

Sevenoaks U3A Group Activities during the current Covid-19 crisis

As a necessary precaution and in accordance with Government guidelines, Sevenoaks U3A has suspended all meetings and group activities for the remainder of the current season. As our membership falls into the 'most at risk' category isolation will probably continue for some time.

It is hoped that we will be able to commence the next season's events programme in the Autumn, beginning with a Sevenoaks U3A Day on 23rd September (postponed from June), and our AGM is planned this year to be held in October. These will, of course, be subject to Government advice and guidance from the Third Age Trust. We will endeavour to keep members informed of future plans through the Newsletter, Beacon and the Sevenoaks U3A Website: www.sevenoaksu3a.org.uk as the situation evolves.

The Third Age Trust are currently running regular bulletins in addition to the National Newsletter. One feature of interest is the 'Keep Learning' page. This can be accessed from the Home Page on our Website and offers a range of suggestions to U3As about maintaining activities in a virtual environment whilst we are in isolation. Hence, it is important that we now think creatively to find ways of communicating with each other remotely instead of face to face meetings. The U3A motto "**Learn, Live Laugh**" takes on a whole new meaning when confronted with the current crisis.

Some Ideas:

The ideas set out below are but a few. Perhaps come of you have other suggestions that can be posted on our Website.

- Video Conferencing – this has been suggested by the Third Age Trust. Many PCs, Laptops, Tablets and Smart Phones already have these applications (Apps) installed, if not, they can be downloaded from the internet. Popular VC tools such as Skype, Facetime etc may well be familiar with some of you but there are many more.
- The above Apps are ideal for face to face communications but for a group a more robust App is required and there are a number of these on the market. The Tech Team have tested the '**Zoom**' App as suggested by the Third Age Trust. You may not have heard of this but if you watch the BBC News much of the current remote broadcasting is done using Zoom Software. Whilst it is a professional tool there is a free version that allows up to 100 participants for a 40 minute session. Sessions can be repeated so it provides an ideal App for running group meetings in a virtual environment. So far a number of groups are learning how to download and use Zoom Software in Sevenoaks U3A and some groups are already running meetings in this virtual world. A new set of words have now entered the lexicon – 'Zooming', and of course, 'Zoom Bombing' where someone or a pet enters the field of vision of your camera!

If you venture into this virtual world make sure your **computer security is up to date**. The Tech Support Team can help on downloads and advice: techsupport@sevenaksu3a.org.uk

On Line Education and Entertainment:

There is a massive amount of on line material directed towards education and learning. Most Institutions and Universities have access to such material. Some that may appeal are:

- Gresham Talks – <https://www.gresham.ac.uk/>
- Ted Talks – <https://www.ted.com/topics/education>
- YouTube: You Tube covers a wide range of subjects – just use the search facility for a topic of interest <https://www.youtube.com/>
- The London Theatres are closed but many are now streaming performances on line [https://www.whatsonstage.com/london-theatre/news/stage-shows-musicals-opera-free-stream-online 51198.html](https://www.whatsonstage.com/london-theatre/news/stage-shows-musicals-opera-free-stream-online-51198.html)
- Royal Opera House are offering free access to some performances - <https://www.roh.org.uk/news/the-royal-opera-house-launches-a-programme-of-free-online-content-for-the-culturally-curious-at-home>
- For music buffs the London Symphony Orchestra <https://lso.co.uk/> and the New York Metropolitan Opera offer livestream broadcasts <https://www.metopera.org/user-information/nightly-met-opera-streams/>

On line Games:

Most card and board games can be played on line. Players can be real or artificial.

Other online facilities cover most group activities we have running in our U3A, such as Languages, Literature, Art and Crafts and so on. Use your internet search facility to find out more about your area of interest.

The Zoom facility is an ideal tool where teaching is part of your group activity.

What about your Group – how can you run your group virtually without meeting. Be creative and remember – **Learn, Live, Laugh!**

Good Luck!

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