

2021 New Year Newsletter - Welcome to the New U3A Membership Year

Best wishes to all our members for a Safe New Year - Roger Poole

A New Year: time to renew Membership, join a new Interest Group, survive Lockdown.

❖ **2021 - Our 24th U3A Year**: One of several “New Years” in U3A

- **Membership Year** - You Pay your Subs to carry on coming to groups & getting this EMAIL.
- **Committee Year** - one AGM till the Next – we file an “annual” report & elect trustees
- **Financial Year** September to August so the accounts can be ready for the AGM

❖ **New Membership year – a time to re-enrol and explore new classes**

We are now starting our 24th Year in a very different way from all the other 23. Membership renewal has traditionally been based round the Help Desk on Monday Mornings – where you could not only renew your membership but get full details of all our interest groups and trips and outings. The Lockdown has made this year unique – preventing us doing this and meeting each other. But with the Beacon membership system and the Website we have new ways of interacting with our members and giving you information. So whereas previously most groups restarted in the new year, this year only those able to meet via Networking are able to run.

Membership of U3A and of Interest Groups - is a two way contract: the society offers facilities and oversight, the member **pays a sub** to cover the society / groups costs, and takes an active part. The Society has use of the members contact details only for membership purposes – by law (GDPR – recommended reading for insomniacs or as an exercise in writing plain English). Traditionally our Open Day at the end of November was an opportunity to explore what other interest groups had to offer – as most of them set up displays and stalls in the Hall. This year we could not do that – so this has been taken up by our Groups Website team, who are preparing a new Groups page to allow you to easily see what our groups have to offer..

We are now 9 days into the New Year – and well over 400 members have renewed! – This is great as it shows confidence in our U3A even though meetings are off for the moment, and gives us permission to stay in touch. Congratulations to Christine Membership secretary for achieving this: and for getting all the subs money into the bank. **It would be great if others wishing to rejoin could do that during January** – so that we can get a feel where our U3A will be in 2021, and avoid issuing reminders. If you have decided not to join please let Christine know.

❖ **Alsager U3A in 2021 - Lockdown and beyond - What are we doing – what can we do?**

We enter 2021 in full lockdown, brought on by the spread of the new version of the Virus, with devastating consequences. But the vaccines are now giving a glimmer of hope, firstly that the most vulnerable people, which includes many in U3A, will be safer, and that this may lead to a lessening of the restrictions. Realistically this is likely to first allow outdoor activities and meetings, then indoor meetings subject to distancing, and may take a long time, if ever - to get back to where we used to be.

Website Upgrade Plans The likely impact on our U3A is that whereas individual groups may restart, we will not be back to our Monday mornings at the civic any time soon – maybe not before September. In this situation, we are planning the second phase update of our website, with the aim of being able to find out and do everything that could be done on Monday mornings. More details will follow next month.

❖ **Group News**

With lockdown all outdoor groups, and indoor meetings have had to be suspended., However several of our Indoor groups are meeting by Networking - see the Group news on the Website for more information – note only indoor groups are active.



We are grateful to all our group leaders – who had to endure all the problems of starting and stopping again. At the moment no meetings can occur, but several groups are still active via the WEB, and full information is available on the Website News pages.

❖ **Group Leaders stepping down**

The following group leaders are retiring or wish to retire, many after having served our society for many years in these and other roles. The whole society is very grateful for all their work. The different Interest groups help Alsager U3A to be a richer and more diverse society for new members to join.

Madeline Hughes - Bird Watching.:
Celia Abbotts - Philately:
Pam Freeman - Poetry and Literature:
Hilary Fleming - Spanish:
Barbara Eardley - Tap Dancing:
Keith Wilkes - Walking Full Days: **Margaret Taylor** - Walking Short Walks:

❖ **Groups seeking new leaders and members**

Apart from Walking, the above groups are now seeking new leaders to take the groups forward, as so far current members of these groups feel unable to take this role. So anyone with the skill and ability to help in this respect please get in touch - via our Group Liaison – with the respective groups.

Similarly several groups would now welcome new members – to strength a depleted core membership: an opportunity maybe for other members to do something new this year?

❖ **Sad news of members**

The society is very grateful to Anne Amphlett our Almoner for expressing the condolences of the society to all those families where a member has very sadly passed away, and for expressing sympathy with those who are not well.

These events are very sad and personal, so we do not circulate this information, except in special circumstances. One such is the very sudden passing of Stephen Wade, son in law to Glennis Roper, and Glennis has asked us to circulate the following to all our members:

"I would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to telephone me, to write to me, or send flowers and cards to me following the sudden untimely death of my dear son-in-law, Stephen who suffered a fatal coronary heart attack the day before his 55th Birthday last month. Christmas and New Year have been very hard especially for Jan and the family but we are grateful for all the love and support that we have received."

Glennis Roper

❖ **Keeping in touch with Members**

Staying in touch at this time of lockdown is very important to everyone. Therefore we seek the help of ALL our members to contact those that are unable to receive our EMAIL communications. So if you are able to do this, - just for one member – that would express the ethos of the U3A movement as a society of friends with common interests.

This Newsletter will go to our members on EMAIL, but this does miss 140 of our members. so where you can keep in touch by phone during lockdown at this time that would be good.

Wishing all members a Safe & Happy New Year Roger