**A Summary Report of SER Meeting**
**for members involved in the PR and marketing of their u3a**

# Promoting Your u3a
**20 November 2026**
**Hosted by Jackie Wiggins**

The conversation revealed a tension between promoting the Third Age Trust organization versus promoting individual U3A groups, with many participants advocating for activity-focused marketing rather than organization-focused promotion.

## U3A Marketing and Public Relations

The meeting focused on promoting U3A (University of the Third Age) as an organization, with Sam Dukes from the Third Age Trust providing guidance on local marketing and public relations strategies. Sam highlighted the gap between U3A's significant impact (45 million hours of activity annually) and public awareness (only 18% of the general public recognize U3A). He explained the importance of building awareness and trust through media coverage, emphasizing the need to understand local news outlets and craft compelling stories that would resonate with audiences such as the recent coverage on Radio 5 Live and the case study of Melanie Lester from Sudbury U3A whose powerlifting story gained significant media attention.

## PR Strategies

Some participants shared their experiences with community outreach, including poster distribution, social media engagement, and partnerships with local councils, while expressing concerns about the need for clearer national messaging and more targeted advertising to attract younger members who could help run groups.

Some participants shared their experiences of securing local media coverage. Jayne from Newbury U3A described their successful local radio and newspaper coverage, including their 35th anniversary event where they worked with town councillors to promote the event. The discussion highlighted the need for better national-level awareness and clearer messaging from the Third Age Trust, while also emphasizing the importance of local U3As converting national awareness into actual memberships.

## Media Strategy Discussion

Sam discussed strategies for generating local media coverage and growing U3A awareness, emphasizing the importance of tailored approaches to specific journalists and outlets rather than mass press releases. Jayne suggested creating a promo pack to target companies offering pre-retirement courses, which Sam acknowledged as a valuable opportunity for national and local partnership.

## Website Development Strategies

The meeting focused on website development and digital promotion strategies for U3A groups. Graham Smith presented a new website for his U3A that emphasizes visual content, online newsletters, and member self-management of pages.

The discussion revealed challenges around digital inclusion, with several participants noting that there are members in their u3a who lack internet access and raising concerns about excluding these members from sharing information. The conversation ended with discussions about potential solutions including printed newsletters for non-internet members.

### The Way Forward

Sam Dukes acknowledged the need for u3a activity-based promotion rather than organization-based promotion and said he would investigate ways to prioritize and develop this and create a better digital user journey for the u3a finder.

He would explore the possibility of creating a national promo pack for u3as to be shared with companies for pre-retirement courses.

The development of a team of marketing advisors for websites, recruiting volunteers with expertise from the membership to share website best practices across u3a.