



**Hello and welcome to our winter newsletter.** This year we will celebrate the festive season a bit differently. In St Bryce Kirk on 14th December at 2pm we have a speaker from Dogs Trust, a charity who specialise in rehoming vulnerable animals. The talk will be followed by an informal gathering in the room opposite the front doors of the church and the cafe.

We will have the usual tea and coffee but there will be no need to queue up! Your committee and other volunteers will serve the drinks and on your table will be a selection of Christmas goodies. So don your festive jumpers, earrings and hats and join us for this special occasion!

The celebrations will continue on 11th January with our traditional New Year Festive Lunch, which will take place in the Horizons Restaurant at the Bay Hotel in Kinghorn. All the details can be found on the events page on our Fife u3a website.

Why not make it your New Year Project to get more involved in the running of our branch of u3a? There are many opportunities: group leaders, committee members, volunteering at monthly meetings. Please approach any member of the committee for more information Thanks.

**On behalf of the Committee I should like to send everyone Christmas Greetings and Best Wishes for 2024.**

Thanks, Val Robertson, Chairperson

**UPCOMING MONTHLY MEETINGS**

**Dogs Trust – December 14<sup>th</sup>**



The Dogs Trust believes that all dogs deserve to live life to the full. A speaker from the charity will tell us about their work in rehoming vulnerable animals.

**The Festive Lunch - January 11<sup>th</sup> see above**

**The Earth in Space – February 8<sup>th</sup>**

Even if the names Sir Patrick Moore and Professor Brian Cox mean nothing to you, join our local expert James More, former rector of Balwearie High School, for this fascinating introduction to astronomy.

**Continuing our New Committee introductions:**



**Teresa Brown** was originally from Romford. She started working aged 16 in a Pathology laboratory as a lab technician.

She moved many times over the years but always worked in the NHS.

Having retired in 2021 she came to live in Burntisland to be near her daughter and her family.

She is involved with the u3a British History group and recently joined the Local History group too.



**Jan Rea** lives in North Queensferry. She joined Fife u3a in September 2019 and is happy to be a member not only of Fife u3a but of a nationwide organisation, though it actually spreads further than that.

She was amazed by the many groups members could join as there is something for everyone to do and meet lots of nice people in the process.

She enjoys attending coffee mornings in Dunfermline, lunches with the group when she can, and enjoys Art Appreciation, Travel and Walking groups.

Outwith Fife U3A she is a member and volunteers with the Scottish Genealogy Society in Edinburgh.



**Fiona Brooking Thomas** moved back to Scotland after she retired at the end of 2019 and joined u3a in 2021 (she thinks).

She is a member of the Art Appreciation Group, the Scottish Heritage Group, and the Travel Group and

also enjoys going to 'What the Papers Say in Dunfermline'.

She joined the Committee this year taking on responsibility for Health and Safety.



## TENABLES

- \*List 10 Christmas carols
- \*List 10 Christmas films
- \*List 10 winter comfort foods

- \*List 10 good books for long evenings
- \*List 10 winter sports

**A - Z** Draw up a listing of first names suited to winter-born babies

### Sunshine on Lochgelly ?

Remember the torrential rain on Saturday 9th October? This did not deter the members of **The Out and About Group & the Theatre Group** from attending the Nardone Theatre Company's production of "Sunshine on Leith". The matinee took place in The Lochgelly Centre & was a thoroughly enjoyable production.

I went by car & was worried about flooded roads etc. The members of the Out & About Group travelled on the 33 bus which took 40mins from Kirkcaldy, but they all arrived in good spirits & unaffected by the terrible weather.

The amateur theatre company coped very well with the moving story & the difficult Proclaimers' songs. We could not help but be moved to tears by the renditions of "Letter from America" & "Sunshine on Leith".

It was a very successful venture suggested by Gillian Dooley & we didn't have to walk "500 miles" for the next joint outing to the Adam Smith Theatre in November to see the musical "Made in Dagenham".

Thank you, Gillian, for organising these outings.  
**Val Robertson, Theatre Group**

### ENERGY SAVING TIPS



With the **Cost Of Living On The Rise**, there's never been a better time to cut your energy bills and be

kind to the planet. Here are some tips to help you & your family reduce energy use in every room.

Over half of our energy bill spend goes on heating & hot water. It's really important to look at our home heating habits and see if there are small changes we can make to reduce our heating bills.

**Turn down your thermostat.** Just one degree lower could save you up to £145 a year. Set a timer on your thermostat for your heating to come on only when you need it.

**Turn the heating flow temperature down.** By turning the flow temperature down on your combi boiler from 80°C to 60°C you can save up to 12% of gas used to heat your house. Turning the flow temperature down on your combi boiler reduces the boiler's energy consumption, without lowering the temperature of your home. This isn't suitable for all systems so do check.

**Don't heat empty rooms.** Individual radiator valves mean you can adjust the temperature in each room accordingly – and keep doors shut.

**Keep the heat in.** Using thermal lined curtains & making sure they're closed after dusk can reduce heat loss by 27% & save an average home up to £291 a year on energy bills. Just be sure your curtains don't cover the radiators.

**Heat people, not the room:** Rather than putting the thermostat up further, try a heated electric blanket or throw to keep you snug. They typically cost between £25-50 to buy but use as little as 3p an hour of electricity even on the highest setting.



### Some key information from:

#### Climate Action Fife – November's talk

Speaker Ea O'Neill explained how individuals, communities, local government & businesses are coming together to tackle the climate emergency & make Fife a greener & fairer place to live.

- Climate Action Fife exists to help everyone take action – find out more about all their projects here <https://www.climateactionfife.org.uk/>

- What can we all do to take climate action? Find out by checking what your carbon footprint is here <https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/>

- They have just launched their "A fruit tree for every garden in Fife campaign". You can take part here <https://www.climateactionfife.org.uk/projects/climate-friendly-gardens/fruit-trees/>

Please watch the Climate Action Fife video we were not able to show at the meeting. Climate Action Fife teamed up with acclaimed Fife-based poet Len Pennie to highlight the urgent need to tackle the climate crisis. 'Planet Earth Noo Needs Oor Help' is a short Scots poem written to support the call for climate action across Fife. The poem was performed and filmed on location in Leven <https://youtu.be/cjbk1EmDLas?si=vZxWUNmsMRlzSyTt> Please do share it if you can.

## Think Brain Health Check-in - Alzheimer's Research UK

This **Check-in** will help you explore your brain healthy behaviours and give you simple tips on how you can give your brain some love. You'll complete 3 short sections and get immediate responses telling you how you've done, how you can do even better and choose to sign up for more information to help.

Take the quiz - Think Brain Health - Alzheimer's Research UK

[alzheimersresearchuk.org](http://alzheimersresearchuk.org)

For more information you can look at these:

Dementia: Brain check-up tool aims to cut risk at any age - [bbc.com](http://bbc.com)

Brain health 'Check-in' tool to help reduce dementia risk - [ucl.ac.uk](http://ucl.ac.uk)

**Remember**, it's never too early or too late in life to take action, and looking after your brain doesn't have to be hard work – just follow our three simple rules:

1. Love your heart
2. Stay sharp
3. Keep connected



Since the **British Heart Foundation Scotland** recently named Kirkcaldy as one of Scotland's defibrillator blackspots, with round trip walking times of

around 15 minutes to the nearest device, we may all want to check on where *our* nearest defibrillator locations are – anywhere in Fife or beyond.

If you enter your postcode on this link - [Defib finder – find the defibrillators nearest you](#) - It shows *your* 10 nearest defibrillators.

If you click on the appropriate symbol on the map, it gives you more detailed information.



## Mindfulness Meditation

When the group began in September there was an excellent turnout and it has continued to be so, averaging 10 members each



month. In November we agreed to two meetings and one in each of December and January. We will return to two a month in February.

We have been practicing Mindfulness of Body and Breath, Sounds and The Body Scan. I introduced Mindful Movement in the form of Qi Gong which was found to be popular and will continue this during the winter months.

We are in the back room of the KUSI club which is a large sunny room. However there has been an issue with the heating which can be very noisy. We decided to compromise and use only the back heater.

I also introduced using a Bose speaker and we have been listening to Mark Williams, Shamash Alidina and myself! The volume can be turned up to help those who are hard of hearing.

I intend to introduce Compassion in the New Year and for the next session we will be mindful of taste - perhaps Chocolate?

Anna Bennett



## Looking for honest and reliable sources of information?

One of the best sources across a wide range of topics and suited to the later life age range is Age Scotland. Publications can be read on-line or single copies of individual leaflets can be requested for free and/or in large print format. Age Scotland also has a phone helpline if you want more information or help.

They group their publications as follows:

- General (including their full publications list)
- Care
- Legal & family issues
- Benefits & money
- Housing & fuel
- Health & wellbeing
- Veterans
- Dementia

Age Scotland website:

[www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/)

Age Scotland helpline: free to call on 0800 12 44 222 and available Monday to Friday 9am-5pm



## OUR ACTIONS FOR THE CLIMATE

Our November speaker from Climate Action Fife reminded us of the importance of **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**. So this feels an appropriate time to promote a couple of our own u3a activities in this area, which also raise a small amount of funds to help us keep our membership fees as low as possible.

Our most longstanding commitment to **Reduce** and **Reuse** is our monthly bookstall. Although its origins are lost in the mists of time, over the years members like Busa, Evelyn and Ann have ensured that the pre-loved books donated by members are on display for other members to pick up and take home, for a small contribution to the honesty box. Anyone who'd like to join the current rota of volunteers to set up and pack away the stall would be made most welcome.



The stall is normally at the foot of the stairs leading up to the church

at St Bryce and there's always a good range of hardbacks and paperbacks to pick from, with mystery/crime novels (the most popular genre of books according to our member survey back in June) always well represented. For any Monthly Meeting, why not bring along those books that are just taking up space on your bookshelf and/or pick up a bargain and stock up for those long winter evenings over the festive period?



Our **Recycle** credentials are more recent but, post-lockdown, we introduced a collection box for recycling printer ink cartridges. The Recycle4Charity company pays us for the cartridges we send them and, to date, we've raised just over £30. Not a huge amount but, as the slogan goes,

every little helps, both in terms of minimising our impact on the environment and keeping our membership fees low.

So, next time you need to change the cartridge in your printer, please bring the old one along to the next Monthly Meeting and pop it in the box.

Sheena Lawson



## FESTIVE TRIVIA QUIZ

- 1 What date does Christmas Day fall on?
- 2 What year did Mariah Carey's All I Want for Christmas come out?
- 3 In the Charles Dicken's classic A Christmas Carol, what is the name of Scrooge's deceased business partner whose ghost warns Ebenezer of the visiting spirits?
- 4 According to the 12 days of Christmas song, what did your true love gift you on the fifth day?
- 5 What time is the King's Speech usually broadcast on Christmas Day?
- 6 Which Reindeer is missing: Dasher, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Donner, Blitzen, Rudolph?
- 7 What plant is sometimes known as the Christmas flower?
- 8 Who composed the score for The Nutcracker?
- 9 Which famous classical singer recorded a song for the 2023 John Lewis Christmas advert?
- 10 Which two singers are helping out Asda and Sainsburys with their Christmas adverts this year?



*Something to groan at!*

*Link each joke with its punch line*

**Who hides in a bakery at Christmas?**

**What do you get if you cross Santa with a duck?**

**What's a horse's favourite TV show?**

**What do you call a boomerang that doesn't come back?**

**Why do birds fly south in the winter?**

A Christmas quacker      A mince spy

A stick      It's too far to walk

Neigh-bours



*Have your best possible Christmas  
and New Year*



**Stay safe . . . Stay well . . . Stay safe . . . Stay well**

Newsletter and/or Website info to:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/fife/contact>