

April 2021 Newsletter to U3A Members by Email; Roger Poole, Chair Alsager U3A

This Month – Meetings restarting , Glennis retiring, but U3A alive – just not the same

Welcome to our April Newsletter. Outside groups have restarted so over 20 groups are now active. 8 group leaders, Glennis & Eleanor are retiring – having served our U3A so well. So these activities need new helpers to be able to continue. We welcome Pam Rayworth to committee, bringing it nearer to full strength.

► Our 24th Year – here but smaller: a changing U3A needs more helpers with fresh ideas

It is great to be able to write this newsletter to our 2021 membership. Even though most Groups have not been able to meet in person for a whole year, we still have a thriving society. Fewer members have renewed than in previous years – but this was anticipated. The main thing is that Alsager U3A is still here for retirees who are looking for new activities in retirement – and once we are able to meet in person we anticipate more members wanting to join.

This past year has been radically different in how we have been able to operate: most groups were suspended, committee and several groups met via ZOOM and membership renewal was totally on line or postal. Our new Website went live just after the first lockdown, and our Website news team have done a great job – which hasn't been appreciated as much as we would have wished. We are now developing the next stage of the website, to highlight our Groups.

As we resume we will be supporting all our groups, but their needs in the new Post- Covid environment may not be what they were before. Getting together inside in big groups may have to wait, and many groups need new leaders to continue. As we evolve towards the U3A for the next 24 years, we will be very grateful for the past that has got us here. However we also need new helpers to enable outings to resume, and we need to review our communications to our members and to those outside U3A: what is needed and how best to deliver it – via Website, Magazine, Newsletter or flyers. So if you wish to know more about our vacancies, or may be able to volunteer – please contact me by email, chair@alsageru3a.org.uk.

❖ Committee News: Pam Rayworth joins, Membership for 2021, Outside Groups restart

► Pam Rayworth joins the committee

April Committee elected Pam Rayworth to the committee – to fill one of our vacancies as a Trustee until the AGM. The Committee as Trustees are responsible to the Charity Commission for the governance of our society, and as our U3A executive responsible for overseeing the running the society, enabling our Groups, which are the heart of the U3A movement, to flourish.

► 2021 Membership

Christine – our membership secretary – reported that we had 708 members as of April 1st: the day that annual U3A "census" is taken. In the past few years up to 100 members have not rejoined for many different reasons with a similar number of new members joining because of the activities on offer. This year, where we have not been able to meet in person, not been meeting at the Civic, and with no outings, we anticipated this number would be lower. Our membership secretary is also now responsible for banking the membership fees, as part of our process of reducing the load on the treasurer. **Our grateful thanks to Christine for the magnificent work in renewing all our members remotely:** previously the Help Desk has been a hub for renewals.

► Groups restarting: full group information on our website: www.alsageru3a.org./

Groups meeting outside have restarted – in accordance with advice and guidance from the Government and sports associations: Alan our Groups Co-ordinator has led us on these issues, and advises committee and groups when and where these conditions are met, and he reported that our outside groups were able to restart in April.

The next step in the governments plan for easing restrictions is planned for May 17th – when, subject to the conditions being met, inside sports groups are expected to be able to restart.

Our grateful thanks to Alan for his leadership in co-ordinating our groups.

► Coming soon – new Group information pages on the Website

New pages are being produced for our Website to give up to date information about all our groups with a modern look and feel. This is being produced by our Groups team – Pam Abbott and Alan Bell, in conjunction with ThenMedia the company providing us with our Website. We are hopeful that this will be available within the next month – possibly before you get the next Newsletter.

This is the first of three incremental upgrades to our Website, to refresh how we provide information and communicate with members and prospective members.

► April Magazine

This is being posted to all our members: we are grateful to Eleanor for editing this shorter form edition of the magazine: the shorter form autumn edition on the theme of Canterbury Tales was greatly appreciated. However Eleanor has decided to stand down, and Alsager U3A is really grateful for all her work over the 6 years that she has edited the Magazine.

So this is a changing point – and committee are keen to review the future for the Magazine. With our new website, news and information can readily be provided to all our on line members, but the magazine gives a more permanent record. Once we are able to meet again we avoid the cost of postage – but do we have a need for the magazine? Is there someone with the vision and ability to be our next editor?

❖ **Glennis will be retiring this year**

Glennis Roper has decided to retire from running our Outings – after a U3A lifetime in this role! Running up to 24 trips a year this has been a magnificent contribution to our U3A, and she has taken thousands of us away to magic places. Just reading past editions of the magazine gives a picture of some of these trips.

Our society will always be indebted to Glennis for this tour de force, where the work Glennis has been doing could take may be 4 people to fulfil.

So another vacancy to put on our board of vacancies: again we would love to hear from anyone who feels able to contribute to a team effort to carry on this marvellous work with Glennis still here we will not be short of a mentor and guide as to what to do.

With Best Wishes to all our Members , Roger

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