

## WELCOME TO THE ISLE OF SHEPPEY U3A

*Across the UK, u3a members are learning, staying active and having fun in later life. It's local, social, friendly, low-cost and open to all*

### Message from our Chair – Heather

I am so pleased you have decided to join Isle of Sheppey u3a. Joining a u3a is a wonderful way to make new friends whilst being inspired to learn new skills, study or experience activities that may be unfamiliar so why not challenge those “little grey cells”! In this bulletin you will find information on what membership includes so, please take advantage of all that is on offer, both through our local Isle of Sheppey u3a activities or through projects and tutorials provided nationally via the National u3a website. We may be a relatively small u3a but we still have lots to offer whatever you are interested in. You will receive monthly newsletters with all the most up to date information so make sure you read them to ensure you find out about our many one-off activities and opportunities we have on offer. Explore our website to see what we have been doing so far! There are over 1,000 u3a’s throughout the UK with more than 400,000 members and there are opportunities to interact with u3a members across the country. The National u3a website provides a breadth of opportunities to learn, laugh and have fun and this has increased significantly over the past few months. So, now is the moment when you can pursue your interests at leisure and really make the most of life

**The u3a movement is a unique and exciting organisation which provides, life-enhancing and life-changing opportunities. Retired and semi-retired people come together and learn together, not for qualifications but for its own reward: the sheer joy of discovery!**

**Make the most of life once you’re no longer in full time work by exploring new ideas, skills and interests with your local u3a**

## HISTORY OF THE ISLE OF SHEPPEY U3A

Isle of Sheppey u3a was founded in 2019 as a project driven by our Chair – Heather and with the help of a Steering Committee. Our inaugural meeting was held in October 2019 where our first 100 members signed up and we currently have around 150 members.

We hold monthly meetings at the Minster Club on the fourth Thursday afternoon between 2pm and 4pm, each month we have a speaker on a wide range of diverse subjects or some other entertainment. Our December meeting is usually bought forward and we endeavour to have a meeting with a Christmas party atmosphere. Our August meeting has evolved into a “Picnic in the Park” where we can socialise outside in the lovely weather (hopefully).

During the pandemic, all our face-to-face meetings had to be suspended, however, we continued to look for ways to stay connected and keep entertained. We took our monthly meetings and some of our interest groups online using zoom, an easy-to-use video conferencing platform. Learning how to get online using zoom and helping each other has certainly tested our u3a ethos of “learn, Laugh, Live”! There are still opportunities to join remote meetings so if you are interested in more information about learning how to use Zoom just let us know.

U3as are run on the principle of self-help and mutual learning. It’s all voluntary, members share their knowledge and experience with others through interest groups, rather than pay people to teach, members share their skills and talents with other members. Any member can create a group based on their interests and our committee will provide all the help and advice required. You don’t need to be an expert on the subject, we’ve even had a group of members get together to learn something completely new to them all.

Most of our groups have a limited number of participant places available, however, we run a waiting list where groups are currently full and would encourage and support members to create more groups where there is sufficient interest. Once you are a member you can simply email us to let us know if you are interested in joining any of these groups or sign up at our meetings.

## INTEREST GROUP INFORMATION

**Art** – Facilitated by Jan – Meets weekly in Sittingbourne.

**Conversational French** – Facilitated by Helen. Meets at various locations

**Flower Arranging** – Facilitated by Sharon – Meets monthly/fortnightly on Tuesday afternoon each month at Minster Club

**Monday Walks** – Facilitated by Heather – Meets weekly on Monday morning at various places both around the Island and further afield

**Scrabble** – Facilitated by Val. Meets monthly Thursday morning at Sheppey Leisure Centre

**Book Club** – Facilitated by Val. Meets monthly, Third Tuesday afternoon at Minster Library.

**Smart Devices** – Facilitated by Sally. This new group will be starting in the new year

**Tuesday Walking for Health** – Facilitated by Sharon – Meets weekly on a Tuesday morning at various places around the Island

**Wine Appreciation** – Facilitated by Ken – Meets on Friday evenings at various locations

**Zoom Quiz** – Facilitated by Heather – Meets Monthly on the last Wednesday Evening using Zoom

**Drama** – Facilitated by Wendy. Currently meeting at Minster Club for rehearsals.

**Play Reading** – Facilitated by Wendy

**Sew & Mend** – Facilitated by Stella. This group is just starting up it meets at Stella's house in Eastchurch.

**Crafty Ideas** – Facilitated by Linda. This new group will be meeting monthly on the second Friday Afternoon starting on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December.

## INTRODUCTION TO ZOOM

### Video Conferencing platform

As so many of our u3a members nationally got to grips with using zoom, this opened up a world of across country interaction, so check the national u3a website regularly to see if you are interested in any of the topics they have available.

The national lockdown in March 2020 encouraged us to look towards technology to maintain our social connections. In true u3a style many members have embraced this technology and we successfully ran several of our groups and also monthly speaker meetings using Zoom.

Whilst everyone has been eager to get back to our usual meetings, Zoom has also opened up a number of opportunities to interact with other members from further afield. National u3a have also been offering several talks and interactive sessions, so if you haven't yet tried out Zoom maybe now is a good time to start as we are able to offer face to face help.

Zoom is both free and easy to use! The Zoom app is available on all major desktop and mobile operating systems, including Windows, macOS, Android and iOS.

**National Office have user guides on their website which can be accessed here:**

**Mobile User Guide** <https://www.u3a.org.uk/advice/policy-downloads/using-zoom-on-phones-and-tablets/viewdocument/600>

**Desktop User Guide** <https://www.u3a.org.uk/advice/policy-downloads/using-zoom-on-phones-and-tablets/viewdocument/600>

***If you have not yet tried out Zoom or are not confident using it, we are here to help. We can talk you through how to get onto Zoom and provide practise sessions without pressure.***

## USA MAGAZINE – “THIRD AGE MATTERS” (TAM)

The Third Age Trust produces a monthly magazine for u3a members. This magazine is published five times a year and is a great source of information with stories of what is happening in u3as around the country. Inside you'll find a section 'Sources' where learning projects and subjects are showcased to inspire and

educate. The magazine is included in your membership subscription and will be sent to your home address so make sure you have ticked the box on your application form to receive it.

### ISLE OF SHEPPEY U3A WEBSITE

<https://u3asites.org.uk/isle-of-sheppey/home>

Click onto our website to find out more information about our groups, many articles submitted by members, some virtual quiz questions and answers and to check out our gallery of photographs. You will also find lots of information and links to online entertainment venues and virtual tours of venues around the UK. New content is uploaded frequently. Members and non-members can also use the website to contact us directly by email.

### THE UK U3A MOVEMENT

Founded in 1981, the UK u3a aim is to encourage groups of people in their third age to come together and continue their enjoyment of learning in subjects of interest to them.

From the start, the guiding principles were to promote lifelong learning through self-help interest groups covering a wide range of topics and activities as chosen by their members.

The 'third age' is defined by a time in your life (not necessarily chronological) where you have the opportunity to undertake learning for its own sake. There is no minimum age, but a focus on people who are no longer in full-time employment or raising a family.

The u3a founders envisaged a collaborative approach with peers learning from each other. The u3a movement was to be self-funded, with members exploring new ideas, skills and activities together and learning purely for pleasure. There would be no distinction between the learners and the teachers – everyone could take a turn at being both if they wished.

Each u3a group is operationally independent but a member of The Third Age Trust, which requires adherence to the guiding principles of the U3A movement. Membership of the Third age Trust includes support for the running of local u3as and access to a vast and wide range of learning resources and online content.

There are 1,057 u3as with over 450,000 members; membership costs are kept low and is open to everyone who's no longer in full-time work.

**Across the UK, u3a members are learning, staying active and having fun in later life. It's local, social, friendly, low-cost and open to all.**

**There's so much out there to experience – what's stopping you?**

### U3A NATIONAL WEBSITE

<https://www.u3a.org.uk>

**Subscribe to the National Newsletter** to get all the latest news, information and updates straight into your inbox: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/newsletter> Once you are a member of the Isle of Sheppey u3a just click onto the login page to create an account to get full access to the website.

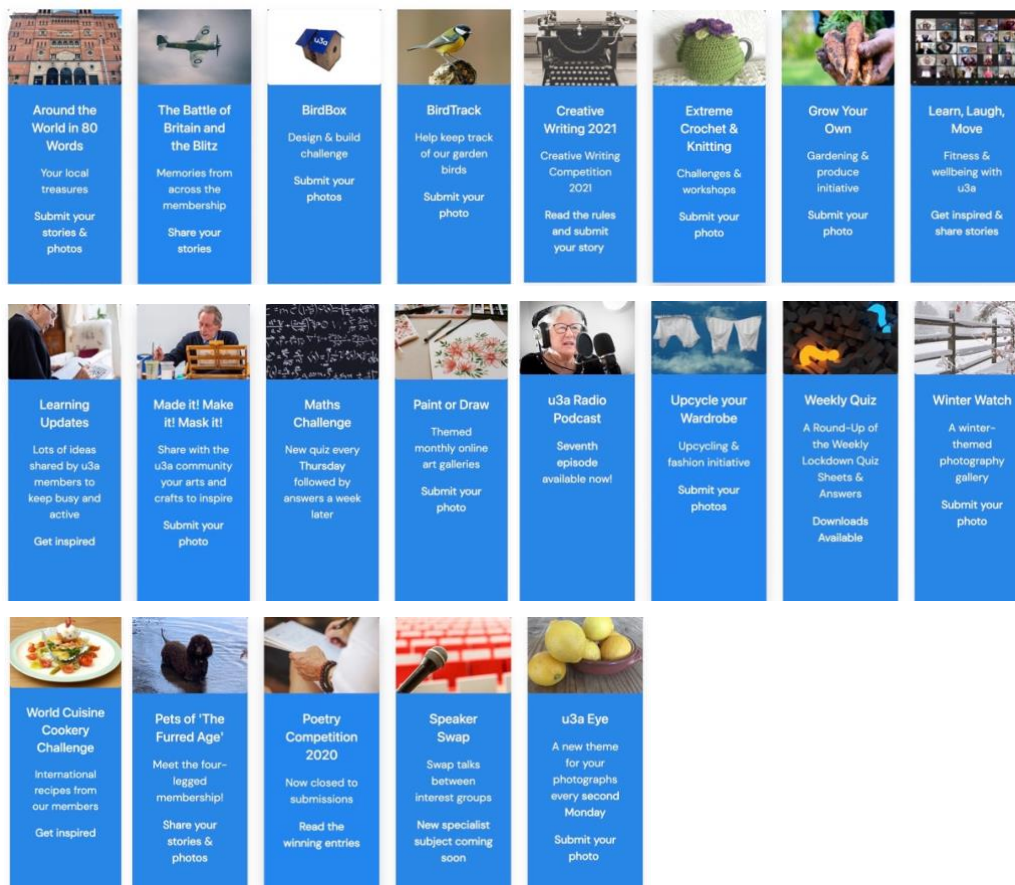
Keep up to date with what is happening nationally. You will find a wealth of resources, information and activities available on the national u3a website.

**u3a Radio podcast** – Introduced a year ago, listen to these monthly episodes uploaded on the 17<sup>th</sup> of each month onto their channel on the YouTube platform.

**National Online Learning Events** – The website also offers a number of workshops, webinars and interactive sessions delivered by members for members, which are free to join. These are in high demand and spaces are limited, particularly for those with an interactive element. Check out what is currently available: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

**National Programmes** - Find out what national programmes, activities and competitions are available. Click here to find out what is currently available <https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/national-programmes>

Here are some examples of what is or has previously been available:



### Resources for starting your own interest group

If you would like to start your own interest group, there is a section of the national website dedicated to providing subject advice and support on both setting up a group in a particular speciality and encouraging the sharing new ideas and approaches.

**NEW!** u3a Radio launched 29<sup>th</sup> September – watch May 2021 podcast on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/yAddlc6oyH8>

### National Online Learning Events:

Check out what is available: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

## Information and Contact Details

You can contact us here:  
[Isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com](mailto:isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com)

Email us to join our WhatsApp Group:  
[Isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com](mailto:Isleofsheppeyu3a@gmail.com)

Find our website here:  
<https://u3asites.org.uk/isle-of-sheppey/home>

Our Facebook Page is:

<https://www.facebook.com/isleofsheppeyu3a>

Our members only Facebook Group is:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/384159678869515>

Interact with u3a members around the country on u3a: Keeping in Touch

Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/U3AKeepingInTouch>

## Committee Members

Chair	Heather Thomas-Pugh	Speaker Secretary	Linda Jones
Vice Chair	Brian Spoor	Group Co-ordinator	Ken Pugh (temp)
Treasurer	Pam Fauchon	Publicity	Celia Perrett
Membership Secretary	Sally Charnock	Additional	Val Spoor

## Diversity & Inclusion statement

Isle of Sheppey u3a recognises that everyone is different and aims to create an environment that values and treats all members fairly. We are committed to promoting equality and diversity and to ensure that u3a membership is as accessible as possible to different groups within the community.