

Connect

West Midlands Region

Shropshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire.

June/July 2022

u3a learn,
laugh,
live

A message from your Regional Trustee



Celebrations in Full Swing

As we move into the summer months (and hopefully the weather gets warmer!), many u3as have already started their celebrations of the Platinum Jubilee, the u3a's 40th Anniversary, and their u3a Open Days. Sandwell u3a was the first off the block in early May (see article and pics), but many more have now caught up, with picnics, lunches, and

open houses.

Mid May I went to see a joint exhibition by the three Coventry u3as to celebrate the culmination of Coventry's Year as the UK's City of Culture. Based in the Belgrade Theatre in the centre of Coventry, three days of exhibiting a tapestry and a wide range of u3a activities, attracted a steady flow of members of the public, many interested in joining. It was great to see the u3as working together, supported by a substantial grant from the Trust. I'll be visiting many more u3a celebrations over the summer, so if you see me, come and say hello and tell me what you think of the u3a movement.

Remember, grants are available to all u3as to support your forthcoming events. Details are set out in this newsletter and on the national website – just fill in the simple application form, email it to me, and I'll do the rest.

I would also like to draw your attention to the u3a's 40th Anniversary Research and Shared Learning Day to be held in Preston on 3rd August. From archaeology to urban sketching, there will be displays of members' work to inspire, handouts to take away, presentations by project leaders and opportunities to ask questions. The conference is open to any u3a member who wants to know more about research opportunities. See more details inside the newsletter.

Finally, I know that a number of u3as are holding AGMs over the summer, so just a reminder that in addition to the National Learning Programme, there are lots of online workshops available for new Committee Officers. A list of workshops is inside the newsletter, and please remember to complete the form on the national website when Committee Officers change (and let me have an email address for any change of Chair) – it saves an awful lot of emails going astray.

Enjoy your celebrations and send me some pics!

Allan Walmsley.

WM Regional Trustee,

Email contact:- allan.walmsley@u3a.org.uk

QR Code to Access u3a WM Region Web Site



QR codes are similar to click links, and are just another way of linking to information. This QR code is a link to the WM Region u3a website but the link can be to any document, website or source.

To open a QR code:

Search and download a QR code scanner app from your app store.

Open the app and hold your device so that the QR code appears in the Camera viewfinder.

The QR code will open immediately.

Thanks to Ross on Wye u3a for the idea.

**For direct access
to the W Midland
Region Web Site
click on the link
below : -**

CLICK HERE

What's on in 2022? -


40th Anniversary Events Programme - A Taster

u3a turns 40 years old in 2022 and is '*fit for the future!*' We will be celebrating this milestone with a packed programme of events running all year. u3as and members will have the opportunity to get involved in the celebrations and help raise the profile of our wonderful and vibrant organisation. A full programme will be available soon but please find a taster below of what's coming up.

Anniversary Quilt Competition

At the time of going to press u3a members were preparing to visit the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester to view the 40 winning blocks as the finished quilt is revealed.

The day is intended to start with the 'great reveal' of the quilt. Members will then hear how the winning 40 quilt blocks were put through different processes on a long armed quilting machine. A few contributors of the quilt are due to speak about what inspired their entry.

By the time you read this article the event will, most likely, have already been held and the winner announced. To find out more :- [CLICK HERE](#)  TO GO TO THE QUILT PAGE ON THE NATIONAL WEB SITE

Picnic in the Park | June 2022

Over the Queen's Platinum Jubilee weekend, u3as are encouraged to hold picnics to celebrate not just the Queen's Jubilee and the Green Canopy but also our 40th anniversary. We hope to make a splash with the reveal of the Anniversary Quilt at this time.

U3a Science Network webinar | July 2022

The u3a Science Network will host an anniversary meeting, Futures, Foresight and Horizon scanning in July, which we hope will be open to the public as well as to u3a members. There are plans to attract an eminent scientist to open the July science network meeting. Two additional meetings for u3a members will be held during 2022, in April and October.

Conference on Research and Shared Learning | July/August 2022

Conference featuring a wide range of topics and sessions about u3a Research and Shared Learning. A planning meeting in January will decide on the projects to be included and we are seeking a significant scientist to open the meeting.

One Foot in the Future - September /October 2022

The aim of this project is to engage older people from across the UK in telling real or imagined stories about older people taking positive steps to make a better future for themselves and others.

Themes are all about Reimagining the Future in Older Age, raising awareness of the u3a movement as well as the fun you can have as you get older.

Celebrating u3a Week | September 2022

u3a Day is an annual event to showcase the activity, learning and fun which takes place across the movement every day. It is a celebration of positive ageing highlighting our members' life experiences. For more information on u3a day : —

[CLICK HERE](#)

GRANTS AVAILABLE TO u3a's in 2022/23

The following grants are now available to u3as as follows:

Workshop and exhibition grants (up to £500 maximum): to assist with the organisation of workshops/exhibitions/seminars on topics relevant to the running and future development of u3as. Activities must involve networks or groups of u3as and/or the cost of taking a stand/exhibition space at a local or county show.

Start Up grants (up to £300 maximum): available to all new u3as during the set-up process and can be paid as soon as the new u3a has a bank account.

Relaunch grants (£100 fixed amount): This is drawn from the Barbara Lewis fund and is a grant to cover costs during a relaunch for u3as that have insufficient reserves to cover the costs. The intention is that the grants will apply to those u3as whose membership numbers have fallen away significantly.

Special events grants (up to £150 maximum): to support events aimed at raising awareness of and recruiting new members to the u3a movement. This includes events such as open days, u3a Day/Week activities and events to support the 40th anniversary of the u3a movement. This is to supplement the u3a's own spending.

u3as seeking any of these grants should send an email in the first instance with the relevant application form to the Regional Trustee via email. All grant applications must be made to and approved by the Regional Trustee prior to the activity taking place.

Following the event, the u3a must email the Regional Trustee, outlining what the money has been spent on and the identified outcomes.

Payment of the grant will not be made more than 12 weeks in advance of the event.

Application forms and more information are on the national website – see link below - under Support For u3as/Financial Matters — To reach the website click the box

[CLICK HERE](#)

When you reach the website you will need to sign in (or register if you are a new user) then click on “Support for u3a's, then Financial matters and you will see the link to grants information section at the bottom of the page.

U3a Director Elections

This is a reminder that information on the AGM 2022 Director Elections, is now available on the main u3a Web Site

To visit the site for more information

[CLICK HERE](#)

Coventry u3as Get Together for the Year of Culture.



The three u3as in Coventry, Coventry Shires, Coventry Sherborne, and Coventry u3a itself, arranged a joint exhibition and recruitment fayre at the prestigious Belgrade theatre in the city centre to celebrate Coventry's status as UK's City of Culture. The exhibition showed work from the range of interest groups available at the three u3as and there was much competition to sign up visitors who showed an interest. The u3as had woven a colourful tapestry that included many of Coventry's Twin Cities around the world – 26 in all (although relations with Volgograd, Russia are currently

suspended) – and the painting groups also showed scenes from many of the same Twin Cities.

Allan Walmsley, Trustee for the West Midlands visited the exhibition on the 3rd day and members from each of the three u3as said how interesting it had been to work with other u3as and share their knowledge.



Can You Help Me Out?

The u3a movement relies almost totally on volunteers willing to use part of their time to help develop ideas and support activities. Whilst most activities are locally based, there are also networks and regional teams that rely heavily on u3a members bringing their ideas and experience together to create a range of opportunities and activities beyond local u3as.

In the West Midlands, I operate as a regional trustee with the support of a small team of u3a members. We meet virtually around 6-8 times per year and I find it really helpful to hear feedback from u3as and networks around the region as well as discussing the latest developments from around the movement. These support volunteers can then explain the various initiatives and opportunities to their u3as and networks.

I am now keen to add new members to the team. There are no specific requirements other than a little enthusiasm and energy; and the role is certainly not onerous. I am looking for u3a members who can keep me up to date with a local flavour from u3as and networks, and to help me with the organisation and delivery of regional events such as study days, regional conferences, or recruitment fairs.

Depending on location, skills and personal interest, you may be interested in providing support with websites and social media support, with regional communications, help to identify gaps in U3A presence, or identify local organisations, events, initiatives or personalities that we can link into.

I'll ensure that you are aware of the need for confidentiality, equality and data protection, and I'll help you to keep up to date with new u3a material relating to policy, practice, legislative and constitutional changes.

If you think you can help me and support u3as in the West Midlands Region, I would love to hear from you. Email me on: allan.walmsley@u3a.org.uk

RETAIN & RECRUIT U3A MEMBERS

A Working Party of members from 65 u3as has produced 35 tools to help with the retention and recruitment campaign.

There are papers, presentations & videos, showing how a bit of thought & lateral thinking can help u3as to stem & reverse reductions in membership and adjust an ageing profile.

The Toolkit is on the main u3a website to access it click the blue box

[CLICK HERE](#)

West Midland Police – Fraud Bulletin

The latest edition of the Fraud Bulletin is now available on the West Midland u3a web site

To access the bulletin click here

[CLICK HERE](#)

Interested in Crown Green Bowls?

Click the box to read the Crown Green Bowls Newsletter on the WM Region Web Site

[CLICK HERE](#)

Do you use u3a Subject Advisers ?

Discover more about u3a Subject Advisers on the u3a subject advice page

[CLICK HERE](#)

Exploring World Faiths – National Zoom Events, June-Sept 2022

Thank you everyone for participating in our Exploring World Faiths National Webinars and to the very positive feedback on the ‘Buddhism, Buddha and the Dalai Lama’ webinar. Powerpoints and recordings of this, and previous, webinars can be accessed on the Exploring World Faiths page on the u3a national website. Queries to Dr Peter Rookes, National Subject Advisor, Exploring World Faiths, pjrookes@gmail.com.

Details of the next 3 webinars are as follows -

Mon 20th June - 10.0 am

General Chat Session for Local Coordinators of u3a Exploring World Faiths groups and others thinking of doing so. We are interested in sharing challenges you may be facing, and ideas for getting started, and different ways of running your groups. Liz Dancey will be joining us and will share the resources she has produced for use in schools, which several u3a groups have also found useful.

Mon 18th July - 10.0 am

Pilgrimage – Presenters from the Christian, Muslim and Sikh Faiths

Pilgrimages to important religious sites for spiritual renewal are a feature of many faiths. We are all familiar with the Muslim pilgrimage to Hajj; Christian pilgrimages to Canterbury, Lindisfarne and Santiago de Compostella; Christians, Jews and Muslims go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem; Sikhs to the Golden Temple at Amritsar; and Hindus go to the Ganges at Varanasi.

Mon 5th Sept – 10.0 am

Holy Wars or Holy Peace – Presenters from Faith Organisations Promoting Peace

To coincide with the International Day of Peace on 21st September, we will explore the contribution of Faiths to conflict and to peace.

Bridge Equipment

Is there a u3a out there in need of equipment for the game of Bridge. If and u3a is interested then please contact Ashford Carbonell bridge club. They have tables bidding boxes and cards which they are not using.

Contact Diane Loney <marcusloney@hotmail.co>

Publicity for u3a

Calling all u3a members who regularly watch TV or listen to Radio.

We have reports that u3a was mentioned in Emmerdale recently, we've now been mentioned in The Archers, Coronation Street and Emmerdale – Eastenders here we come!

If you see or hear any mention of u3a on Radio or TV we would like to hear from you.

COTSWOLD LINK Special Interest Day

Wednesday 6th July 2022

The Pavilion, Hatherley Lane, Cheltenham, GL51 6PN 10.30 – 15.30

Four talks on the theme

Mitigating Climate Change & Environmental Impacts

This Special Interest Day is open to members of all the u3as affiliated to the Cotswold Link network. The wide range of topics connected to climate change

will include what we can do as individuals.

Tackling Climate – What Role can we play?

Dr Richard Swannell

Dr. Richard Swannell is an environmental scientist and international director of **WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Program)**. He leads teams that help businesses reduce waste in the food and textile sectors, cut plastic pollution and move towards the goal of achieving NetZero. He will talk about the role we can all play as citizens in helping to deliver a net zero future, and how we can act to limit climate change to a 1.5-degree increase.

Climatic Effects on Trees & the Effects of Trees on Climate

Jeremy Evans and Jane Craven

Jeremy Evans currently advises landowners on the creation of woodland and the management and preservation of ancient woodland and the ancient and veteran trees that they contain. **Jane Craven** focuses on informing all of us about the importance of trees as a key part of our landscape. Both work for the **Woodland Trust**. In their talk they will explore the dual relationship between trees and climate, including their role in encouraging wildlife.

Nuclear in a Net Zero World

Vicki Dingwall

Vicki Dingwall from **EDF Energy** has worked on the nuclear power station construction project at Hinkley Point C since 2009. During the early planning stages of the nuclear power station, Vicki specialized in communicating nuclear planning and consultation information to promote better understanding and perceptions of nuclear power. Vicki's talk will focus on the role that nuclear energy has to play in achieving net zero targets and the hurdles the industry must overcome.

Improving Energy Efficiency in the Home

Paul Sheridan

Paul Sheridan is a senior domestic energy advisor for **Severn Wye Energy Agency** with over 20 years' experience of energy efficiency and renewables in the home. He has worked on a number of home energy improvement projects over the years. He will discuss a range of measures for improving the energy

Booking forms are available from the u3a Cotswold Link Web site

[CLICK HERE](#)

U3a Office - Staff Structure June 2022

Following a review of services to u3as, networks, regions and to the Trust Committees, the staff structure is now reasonably stable. As a simple snapshot of current workload, on average the staff deal with around 900 calls per month from u3as and u3a members, the Office has developed the spring and summer learning programmes, including the poetry, creative writing competitions, managing up to 3000 tickets per month for online special events. There are on average 8 training workshops per month attracting 30-50 members each time. On communications, the national newsletter has an audience of over 38,000 with posts on the u3a Facebook pages reaching over 107,000 people, and In April, over 133,000 people viewed the u3a YouTube channel.

The annual returns process is also almost complete with subscriptions invoices and payments from 1,060 u3as as well as Beacon, and TAM payments.

The current u3a Office structure is:

Chief Executive Officer - Sam Mauger
Head of Policy and Communications– Liz Drury
 Special Projects Officer – Julie Travis
 Press & PR Officer – Elise Sargent
 Communications Officer – Nellie Mair
 TAM Editor – Jo Smith
 Policy Officer – Harriet Radermacher
 Website and Digital Officer – Charles Tomlinson
Head of Member Services – Alison May
 Learning Development Officer – Georgia Laws
 Learning Officer – Janine Aldridge
 Information and Advice Manager – Aisha Merchant
 Member Services – Sharon Ahtuam
 Advice & u3a support – Linda Hodson
 Training & Regional Support – Susannah Hodge
 Volunteering Support – Mingma Norman
Head of Internal Services – Chris Hughes
 Contracts Manager – Alastair Barr
 Operations Manager – Will Jones
 Data & Systems – Maria Baco
 Finance Officer – Jenny Murphy
 Finance Officer – Audrey Mafemera

Note: Most staff work part-time hours. The full time equivalent is 19 staff.



SANDWELL u3a Party

Alan Wyle, secretary of Sandwell u3a, tells us that they held a Queens Jubilee Celebration party recently.

The event was attended by over 70 members of Sandwell u3a and a great day was enjoyed by all.

The members were entertained with singing by Lydia Rae and then had afternoon tea with, coffee, tea and cakes.



Research & Shared Learning National Conference

3rd August 2022

'She smuggled home her father's severed head, wrapped in her apron....'

This family story, handed down over generations, was a starting point members of for Glasgow West End Local History group. Working with local archives and museums, they uncovered the tragic story behind the death of James Wilson. You can share in these findings and more at our conference on 3rd August in Preston, Lancashire

From archaeology to urban sketching, there will be displays of members' work to to inspire, handouts to take away, presentations by project leaders and opportunities to ask questions.

The conference is open to those already involved in u3a research / shared learning projects, and also to any u3a member who wants to know more.

For more details and the booking form

[CLICK HERE](#)

Lunch will be provided. The venue is directly opposite Preston mainline station. If driving to the venue, Fishergate Shopping Centre Car park offers 24-hour parking for £8.50 and is a short walk from the venue.

Questions? Contact slp@u3a.org.uk

u3a Science Network Anniversary meeting 26 July 2022

The July meeting on 26 July has been designated as the Anniversary meeting and is now available for booking on the national website.

This is a science-based learning event with 3 presentations of 45 minutes followed by questions after each, with a break for refreshments and for lunch. The meeting will start at 10:30 (doors open at 10:15) and will end with a short Summary and Thanks session at 3 o'clock.

Booking :- To book a place on this Free event, please go to Events on the u3a national website and click the registration option for the u3a Science Network anniversary meeting on 26 July or directly here

[CLICK HERE](#)

Programme

10:30	Welcome and Introduction Leigh Edwards Science Subject Adviser	Michaela Moody
10:35 – 11:35	John Marriage Lyme Regis u3a Blowing Hot and Cold in the 1980s	Michaela Moody
11:35 – 11:45	Break	
11:45 – 13:00	Mike Perry Tring u3aThe Carbon Imperative	Leigh Edwards
13:00 – 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 – 14:30	Leigh Edwards Exeter u3a Human colonisation of Space	Jane Tietjen
14:30 – 15:00	Plenary session for feedback and announcement of details of October meeting	Michaela Moody

LATEST COVID GUIDELINES

The latest guidance is set out on the national u3a website

Click the link below to see how it applies to your u3a:

[CLICK HERE](#)

National News-letter

To access the archived copies of the National Newsletter click the box below.

[CLICK HERE](#)

GUIDANCE Constitutions and Covid

To access the 26th March 2021 link to a u3a mailing on constitutions and Covid guidance, click the blue button below

[CLICK HERE](#)

GET THE NATIONAL U3A NEWSLETTER!

Sign up [here](#)

It's a great way of finding out what's going on in u3as across the country: **you can copy all the best ideas!**

MODEL

CONSTITUTION

The **new** Model Constitution has arrived and is available on the main u3a website under **Support For u3as/ Document Downloads**. Look for Document

U3A-KMS-DOC-035.

Alternatively, log in to the main website and click [HERE](#)

More News

For more news and information on a variety of u3a matters try the u3a Sources blog

To access Sources

Click the box

[CLICK HERE](#)

Social Media News

Have you ever explored our social media presence if not then now is the time to take a look via the below links to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube : —

Click the buttons below to see our social media profiles

Facebook



Twitter



Instagram



YouTube



NEW ON THE BRAND CENTRE

The first tranche of merchandise is available on the brand centre. This includes mugs, bags and badges. You can use these to promote your u3a and on u3a day. More merchandise over the next few months.

Click [HERE](#) to go to Brand Centre Registration Page on the National Web Site

NEW ON THE IMAGE LIBRARY

The national image library has been updated. This is full of u3a member photos, from walking to ukulele playing. Use these on your u3a websites and publicity materials. The Trust will be updating this image library once they start doing photoshoots again.

Access the image library via the Main U3A Web Site

Let's Talk Tech

A dedicated website full of helpful guidance and user experiences for u3a Hybrid (or Alternative) meetings has just been launched.

As experience builds the website will grow with more tips and techniques

To access the Website click the box below



You can also join the Facebook group, where you can find details of weekly Zoom drop in sessions for more help and support. To join click the box



ARE YOU A u3a CHAIR IN THE WEST MIDLANDS ? IF SO :-

Every Friday, I hold a “Fireside Chat”, a very informal Zoom session where Chairs exchange their news and views about u3a.

If you're a Chair and haven't come along yet, please email me and I'll send you an invitation. — Allan

If you want to contribute to one of our newsletters or if you'd like to know more about any of the items featured

OR if you just want to say hello, email

allan.walmsley@u3a.org.uk



Newsletter Express

To read the latest copy of the National Newsletter Express click the box below



ADVANCE NOTICE

U3a day celebrations are now extended throughout a week. Be prepared for the week of u3a celebration.

The dates for the next five years are -

17—25 September 2022

16—24 September 2023

21—29 September 2024

20—28 September 2025

19—27 September 2026
