

COVID-19 UPDATE - FEBRUARY 2021

The Third Age Trust and North Walsham u3a Committee are continuing to do all they can to keep u3a activities going as much as possible, but it seems inevitable that face to face meetings will continue to be suspended for some time. This is a real shame, but I am sure you will agree that we need to stay as safe as we can, especially given that older people tend to be affected more severely than others by Covid-19.

The Current National Rules

As you will probably already know, England is again in a national coronavirus lockdown, and the government has brought its message of “Stay home. Protect the NHS. Save lives.” back again. As a result, we are all required to stay at home unless we need to leave for one of the following reasons:

Work: You can only leave home for work purposes where it is not possible to work from home. This includes people who work within critical national infrastructure, construction or manufacturing, which requires in-person attendance. You can also leave home to provide voluntary or charitable services.

Essential activities: People will be allowed to leave home to buy essential items at shops or obtain services. You can also leave your home to help a vulnerable or disabled person, or someone who is self-isolating, to shop for essentials on their behalf.

Education and childcare: You can leave home for education, registered childcare and supervised activities for children where they are eligible to attend. People can also continue with existing arrangements for contact between parents and children if they live apart, as well as with childcare bubbles.

Meeting others and providing care: If you are legally permitted to form a support bubble, you can leave home to visit those in your support bubble and to provide informal childcare for children under 14 as part of a childcare bubble. You can also provide care for disabled and vulnerable people, provide emergency assistance, and attend a support group of up to 15 people. Leaving home for respite care will also be permitted where that care is being provided to a vulnerable or disabled person, or as a short break in respect of a looked after child.

Exercise: Outdoor exercise can continue alone or with one other person, or with your household or support bubble. However, this should be limited to once per day, and the government advises against travelling outside your local area for exercising. It also urges people to maintain social distancing.

Medical reasons: If you need to leave home for a medical reason, including to get a Covid-19 test, for medical appointments and emergencies, you can. You can also leave home to be with someone who is giving birth, or to visit someone who is dying. Visiting someone in a care home, hospice or hospital, or to accompany someone to a medical appointment is also permitted.

Animal welfare reasons, such as to visit the vet for advice or treatment, is also considered a “reasonable excuse” to leave home.

Harm: You can leave home to escape risk of harm, such as domestic abuse.

Communal worship and life events: You can leave home to visit a place of worship for communal worship, funerals and weddings as long as you observe social distancing rules and do not mingle with anyone outside your household or support bubble. Weddings, funerals and other events linked to a death are all subject to limits on the number of people who can attend. Weddings and civil ceremonies can only take place in “exceptional circumstances”.

There is a useful explanation of support bubbles at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-52637354.

Not Sure if You Have a Cold, Flu or Covid-19?

If you are not feeling well, but aren't sure if you have a cold, flu or Covid-19, the following may help:

www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/health-54182329

www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/21/coronavirus-symptoms-how-to-tell-if-you-have-a-common-cold-flu-or-covid.

There is more information about Covid-19 symptoms and how you can protect yourself at:

www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51048366.

And, of course, you may want to get a Covid test if you think you have the virus.

Vaccination

Like the rest of the country, Covid-19 vaccinations have now begun in and around North Walsham, with priority being given to older people and those who are at the greatest risk for health reasons.

When you become eligible for your vaccination, you will be sent a letter or called by your GP inviting you to make an appointment. Once you have received your invitation, you can either ring up to book, or book an appointment online by going to the web address that is printed on the letter. It is a page on the official www.nhs.uk website.

If you don't make an appointment after a certain length of time, you might be sent a reminder text message or email.

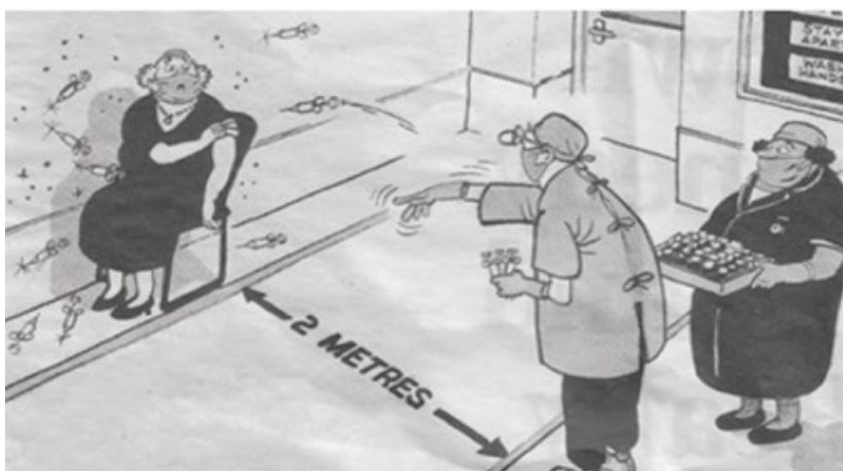
Sadly, there are more and more reports of scams related to Covid vaccinations. These take the form of phone calls or emails asking you to contact the sender to give your details so that you can get vaccinated, and many of the scams ask for a payment to be made up front. **The NHS will never ask you for bank or credit card details and the vaccination is completely free.**

There has also been a lot of misinformation about vaccinations, claiming that it isn't safe or that there is some other reason to avoid it. **Please ignore this and get vaccinated as soon as you are able to.**

If you have any questions or concerns about being vaccinated, ask your GP or another medically qualified person, not social media!

There is also a useful NHS leaflet about Covid vaccination at:

www.ulh.nhs.uk/content/uploads/2020/12/PHE-vaccine-leaflet.pdf



North Walsham u3a Update

Interest Groups Working Together Online

Lots of our interest groups are now meeting virtually online and/or staying in touch by email. It isn't the same as meeting face to face, but it does seem to work well once people get used to it. At the time of writing, groups that are meeting on Zoom or staying in touch by email include:

- Art Appreciation
- Classical Music
- Computing
- Current Affairs
- Digital Photography
- Discussion
- Family History
- Folk Music
- History
- Humour
- Intuition and Beyond
- Jazz Appreciation
- Mac Users
- Philosophy
- Poetry
- Rock 'n' Pop
- Wine Appreciation
- Yoga

If you would like to join one of these groups, please contact the Group Leader whose phone number is on last year's programme card, or send a message at www.northwalshamu3a.org/contact-us and we will pass your details on to the Group Leader so they can contact you.

If any of your groups aren't yet using technology to keep working together and you think they might be able to, please do the following:

1. Talk to other members of your group about it;
2. Try to identify someone in the group who could act as a Zoom 'host' (who can be the Group Leader, but doesn't need to be);
3. Ask Peter Phillips and/or Richard Nevill for advice if you want to, or send your query through the contact page on our website at www.northwalshamu3a.org/contact-us.

North Walsham u3a is paying for a number of Zoom subscriptions to support this.

Online General Meetings

We are also still offering a virtual monthly General Meeting on Zoom, normally on the first Friday afternoon of each month. This month's meeting will be at 2.00pm on Friday, 5 February and a Zoom invitation to this will be sent separately.

Virtual Coffee Mornings

Richard Nevill has offered to host virtual coffee mornings on Zoom at 11.00am each Monday. You can contact Richard about this at ricnev@gmail.com.

North Walsham u3a Equipment – Can You Help?

Our u3a has a variety of equipment that needs to be stored and the Committee are looking for somewhere safe, warm and dry to keep it. It includes IT equipment, notice boards and other items, and would fit in a walk-in cupboard or (very) small bedroom. If you would be willing to store these items, or can suggest somewhere that might be suitable, please send us a message via the contact page on North Walsham u3a's website at www.northwalshamu3a.org/contact-us.

National u3a – The Third Age Trust

There is a vast amount of information for members on the Third Age Trust website, including what other groups are up to and details of upcoming online events that you can book for free.

If you have not yet registered for access to the TAT website, I urge you to do so at:

www.u3a.org.uk/member-login?view=registration.

There are details of a range of u3a learning opportunities at <https://u3a.org.uk/learning/national-programmes>.

You can also subscribe to receive the email Newsletter from the Trust at:

www.u3a.org.uk/newsletter

More Ways to Learn in Lockdown (apart from u3a activities)

Free Ways to Learn New Things

The Money Saving Expert website has an article about **12 free ways to learn something new at home including languages, piano, Open University courses and more.** There are full details at:

www.moneysavingexpert.com/deals/deals-hunter/2020/03/free-ways-to-learn-new-skills-at-home/.

TED Talks – Online and a Possible New u3a Group

TED talks are lectures by world renowned experts in their fields on hundreds of different topics. Many are at www.youtube.com/ and can be watched for free.

If you would be interested in watching and discussing them with other u3a members, send us a message at www.northwalshamu3a.org/contact-us and we will start a new group to do this.

Virtual Tours

If you fancy joining a live, expertly guided tour in Venice, Budapest, Rome, Berlin or any one of many other more wonderful places, try 'Virtual Trips'. You have to sign up and book the tours you want. There is no charge for a tour, but you can leave a tip for the Guide by card or PayPal if you want to. Full details are available at: www.virtualtrips.io/.

Zoom Tutorial Videos

If you are unsure how to use Zoom or how to get the best out of it, there are some useful tutorial videos at: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-Tutorials?zcid=1602>.

AND NOW FOR SOME BRILLIANT (OR POSSIBLY EXCRUCIATING) PUNS... Thanks to David Riddle, Chairman of North Norfolk u3a for the following selection of excruciating puns:

Those who jump off a bridge in Paris are in Seine.

A man's home is his castle, in a manor of speaking.

Dijon vu - The same mustard as before.

Shotgun wedding - A case of wife or death.

A man needs a mistress just to break the monogamy.

A hangover is the wrath of grapes.

Does the name Pavlov ring a bell?

Reading while sunbathing makes you well red.

When two egotists meet, it's an I for an I.

A bicycle can't stand on its own because it is two tired.

What's the definition of a will? (It's a dead give-away.)

Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana

In democracy your vote counts. In feudalism your count votes.

A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.