

## Notes of the Group Leaders/Contacts Meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019

### 1. Welcome and opening by David White

- a. After a welcome and housekeeping matters, all group leaders were thanked and recognition given that without them our U3A would not exist as group leaders were the life blood of our U3A.
- b. An outline of the meeting's plans was given.
- c. Mention was made of two new groups just starting – Fabulous Fashion and Guitar. Also that leaders were needed for Cribbage and other card games, Italian for Beginners. Plans were also being set up for a second Sunday Lunch group.
- d. David White's role as Groups Co-ordinator was to help set up new groups, assist with existing groups if needed, and as a link between all group leaders and the Committee. Everyone present was encouraged to contact David if they had any matters that might warrant further discussion at committee level.
- e. All reminded to ensure members carried membership cards and completed emergency details on rear. Also emails sent to group members to be blind copied.
- f. David, as webmaster, talked about the website and the committee's desire to keep it fresh and vibrant. All were encouraged to submit details for inclusion, whether news stories, planned events, or information to be shared with group members. David suggested all group leaders add him ([dwhiteu3aweb@gmail.com](mailto:dwhiteu3aweb@gmail.com)) to their group circulation list and he could select details to be added to the website as appropriate.
- g. All were encouraged to also make use of our Facebook page and the main U3A site. Lots of very useful information and ideas can be gained from the main U3A site.
- h. Brief mention was made of copyright issues and leaders were encouraged to take care if using copyright material. Central U3A do hold some licences but there are limits to those.

### 2. Report from National Conference

- a. Ruth talked those present through her experiences after attending the National Conference in August 2019.
- b. She invited all of those present to consider attending next year's conference (with expenses for two members being paid by our U3A)
- c. Ruth ran through a number of points and a copy of her report has been loaded onto our website and is also attached here for reference.

### **3. Financial Matters**

- a. Our Treasurer, David Lesley, ran through a number of financial matters.
- b. He pointed out that cheques are preferred to cash as it was quicker for him to deal with at the Bank.
- c. Leaders were asked to ensure all cheques were correctly dated, signed and payee given as Leigh Estuary U3A.
- d. If handing in monies/cheques for a specific group then place in envelope with groups name on the envelope.
- e. David invited everyone to contact him with queries, any time.

### **4. Group Discussions**

- a. All present were divided up into groups of five, each group was given a set of topics to discuss and comment on. What follows is a summary of the many points and comments raised. The Committee will be discussing these issues and considering in greater depth.

#### **Q: What comments, ideas and thoughts might the team have to make our U3A better?**

- Being flexible with leadership of groups
- Initiate a change
- Interaction with other local U3A groups
- Joining fees for other groups
- Could we get too big and a suitably sized monthly meeting venue becomes a problem
- Need something/information centrally, or do we just have to Google (an issue if no internet access)
- Newsflash to have a list of local U3A groups so new people would know all local groups.
- Does Leigh Library have our contact details?
- Improve quality of monthly speakers – increase payments. Make a charge for entry to allow for better speaker.
- Newsletter
- Email problem
- Contributions to national newsletter (TAM)
- Quiz or similar to get people to meet and mingle instead of a speaker
- Get members to talk about their groups, what they get up to etc.
- New member meetings by invite.
- TruLeigh Scrumptious meetings can be intimidating to some.
- Teach people to use the website
- Be willing to “employ” tutors for certain groups

**Topic: Full Groups, how can we best cope with new members saying they joined but all groups of interest are full.**

- Are groups truly full – some yes, some no.
- Have a first come, first served approach.
- Get a small number of existing group members to set up a new group and attend both for a while.
- Finding suitable venues may be an issue (put list of potential meeting venues on website)
- Regular attendance should be a requirement, some discretion needed but failure to contribute to groups by attending should mean space opened for others to partake.

**Topic: Main Monthly Meetings – should the format change?**

- More professional speakers
- Share ideas with other U3As
- Parking problems
- Have people to talk to along the sides of hall
- Subject matter of talk will always impact on numbers attending.
- More advertising – doctors, churches, library, pubs, leaflets.
- Some members very good at introducing new and existing members to others and should be encouraged more
- More comfortable chairs
- Suggested talks should be more factual and educational than personal experiences
- Notices at beginning too long winded
- Sound system not good

**Topic: Group Leader/Contact Meeting**

- What did you expect? Lunch and a chat with other leaders
- Coffee/tea upon arrival would have been nice
- Welcomed hearing of opportunities, ideas and information from other group leaders
- Speaking in front of window made it difficult to lip read for hard of hearing members.
- Good idea, especially the discussions.

**Topic: Guidance Notes – needed?**

- Needed but already available.
- Need safeguarding and equality policies
- Keep to a minimum please
- Policy around group attendance

### **Topic: Shared Learning**

- We should encourage shared learning with an open group to study a particular topic for a short period.
- Research can be local or national
- Not needed – don't duplicate.

### **Topic: Committee – how can we encourage others to help with the Committee tasks?**

- Make use of sub committees (e.g. for events or specific tasks) which might be a springboard to getting others involved and more help.
- Simply ask others at main meetings to help with putting chairs away

### **Topic: New Groups – what ideas?**

- Group that makes use of bus pass travel might have an appeal.
- Short terms groups have an appeal, maybe seasonal
- Not all groups need an expert, anyone interested in a topic to be encouraged to contact Groups Co-ordinator
- Choir, Yoga, Fitness Dancing all suggested

### **Topic: Main Events – should we do more?**

- Suggested we should have an Easter event
- A “share individual experiences” event
- We should showcase groups like Ukulele, Creative Writing, Poetry, Craft, Photography, Play reading, Guitar etc.

## **5. Lunch and Challenge**

- a. Following quite lively discussion, we broke for lunch, mixed teams up a bit and each team was challenged to a simple quiz.
- b. For those unable to attend, the quiz and answers are attached – no cheating.
- c. Ruth had arranged for a two week break for all winning team members but Thomas Cook let her down. Instead the winning team, scoring 38 out of 40, all got a small box of chocolates each.

## **6. Close**

- a. Ruth thanked everybody for their contributions and the meeting closed.