

# Connect

## West Midlands Region

Shropshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire.

April/May 2022

**u3a** learn,  
laugh,  
live

### A message from your Regional Trustee



#### Recruitment Taking Centre Stage

Moving towards the end of the half year and whilst there are still Covid cases amongst all communities, the worst seems to be behind us and u3as can finally plan for the new normal. Recruitment remains high on the agenda and the summer is an ideal time to hold recruitment fairs, have stalls at local markets, and hold Open Days in conjunction with the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Platinum Jubilee or u3a week celebrations. Grants of £150 are available to all u3as – send me an email or see the national website or

[CLICK HERE](#)

for more information and a claim form (remember you need to log in to the website).

Many u3as are recognising the value of seeking new recruits from the next generation. The national age profile of u3a members has increased from 72 to 74 years old in the last 10 years and recruitment of younger members is essential to sustain the long term future of the movement – so look for sources of younger members and direct your advertising where younger prospective members are likely to see it. Many companies run pre-retirement courses and some u3as are already part of them.

Nationally, there are moves to build on the current partnership with Specsavers (see national newsletters and TAM magazine) and develop new relationships with other well known organisations where we can promote the standards and values central to the movement. One such organisation is Co-operate, the community support body of the Co-operative Society, that has local Pioneers organising community activities in almost every town (and many villages) in the region. Let me know if anyone in your u3a has experience of working with Co-operate or with their community website.

Allan Walmsley.

WM Regional Trustee,

Email contact:- [allan.walmsley@u3a.org.uk](mailto: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 40<sup>th</sup> 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' life experiences. For more information on u3a day : —

[!\[\]\(235bfe13ebf007ce2eea9e689707fac7\_img.jpg\)](#)

# 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 40<sup>th</sup> 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?

Many thanks to those who sent me comments about their experiences with the Amazon Smile charity scheme. Under the scheme, Amazon customers can register a charity to receive donations based on their purchases and some members had queried if the scheme really works. Well, it's clear from the comments received that the project works well with Amazon donating funds to customers' chosen charities. Unfortunately, only one of the respondents had registered donated funds to go to their local u3a, but u3as thinking about taking part can have confidence that the process seems to work well.

Allan Walmsley—WM Region Trustee

Email comments to: [allan.walmsley@u3a.org.uk](mailto:allan.walmsley@u3a.org.uk)

# ***Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Coffee Morning***

***via Zoom***

***Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 10.30am – 12 noon***

***Are you interested or curious to find out more about Equality, Diversity & Inclusion?***

***Have you already attended an EDI Awareness Presentation?***

***Please join us on the 25<sup>th</sup> to share experiences, raise awareness and help us all increase our knowledge and understanding.***

***We look forward to meeting you on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Click to register for the event***

**CLICK HERE**

***We would especially like to see those who have already attended a presentation and see how they are getting on but would also be delighted to welcome anyone with an interest.***

***The EDI Committee***

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## **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 month 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**

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## **Interested in Crown Green Bowls?**

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

**CLICK HERE**

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## **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, May-July 2022

Thank you everyone for participating in our Exploring World Faiths National Webinars and to the very positive feedback on the 'Do All Religions Lead to the Same God?' webinar.

Dr Peter Rookes, National u3a Subject Advisor, Exploring World Faiths, introduced the topic from the perspective of the Abrahamic, Sikh and Zoroastrian faiths, which are all monotheistic.

Stephen Vickers, Religious Education Task Force of the Office of Public Affairs, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the UK presented from a Baha'i perspective, and Vandna Dey, who is a teacher at the College of Vedic Studies and Head of Education and Pluralism at the West Midlands Hindu Forum approached the topic from a Hindu perspective

Powerpoints and recordings of this, and previous, webinars can be accessed on the Exploring World Faiths page on the u3a national website.

Here are **details of the next 3 webinars** 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](mailto:pjrookes@gmail.com).

### **Mon 16<sup>th</sup> May (Buddha Day) – 10.0 am Buddhism, Buddha and the Dalai Lama**

Richard Ollier is a retired secondary school teacher, who has been a practising Buddhist for about thirty five years, at first in the Theravada tradition, and more recently as an ordained priest in the Amida Order of Pureland Buddhists (in a Japanese tradition). I am a Learning Mentor on an online training course for Buddhist chaplains.

Lama Choesan is a Buddhist Nun based in Hereford, and is one of only 2 Tibetan Nuns in the UK.

You may like to watch on iplayer – BBC4, 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb 2022 - Mission Joy with Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama -

### **Mon 20<sup>th</sup> June - 10.0 am**

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

### **Mon 18<sup>th</sup> July - 10.0 am Pilgrimage – Presenters to be advised**

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 5<sup>th</sup> Sept – 10.0 am Holy Wars or Holy Peace – Presenters to be advised.**

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



## Waste Savvy Staffordshire

Garden Organic is delighted to be continuing to collaborate with Staffordshire County Council to help reduce the region's waste through the Waste Savvy Staffs campaign.

Volunteers have been recruited from across the region over the last two years, but the project is now looking for more passionate people to meet the increased demand for stands at events and talks in the community, which will in turn have an even greater impact on the region's waste and emissions.

The next recruitment day is Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May at Veolia's Energy Recovery Facility in Four Ashes, Wolverhampton, where much of Staffordshire's residual waste goes to be converted into electricity. Attendees will be provided with free training on food waste reduction, composting and recycling in particular, but will also be made aware of other sustainable waste schemes in the region. Following a complimentary lunch, there will be a tour of the facility, as well as engaging in some additional discussion about engaging with communities to reduce waste.

Volunteers do not need to have had any prior experience of waste or public engagement, only need to commit to a minimum of 30 hours of volunteering over the year and can be reimbursed for any travel costs. The only requirements are that individuals live in, or near, Staffordshire, are comfortable talking to people and are passionate about supporting their community to reduce the impact that poorly disposed waste has on our environment.

Most of the volunteer activity will be engaging with the public at events across the region, such as countryside shows, garden/flower festivals, sustainability events and fun days. If you're a confident public speaker, you might also be interested in delivering talks and workshops to schools and community groups.

To keep up to date with events and waste reduction information from the County Council, follow the campaign on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/wastesavvystaffs](https://www.facebook.com/wastesavvystaffs).

If you have an interest in reducing, reusing, recycling or composting, and enjoy sharing your knowledge with others, this is the volunteering opportunity for you!

If you would like to sign up or find out more, please contact [rwhitehouse@gardenorganic.co.uk](mailto:rwhitehouse@gardenorganic.co.uk).

**Join us on  
Thursday  
19<sup>th</sup> May!**



**Meet Amanda**

**She's helping Staffordshire people  
become more Waste Savvy.**

# 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](#)



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## THE Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) at HMP Oakwood is Looking for New Members

Volunteers are being sought for a most unusual task at a local prison.

Applications are being invited to join the Independent Monitoring Board who regularly visit the prison and report their findings to the Ministry of Justice.

By law, every prison must have a group of unpaid volunteers who visit the prison to ensure that it is being run justly, humanely and fairly on behalf of the prisoners. This group, known as the Independent Monitoring Board, is made up of volunteers from the local community who cover all ages, backgrounds and ethnicity and religions. The Board monitors the day-to-day life in a prison, you could be talking to prisoners, checking that they are being given access to health care and training or observing how all those at risk of self-harm are treated.

You do not need any qualifications as you will be given full training for this role all we ask is for you to give an agreed amount of your time each month, but you will need to commit to at least two visits a month.

The prison at the centre of this activity just happens to be the largest prison in England and is based just north of Wolverhampton.

Volunteers would be welcomed from all backgrounds and whilst this is an unpaid voluntary sector activity, travelling expenses will be paid.

For more information, please contact a member of the IMB at HMP Oakwood on 01902 799700 ext. 39734/39735

## 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](#)

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## National News-letter

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

[CLICK HERE](#)

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## 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!**

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## 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](#)

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## 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



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## 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

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## 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



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### 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](mailto:allan.walmsley@u3a.org.uk)**



## Newsletter Express

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



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### 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

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