

Connect

West Midlands Region

Shropshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire.

February 2022

u3a learn,
laugh,
live

A message from your Regional Trustee



Most u3as are probably looking forward to one of the busiest of modern times. As we look forward to the lifting of all social restrictions and learning to live with Covid, u3as are already reporting success with recruitment plans and new recruits building up numbers to pre-Covid levels.

An influx of new recruits can be daunting for some u3as, but here is an opportunity to show new members the values, standards and commitment levels that we would like to see in all u3a members - here may be your future group leaders and coordinators, committee members and perhaps even a future chair. Welcome them warmly and encourage them to participate and play a full part in activities across the u3a. Nurture them and show them the positive experiences of being a u3a member – particularly the friendships and opportunities.

As the year moves on, many u3as are already planning activities for the Queen's Jubilee, the u3a 40th anniversary, and for u3a week in September. Many u3as are planning their first face to face AGM for two years – a daunting task because some chairs and committee members have never known a Covid-free period.

So, there's lots to think about this year. Let's make it the year that we come out of our shell, the year that u3as once more play a major role in helping and supporting a major part of society.

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

The 40th Anniversary quilt competition was launched for members to create blocks for a quilt on the topic of Positive Ageing. The Anniversary Quilt competition has been judged and 40 squares on the topic of Positive Ageing have been selected for the quilt which we hope will be revealed on as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee weekend. We plan an alert in the second half of May to advise members of dates and times and anticipate that the quilt can then be displayed in a number of locations in the UK.

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' lived experience. For more information on u3a day : —

[CLICK HERE](#)

GRANTS AVAILABLE TO U3As 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.

Nick Carter

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.

Exploring World Faiths – National Zoom Events

Thank you everyone for participating in our Exploring World Faiths National Webinars. Here are details of the next 3 on Zoom as follows. There is no need to register in advance, just login on the day – login details are on the Exploring World Faiths Subject Page on the u3a national website.

Queries to Dr Peter Rookes, National Subject Advisor, Exploring World Faiths, pjrookes@gmail.com.

Mon 21st March – 10.0 am—Lent and Ramadan overlap this year 2nd March – 16th April and 2nd April – 1st May

Hear about the differences and the similarities from Bernie Morton and Mahmooda Qureshi. Bernie is an active Christian. Mahmooda is Muslim and Regional Coordinator of the Faith and Belief Forum

Wed 20th April – 10.0 am—Topic – ‘Do All Religions Lead to the Same God?’

Based on the Warwick u3a conference in March. Dr Peter Rookes, National u3a Subject Advisor, Exploring World Faiths, and author of:- ‘Commitment, Conscience or Compromise: the changing financial basis and evolving role of Christian health services in developing countries’; ‘Have financial difficulties compromised Christian Health Services’ Commitment to the Poor’ in Rakodi; ‘Religion, Religious Organisations and Development’; and Sub Chapter in Tetlow: ‘Perceptions of Christianity from People of Different Faiths’.

For each of the above events — Check the Zoom login details on the Exploring World Faiths page on the national u3a website.

REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Nobody wants a Regional Conference – Right? So, this year, all u3a members in the West Midlands are invited to join an online day of shows, presentations and engagement celebrating people living ***Interesting and Motivating Lives*** and encouraging us all to live ***Inspiring Lives***. The aim of the day is to celebrate the aspirations and achievements of people in later life and to inspire others to achieve their potential.

There will be a variety of speakers from both the u3a and celebrity worlds, on a range of subjects explaining and promoting positive living in older age, plus a look into the history of well-known people achieving great success in their later years. There will also be entertainment and exercise, all designed to show that life needn't end with retirement – it can also be a launchpad for more interest and excitement!

It will all take place on **22nd March 2022** and run from 10.00am to about 2.30pm. It will take place on Zoom, via an open invitation - there will be no need to register. A link will be issued in early March and members can pop in and out whenever they like throughout the Day.

We do hope that you will join us as we expect a full and interesting day.

Please make a note in your diary and circulate this information widely to your u3a members. We will provide further details of the Day's events as we progress.

Remember - No need to register, members can just attend on the day. A Zoom link will be widely published in early March and all members need to do is click on the link before 10am on the day.

Looking forward to seeing you on the Day.

West Midlands u3a Event Team

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](#)

Networks

u3a networks are such an important part of the movement and we know that you want to connect widely with each other. If you're part of a u3a network, you can soon have access to a brand new newsletter filled with the latest news from u3a networks across the movement. Sign up for the newsletter by using this link: -

[CLICK HERE](#)

Do you use u3a Subject Advisers ?

You can pick up all the latest information about Crown Green Bowls in the latest Bowls Newsletter issued by Andy Cowan, the National Subject Adviser for Crown Green Bowls. Have a look at the newsletter by clicking on the link

[CLICK HERE](#)

You will find the Crown Green Bowls newsletter in the right hand margin.

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

[CLICK HERE](#)

Talks for your u3a from — Diabetes UK

Diabetes UK is interested in the possibility of developing some community partnerships with organisations across the Midlands & East of England including the u3a movement. They now have an active network of Speaker Volunteers who are trained to deliver talks in the community to raise awareness of diabetes and the support that is available.

They would be happy to arrange a series of talks across the regions to u3a groups if interested. These can be delivered flexibly, either face to face or online depending on availability.

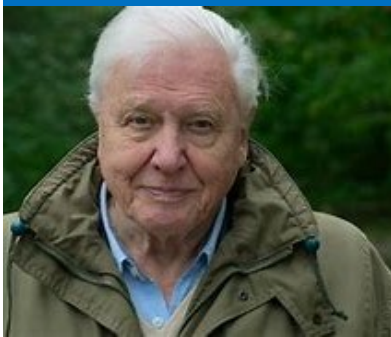
If you would like to discuss further, please contact, Roy Bustin, Volunteer Coordinator, Diabetes UK on Roy.Bustin@diabetes.org.uk

Enquiries to U3a Office

Ever wondered why some of your enquiries to the office go unanswered? During a recent review of resource requirements in the u3a office, the Advice and Volunteering section clocked an average of over **1000** telephone calls per month and between **800-900** emails per month to the generic u3a.office email address. This workload is currently shared between 4 full time equivalent staff, some of whom work part time together with a small group of volunteers.

The review will hopefully lead to an improvement in resources and better access to advice and FAQs via the website, with better clarification when general communications like the newsletters are issued. Whilst the u3a movement is a member organisation and contact with members will always be part of the service, members are asked to think twice before contacting the office. Perhaps their query can be answered in a different way.

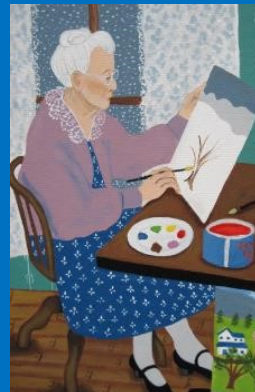
Regional Conference — a new approach



Zoom in on **22 March 10am-2:30pm** to find out about

“Inspiring Lives”

Need some inspiration? You'll find it here. Examples, advice & stories from u3a and beyond of great achievements after 60.
Details soon: **SAVE THE DATE**



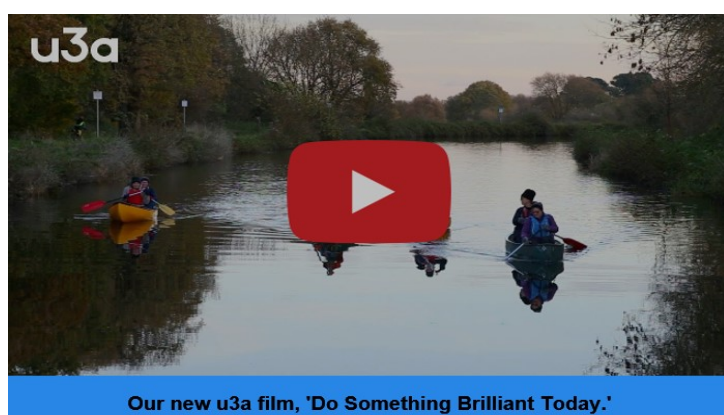
#Generation WOW — with

u3a has agreed to provide an opportunity for u3a members to showcase particular skills in videos that Specsavers produce and issue widely through conventional and social media channels in support of Specsavers Home Visits.

This one of the first collaborations with a commercial company and Specsavers has agreed to fund the Trust to raise awareness of the u3a movement and of their fight against ageism, promoting positive ageing and with Specsavers Home Visits through a mutually agreed campaign programme demonstrating the Trust's peer to peer learning model:-

To access the videos  to go to the Specsavers web site .

When you reach the web page scroll down to the videos, they are at the bottom of the page. There are three available at the moment. Landscape Painting, Laughter Yoga and Flower Arranging.



Do Something Brilliant Today!

In our new u3a film, launched last Friday, members share their stories of how u3a changed their lives for the better. It showcases how u3a helps members to learn new things, laugh together and live life to the full.

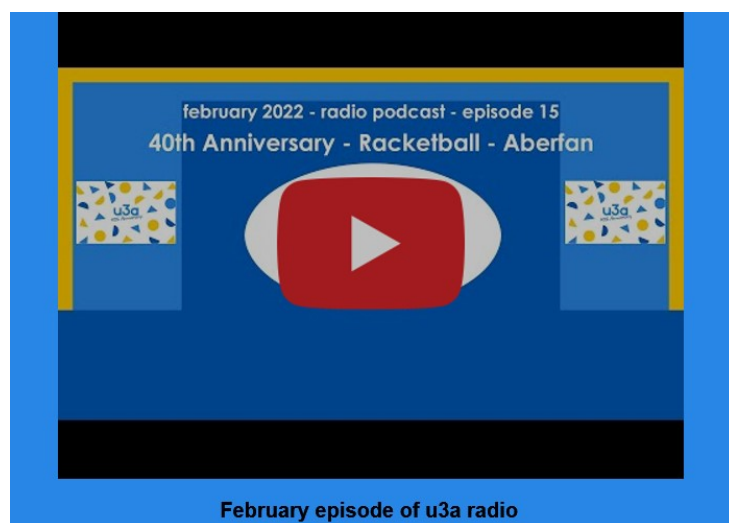
To watch the film on our Youtube channel



A new episode of the u3a radio podcast .

In the latest episode of the u3a radio podcast, hear about how u3as will be having picnics across the UK to celebrate the 40th anniversary, learn how u3a members have been researching the health of postal pensioners and meet the newest member of the team, Sarah.

You will find this on our Youtube channel above or on Spotify by clicking here



BARN DANCE CALLER REQUIRED

Droitwich Spa u3a have their 10th Anniversary celebration coming up this July and would like to hold a Barn Dance as part of the celebrations. They have the musicians but are looking for a caller and wonder if there is anyone in the West Midlands u3as who would be willing to help them out with this on Saturday 16th July 2022.

If you can help contact [<gabrielleroma@hotmail.co.uk>](mailto:gabrielleroma@hotmail.co.uk)

u3a Growing the Future

To mark the u3a movement's 40th Anniversary in 2022, the Trust is creating a u3a anniversary woodland situated in the Brecon Beacons.

u3a member's contribution to the u3a woodland will help benefit the environment, wildlife and climate for future generations.

The movement's target was for 5,000 trees to be planted between October 2021 and March 2022 and the good news is that over 6000 are now on their way to being planted. We are now setting a new target of 10,000.

u3a members are able to buy individual trees or a copse of 100 trees and u3as are also encouraged to plant trees within their own communities.

Buy u3a woodland trees on the u3a brand centre.

To access the Brand Centre

[CLICK HERE](#)



Trust u3a

Since its inception in early 2020, Trust u3a has proved to be an invaluable forum for providing learning opportunities to members. Whilst the original intention had been to create Tu3a for a limited 12 month period, the continuation of Covid restrictions and the undoubted popularity of group-based online activities has justified its continuation. Membership has been steadily increasing and now stands at over 1,000 members, all enjoying access to over 80 online interest groups. However, this success and popularity has created a number of challenges.

As Tu3a was originally set up on a temporary basis and largely administered by volunteers with support from u3a office staff, this makes it difficult to justify an independent u3a status. In addition, the increasing appetite for the concept of online interest groups suggests that Tu3a activities should be properly supported as a key part of the Trust's learning activities. Online interest groups are becoming increasingly more popular throughout the UK, and demand is increasing throughout the entire u3a membership.

Consequently, the Board has decided that Tu3a will become a part of the Trust's overall learning provision and Tu3a administration will be fully supported by u3a office staff. This does not mean that any of the current online groups will change, and we expect all current Tu3a group-based activities to continue unchanged with volunteers leading online interest groups.

The effect of this change is that Tu3a will become a key part of the Trust's Online Learning Platform and the change will enable Tu3a activities to be managed alongside the National Learning Programme, the Shared Learning Programme and the activities of Subject Advisers.

Arrangements for membership are currently being developed and all members will be contacted as soon as possible. The transfer is now likely to take place on 1st October 2022.

Best wishes for 2022

Allan Walmsley

Tu3a Chair — Email: allan.walmsley@u3a.org.uk

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 Newsletter

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
