



Dear u3a member,

Welcome to our November Newsletter.

Looking out of my office window at Moseley Bog, it is amazing that most trees have not shed many leaves as yet. I suppose it is a symptom of global warming. Maybe, global warming will help me retain my hair longer as I move into the Autumn of my life. It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good.

Please continue to send your letters, creative works and local photos to: [ken's email](#), putting the word 'Newsletter' in your email subject box.

With every good wish from Ken Fisher, Editor

In this month's newsletter

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Message from our Chair, Ray Tier

Many thanks to those of you who responded to the consultation on our new Code of Conduct. About 40% of you replied and your responses were overwhelmingly supportive, which means that the Code (which we are obliged to have under our constitution) has the widespread support of our membership. We made a small number of useful changes to the document as a result of your helpful comments and the final document can be seen on the Documents page of our website (see article on this later in the newsletter).

Our next challenge is to formulate a Safeguarding policy which we are required to have by the Charity Commission. This needs to be implemented in a way that is sensible and proportionate as we are clearly not a charity dealing with large numbers of vulnerable adults or children; so we will be developing it appropriately, consulting with National u3a and following their guidelines

Since our last newsletter, I have had a few responses to my plea for new volunteers to join our committee (thank you) – but we need more if our u3a is to continue in existence beyond June 2024. Maybe some of you are hoping someone else will volunteer, but if everyone did that of course we would have no volunteers at all. We will be sending out a flyer with (or shortly after) this newsletter and I urge you all to consider applying. It is not an onerous job, and our current committee enjoy our sociable monthly meetings. Now is your chance to shape the future direction of your u3a!

Finally I would like to welcome and thank Gillian Sinclair who has joined us as minute-taker for our monthly committee meetings. We are very grateful for her help!

If you need to contact me, just email me.

Events and reminders

Drop in for a coffee and chat at Fletcher's Bar



Friday 10th of November. from 10:30 to 12:00 at Fletcher's Bar in York Road in Kings Heath.

We have the front room to ourselves. You just need to pay for your own drink at the counter in The Kitchen Garden café, cost will depend on your choice of drink. We will provide biscuits. All access is through the Kitchen Garden Cafe, this includes disability access, but if required they can also put up a ramp

at the front door of Fletcher's provided you let them know in advance.

Any questions call Tessa Bidgood or email either her or Jeff Baker.

Monthly Meetings

[A message from Janet Burgess, our Social Secretary](#)

October Meeting at The Shires

A disappointingly low turnout of 15 were treated to a fascinating talk by Corinne Brazier from the West Midlands Police Museum on the little known police strike of 1919. A book was available for purchase and several members asked questions. Corinne was extremely knowledgeable and delivered her illustrated talk with a lively enthusiasm. She has used the Covid Lockdown times to prepare a talk on Peaky Blinders though she said that was better received at the museum. However this could well be a future talk for us.

Tuesday, November 14th meeting - 2-4 pm. at The Shires

A talk about oral memories: Extraordinary Lives of Ordinary People. by Helen Lloyd. Helen is an oral history consultant who has recorded and edited life stories for many oral history projects both locally and nationally. Examples include the BBC's Millennium Oral History Project and the Central Library Millennium project and Digital Handsworth.

Some members may know Helen as she is a local resident.

We hope many of you will attend.

Interest Group Matters

Scrabble



If you are a keen Scrabble player, why not join a new group which is going to meet face to face? If you might be interested in this new venture, please contact Anne, the Interest Group Co-ordinator via the Interest Group Enquiries tab on the website at

<https://u3asites.org.uk/mkhdu3a/contact>

Gallery Visits :

Our current group is full, but a few people have shown some interest in setting up a new group. Keen? Contact Anne as above.

Discussion of Current Issues

Our group dealing with the Discussion of Current issues enjoy exploring current issues in a friendly and pleasant atmosphere. Members decide which topics are discussed and volunteer to introduce them. This group meets on Friday mornings, twice a month. Contact [Clare Goulder](#), the Group Leader, for further details

Vacancies in Interest Groups

Digital Photography, Circle Dancing and Book Groups 1 and 5 all have spaces. See the 'Opportunities in Groups' section of our website for further details of all these groups, at: <https://u3asites.org.uk/mkhdu3a/page/123061>

French Book Group

This is a new group led by Jill Spearman. If you were at all interested it is now too late, as the group is full! We wish them well in their new venture.

Poetry Group

There is a vacancy for anyone interested. Details are on our website. The Group is led by Janet Burgess and meets between 10 and 12 pm on the second Friday of the month at the Friends' Meeting House, Colmore Road, Kings Heath. There is a member from Kings Norton u3a who is interested, but first chance goes to anyone in our u3a.

Further details

Further details about the above Groups can be found by clicking on the web-site link: [Members Portal](#)

Health and Safety

Please inform your Group Leader or a member of our Executive Committee of any H&S concerns that you may have, so that these can be fully addressed as soon as possible. Risk Assessment documents can be found on the [National u3a site](#) by following the menu link – ‘Support for u3a’s’. However, you will need to log-in (and create an account if you do not have one) to enable you to search for relevant information

Membership Matters

Welcome to our new members

Vanessa Beech, Sandra Coleman, Stephen Gordon, Edith Moore, Gillian Ravenscroft, John Sharpe, Peter Streets and Judith Tweedle,

Sad news

Our member Diana Fagan has sadly passed away in hospital, having been suffering from Covid pneumonia. Diana was a member of our German Next Steps Interest Group.

The funeral will be at the Robin Hod crematorium on Wednesday 22nd of November at 11.30 am.

Scam watch

Deactivation scams

If you receive a message from O2, Facebook or similar organisations saying that your account is to be deactivated for such reasons as wrong bank details or some form of non-compliance and that you need to go to a web link to rectify matters, it is probably a common scam. You need to be wary, and make a separate check via your known web site. Do not click on any such links.

HMRC impersonation scams

In the run-up to the self-assessment deadlines of Tuesday 31 October for paper tax returns and 31 January for online tax returns, fraudsters are imitating HMRC in calls, texts and emails. Be wary of any such messages

Reporting scams

To report scam emails, forward them to them to report@phishing.gov.uk.

Code of Conduct Consultation

A message from our Secretary, Cormac Quigley

In our last newsletter we flagged up our proposed Code of Conduct and invited you to take part in a consultation, aimed at getting your views on the CoC.

We had 208 responses, so thank-you for taking the time to get involved and feeding back to us on the draft Code.

Of those members who responded, there was an overwhelming number in support for the Code.

We have made some minor tweaks to the Code following some of the comments, namely:

- Including openness and tolerance as well as a respect for members' confidentiality in the "Respect" behaviour;
- Including a reference to "live, laugh, learn" as common goals; and
- A minor change to the final paragraph from "free toimpose sanctions" to "free toimpose sanctions it reasonably considers necessary"

As such, your committee has now agreed and adopted this Code of Conduct – it can be seen at:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/files/m/mkhdu3a/docs/codeofconductv3.01.pdf> .

This Code of Conduct now applies all current u3a members. We will review it in a year's time.

We have also pulled together a response to the comments we received which can be viewed at:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/files/m/mkhdu3a/docs/responsetocodeofconductconsultation1.0.pdf>

So finally, can I reiterate my thanks on behalf of the Committee for those who took the time and effort to respond to the consultation, helping us to improve, and giving us the mandate to implement, this Code of Conduct.

Swanshurst Park Celebrates its 100th birthday

An article from Ray Tier

Eagle-eyed members may have noticed a new sculpture that has recently appeared in Swanshurst Park.



At first, it was just a tree trunk lying mysteriously in the middle of the grass, then later, I heard the regular whirring of an electric saw and it began to change shape. When I finally met the sculptor he showed me the swan, cormorant, crow, owl, various birds, plants and fish which were beginning to emerge and became more recognisable as each day's work progressed. Unfortunately, I missed the actual installation but it now stands proudly in place on the Yardley Wood Road edge welcoming visitors with symbols of the Park's wildlife and commemorating the Park's foundation in 1922.

Originally the area had been farmland, presided over by an ancient half-timbered farmhouse, 'Swanshurst', which stood on the south side of Swanshurst Lane, and the lake was a mill pond supplying water to Sarehole Mill. In the 1920s/1930s the whole area was redeveloped to meet the needs of the expanding population of Birmingham. The new Brook Lane carriageway was constructed with the road bridge over the Cole, to replace the nearby Four Arches Bridge and ford, and the farmland was covered with housing. The new Swanshurst Park originally provided excellent recreational facilities for these new residents – boating and fishing on the lake, a pitch and putt golf course beyond the dam, sports pitches and changing rooms for organised team sports and a bandstand. Prefabs were built along the boundary with Brook Lane during WW2. Sadly, over the last 30 years much of this disappeared. The boathouse, bandstand and changing rooms were burnt down by arsonists, most of the fish were lost when the council carelessly drained the pool in preparation for dam repairs and the golf course was closed and left as waste land.

Since then, however the Park has undergone a resurgence as a haven of nature and wildlife. Some of the grass is now kept long to create a wildflower meadow, the old golf course has become a sort of unofficial nature reserve and new scrapes and coppices have been developed to soak up the excess water from the many springs in the park, encouraging bullrushes and irises. More recently a Friends of Swanshurst Park volunteer group has been established, which acts as guardians of the Park and organises children's activities and family fun days. The Park remains a popular destination for dog walkers, informal sports and family picnics on summer weekends.

The new sculpture celebrates these 100 years of change and survival. Hopefully it is a sign that the Park will continue to thrive and prosper for at least another century.

Useful web sites for news and help

Please click on the blue headings to go to each web site.

[Moseley, Kings Heath and District u3a web site](#)

Our us3a's own web site

[Birmingham Council News](#)

This site provides useful information about council services.

[West Midland Police](#)

Help and support in the local area.

[Moseley Together](#)

Community support and news for Moseley and other general information.
tel 07796 668257

[WM Now](#)

WMNow is a free community messaging system that emails you up-to-date information from police and partners after you have registered.

[Betel](#)

If you have furniture to dispose of Betel will collect it and relocate it to people in need.
Telephone number 01564 822356

[West Midlands u3a](#)

News and information from our regional u3a.

[U3a Found in Nature](#)

Where members can share any photos which are 'wild and interesting'.

[u3a free workshops and courses](#)

Details of free workshops/short courses available free to our members.

[U3a Newsletters](#)

Link to the latest and previous National u3a Newsletters

Contact information

Please ensure that emails sent to the addresses below include 'u3a' in the subject box. Clicking on the email title should open an email to the actual email address.

Interest Group enquiries

Anne James

Groups email

Membership enquiries

Faith Walsh

Membership email

Accounts enquiries

Carey Baff

Accounts email

Newsletter

Ken Fisher

Communications email

General enquires

Ray Tier

Enquiries email

Social events

Janet Burgess

Events email

Your Executive Committee

- Chair Ray Tier
- Vice Chair Ken Fisher
- Business & Communications Secretary Cormac Quigley
- Treasurer Carey Baff
- Interest Group Co-ordinator Anne James
- Membership Secretary Faith Walsh
- Social Events Secretary Janet Burgess
- Member Heather Lawrence