

August 2023

Phone National Office: 0208 466 6139 u3a.org.uk



Introduction from Sam Mauger

Dear members,

We are all looking forward to u3a week, which is nearly upon us, and we are already hearing about the plans that u3as are making to mark this event.

u3a week is our chance to show to communities across the movement how they can take part in u3a life and learn, laugh, live.

I have heard so many stories from members about how life-changing their local u3a has been for them. **It gives members the opportunity to make a whole group of new friends and to pursue interests close to home (and sometimes in their homes too).** Not to mention that great feeling of walking down the high street and knowing so many people who are u3a members. Some members have said that they only got to know local people when they retired and joined their u3a.

A very special welcome to Frinton, Walton and District who have got off to a magnificent start.

For all u3as I look forward to hearing your many stories about how you celebrated u3a week. I am sure it will be a week to remember.

With very best wishes

Sam Mauger

CEO of the Third Age Trust

News from the Trust



Less than a month to go until u3a week

The movement's annual celebration – u3a week – is taking place 16–24 September and we would love you to be a part of it.

Alongside local u3a activity, we're running online events throughout the week, including a special talk with Carl

Honoré focussing on how ageing should be embraced as an adventure.

Pictured: Wigan u3a taking part in u3a week, 2021

u3a News



A new u3a launched in Essex

"Brilliant!" "A triumph!" "What a wonderful group!" – These are three of the comments Frinton, Walton and District u3a received at their launch event. The day was split into two two-hourly sessions of displays, presentations and discussions, all of which were well received.

133 members had already joined before the launch – and over one hundred people attended on the day. Good luck to Frinton, Walton and District u3a.

Summer learning in the North West

80 members from across 40 u3as in the North West region took part in a Summer School at the University of Cumbria. Subjects included Archaeology, Architecture, Art Challenges, Female Artists, Literature and Japanese Encounter.



The above photo is from the Art Challenges exhibition and shows the beautiful work created by our members.

Your Stories

At their Convenors' lunch in July, Porthcawl u3a presented an engraved Welsh slate plaque to leaders of the Art History group, Jenny and Graham, marking their twenty-year leadership.

Over the years, Jenny and Graham have shared their knowledge modestly, and their friendly approach has attracted a large, loyal and enthusiastic attendance. They are stepping down now but will continue as valued members of our u3a.

Porthcawl u3a Committee

News from the Board

Liz Thackray, Chair of the Third Age Trust

At the end of July, we launched a new Facebook group, 'Fit for the Future'. It has a focus on governance, finance and what kind of organisation we need to be in order to be fit for the future.

Last year, following the AGM, we introduced some of our thinking about what kind of governance structure we need moving forwards. This was to correct some of the problems with our current arrangements. A Steering Group has been established comprising the Chair and Vice Chair of the Trust together with five Trustees and our CEO. This group has terms of reference set by the Board and reports to it. **It, in turn, is responsible for overseeing the Pilot Council which is chaired by a regional Trustee and is exploring different models for engaging the u3a membership in discussion with u3a Board members.**

The core membership of the Pilot Council comprises regional and national Trustees. In addition there are representatives of Network link and the main Board committees. Each Trustee invites an additional person, not the same person each time, to attend the meetings, so as to enable different perspectives to be expressed. At present the Pilot Council has no official status, but we hope it will become an important part of our governance structure. If there is something you think the Council should be discussing about what u3as do or should be doing, please email your thoughts to council@u3a.org.uk – who knows, you may get invited to join in a pilot council discussion.

It is early days for these developments, but just as our founders created an organisation that made the most of what society was like in the early 1980s, **we need to ensure we are relevant and responding to society today.**

Media News

u3as in the news

Sperrin u3a's recruitment drive is going so well that they made headlines in Northern Ireland World this month. It was great promotion for the Mid-Ulster group whose numbers are steadily growing thanks to walking (pictured), Tai Chi and genealogy interest groups.



Burgess Hill u3a celebrated three decades with a fantastic fair, which was featured in The Sussex Express, Mid Sussex Times and Yahoo.

Spotlight On:

George, Stockton on Tees u3a



Pictured with Lynda from Sydney u3a (in the middle) and his wife Pamela.

My wife and I have been aware of u3a for ages but only joined a couple of years ago when we moved back to the UK from Spain. My wife enjoys the monthly meetings, as do I, but my particular interest is the creative writing group.

Our son lives in Sydney so the first time we went to see him, after joining u3a in the UK, we contacted the u3a office there.

We were warmly welcomed and granted access to their groups for the three months we were 'down under'. I joined their creative writing group and very much enjoyed participating. While we were in Spain my wife and I used to play Canasta with some friends there. On looking through the Australian u3a 'What's On' website we found out about a group who met once a week to play Bolivian Canasta so joined in. The Bolivian version of Canasta is a real 'head bender'.

We attended a u3a lecture given by an historian who'd studied the way Australia was first mapped by Dutch explorers – fascinating! We also signed up for a u3a organised boat trip around the harbour with an on-board lecture about how three Japanese submarines had infiltrated the harbour during WW2. We plan to go back to Oz again next year to see our son so will begin our u3a event planning the day we buy our flight tickets. Can't wait.

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Headline photos: Members of u3a Interest Groups Online, Southport u3a at their garden stall in the Societies Tent at Southport Flower Show, Burgess Hill u3a's 30th Anniversary cake.