

Connect

West Midlands Region

Shropshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire.

March 2022

u3a learn,
laugh,
live

A message from your Regional Trustee



Spring Is Here!

We have just passed the Spring Equinox, and for once the weather is playing ball.

The last couple of weeks have lifted everyone's spirits as sunshine has replaced the dreary drizzle and dark evenings. Perhaps it's too early to tell yet but it looks like the bad weather is behind us and we can safely plan outdoor activities, particularly as the impact of Covid also seems to be fading.

The u3a movement is ideally placed to take advantage as walking groups and sporting activities resume, and interest groups meet once again in gardens around the region.

This year's conference, titled "A Day of Inspiring Lives" went ahead online on Tuesday 22 March, and despite the competition of wall to wall sunshine, we attracted over 70 members to hear inspiring stories from u3a and non-u3a members alike.

Read the report on the conference in this newsletter and take a few minutes to have a look at the presentations and recordings available on the West Midland u3a website.

Stimulating, thought-provoking, and inspiring stuff and thanks to all contributors and organisers.

Finally, don't forget about this year's u3a 40th anniversary!

There is lots to see and do – join in with your own activities, arrange a u3a picnic and send in your pics and comments to the 40th Anniversary page on the national website.

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 : —

[!\[\]\(235bfe13ebf007ce2eea9e689707fac7_img.jpg\)](#)

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.

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.



Are you benefiting from Amazon Smile?



Some time ago, Amazon introduced Amazon Smile, where individuals can register a charity of their choice to benefit from donations generated through purchases they made through online giant Amazon. For every £1 spent online, Amazon will donate 0.5% (0.5p) to the buyer's favourite charity at no cost to the buyer.

Some members have nominated their u3a, but I have had queries about whether the scheme has any benefit and any downside. So, I would be very interested to hear from any member or treasurer that has experience of the scheme. Do amazon pass on donations quarterly as claimed? Has your u3a benefitted? Or, is the whole thing not worth it.

Please send me your comments and I'll publish the findings in a future newsletter.

Allan Walmsley—WM Region Trustee

Email comments to: allan.walmsley@u3a.org.uk

West Mercia Police -

Economic Crime unit - March Fraud and Scam Bulletin — To access the latest Bulletin on the u3a West Midlands Region Web Site, click the box

[CLICK HERE](#)

TAM articles



Joanne Smith, Editor of our TAM magazine tells us that most of the articles that get sent in are of a certain demographic which reflects the membership. (Obviously referring to our “more mature” members)

She says that it would be nice to carry more diversity in the magazine and therefore she is asking you all whether you can suggest any stories featuring more diverse and younger members aged under 65.

If you come across any members who fit this age profile with stories to tell (whether within the u3a or outside), please get in touch or encourage them to get in touch .

OR

If you have any views on this request, one way or the other contact details are as follows

Allan Walmsley, WM Region Trustee allan.walmsley@u3a.org.uk

Joanne Smith, TAM Editor joanne.smith@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](#)

What's New – Spring Learning Programme 2022

- Last week u3a launched the Spring Learning Programme, with initiatives around crafts, puzzles and book groups being added to the mix of popular projects and learning opportunities.
- Click the box to learn more

[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, March-June 2022

Thank you everyone for participating in our Exploring World Faiths National Webinars and to the very positive feedback on the Spiritualism session presented by Julia Almond.

Here are details of the next 3 on Zoom as follows. Please register on Eventbrite through 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.

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

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’.

Mon 16th May (Buddha Day) – 10.0 am Buddhism, Buddha and the Dalai Lama

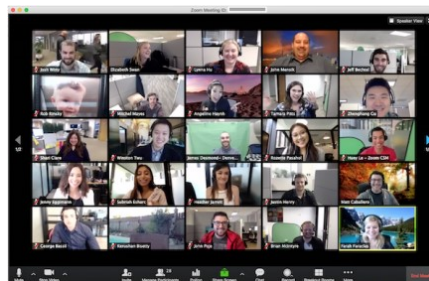
Contributors to be confirmed

Mon 20th June - 10.0 am

General Chat Session for Local Coordinators of u3a Exploring World Faiths groups and others thinking of doing so.

Advice from Esther Rantzen —

Video tech was Esther’s salvation during lockdown. “The important thing is to take the first step. After that, it’s like driving a car”, says helpline founder Esther Rantzen. So if you feel old, lonely and wary of the internet, she says “do what I did – learn Zoom”.



Esther’s advice to older people can be found in her recent article in the Guardian

To read the article click the box —————

[CLICK HERE](#)

Did You Miss It? What a show!!

Tuesday 22 March saw the West Midlands Region u3a – A Day of Inspiring Lives, and what a show it was.

Allan Walmsley, Trustee for the West Midlands

Introduced the programme which was designed to provide examples of u3a and non-u3a members who had achieved success in later life, as well as a look at the pace of change and changing standards in society since the movement was formed in 1982.

Liz Thackray Chair, Third Age Trust

Explained how the movement had to change with the times, and challenged members to help define the future of the organisation.

Jean Jackson from Lichfield u3a

Posed the question, “Is 60 the New 40??” With examples of older celebrities championing grey hair and major achievements such as Lynn Forth from Wyre Forest who had written 3 books in retirement.

Sandi Rickerby, Trustee for the Third Age Trust

Leads on a major u3a campaign called Push Back Ageism – how can we influence the way builders and manufacturers design their products.

Professor Janet Lord

Presented “Ensuring Old age is enjoyed and not endured – It’s never too late to start!”. Exploring the reasons why we age and how science is making progress to slow the ageing process.

Julie Robinson, CEO Move it or Lose it Ltd

Took delegates through a demonstration of exercises designed to maintain mobility in older people.

Matt Pointon, West Midlands Lead, WEA,

Talked about lifelong learning and told the story of an immigrant who thrived as she began a learning programme with the WEA that started her career in the UK.

The 1982 Show!

Showed how fast the world has changed in the last 40 years, with loads of examples of life then and life now.

Sue Langley from Wyre Forest u3a - Inspiration in Action

Showed us that almost anything is possible if you put your mind to it. She brought the day to a climax with a surprise appearance from Don Maclean, comedian and former presenter of Crackerjack. Don certainly didn’t disappoint with wall to wall gags and stories from the past and present. He even finished with a rousing 40th Happy Birthday to the u3a.

All recordings, videos, and presentations are available to view and download on the West Midlands Region u3a website under Events.

Click on the box to access the WM Region Web Page



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](#)



A MESSAGE TO UKRAINE FROM THE STAFF AND TRUSTEES OF THE THIRD AGE TRUST WHICH SUPPORTS THE U3A MOVEMENT:

Our thoughts are with u3as in the Ukraine, their members, family, friends and neighbourhoods during this terrible and unprecedented time. We know many of our members wish to make personal donations to the humanitarian effort in Ukraine.

Please click the box to see the Charity Commission's guidance on giving safely to registered charities providing assistance to Ukraine

[CLICK HERE](#)

For any of you that wish to make a donation in your personal capacity, below is a link for The Disasters Emergency Committee which brings together 15 leading UK aid charities to provide and deliver aid to ensure successful appeals.

The charities include Oxfam, Save the Children UK, Age International, British Red Cross, Cafod, Christian Aid and Islamic Relief.

[CLICK HERE](#)

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
