

## YAHR FORUM.

Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025

St George's Conference Centre, Great George Street, Leeds LS1 3DL.

Following this year's YAHR/AGM, a Forum style workshop was held to share ideas relating to membership of a u3a.

- 1. Growing your u3a**, PowerPoint Presentation led by Maureen Cave, Chair of Sheffield u3a, in which she outlined Sheffield u3a's current management system with over 3,000 members. On the basis of one size does not fit all, the following issues were covered: Why grow? Advantages: wider range of skills available, wider range of groups, financial stability. Disadvantages – apathy, comfort zone, geographical situation, communication. Where to start? At the very beginning, with clear aims and goals leading to consistent growth with the u3a being run by the members for the members and providing continued learning. On a basic level, Keep it Simple (KISS). Finance - groups run own finances. Structure – teams, Membership, IT, Groups, General coordinator. Consistency with written policies on website. Recruitment, principally by word of mouth. Publicity materials, Social media, Local Radio, no Open Day but group activities e.g. garden visits.
- 2. Dealing with u3a Finances**, PowerPoint presentation led by Richard Bell, Chair of Ilkley u3a with focus on an increasingly cashless society. Issues included problems with banks, fewer people writing cheques or with incorrect details, cash payments, direct payments by members, groups paying directly into banks, annual membership and interest group fees, how to claim Gift Aid, subsidising group payments, contactless card readers, grants to individual groups, TAT insurance. As a charity everything should be banked and have a trail record. It was stressed that the world IS going to change and u3as have to change with it.
- 3. Harnessing Social Media** - embracing technologies to raise awareness and help recruitment, led by Margaret Fiddes, Sherburn u3a and Helen Stevens, Ilkley u3a. Social Media is an easy means of communication which allows fellow members and potential members to stay in touch. It enables people to find out about interest groups and to meet like-minded people. It is a way to share photos, news and experiences. Social media has many benefits for 3as and is one of the best platforms for the over 50 age range. Helen Stevens gave tips for getting started and setting up social media which included enlisting help and mutual support. Permission is not required to take photos in public spaces, but a u3a can include this on the membership form and ask members to share Facebook pages. More information is available via the u3a website on the TAT YouTube page under "Let's Talk Tech."
- 4. The Challenges of Recruiting Trustees** – led by Angie Grain, Ilkley u3a. Groups were given the opportunity to explore ways in what has and what has not worked for them in their u3a. Successful suggestions included local events to publicise joining a u3a, a Spring Fair at a local venue at a reduced cost, community group singing on VE Day, stall at Farmers' Market with

an advert, York Older People's Association (YOPA), sponsoring of cricket and croquet events, Post box Toppers, Facebook.

5. **YAHR FORUM.** – the way forward. A chance to have your say.

Margaret Fiddes and Angie Grain on what the YAHR can do for its members in combination with Pat Collard and Brian Cave, Council representatives. Invite Pat and Brian to a meeting with a half hour slot so that issues can be fed back. Matters raised: ICE card available from Trust which has already been circulated and attendance records to be kept for 3 years. Group Convenors to keep emergency numbers for their groups. Incident report forms to be filled in and kept. For communication purposes report Committee changes to appropriate administrator. Ensure newly elected Chairs and Secretaries are familiar with u3a routines and policies. YAHR Trustees can give help to deal with concerns where possible. A grievance which may involve Chair should be passed to a named person for resolution. Generic email addresses to be used. There was no outcome to a variety of views relating to changing the u3a logo. Hiring of room at venue could be facilitated by the Trust. Council representatives have their own budget.

In conclusion Angie Grain asked where YAHR goes now. Ways forward include feedback needed on why new members join a u3a, new members' meetings bring new ideas. How to support and look after new members, and how to ensure succession. Sign up for the national newsletter. Ideas and suggestions for future YAHR Events, one possibility being a workshop for Treasurers and another one on Insurance.

The meeting closed at 3 pm.