

Higham and Rushden U3A – Changes to Renewal Approach

Renewal and Subscriptions:

- **Why are we changing the way in renewals are carried out?** This change is a result of us adopting the new Beacon management system. In the past renewal was based on a “standard year” with a September 1st renewal date. Beacon uses the anniversary of the date on which you joined to calculate when your renewal is due.
- **Why are we adopting this Beacon system?** The Beacon system is being adopted because as we continue to grow in size the administrative tasks become greater. The Beacon system will help with administration AND provide a sound platform for future development.
- **Will my membership subscription increase?** No
- **I cannot remember the date I joined?** That doesn't matter since it was recorded when you first joined and this date has been loaded into Beacon.
- **Why will I have to pay twice?** You will not be paying any more for membership after September 2017. You will be asked to pay a small amount to cover your membership from September 1st 2017 up to the anniversary of the date on which you joined. You will then be asked to pay the full subscription for the coming 12 months.
- **What will happen about Membership Cards?** You will not be given new Card when you renew after September 2017. For the time being you will be asked to retain your 2016-17 membership card. The Committee is looking into the issue of a more robust “lifetime” card and expects that these will be available to be issued sometime in early 2018.
- **How will I be able to confirm that I have paid my subs when the Group Leader asks for my membership card?** Group Leaders can see who has renewed their subscriptions by looking at Beacon. They will no longer need to ask members to produce their cards to prove they have paid their subs.
- **I joined on the 2nd of the month and my friend joined 3 weeks later. Why are we being asked for the same renewal subscription at the same time?** During the transition period renewals are being dealt with in batches, one month at a time. After we have completed the transition renewals will be sent out on an individual basis using the date of joining.

Dual Membership:

- **Why are reduced subscriptions being dropped?** The Third Age Trust requires all U3As to pay a Capitation Fee to cover the costs of running the “central office”, purchasing insurance, legal advice, running the National website and similar. Where an individual belongs to more than one U3A it is up to the U3As concerned to decide whether to reduce the amount of the subscription by the Capitation Fee – in theory only one such fee is required for a member. However, offering reduced subscriptions raises many questions and requires agreement between U3As as to who will collect the Capitation Fee and pay it to the Third Age Trust. This can be a complex matter and time-consuming process if carried out correctly. Not all U3As offer reduced subscriptions and whilst HandR have done so in the past, it has been decided that this facility will no longer be offered.

- **I belong to another U3A and have been paying a reduced subscription at HandR – will this change?** Yes, you will have been paying a reduced subscription of £15 less the Capitation Fee that we pay to the Third Age Trust. In future you will have to pay the full subscription if you wish to remain a member of HandR U3A
- **I belong to HandR U3A and have been paying a reduced subscription at another U3A – will this change?** There will be no change. You will continue to pay the full annual subscription of £15 here at HandR. The amount that you pay to the other U3A is for them to decide.

Reciprocal Membership:

- **What is the Reciprocal membership system?** This was a scheme set up some years ago when the local U3As were much smaller and the setting up of Interest Groups was harder. It provided members with the chance to enjoy a wider range of Interest Group activities.
- **Why is the Reciprocal membership system being dropped?** Although it is impossible to find out exact numbers it is thought that only a small number of members make use of the reciprocal membership scheme, which has always generated questions about how it operates. There seems little point in continuing the scheme now that the membership has increased and Interest Groups are well supported within our own U3A.
- **I belong to another U3A and attend an Interest Group at HandR – what will happen in the future?** If you wish to continue to attend HandR Interest Groups you will need to join and pay the full subscription.
- **I am a HandR member and attend an Interest Group at Thrapston/Wellingborough. Will I be able to continue to attend the Group?** Only if you join the appropriate U3A and pay their annual subscription.