

REVIEW OF MARKET STALL PUBLICITY DAYS – 2nd and 5th June 2021

It has all been a huge learning curve. We were able to get a much better pitch on the Saturday than we had on Thursday. We also found a better method of fixing the banner to the gazebo.

The volunteers were great. Each had their own way of talking about their experiences in u3a – there was no prepared script, just enthusiastic conversation. We had been disappointed that despite our approaches to local media, neither the Advertiser nor the local radio station had contacted us or given us any publicity. Reaching out via social media had also seemed to be not worthwhile. However, on Saturday afternoon, James Ashworth of the Advertiser attended our stall and stayed for about 30 mins. He was very interested; we talked a lot, and he took a lot of notes and asked us to submit photos. By that evening, he had put quite a lengthy article on the Advertiser website and has since put a picture and an article in last week's Advertiser.

Over the two days, we had a steady stream of interested members of the public. Having the leaflets to hand out was a big plus. There was never any danger of a crowd gathering, but those that did get into conversation were mostly very interested. Quite a few took away pre-printed membership forms with them. I have no way of knowing whether recent membership applications came from the Recruitment Days, but I am getting a steady stream.

If we want to get the membership back to over 500, we could consider further recruitment events such as Village Fêtes and Test Valley Community events. We now have the following materials: Banner, Flag, tabards and leaflets. We have a lot to learn regarding getting publicity in publications, radio and social media.

Overall, it was a rewarding experience, and my thanks go out to all the volunteers and all who helped in any way. I have informed TVBC of the problems encountered with their instructions of where to put our stall. And I have sent our thanks to the Anton Rotary Club for lending us their gazebo and I have applied to TAT for the financial grant payable to all groups that incurred expenditure in connection with u3a days and have heard nothing. I gather from social media that neither has anyone else.

JMcL