

OUR SURVEY OF CONFIDENCE

THANK you to everyone who replied to the survey of member confidence in starting up group activities once again.

Your Management Committee decided that they needed some clear idea of the willingness of members to resume group activities, with some small groups starting around 1 October, if all Government guidelines could be achieved and Third Age Trust (our parent body) requirements met. I volunteered to undertake a small survey on their behalf.

Thanks to the support of our Membership Team, 300 emails went out to a totally random selection from the Beacon membership database, based on the last digit of your membership number. At the time of writing almost 60% of you have replied. Of these 85% are willing

and enthusiastic about restarting once it is safe to do so. The remainder are sufficiently concerned to want a further delay, perhaps until January or until a vaccine is available. There were lots of extra comments, all of which will be taken into account when decisions are finally made.

These results, along with those from the Group Leaders' survey, will inform the way ahead as we start to plan for the autumn. The Management Committee will be in touch as soon as safe arrangements can be achieved.

Thank you too for all the personal good wishes contained in the replies. Even though I don't know all of you, I feel that we are part of a bigger family of U3A and I so appreciated the kind thoughts in your messages.

SUE WATKINSON
Trustee



Your Treasurer



OUR U3A has not been offering activities since mid-March. However, there has been plenty of activity on the financial front. I will not comment on the accounts because you have received both those and my treasurers report as part of the AGM communication.

As many of you will be aware, some courses were interrupted by the suspension of our activities. That meant that many members had made contributions for lessons that were not delivered. Some leaders asked for a refund of these surplus contributions; effectively abandoning the course. Others decided to treat the interruption as a temporary halt and to pick up from the point of suspension when it is feasible to do so.

Some theatre trips, a Philharmonic trip and a church history trip were also cancelled. The refunds for these, combined with the cancelled courses, gave John Tomlinson and I plenty to do for a couple of months.

Despite the suspension of our activities, the usual overheads must be paid. The Third Age Trust required our membership subscriptions (£3.50 per member) be paid by end April. We continue to use Beacon for managing membership records and our accounts and had to pay the annual licence for that product. I successfully claimed Gift Aid on qualifying membership subscriptions from the 2019-2020 membership year. My accounts were inspected and certified by JVSA; a smooth process that nevertheless results in us making a payment for their professional services. I am providing you with this information to convey to you that financial activity was not suspended, and I have been occupied by some challenges other than jigsaws (or, more accurately, those pesky Wasgij puzzles).

Getting back into Booths for a coffee has been a welcome step towards 'normality'. Let us hope we can also get back to our normal regime of U3A activities soon. **DERRICK FEWINGS**, Hon. Treasurer

We are monitoring the lockdown situation

SOON after last year's AGM, most groups stopped for a summer break. Upon returning in September, we returned fully refreshed to continue that part of our lives enjoyed at the U3A. Everything was great up to the New Year then Wham! It hit us. The dreaded virus, which meant that in March all our face-to-face activities had to stop.

Being quite a determined generation, many of our Groups have used technology to keep in touch with their members, and indeed, some have continued with virtual meetings.

The Management Committee and Trustees have been monitoring the lockdown situation and are making plans for the gradual reopening of our activities as and when we are given permission, and more importantly, when it is deemed safe for our members to once again enjoy meetings.

It has been marvellous to be able to see our families and friends again over recent weeks, and I am sure that our lady members have been pleased to visit their hairdressers and the gentlemen to visit the barbers.

The virus is likely to be with us for some considerable time but we must be positive and look to the future with optimism.

We will have to adapt. We will have to be more aware of hygiene and any rules imposed upon us to keep healthy. Our U3A will continue to offer friendship and camaraderie to our present and future members, and if I may quote the late great Vera Lynn: "We'll meet again, don't know where, don't know when, but I know we'll meet again some sunny day."

ALAN STARKIE,
Chairman





THIS newsletter is hopefully a temporary production until we can all meet again at our various venues.

Our virtual U3A

WE are all aware of the many and varied talents and interests of our U3A Members. A good number of Groups have been innovative and proactive in keeping A&O U3A going remotely, giving members the opportunity to keep in touch and even carry on with some usual U3A activities! Here are examples.

Our photographers have excelled. The Chairman, early on, set up a system for Digital Photography to carry on with its monthly competition. Winning photos can be admired via the website. Additionally, webpage West Lincs in Bloom was published following a request to all members for snaps taken in their springtime gardens or out on their daily walk. This was so successful, that a summertime Gardening Group

Gallery has been added.

Members with literary talents have had opportunities too. Budding poets penned works published in enews or on Poems for Lockdown webpage called. Creative Writing ran a story writing competition.

The musicians have not missed out. Ukulele Group members are still keeping in touch with support from their Leader and self-help videos. What a good time to learn to play the ukulele! In late July, Recorder Group managed to play again - in the Aughton Village Hall garden with lots of space and even a couple of spectators!

Groups such as Gardening, Snooker, Sunday Social and a newbie called Science during Lockdown devised quizzes to entertain and exercise

brain cells at home. Indoor games Groups can make use of online versions of Chess, Bridge and Scrabble.

Participation in our usual range of outdoor activities was limited during lockdown, with the exceptions of Gardening (*where some embarked on whole new garden projects, never mind a wee bit of pottering*). And many of us enthusiastically embraced the idea of the permitted 'daily walk'.

As social distancing eases, we may increasingly be able to return to our U3A Walking, Golf and other outings.

We have also been very innovative in using technology to carry on remotely! For starters A&O U3A has long used phone and email for communication.

(Beacon Membership records indicate that 92% of members now have an email address.)

Some Group Leaders eg Local History and Philosophy have been using their own long-standing phone and email contact lists. Beacon also provides

Leaders with an easy way of emailing their members as for the excellent Gardening and Church History newsletters replacing meetings.

Many Groups have embraced social media solutions to keep going. For example Drama, French, German and Spanish are communicating using Zoom; Country Dancing and Creative Writing now chat via WhatsApp.

There are even events with outside agencies. The Speaker Secretary has been very active organising remote events; eg: a Speaker on YouTube. Science plus Health & Wellbeing have a Zoom meeting lined up for September.

Some individuals also contact their U3A friends by various means with cheering chat and jokey snippets.

Computer Advice now provides a remote but extended service via phone and email to help with IT issues including these new ways of communicating.

If you are aware of

Schedule for enews

You may have missed receiving the June and July last Monday enews mailings. If so, then unfortunately, if your membership has lapsed or you do not have an email address on the Beacon Membership System, you will not receive these monthly missives. Contact the Membership Team for advice on updating your record on this system.

The deadline for items for the next enews is 12noon on Monday 31st August (last Monday of the month). Please send your items before Noon on that day to the enews Editor.

If you have missed the enews deadline, and have some U3A content you would like to publicise in the meantime on this website, contact the Web Team.

You can use the web form on the Contact Us webpage to get in touch, selecting appropriately from the 'drop-down list' on the form as you fill it in.

remote activities not referred to in this article or have ideas for new ones, do get in touch with the Web Team for a mention on the webpage, Our Virtual U3A.

Much appreciation is due to all the U3A Officers keeping the show on the road from afar. And many thanks to all members who have continued to

participate in Our Virtual U3A during social distancing ~ sharing their talents, knowledge and enthusiasm.





COMPETITION



OUR Creative Writing group launched its first Short Story Competition in the spring, just before lock-down. With a 1,000 word maximum and an open subject, Group Leader Joan Potter received 18 entries. These were passed anonymously to **Gill Enstone**, a retired English teacher, the independent judge.

She has chosen one outright winner, who will receive a £25 book token at a time and place to be arranged and selected three Highly Commended stories. All four of them will receive a thorough and thoughtful critique. Of the winning entry she wrote: 'This is an impressive piece of work on many levels and richly deserves its place as the winner of this competition.'

1st **Mike Briggs**: The Mohave Flute Player
Highly Commended: **Ann Henders** – Breath

Sue Watkinson – Last Memory

John Winter – The Man in the Smiling Mask

Congratulations to Mike and thanks to all the writers who entered the competition. The stories were different, interesting and challenging in their various ways. We hope to be able to print the winning entry in the next full edition of our U3A magazine.

The AGM - we need your votes

OUR 'virtual AGM' will be held on 10 September. So that we can involve ALL our members, we are sending you the notice in two ways.

Those who are on email will receive a notice of meeting from our Honorary Secretary and an agenda with voting options for each resolution. Those not on email have the same notice, enclosed with a hard copy of this magazine, and their voting will be by post (*or email if they have a friend or relation who can do it for them*). All the supporting papers

can be accessed on the website or mailed out by special request.

There are no major changes but new members have volunteered for both Trustees and Management Committee. We need your votes to confirm that you are content with the way our U3A has been managed for the year ended 31 March 2020 and that you have confidence in the elected representatives to take us forward through the current year.

Please support this meeting by sending in your votes.

Our U3A has its own Facebook page with approximately 300 'Likers'.



It is an information distribution page rather than a 'Forum' for members' views.

Posting is limited to 'Editors' and 'Admin', but any Group Leader or representative can become an Editor very simply by contacting brianwbostock@gmail.com

What's the gain? Anyone who 'Likes' the U3A Aughton and Ormskirk page will automatically see anything posted on the page, be it Group information or Admin help with Alerts or items felt to be of general interest. (*All without any further action on the members' part*).

This means that the membership, without having to view the Website can be kept up to date with what's going on then perhaps get further details from the Website.

**STAY SAFE
AND STAY
POSITIVE**

Digital Photography Competition Winners



Our Digital Photography group run regular competitions. Winners and runners-up can be seen on the U3A website.

Here are the 1st and 2nd photo winners for June and July. Far left is Ginny Salkeld's winner for the June theme: **MONEY**. Ginny also won



the second June theme: **LOCKS**, with this excellent shot. Third from the left is Bill Soens' winner for July's **GARDEN WILDLIFE**. Below, we feature the winner for July's theme: **SKIES**, taken by Peter Banks.

The group encourages as many as possible to put entries into the competitions as it helps to develop both photographing and creative skills. Each month there are two competition topics. Take a look at our U3A website and have a go yourself.



Aughton & Ormskirk U3A Activities

BELOW I give some insights into what our

... but not as we knew them!

onus will be on attendees to follow

activities will look like while Covid-19 constraints apply. Everything I say can be gleaned from the information given on TV, in newspapers and in documents issued by the government. I hope you find it informative. I'm sure we all look forward to the day when no such constraints are imposed on us.

Premise-based activities

The capacity of each of the premises we hire will be limited. At the Scout and Guide HQ, the large hall will be limited to 25 attendees. The small hall will be limited to 15 attendees. The computer room will be limited to 6 attendees. We await the equivalent information from other premises. For either safety or economic reasons, some premises may opt to not open until restrictions are removed.

Attendees must comply with social distancing guidelines. If attendees are seated, the seats must be spaced out as appropriate. Ideally, members enter and exit through different doors and members avoid crossing paths in corridors. No kitchen facilities will be available.

Attendees must play their part in completing hygiene-related tasks. The scouts and guides HQ will be cleaned once per day by their representative. At the end of a session, the group must wipe all surfaces. Rather than rely on the actions of the previous user, it would be prudent to also wipe all surfaces at the start of the session.

For potential reference in a Govt 'test and trace' process, a register of names and telephone number of attendees must be kept. This needs to be held by the group leader for at least 21 days.

Trips

The capacity of a coach will be severely limited by the need to comply with social distancing. In my view, many

coach operators will decide that demand will be constrained by the inevitable increased price of tickets and will decide to suspend service until constraints are removed.

Similarly, the need to limit capacity will cause many places of interest (e.g. theatres) to stay closed. If transport and a venue can be found, the

whatever constraints are imposed.

Outdoor Activities

Social distancing guidelines apply. If you enter any premises, you comply with the rules of those premises.

Commencement of activities

As advised in other articles, your trustees and Management Committee are busy addressing the work required to allow resumption of U3A activities. The wellbeing of members is of paramount importance.

Some activities are already taking place. However, these activities are not branded as U3A activities and are just a group of friends agreeing to pursue some activity in which they have a shared interest.

If you decide to start any activity prior to the formal resumption of U3A activity, no reference to the U3A should be made in booking of premises and the entire costs must be covered by the participants.

No financial transactions will pass through the U3A bank accounts.

I hope the above is useful to you and that we can return to normality soon.

DERRICK FEWINGS,
Hon. Treasurer

HURRAH!

Some GOOD news from
our Treasurer

2021/2022 annual membership subscription

GIVEN that our annual receipts from membership subscriptions are enough to cover the cost of 'administering' our U3A (TAT membership subscriptions, Beacon licence, magazine production and distribution, website and all the usual office costs), I am happy to recommend that the annual membership subscription for 2021-2022 remains at £15.00.

However, this requires that the pool of activities we offer is broadly self-funding; that is, for room-based activities, total money from session fees broadly covers the cost of hiring rooms for those activities.

With no increase in the annual subscription fee, any significant shortfall in receipts from session fees versus payments for room hire will have to be covered by revision to session fees.