

## Grouchy Girls 2021

### JANUARY 2021

Our first grouch this month was 'EXPRESSIONS THAT ANNOY US' and we were off! To keep us GGs calm avoid saying 'love to bits', 'Fabulous', 'Bless' and 'literally' when it isn't!

Religious or not, we are upset by blasphemy; taking the Lord's name in vain, as it is so disrespectful. Gill gets irritated when she hears 'go extinct', preferring 'becomes extinct'.

CAN YOU BUY HAPPINESS? was a thought provoking topic. Charitable donations and helping people out gives us real satisfaction. Happiness is a state of mind but being appreciative of everything we have makes us content. Being able to pay to have a hip replaced instead of months in pain, certainly improves quality of life.

WHAT SMELLS DO YOU LOVE OR HATE? If you have just spent a ridiculous amount of money on perfumes as pressies, bad luck! These 'perfumes' are loathed by many GGs and evoked some strong memories. Ditch your bottles of Old Spice and Poison, they give GGs a headache. Mind you, human B.O. Is not popular either. Are females hard-wired to bond with all new-born babies by sniffing their heads? I think so judging by this group. I'm not going to say some GGs are weird, but oil fumes and fresh horse poo?

### Grouchy Girls embrace ageing!

Reasons to be cheerful, part one:

1. Accept it, we're lucky to still be here
2. Freedom to please yourself
3. Able to be spontaneous
4. Not getting up early to work in the dark
5. Please ourselves- to heck with fashion
6. Having time to appreciate small things- blue sky, a flower emerging
7. More confidence as less self-conscious
8. No periods, pregnancy or precautions
9. Travel options our parents didn't have
10. The free bus pass

We're the lucky generation, and we appreciate it.

### Green Tips from the Grouchy Girls

No, we are not rivalling Nicola and the Greenfingers group! We've agreed to share eco tips and came up with some good ones. We all keep a little foldaway bag in our pocket and are experts at not wasting food, making 'bottom of the fridge' soup and using recipes for random items from Google. Tips you might find useful:-

1. Save old tea bags as they are great for water retention in hanging baskets.
2. Avoid buying plastic wrappings, but when you do reuse containers for freezing food and wash out plastic bags.
3. Crush eggshells to surround new plants in spring as you're less likely to step on them, they deter slugs and they fertilize the soil.
4. Cut down on paper too as it causes pollution when being recycled, compost heaps benefit from the carbon in crumpled up newspapers, and do we really need paper napkins?

## **Out of the Box Thinking** from the Grouchy Girls

We were discussing how we envision Nottingham city centre a year from now. We imagined more inner city living, shared concerns over the Debenhams building and the plans for Broadmarsh to be a green space. Then Mary had bigger ideas! Think Las Vegas and a sensational building to make the Luxor Sphinx building with glass pyramid humble, a massive Major Oak? Inside would be floors for hotels, shows, casinos, restaurants and events. We'd be unique in the midlands.

Join us every Tuesday at the new time of 10 a.m. to discuss a range of serious and light hearted topics.

Maggie Martinez

## **FEBRUARY 2021**

We discussed the use of ROBOTS taking on the role of carers for people with additional needs. This is already happening in Japan as their elderly population lacks enough young people to be carers. Chris had watched a video and gave us very detailed and interesting feedback. Robots are used to improve mental, physical and emotional health by encouraging, and physically supporting exercise, giving reminders for meals and medication and even singing. The robots can converse and answer questions with their computer brains. We felt positive about a residential home having a combination of human and carefully monitored robots and a bit wary of any robot having sole care of a vulnerable adult as, like computers, they can be hacked and possibly gain bank details etc.

Jean, currently alone at home, said a robot is welcome to visit as the idea of having anyone make her a cup of tea would be lovely. We considered the possibility of unemployment for carers, and their current poor pay and conditions. Sheila then mentioned using Alexa to give her mother reminders to move around and take medication. Don't forget to switch Alexa off when not in use as she uses your conversations for marketing purposes. More than one GG recommended the novel on the subject of robot companions; *Machines Like Me* by Ian McEwan, a recent choice of our u3a book group.

Even Grouchy Girls can't get the genie back in the bottle! This was agreed when we discussed the curtailing of free speech by the American billionaires who control the all powerful social media and decide what to shut down or allow. There are laws against sex discrimination, racism, inciting violence and hate speech but when it comes to social media it seems the owners of the sites are all powerful. There are many good things about the facility social platforms give us to stay in contact with those far away, especially in these restricting times, but we fear for younger generations who are influenced by algorithms and influences of a few media moguls. We all know not to believe everything we see and hear in the news, but try to keep life simple and avoid the trolls. Hand me my newspaper please.

We had a moan about modern expressions we dislike, (e.g. least, worse option) and how many come from America, but digressed and wandered down memory lane to remember Greenshield stamps, a free plastic daffodil with Daz, a tiger tail with petrol and toys in your breakfast cereal. Yes reader, you are old enough to remember putting bicarb. in the little submarine. Oh happy days of long ago and having to choose whether to buy a Beano or a Lucky Bag with your 6d pocket money.

**Green Tips from the Grouchy Girls** is a regular feature as we have so many ideas. We like to avoid pouring things down the sink that end up polluting our water courses.

- White vinegar and sugar is good for cleaning your oven
- When you wash the filter from your vacuum cleaner, adding a few drops of essential oil will give a fragrance when you clean
- Freshen your carpets by sprinkling some bi-carb. & brushing it in before you vacuum clean

- Remember to vacuum your mattress when you change bed linen to get rid of dust mites
- If your hose doesn't reach into narrow spaces, squash a long cardboard tube on the end to extend it
- Wiping some citronella oil around window ledges deters bugs coming in
- Adding soluble aspirins to a rinse will get rid of any white bits of tissue on your black clothes (can't wait to try that one)

HOW DO THOSE GROUCHY GIRLS LOOK SO BEAUTIFUL is the question on everyone's lips these days. After much debate those youthful ladies have decided, at no cost to you, to share their secrets AND avoid costly products

1. Mix 50/50 witch hazel or glycerine with rosewater for a refreshing face cleanser
2. A cider vinegar rinse will leave your hair gleaming
3. Fade age spots by rubbing lemon peel on them
4. Nutritious face pack recipe --
  - Mix half cup hot water with half cup oatmeal
  - Add 2 tbs each of Greek yogurt and manuka honey
  - Whisk an egg white and give your face a feast!
5. Olive oil moisturises skin, cuticles and nails
6. Plenty of water and sleep keeps the eye bags away
7. And the best face lift is... a smile

Maggie Martinez

### **MARCH 2021**

Down Memory Lane with the Grouchy Girls. We weren't always grouchy and when we were children we loved to play outside. Who remembers 'Chinese' skipping when you first had to loop a lot of elastic bands? One child at either end and somebody in the middle doing clever cross over jumps.

Were you the 'piggy in the middle' or busy playing Two Ball against the wall? An old stocking with a tennis ball in could be swung round from your ankle to jump over as it spun or a ball passed behind the backs while chanting 'Queenie, queenie, who's got the ball...'. And we knew skipping games aplenty, chanting 'I like coffee, I like tea...' and 'Teddy bear , teddy bear touch the ground...' calling for coordination.

Some games were seasonal, for instance 'snobs and jacks', hoola-hoops, conkers, and hopscotch. When the grandparents are allowed to see the little ones again they might be ready to leave the electronic games and be taught some of these. My two love 'Paper , scissors, stone' and I can't wait to play it again.

**Green Tips from the Grouchy Girls** is a regular feature as we have so many ideas. We hate waste and particularly hate throwing food away.

- Save food by buying silicone stretch lids online from DOPGL at 12 for £7.97
- or use a dish and put a plate on top
- Keep a small pot of coconut oil to quickly polish you jewellery before you put it on- a good smell and you'll be impressed with the shine
- Every toothbrush you have ever owned is still out there. Time to change to biodegradable bamboo and you can even buy heads for your OralB electric one - a number of online outlets including Livecoco

- Re-purpose old laptops, tablets and any computers for our local schoolchildren You deliver to Willow Farm or Carlton le Willows or contact through [office@willowfarm.notts.sch.uk](mailto:office@willowfarm.notts.sch.uk) or call C le W on 0115 9565008
- Plastic bottle tops for re-cycling can be taken to The Fruit Bowl at Mapperley
- Stamps, including surrounding paper, collected by the City Hospital

Can tourists save our town centre from being a ghost town? The grouchy girls are worried that without more footfall we are going to continue to lose our city stores. We still want to meet up for a coffee with friends, but one store going has the snowball effect of more following. Perhaps we will become more like Southwell with more small shops and cafes. Maybe the tourist trade will bring more people to keep our city centre going, especially the families of our large student population.

£1m has been spent refurbishing the castle and £3m is allocated to open up our amazing cave system underneath Nottingham. Robin Hood needs more than the statue so we need ideas to exploit him for the tourist trade as he is known around the world.

We have fond memories of the Lace and Costume museum. A large pot of money was spent moving the 1450 grade 2 listed Severn's building but it has never been put to use. Shame!

Maggie Martinez

## **APRIL 2021**

The Good Old Days? The Grouchy Girls were remembering things that now sound outdated, sparked by a crossword solution 'flea circus'. Who under 60 would have had a clue, let alone the solution? So cast your mind back and decide whether these are missed;-

T.V. test card and kittens, blue packets of salt in your crisps, Vim, telephone boxes where we tried to 'press button B and get your money back', drip-dry shirts, brushed nylon sheets and scratchy blankets, underskirts, liberty bodices, Green Shield stamps, Betterware, carbolic soap, Reckit's blue bags, shiny toilet paper, money back on bottles, paper, the 'rag and bone' man, the man who came round to sharpen knives, cod liver oil and NHS orange juice and stamp collecting.

Will the next generations be nostalgic about coins, cheques, OS maps?

## **Do you worry that a child you know may be being bullied, perhaps online?**

What advice could you give? If you need to approach the school, do it in a 'working together' manner, even if you think staff haven't dealt with the problem. Things are dealt with in better ways than in our schooldays, and every school has a Bullying Policy you can ask about.

We ask children what they are learning at school but how often do we ask about breaktime? Just ask what they play and who they play with. Avoid asking if they feel bullied, just listen. If you find they stay in to help the teacher, that might be a sign they are avoiding feeling bullied.

If the child involved has additional learning needs, it must still be dealt with but the 'victim' may not feel they can complain. Children on the autistic spectrum can be taught emotional intelligence as they can find it difficult to differentiate playing from teasing. We know adults can be bullied and this is extra hard for children who don't want to 'snitch'. That hasn't changed!

Avoid approaching the parents of the child you suspect, neither of you actually know the background to any disagreements.

**Green Tips from the Grouchy Girls** is a regular feature:

- We don't just love bees, we love The Beeswax Wrap Co. as they make a versatile , reusable, plastic free alternative to cling film. They use attractive prints so they make a lovely gift. Useful over pots in fridge, wrapping sandwiches, cheese or salad. Handmade in the UK
- We loathe water in plastic bottles but agree our tap water isn't always as good as we'd like. Solution! Instead of the expensive plastic filters for jugs, try a cheaper, reusable charcoal filter in a jug you already have. It can be rinsed clean after use and boiled after a few months. Sally swears the water is like spring water. The charcoal absorbs chlorine, tastes and odours. At about £8 a pack of 8 from Natural Bamboo company - other brands are available.
- Presents for babies? The Enchanted Florist , near Coop in Gedling, sells beautiful bamboo place settings in Peter Rabbit designs. Cheaper to post than china and helps keep our local shops going.
- If you want to have a more eco-friendly lifestyle we recommend Big Green Smile for cleaning, health and beauty and New Living for homeware

Maggie Martinez

## **MAY 2021**

During lockdown we have had weekly meetings with a regular attendance of 17 or more. We enjoy serious debates and light hearted topics, share our 'green tips' and admire each other's craft work. I like to think we now know each other better, feel safe to debate differing views and have become a group of friends.

**Flag Waving** It was pointed out that Morrisons is packaging British products in our flag to such an extent that some shoppers felt uncomfortable. Group members said they felt it was because of associating flag waving with far right extremist groups, bearing in mind they use the St. George flag. We already have the 'red tractor' label on an extensive range of products including meat, poultry, dairy, breakfast cereals and fruit and vegetables. It shows that products were produced and packaged in the UK. So, are these flag decorated products a subliminal pro-Brexit message or just a marketing strategy?

For good reasons we thought the old slogan '**Buy British**' could encourage us to have food that has not used up fossil fuel to travel around the world. We also felt more confident in our animal welfare standards and workers' conditions. Some members said it was time to be more patriotic and proud of our country. It was even suggested that all food packaging should have the flag of the country it originated from so we can make informed choices. One member reminded us how successful the campaign to boycott products from South Africa was, as a protest against apartheid.

We are often bamboozled by claims of 'seasonal' or finding that a product travelled round the globe and labelled 'packaged in UK'. It was felt we need to produce more of our own food and thereby create employment too.

**Fiddling while Rome burns?** While the biggest iceberg on our beautiful blue planet is now breaking up, NASA has awarded \$2.9 billion to billionaire Elon Musk, to work on space trips to our moon and back. Shouldn't we be cleaning up the pollution not only on our planet but floating around it instead? Is it just a space race with China or is there gain to the enterprise? \$2.9 billion would go a long way to narrowing the gap between rich and poor.

Shirley is in the queue to live on Mars as one day the sun will burn us up. We think she just wants to pair up with a Martian, as Mars will burn up too!

Lesley wonders whether travelling to other planets could cause cross contamination as explorations on earth has done in the past. On the other hand, valuable minerals could be discovered. Some feel we should always be pushing boundaries while others feel that as the deepest parts of our oceans are unexplored we should go there first .

Was a 1% pay rise an insult to the **NHS workers**? We must take into account that the NHS employs 1.4 million staff with a budget of £100 billion. Our resident nurse, Sheila, back at work part-time for vaccinations, feels pay is acceptable for nurses and doctors, but other staff e.g. cleaners, who took the same risks from Covid, deserve better pay and conditions as theirs is not a vocation. The pay gap is huge. They, however, are employed by private companies.

This week it has been on the news that many doctors and nurses are leaving the NHS. This is of great concern as, if they work for agencies, it is extremely expensive for the NHS to employ them. NHS staff do get some perks, for instance discounts in restaurants but maybe more incentives are needed if the country can't afford pay increases. In Scotland all NHS workers receive a £500 bonus. As ever, the Girls have ideas; maybe a lottery to give freebies to all workers, gifts not money, or free public transport that would have the knock on effect of freeing up parking for patients. We recommend 'This is Going to Hurt' the diary of a junior doctor by Adam Kay as it shows that the pressure of work, not the pay, is why many doctors crack under the pressure of their workload. Plus, who wants to be treated by an exhausted junior doctor?

**Feeling pressured by charities?** It is sad when we are put off donating by the emotional blackmail of unwanted 'free gifts' when we wanted our donation to go to the cause. We'd like the people in charge to realise we don't want pens, calendars and pathetic pens Some of us are happy to buy raffle tickets or subscribe to charity lotteries but loath the 'chuggers' on the street wanting you to make a monthly donation. These people are paid and we'd rather have volunteers with collection tins. Most of us realise how privileged we are compared to others and make regular payments but when giving a donation don't want to be asked to make another regular payment.

Having had little success returning charity requests through the post, one member suggest 'return to sender-deceased' is more effective.

We are put off fund-raising when charity executives are receiving excessive salaries, surely there are vocational people who would do the job for less.

Keep giving, generous u3a folk, and don't let the \*chuggers get you down!

\*charity muggers

### **Green Tips from the Grouchy Girls**

- **No Mow May** is such an excellent idea and one less job to do. If you like everything to look neat then just edge your lawn this month but let the clover and daisies grow for the bees. Also there are tiny bugs that the birds need now they are nesting.
- Jill lets the grass grow long and has wild flowers amongst that she just cuts a path through. Beautiful, and prettier than a flat green patch.
- **Bananas and roses?** Cut up your banana peel and put around your rose bush as they have 42% potassium along with nitrogen and phosphorus. Eggshells ground up and put around seedlings when you plant them out not only discourage slugs but warn you to not tread on them. As the worms take them into the soil they feed the plants as they contain calcium; particularly good for tomatoes. They reduce the acidity of your soil and aerate it and help plants have strong stems.

- **Birds need calcium** for their eggs, so crush them finely and add to bird food. Sterilize them first by leaving in the bottom of your oven when baking or with boiling water.
- **Coffee grounds** help your compost to rot down and alliums like to have them sprinkled around them and don't forget to put your tea leaves around the roses too or line your hanging baskets with teabags to retain Moisture

Maggie Martinez

## JUNE 2021

Grouchy Girls wonder how we can reduce the high carbon footprint of the fashion and clothing industry, unlike the grouchy girl in the picture who never gave it a thought.

We still believe in mending and altering and feel it is good to upcycle clothes. The stigma has gone along with the tag '2nd hand'; they are now 'pre-loved', but once they've gone through the washing machine we are happy.

We do believe a lot of clothes are too cheap, meaning workers are not being paid a fair wage. We understand that people on low incomes are glad of this, but we'd like to see informative labels on clothes to guarantee they're ethically produced. Also, we don't feel the need to buy more clothes, unless, like one member, you've gone down 2 sizes.



**How do conspiracy theories arise** and why do people choose to believe them? Crackpot ideas soon go global on the internet, including the latest one which says our vaccinations have us chipped; test by holding a magnet to the site of your jab and it will stick. It could be that in times of social upheaval and crisis some people want to feel in control.

Some theories seem to originate from the USA bible belt and we discussed Qanon which is decidedly weird - look it up, and surprise, Mr D Trump supporters started that one! It is a concern that powerful bodies including governments can use these theories to control. People believe what they want to believe, and to be honest many of us read the newspapers that share our views.

### If you could time travel, what year would you visit?

- 1959 for Bridget to witness the change that started the 'swinging sixties', then forward to 2121 to if we are all chipped and robotic.
- 1900 for Gill as she wants to be a lady in the fashion of the era to meet her grandparents and our country before the wars.
- The Chinese Empire as Beijing was being built or maybe to meet Leonardo da Vinci for Shirley.
- Then the Greek Empire for Ann, bathing in asses milk under a blue sky while her servant peels the grapes.
- We'd all be fascinated to go to the dark ages before history was written down and wondered if people were as dirty and smelly as portrayed in films. That led to us wondering, why did we go back to our primitive ways when the Romans departed?
- Sally would go back to the sixties of her youth and hippy beads and bells.

Maggie Martinez

## JULY 2021

### **Are ID cards a good idea or the last bastion of civil liberty**

Grouchy Girls do not always agree with each other, but in this case they were united in thinking they were not. Concerns were raised that they were unnecessary and would lead to the authorities having more control over our lives; particularly if the Police had the power to stop anyone and demand to see their cards. In any event a person's identity could be verified by other means available such as a passport or driving licence. It was felt that any argument that they might help with illegal immigration or reduce crimes could possibly be surpassed by the cards being falsified.

### **How biased is the news we receive in newspapers, TV, radio & the internet?**

Girls said they had observed that news stories can vary significantly from one source to another particularly where they are not entirely factual and part based on opinion. This was not seen as a wholly bad thing as people tend to choose a news source which allies to their own views. It was felt that news stories should not suppress the truth, but should avoid inflaming things.

### **What were you doing in the 'swinging sixties'?**

Girls love a good old reminisce. For most of us the 60s were not too 'swinging' -more a case of bringing up families or furthering an educational career. They did however embrace the 60s fashion – one GG admitting to wearing a blouse as a mini dress!!

Lesley Tomlinson

### **Green Tips from the Grouchy Girls**

**War on slugs:** Using chemicals can go up the food chain and harm the predators as well as the slugs. One good tip from the garden expert who was our guest speaker, was to put shallow dishes of beer out in February. This is when the slugs emerge to breed, and, from experience, it really helps. The slugs expire in happy drunkenness, and any predators will enjoy the flavour of marinated slug.

Many beetles eat huge numbers of slug eggs, so encourage them into your garden by leaving piles of wood around the edge of your garden and earth them up a few inches. Hedgehogs love to dine on juicy slugs, but you may need to encourage them in, so be sure to have a gap under the fence. Look online to find what to use for a hedgehog house. Dried dog or cat food can tempt them in but milk is bad for them. We mustn't forget our friends, the frogs, and a natural pond is perfect. If you haven't got one, even a washing up bowl sunk into the garden can help. Be sure to surround it with rocks to look good and stop the hedgehogs falling in.

Some of those large slugs that are easy to spot actually eat the small ones, and the smaller the slug the more damage they do. Think eel worms in your potatoes.

I've enjoyed researching slugs and hope this helps us keep our gardens eco-green .

Maggie Martinez

## JULY 2021

Grouchy Girls are still having alternate weeks of meeting on Zoom and having lunch at The Willowbrook. This week was a zoom and the first debate was '**Is it ever right to smack a child**'? Most of us could remember receiving the odd smack and there were admissions of giving our own little ones a smack, especially if they were endangering themselves.

We agreed that as we wouldn't hit another adult the idea of it being OK to hit a child was ridiculous. During our confessions, some of us felt when we'd lacked self control and doled out a smack, it was often because of our own frustration levels. We discussed all the better ways to discipline and the 'naughty step'. We remembered corporal punishment in schools, and the

records of the children who were caned showed it didn't work as the same names cropped up. So, practise your death stare but keep your hands in your pockets.

**Love Island** : Does it cause youngsters to think appearances are all important, or is it harmless entertainment? Only one Grouchy Girl owned up to watching an episode, and, of course, this was research for the discussion. Her work colleagues loved to discuss the pairing off of the beautiful people and thought it fun. However many of the Love Island girls are beginning to look like clones due to their cosmetic surgery. We hated the idea of young girls watching and thinking it was normal to have trout lips and Botox when, in our eyes, they didn't need it. Also, normalising bed-hopping to find someone to pair up with was viewed as immoral by some of us, but none of our business by others. Could watching these perfect bodies lead to anxiety and eating disorders?

We worried about the participants who are seeking money and fame as their celebrity status will be short-lived. Two contestants have ended their young lives. However, similar themes are in pop videos and magazines and we can't put the clock back

It was a relief to go on to our third topic '**Is it stressful to live amongst clutter**, or is a cluttered home evidence of an interesting life? The secret seems to be organised clutter and plenty of storage. How would we have coped in lockdowns without books and crafts? In our zooms we like to see what each other is creating, and be impressed. Ornaments can remind us of our personal histories, though one member admitted to hating her husband's collection of animal ornaments.

One member defined hoarding as keeping things you never use or enjoy, and while some like to cull clothing, one said the answer was to buy another wardrobe! So despite covid lockdown clear outs, we like the clutter we use for crafts but admit that too much 'stuff' makes us lose things. We feel that minimalist homes are not welcoming

**What difference has 19th July made to your daily life?** was the first question in our Grouchy Girls zoom, and as usual we shared a range of views. Although keen to stop wearing masks, members felt that wasn't a choice, as we need to protect vulnerable people. The regulations made some of us feel more confident to enter public buildings and transport, and now some of us are nervous on going indoors. Those now happy to meet indoors would like to think there will be better ventilation and that higher levels of cleanliness will continue.

Many felt there was no logic to the regulations e.g. youngsters crowding into clubs weeks before being asked to prove they're double vaccinated and football fans travelling in crowded trains, then being asked for proof of vaccination to go into an outdoor stadium. The 'pingdemic' is making hospital waiting lists longer as even though medical staff may test negative they aren't allowed to work.

**Is it ever appropriate to swear?** Where do you draw a line? Despite our angelic reputations, Grouchy Girls admit to using BAD language to vent! Some would only swear when alone, as we were brought up to think it was not 'ladylike'. Times have changed from when men never swore in front of women as we now hear swearing in the street from women and men. We're bored with comedians who think swearing makes them funny and we don't like swearing in front of children. We also draw the line at blasphemy as it is disrespectful. Constant swearing is boring and there are always better words to emphasise.

**GOOD NEWS!** On gloomy days we like to cheer ourselves up by concentrating on some positives. These days the news makes this difficult but Grouchy Girls to the rescue; reasons to be cheerful, part one

- After the appalling racial abuse of our young black football stars, it was great to see the crowd of supporters at the Marcus Rashford mural, and to hear that some online abusers were being prosecuted
- Nottingham Uni refused an applicant due to his online racial abuse
- We love that grass is now being allowed to grow longer in parks and gardens, the clover & daisies making it so much prettier
- We are lucky to have Gedling Country Park and it looks better every year

- Meeting baby grandchildren for the first time
- Last but not least was the story of a dog being rescued from behind skirting boards

Maggie Martinez

## SEPTEMBER 2021

Serious Grouching from your Grouchy Girls when we discussed:

### **Is illegal drug use a health, or a criminal issue?**

There was general agreement that current policies are not working and that addiction to drugs is linked to crime in general; knife crime, robbery and prostitution to name a few. Many drug dealers lure vulnerable young women into a life of addiction and prostitution in order to exploit them. Dealers also use women as mules to carry hard drugs inside them, putting their lives at risk.

Classification of drugs is confusing and prison sentences do not help drug addicts to get clean; it is well known that hard drugs are available in prisons. Places in rehabilitation facilities are limited, and many addicts relapse as soon as they are back in contact with dealers. Maybe prison would be an excellent way to help addicts if they served their sentences in a facility designed to support them giving up hard drugs. It would help to cut crime and save lives.

Governments receive tax from cigarettes and alcohol, both of which can cause addiction and ill health. Alcohol can also be behind crimes of violence, including domestic violence, but does not have drug barons reaping money from 'users'. If hard drugs were made legal and dispensed in a controlled way, we think crime and addiction would be reduced. Care would be needed that those dispensing were kept safe.

A global agreement to enforce changes, and early interventions to identify addictive personality could work to prevent this serious social problem.

We lightened up when discussing **whether Honesty is always the best policy** - Santa? Tooth fairy? Weird hairstyle? Does my bum look big in this? Grouchy girls have been known to fib!

We're meeting in person at The Willowbrook on the 3rd Tuesdays of the month at 2pm. Some of us meet at 1pm to have lunch beforehand.

Our next meeting is on 21st September when we will discuss

1. How satisfied are you with current bank services?
2. Have you cut back on eating meat? Share your views.
3. Why do we use different voices when we talk to babies or animals?

Maggie Martinez

## OCTOBER 2021

Grouchy Girls discussed their levels of satisfaction with **bank services**. We felt there is a shortage of branches locally, but it is good that Post Offices could be used for the Coop Bank. We are usually happy to use online banking and a few members praised the Coop bank services; and Deidre told us that Barclays sends her a text whenever money goes out of her account. Sheila praised the 20 minute online course offered by Halifax on avoiding scams. She shared the tip to always transfer £1 first to any new recipient, then check it has gone through before sending a large amount.

We are worried about the new limit of £100 for contactless payments as we've heard of cards being cloned, plus if your purse is lost or stolen 5 payments can be taken in a day before the card is blocked!

Final tip: check any old accounts, as if they haven't been used for years, they can be closed and the money given to charity.

Have you cut down or stopped **eating meat**? Reasons for eating less meat varied from the expense to the cost to our environment. Knowing meat is part of global warming was an incentive, plus all the veggie recipes now available. A compromise was to make dishes with mince with a higher proportion of vegetables or even replace the mince with Quorn. Eating alone doesn't inspire some members to go to a lot of trouble, and a piece of chicken or fish makes a no fuss meal. One member felt we should support farmers but transporting animals live was unpopular.

Maggie Martinez

## **NOVEMBER 2021**

Thank You x 300 ! - With Lesley T's inspiration, members of our u3a have made a contribution to France Medico Charity by **donating old pairs of glasses**. Over 300 pairs have been collected, and will go to those around the world who cannot afford them. Life transforming for people struggling to read, use computers, work, sew etc. Well done all and thank you Lesley, keep them coming!

As well as glasses, we continue collecting **plastic lids** that cannot be recycled locally. Lids from milk bottles, coffee jars, shampoo bottles etc. Not only does that mean that less goes into landfill, but money is raised for the Dove Hospice. Sally B kindly takes bags to The Salad Bowl at Mapperley. Either bring any you have collected to the general meeting, coffee morning or Grouchy Girls, or take them to The Salad Bowl. Thank you Sally.

**Blister packs** for pills were being collected for recycling too, but we have to change how we now keep those out of landfill. Helen F, Claire and Lesley, in conjunction with the W.I., have been collecting sacks of these to take to Superdrug shops. From now on Superdrug is not able to take large bags from community collections. Please, therefore, take any you have to a Superdrug outlet, as they accept from individuals.

Do the Grouchy Girls think all **doctor appointments** should be in person?

As usual we had a range of experiences and views, with gasps of horror that one member had to call out her symptoms to the receptionist from a socially distanced gap. This meant she had to share this personal information with those nearby. The practice would then arrange a call from a doctor if felt necessary.

Another member has what she feels is an excellent compromise. After 2 phone appointments she sees her consultant but can ring a specialist nurse if she has concerns.

If you are confident you know that your symptoms are of a recurring illness, a phone call could be acceptable BUT with any new symptoms a face to face appointment should be available.

Post op. Problems? The suggested action is to call your surgeon as there is always a danger of a DVT.

## **DECEMBER 2021**

**FIREWORKS:** Oh those good old days before health and safety, when Jumping Jacks went up Dad's trouser legs and indoor fireworks set fire to the tablecloth. Nowadays fireworks are more spectacular- and cost a fortune. The Grouchy Girls wondered whether there should be more restrictions on people buying and setting them off all year round. Dog owners can prepare for 5th November with doggy sedatives and making sure their pet is not left home alone.

We worry about the impact on wild animals and one member worried about the effects on those loud bangs for ex-service people with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

While some felt families should be able to buy fireworks for parties, others felt they should be licensed for well organised events. If not we'd like more ecological ones minus the loud bangs, and resign ourselves to them being available online anyway.

Green Girls **COP** made us reassess our efforts to be more ecologically minded. We wish it was easier to buy products without so much packaging, especially plastic. We don't feel confident that the items we put in the green bin are all recycled. Some of us enjoy our deliveries from the milkman as although a little more expensive, it saves so much plastic. We try to buy food that is local and seasonal, and compost waste. Some of us love eating our home grown fruit and vegetables. Eating less meat has become enjoyable and we have some good recipes for meat-free meals. We trust our nose when ignoring 'sell by dates'

Using public transport and avoiding buying items flown around the world helps, and some of us love buying upcycled items from charity shops. We understand that electric transport does not pollute the air but worry about how all batteries are produced.

**WINTER BLUES** must be avoided unless included in wearing bright colours to cheer ourselves up. If your winter coat is a dark colour, get out your brightest scarves.

Houseplants brighten up the home and if you are a plant murderer, you could buy some flowers. Wear your brightest lipstick with a matching smile!

IN 2022 WE ARE CHANGING GROUCHY GIRLS TO 12 noon on the THIRD WEDNESDAY of the month. New members are always welcome.