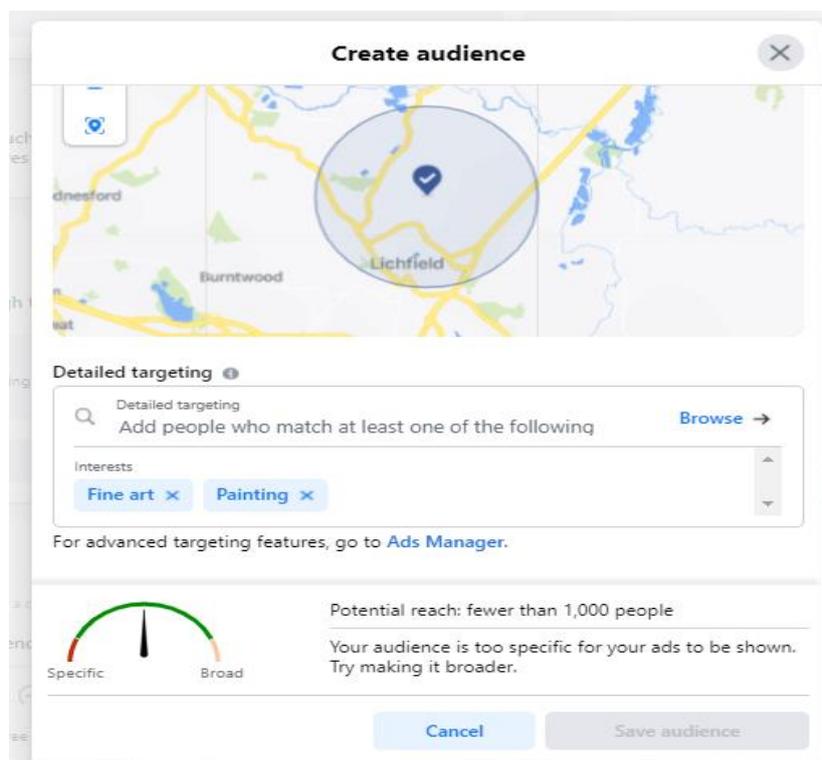
Arts and music

Current events

You'll end up with a list. It may be too big or too small – play with your location, age group, the range of interests, until you succeed. Bear in mind you need big numbers. Facebook will advise you what to do - see adjacent example.

Paying for Ads

Once you're happy with your ad, pay for it using a credit card. You will receive automatic reports on the ad's progress.



SECTION 2: Design a Facebook ad

N.B. For extensive advice about Facebook ads, endorsed by Facebook, go to [Wordstream](#). This Guide is an overview and does not describe all the many options.

Let's assume you want to create a brand-new ad, perhaps on a brand-new Page.

Ad: the basics

1. It needs to be visually appealing, clear, with a clear message about what to do.
2. It must have a photo or a slideshow; maybe a video clip. Because images and slideshows use less bandwidth, they load faster so may be a better choice.
3. The image size limit is about **12MB**, although video can be **2GB**.
4. Video should be MP4 or MOV. Images should be about 1200x628 pixels, with little or no overlaid text – it slows the download. Aspect ratio is widescreen.

If you can, test your advert before you post it: show it to people, ask them to criticise it so that it can be improved. Would they respond to it? Why not?

Facebook offers several options to help you create your advert. First, choose a format.

1. **Carousel**: an advert with 2 or more images or videos that move round
2. **Single image**: up to 6 variations of your advert can use the same 1 image
3. **Single video**: an advert with one video
4. **Slideshow**: a looping video advert with up to 10 images that never stop
5. **Canvas**: combines images and videos

Once you've chosen your format, add your content. It needs to say clearly what you're offering, what the benefits are (why bother?) and what to do next. Don't just invite people to a meeting – that might be daunting; also offer “send for more details”, which requires less commitment. Tell them why Gardening Group is great – and needs them!

Place your order – and afterwards

Once your Ad is ready, submit it by clicking “**Place Order**” at the bottom right of the page. You pay via credit card. You get an email from Facebook once it's live. Results should begin to arrive within 3 days. Normally you run your ad for at least 5 days.

Monitor it – you should have some recipients that you KNOW, who can give feedback. You may be one of them yourself. If you're not getting results, experiment – edit your ad or replace it. Facebook will send you charts showing how your ad is performing: see the following case study.

Think about what could be improved: was timing a factor? There are best times to post an advert: try what works best for you. Good luck!

CASE STUDY: Using Facebook Ads

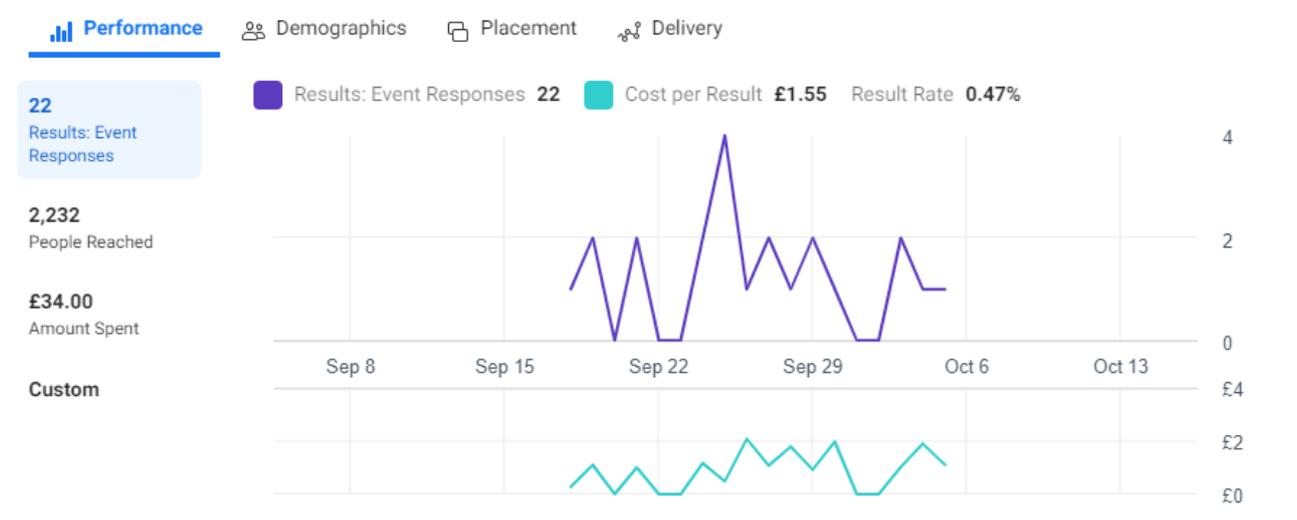
In 2018, Sherburn and Villages u3a was celebrating its 10th anniversary, a landmark we wanted to share with the community, and so in good u3a tradition we set up a working party to think about what to do and how to do it.

We always have an open day in October but that year decided to go for a bigger better open day on a Sunday where we could welcome anyone and everyone no matter how old they were and no matter whether they were working or not – to get the message about the u3a across to the whole community. We showcased our groups, had workshops & entertainment: everyone is a potential member.

We'd never used Facebook ads before but the pricing made it worth investigating. Some of the best features are the ways in which you can see exactly what you are getting for your money, who is seeing your ads and what response you are getting.

It's also quite intuitive. As you create an event or a post, you see a little box saying "boost event" "or "boost post" and if you click through, all options become available.

The reports are clear too: you can see exactly how much you're spending and who's seeing your ad. Here's one of the charts that showed us what we got for our money:



As you can see, the reports showed that the majority of people seeing the ad were over 50, although it was our intention to get the message out to everyone, and **at £34 to reach 2,232 people we were happy with the result.**

After the event we were simply delighted with the attendance and the general success of the day. It was very gratifying then to see that our membership shot up and surprisingly for us, took us into the top reporting u3as for new members in 2019.

It can't be said that Facebook ads were the only the key to our success, but they certainly were a part of it. We asked everyone how they had heard of us at our event. One lady said she had seen it everywhere, and that was great! We think we blitzed the

area so that one way or another, the message got out. We marshalled the troops and got out there posting leaflets through letterboxes and handing them out at local events, putting up posters and hanging banners. These are all things which require a great deal of person power. Facebook ads, by comparison, are easy and take very little effort and of course you can do it from your armchair.

All you need a Facebook page and a budget and a few minutes and away you go.

We all know that the number of Facebook users is growing: in August 2020 Facebook reported 43.54 million people used the service in the UK and a huge proportion of those people fall into the bracket we would like to come along and join us.

So why not investigate and give it a go as part of your recruitment campaign?

Margaret Fiddes

Sherburn and Villages u3a

(printed with their permission)