

## *January—June 2021 Magazine*

Welcome to the Magazine for the first half of 2021. It has been a period of almost continual 'lockdown' as efforts have been made to limit the spread of the virus and reduce the number of deaths. Vaccination started for the over 80's about the beginning of January with supplies of the Pfizer vaccine and the Astra-Zeneca vaccine becoming available in quantities. At first the second dose was being given after about 3-4 weeks but this was soon changed to 12 weeks when it was realised that good protection was given after the first week and the by delaying the second dose until 12 weeks, more people could be vaccinated early and so speed up protection. This has worked well and the UK is one of the best protected countries in the world with the widespread acceptance of the vaccination programme.

A few problems have arisen during during the programme: There is evidence that 2 vaccines give increased tendency to blot clotting, although no worse that would be experienced in the population as a whole without the vaccine programme. There has been widespread misinformation aimed at upsetting the acceptance of the vaccination programme.

The UK has seen a dramatic fall in the hospital admissions for Covid19 cases and an equally dramatic fall in the number of deaths. The rise of new strains of the virus has continued and a strain called Delta, which seems to have arisen in India, gives cause for concern. At the end of June the number of confirmed cases has risen to about 15,000 after having been around 1,000 during April and May. This may be partly explained by the progress in testing, but it is thought that the Delta strain is more easily transmitted. There are hotspots across the Midlands and Northern population centres. Stratford is on the edge of the West Midlands

population centre and cases are much lower than in Birmingham, for instance.

There are now plans going ahead to have a booster injection for vulnerable age groups (mainly 50 years +) from September onwards.

### U3A News.

Plans are being made to restart monthly meetings from September 2021 with an AGM in either October, or more likely in November. Group meetings should also be able to restart provided HM Government relax the Social Distancing requirements, as they have promised.