

Welcome

At last the nights are lighter and let us hope for some better weather in April after a very wet March. Since the AGM we now have a new committee in place, although we still have 4 vacancies. A great shame as this can leave us short handed sometimes. I am sure there are a few of you out of the 500+ members who can lend a hand? We are a good and friendly team and is not a heavy commitment, but your support is essential to keep your u3a going. So please chat with a member of our committee (see list below) if you feel you can help.

Best wishes, **Brian Webb** – newslettereditor@sidmouthu3a.org

Chairman's Message

It was good to see so many of you at the AGM in March. We said goodbye to Brian Fernley, Chris Ward and Marily Burton as they left the committee, and thanks go to them for their time and energy. A summary of my report can be found on page 6 of this newsletter. As u3a is run by the members, we need your support. I can only echo what the editor has already said, please come forward to help us keep Sidmouth u3a such a dynamic organisation.

Well done to Marilyn and Carole who organised an excellent Thank You Luncheon for our group coordinators in March. Welcome to Ed Dolphin who takes over as our new groups coordinator working with Carole.

I popped in to see how the Bowls Taster Day was going last week and everyone seemed to be having a good afternoon which was to be followed by a cream tea. Thanks to Jackie Cox for organising this. We look forward to more events this year as our new Social Committee gets going.

There are a few places left on the three day gardening visit to RHS Bridgewater in June. If you are interested and want more information please get in touch.

Best wishes Janet Bailey chairman@sidmouthu3a.org.

Membership Secretary's Message

This last month has been very busy for me, firstly getting familiar with the system then updating the details as everyone is paying their subs. We are almost there but we still have around 70 people who have not paid. Could I please request that those unpaid members pay up quickly as we need to ensure everyone is covered by the u3a insurance for participation in your groups. A special note is that some couples have only paid one fee. Could you check that this is what you meant and let the Membership Secretary know which person is renewing. The fee is £12 per person. If you want to resign please let me know.

Thank you! **Neil Morley** – membership@sidmouthu3a.org

Forthcoming Events

Tuesday April 11th 2023 Meeting, Stowford Rise Community Centre from 1.30–3.30pm

“Confessions of an Archbishop’s Bag Carrier” by Brian Pearson

Between 1988 and 1997 Brian served on the personal staff of the Bishop of Bath and Wells who became Archbishop of Canterbury. During that time Terry Waite was held hostage, crises in royal marriages were exposed to public comment, the issue of women as priests threatened to split the church and the world-wide Anglican Church united in a Decade of Evangelism while divided by doctrinal and moral differences. Dull, it was not!



So, what does holding the office of an Archbishop really involve? What happens behind the walls of Lambeth Palace day by day? How does an Archbishop balance the many calls upon his time? When he travels overseas, who does he meet and what difference, if any, does it make? And while we are about it, why did the Archbishop have to wear Brian’s shirt in Washington?

These, together with your questions, will be among those Brian will attempt to answer during what he hopes will prove to be an informative and entertaining illustrated presentation in which he shares his personal reminiscences and reflections.

Tuesday May 9th –Monthly meeting:–

“Otters – Coming to a River Near You” by Stephen Powles



Social Events

Tuesday 6th to Thursday 8th June 2023

Bridgewater Garden Tour 2023

3 days 2 nights Tour Price – from £356 – based on 26 passengers travelling



Included in the Tour Price:-

Executive Coach Travel throughout

Accompanied by an experienced Floral Tours representative

Half Board accommodation on a shared room basis at the Novotel Manchester West, 4* hotel,

Single rooms are available but with a supplement of £40pp/pn

Visit to Trentham Gardens, Visit to RHS Bridgewater Garden, Visit to Arley Hall Gardens, Visit to David Austin Roses

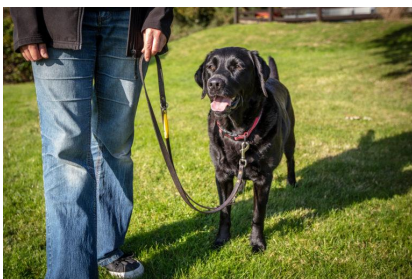
- All u3a members have Insurance as part of their membership included.
- If passenger numbers change the price will be adjusted accordingly, for example :- For 30 passengers travelling the price will be £336 and for 40 passengers travelling the price will be £302
- RHS members – £8.50 reduction on the price

If you have any questions or to get a booking form please contact:-
Janet Bailey via email :- chairman@sidmouthu3a.org

Please keep your dog on a lead

There's nothing I like more than on a lovely, sunny spring morning than walking in the countryside and enjoying the spectacle of the emergent new life. Whether that be frogspawn, bluebells or hearing the birds beautiful song as they claim their territory in pursuit of finding a mate.

Nature is under threat and so many of our bird species are declining at an alarming rate. This is



where, if you are a dog owner, you can help to make a difference by keeping your dog on a lead, especially between March and July, even later for some species. This is especially important when walking through a nature reserve. Please use a short lead, not one of those variable length trip hazards! Why? Because when dogs are allowed to roam far and wide, particularly out of your sight, they can frighten nesting birds, especially ground nesters like Curlew and Lapwing.

The nest is then left open for predation whether it's the theft of the eggs or chicks or just desertion of the nest by the parents. A few breeds may lay another clutch but for many that will be their chance to breed gone for that year. Additionally, don't forget a dog's natural instinct is to chase sheep and often cause them harm by doing so.

So be a good patron of the countryside and keep your dog on a lead – it will make a difference!

Thank you, Janet Fernley. More information from:-

<https://www.dogsforgood.org/good-advice/walking-a-dog-in-the-countryside/>

Groups Galore

NEW Group:- “Find Your Voice”

Singing is everyone’s birthright, regardless of musical experience or ability.” – The Natural Voice Network. Come discover, share and experiment with your voice in a relaxed, friendly environment where the focus is most definitely on having fun fun fun!!!

The sessions will be very informal and mostly acapella rather than piano-led. We will explore a range of entertaining vocal exercises, rhythm games, easy rounds, and basic arrangements of a variety of songs from different genres with some simple harmonies thrown in occasionally to spice things up. You’ll be surprised at what you can do!

Everyone is welcome. No previous experience necessary – just a willingness to have a go. Our motto is ‘If you can talk you can sing!’ Collective music making connects people on so many levels and is one of the most positive forms of human activity, supporting physical, mental, emotional and social health. Singing in particular improves breathing, posture, muscle tension and always engages the emotions. It promotes self confidence and a general sense of wellbeing enabling people of all ages and abilities to come together successfully to create something special.

“The only thing better than singing is more singing” – Ella Fitzgerald.

The group will be held at the United Reform Church Hall, Primley Rd, we hope to be starting on Tuesday 23rd May and thereafter on every 4th Tuesday of the month at 2pm –4pm. It will be led by Lorna Bryant who is an experienced singer and performer. Alongside performing Lorna has enjoyed leading various vocal workshops and informal singing groups over the years. She has helped children and adults of all ages to discover their voices through singing and by using fun alternative (non classical) techniques. Lorna is delighted to be joined and assisted by the lovely Sue Nicholson. Sue is passionate about singing and has attended many voice workshops and performed in community choirs and vocal harmony groups. Lorna and Sue have become good friends in the last couple of years and regularly enjoy breaking into song at the local swimming pool. No one has complained yet ! But before we proceed we need to know the number of members interested in joining to ensure it will be financially viable. Please contact Sue at singingsuenicholson@gmail.com for further details.

NEW Discussion group:- This House believes! (Zoom only)

We need a few more members before we can start. It will be modelled on the *Oxford Union Debating Society*. The group will have an opportunity to debate current and ethical issues with the meeting ending with a vote of members, after hearing the debate between those for and against “*what this house believes*”. Our time together will be via Zoom, so you will need access to this facility.

Expressions of interest from those who can debate or want to learn to debate to stephen.low@oxfordbrookes.net

Sunday Lunch Group:- Come and join our friendly group of diners who visit upmarket restaurants in the local area. We meet on the 2nd Sunday in the month and so far, have enjoyed a wide variety of dining experiences. Please contact Gail Richmond on glriichmond@hotmail.co.uk

Another Mah Jong Group:- This group started again on Fridays at 2 pm, 26 Summerfield, Sidmouth. Contact Heather. We use the book “Improve your MahJong” by Patricia A Thompson & Betty Maloney.

Alternative Vegetarian Curry Club:- There are limited spaces left for now on the 1st Monday of each month from 1.00–3.00. Please contact Helen & Anthony on goodmanpayne@talktalk.net for more information and/or to book your place. Thank you.

Cribbage group:- The Cribbage group welcomes all levels of players from complete novices to experienced players. We are a small friendly group, many of whom learned how to play from their grandfathers or grandmothers (and may not have played much since). We use a rotation system so

that everybody gets to play everyone else, eventually. We don't currently play the 'muggins' rule, so don't worry if your counting skills are a little rusty. We meet on the 3rd Friday of the month from 10.00 to 12.00 in a large, light and airy room with toilet facilities, a kitchen and (limited) parking. For more information contact: Chris Powell, webmaster@sidmouthu3a.org

Exploring Art :- The Exploring Art group's project "**Our Town**" is now completed and after a couple of delays due to bad weather the poster is now up on the billboard in the East Ham car park by the swimming pool.. Please go and take a look if you haven't already seen it. More pictures and information about the Wallspace billboard can be found on the [Sidmouth School of Art website](#). A2 size prints of the *Our Town* poster will be available to purchase from the Information Centre next to the swimming pool from the beginning of May. Photo reproduced courtesy of www.sarahhallphotography.co.uk



Sidmouth Recorder Group

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month, at the United Reformed Church hall in Primley Rd, Sidmouth, and we play a wide repertoire including folk songs, arrangements of baroque, classical and modern music. We welcome experienced players as well as musically literate u3a members who would like to work on their recorder-playing skills. If you're interested in joining us, please contact Amanda Haste on amanda.haste68@gmail.com

Scrabble Group:- We have moved to the Leigh Browne room which is in the **Dissenter Centre, located at the junction of All Saints Rd, Sidmouth, EX10 8ER**. For further information, contact Jack Richmond, Group Organiser. – jackgrichmond@gmail.com

Urgent Requirement For New Group Leaders

A Group Leader is urgently required to run the once monthly newly named **Wanderers** group.

Rummikub Groups – New leader needed

If you think you might be interested in this role please contact Carole Turner on groupsc@sidmouthu3a.org

Groups with vacancies and Groups List:- Full details can be found in the link on the newsletter email).

Chairman:- Janet Bailey – chairman@sidmouthu3a.org
Vice Chairman:- (vacant)
Secretary:- Christina Isis – secretary@sidmouthu3a.org
Treasurer: Vera Arnold – treasurer@sidmouthu3a.org
Membership Secretary: Neil Morley – membership@sidmouthu3a.org
Groups Co-ordinator 1:- Ed Dolphin – groupsed@sidmouthu3a.org
Groups Co-ordinator 2:- Carole Turner – groupsc@sidmouthu3a.org
Social Committee Chairman:- (vacant)
Newsletter Editor:- Brian Webb – newslettereditor@sidmouthu3a.org
Open Meetings:- (vacant)
Front of House Manager:- (vacant)

u3a

Committee

Contact
Details

Summary of Chairman's report for AGM 2023

The Chairman began by introducing each member of the committee and thanking the outgoing members for their time on the committee. Those stepping down this year are Brian Fernley; Speaker Finder, Marilyn Burton; Groups Coordinator and Chris Ward; Membership Secretary, then introduced Neil Morley; Membership Secretary and Ed Dolphin; Groups Coordinator.

Some of the events that have occurred over the past year have been, A 'Thank you' luncheon for the Group leaders, Toby Buckland's Garden Festival. June saw the country celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and Sidmouth u3a joined in those celebrations by buying two tables in town to allowing up to 12 members to attend.

2022 was the 40th anniversary of u3a in the UK. Sidmouth u3a celebrated by holding an Open Day in September inviting the community in to see what we did. This was phenomenally successful with 162 people attending. 86 members and 76 non-members. Of those, 51 joined.

Two new members meetings were held during the year, and over the winter we held some extra Zoom meetings, but as attendance was low, we won't continue this.

In December we invited Simon Rees to return to entertain us, and at the end of January the Chairman attended a zoom meeting with East Devon Link.

Over the year various events and outings have been arranged such as a visit to SS Great Britain, skittles at The Blue Ball, two inter u3a quizzes in Willand and Honiton, a trip to The Great Hall in Exeter to see the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra perform Violin Magic, and in March, Sing and Have Fun.

Every member of Sidmouth u3a pays £12 per year from 1st Feb - 31st Jan. Of that £12, £3.50 is paid to the Third Age Trust to cover the running of the organisation and insurance etc. The remaining £8.50 covers everything else including about 10 newsletters a year the vast majority of the newsletters are sent out by email therefore costing nothing, with a small number being printed because some members don't have an email account.

However, the cost of printing and posting a colour newsletter over the year works out at about 3 times the amount paid in by each member. Up to now the extra cost has been covered from general funds but this can't continue indefinitely so we have made a few changes. This month, and last, the newsletter has been printed in black and white, therefore significantly reducing the cost of printing. Newsletters will be made available at the monthly meetings for collection and only posted where a member cannot get here to collect or cannot get a friend to collect on their behalf.

Although we will continue to support those u3a members without a digital device, free of charge for a while, we will be making a change to the membership fee from 1st Feb 2024. The fee will remain at £12 to include an emailed copy of the newsletter, with a supplement for a printed copy, and we encourage all members who have an email address but refuse to submit it, to change to emailed newsletters, to help reduce costs.

As it is quite difficult to read the newsletter on a small device such as a phone we will have a small number of copies each month for the cost of £1 cash, available at the open meetings.

If a u3a member books a holiday with Riviera Travel and names their local u3a, we get a percentage of the cost of the holiday. This year Sidmouth u3a received £155 from just one holiday booked.

Lastly, and very importantly, your committee does a fantastic job but no-one stays forever, so we constantly need new people coming forward to help. We currently need;- **A Front of House Manager, a Speaker Finder and a Vice-chair.**

Please consider doing your bit for Sidmouth u3a.

My sincere thanks go to EVERYONE who helps us, in any way, to keep Sidmouth u3a so successful.