

Setting up and running online meetings

What are online meetings

Nowadays it is possible to hold a meeting online. To do so you and the participants need to have appropriate software installed on your computer or tablet. In some cases it is possible to include people who are not online by calling them on their phone. However the cost of the call has to be paid for.

At present we are looking for the best solutions for Sheffield U3A. We will let you know when we have decided on a solution and also give details of how to access it.

In the meantime

We suggest that you use one of the following free online meetings software. They will all have limitations!

- Skype: this allows up to 25 participants and, for a cost, allows some of these to be connected by landline. Those with a Windows based computer may well have it installed already as it is a microsoft product. It can be used from a tablet - download the app. Many people know Skype from use with families but they may not be aware that it can be used with groups. <https://www.skype.com/en/>
- Zoom: This has free and paid for versions. The free version allows meetings of up to 40 minutes. (You can have two meetings with a break which would work well.) Again you will need to download the software. <https://us04web.zoom.us/download>
- Google hangouts: for this participants need a Google account (i.e. gmail) and it allows up to 10 participants.
- WhatsApp: this may be useful for messaging but be aware that this requires users to have a smart phone. You can however set up a WhatsApp Group for your Group and that could help most people stay in contact.

Running online meetings

You need to have a chair. This need not be the person who convenes the meeting. The chair needs to prevent everybody from talking at once and to make sure everyone is able to talk if they wish. If a chat box is available, make sure everyone can see it and use it as that can help people get a word in edgeways.

The first meeting is likely to be fairly chaotic as people access the software and find how to set up audio and video. It is probably a good idea to have a trial meeting initially with very few people. Indeed using trial meetings with a few at a time is probably best.

Other options

Bridge Groups, and other game playing Groups may be able to join online Brisge, Scrabble and other Word game online Groups. You can usually play either with others or against the computer. If you find a good one please let me know so I can share the information with other Groups.