



MONTHLY MEETINGS

Please note that we do not have a monthly meeting in December.

Our previous monthly meeting took place on 26th October, when Sheetal Walklate and Dee Price presented a talk titled “Restorative justice interventions to youth crime and antisocial behaviour.” The presentation was considered by many to be both comprehensive and interesting. As expected, in an emotive subject, the question/answer session provided some straight-talking questions from the audience. Responses were, however, handled very professionally.

The Staffordshire Youth Offending Service works across the youth justice system as part of a wider team of staff from social, health, education, housing, police, probation, and drugs and alcohol misuse services. There is also a need for volunteers to support the Service. Full training is provided, therefore should any member be interested in becoming a volunteer, please email: Referral.Orders@stoke.gov.uk

The North Staffs Accordion Band have again been booked for the branch Christmas gathering on 30th November. The band consists of fourteen players, together with a drummer (if available). Both the music and the Singalong proved to be very popular last year. Copies of the lyrics will be distributed on the day to encourage everyone to participate. So please relax and sing even if you are not confident, but keep smiling and enjoy the entertainment.

Branch Catering Officer, Diane, will provide Christmas themed cakes for the refreshments. If you have sampled Diane’s cakes before, you will be aware that there will be no leftovers.

25th Jan '24 Paul Lucas, who is a member of Cheadle u3a, will entertain the branch with a presentation titled “The perils of an educational transport officer.”

29th Feb '24 Jo Austin will be the guest speaker, and her talk is titled “Aneurin Bevan and the troubled road to the NHS.”

Please encourage other members to attend, what is always a good afternoon out.

MEMBERSHIP

At the branch committee meeting held on 9th November, the Membership Officer reported that the latest count of members was 404. This was an increase of 9 relative to the previous month. At this

time in 2022 we had 405 members, so membership has thankfully remained static. The committee would of course prefer an upward trend.

Many thanks to those who have persuaded family and friends to join us, and please encourage new membership whenever the opportunity arises. Likewise, if you have a Facebook Page, please publicise whenever you are able.

Should you know anyone who would like to join us, application forms can be obtained from our website, or from membership officer, Alan Stevenson, Tel. 01782 395760: or by emailing: a.stevenson09@btinternet.com

You can also find us on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/StokeSouthU3A/>

u3a TRUST MATTERS

Trustees Week

Each member of the branch committee also has a secondary role as a Trustee of Stoke-on-Trent South u3a, which is a Registered Charity. Week commencing 6th November was designated nationally as "Trustees Week." Numerous workshops were held during the week to support branches and trustees. I am pleased to report that in respect of each workshop offered, we already have written policies and procedures in place, and all have been reviewed and authorised by the committee. These policies and procedures may be viewed on the branch website.

Staffordshire Neighbourhood Link Meeting

Both the chairman and vice-chairman attended the Link meetings at Oulton Village Hall on 31st October. The chairman attended the main meeting, and the vice-chairman attended the groups co-ordinators meeting.

Branches in attendance were: Burton-on-Trent, Cannock Chase, Cheadle, Stoke-on-Trent South, Stone, Stafford and Uttoxeter. We have reciprocal arrangements with each of these branches whereby members may attend any activity within the link grouping without having to pay a further annual subscription.

The agendas consisted of discussing common areas of concern, and sharing ideas on best practice. Both meetings were considered to be a success, and the consensus was that having good relations with the other Staffordshire branches was essential.

The final matter on the agenda was to appoint a host branch for next year's meeting. This would involve being responsible for administrative arrangements such as: communicating with attendees; preparing an agenda; booking the venue; providing refreshments; chairing the meeting; and arranging for preparation of minutes. Having not undertaken host duties for a number of years, we were inevitably elected to do so. At its sitting on 9th November, the committee accepted the small cost attached to hosting duties.

FOCUS ON GROUPS

As we enter the month of December, many groups will be arranging Christmas meals, and members will no doubt be engaged on other obligations of a festive nature. Consequently, many groups will be taking a short break from activities. It is therefore important that members contact group leaders before turning up for December meetings.

Also, could group leaders please liaise with their venues, and cancel bookings as appropriate.

Arts Lovers Group

The numbers of attendees at this longstanding group have unfortunately dwindled in recent months. We are therefore urging anyone who would like to improve their artistic skills in painting and drawing techniques to join this friendly group.

Group Leader, Lynette Bell, will be delighted to welcome new members.

The group's Venue is Oakwood Road Community Centre, Oakwood Road, Blurton, (off Blurton Road), ST3 3AR, and meets on alternate Wednesday mornings from 10am until noon. The next planned meeting is 6th December.

If you are interested, please contact Group Leader Lynette Bell on 01782 238712.

Computer Group

Group leader, Joe Neilson, is considering a resumption in the new year, but only if a satisfactory number of members register an interest. Should anyone wish to make a fresh start, please contact Joe during January.

Anyone wishing to contact Joe, may do so via telephone 01782 852042 or by email to: joeneilson6@gmail.com

Discussion Group

The next group meeting is confirmed for Tuesday 12th December 10.00am to 11.15am. It will take place in Stoke Library, which is located in the Council Hub close to the Market. New attendees to the group are again welcome.

The subject under discussion will be: **What's wrong with this (our country)?**

Group leader Bob Jones can be contacted on 01785 817743.

Gardening and Nature Lovers

This small group has decided to meet at the Trentham Hotel on 8th December at 1pm for a Christmas meal. Could any member who attends the monthly meeting and does not have transport, please contact Josie Peirson if they wish to attend the meal. Josie's telephone details are: Mob: 07775 974876 or Landline: 01782 399711.

Lunch Group

The lunch group meets on the second Tuesday of the month at The Hem Heath pub (on the corner of Stanley Matthews Way).

The next meeting will take place at 12.30pm on 12th December, and the group leader is Maureen Cumming, who may be contacted on 01782 331797.

Mexican Train Dominoes Group

We again encourage members to join this very small group. The last meeting on 15th November attracted only four members. The enjoyment of the attendees very much relies on there being a good number of participants. Games are good fun with simple rules. but you can learn and implement a variety of strategies.

The group meets on alternate Wednesday mornings at Longton Central Hall, and is led by Pauline Murray (Tel: 01782 392817). The next meeting date is 29th November.

Walking Group

Just one walk is planned during the month of December:

Monday 11th December: Barlaston Downs. Mainly flat, some slopes.

Meet for 10.30am start at the car park on the right of the small road leading to Upper House Hotel, The Green, Barlaston, ST12 9AE.

If you have ideas for future walks, or could lead one, or if you require further information, please contact Ali Townsend on 07450 791153.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

CPR / Defibrillator Instruction Session

Entertainments Co-ordinator, Beverley, has contacted each of the ten members who expressed an interest in the session. Arrangements are still ongoing regarding: a provider; suitable days; dates; times; and maximum numbers. The session is now planned for the new year.

Day Trips

The "Closer to Home" walking group arranges a day trip by coach each month to a variety of interesting locations. The group has kindly offered vacant seats to u3a members, and there is no obligation to join the walking group. Any bookings made by u3a members will of course be private transactions, and not related to u3a membership. The group's next trip is to Bury Market on 14th December. You may contact Carole Arrowsmith on 07871 231767 for further details.

Branch Publicity

1. Carer's Event

Branch publicity lead, Phil Rowley, received an invitation to attend a Carers' event on 14th November at St. Paul's Church, Longton Hall Road. The event was organised by Tim Davies, from South Stoke Central Primary Care Network, who invited a small number of local charities to showcase their activities.

Both the publicity lead and chairman were pleased to represent the branch, and were able to promote our activities and distribute publicity material to a number of interested attendees. It was also good to converse with a number of u3a members who were in attendance as carers. Feedback was provided to the organisers, in which we expressed a desire to be involved in future events.



2. Local MP's Jobs Fair

The branch accepted an invitation to have a stall at the Jobs Fair organised by Stoke-on-Trent Central MP, Jack Brereton, on Friday 24th November. The committee were of the opinion that any publicity opportunity should always be accepted.

Cost of Living

If you are struggling with the cost of living, Stoke-on-Trent Council is presently running a '**Help Is At Hand**' campaign which is aimed at addressing the pressing issue of rising living costs. If you are facing the challenge of striving to make ends meet, the council has dedicated support available. You can find out more at www.stoke.gov.uk/helpisathand

CHRISTMAS QUIZ

1. Which country first started the tradition of putting up a Christmas tree?
2. Which popular Christmas beverage is also called "milk punch"?
3. How many ghosts show up in the novel "A Christmas Carol"?
4. What colour are mistletoe berries?
5. Who invented the Christmas Wreath?
6. How do you say Merry Christmas in Spanish?
7. Where does the royal family traditionally celebrate Christmas?
8. When do the royal family exchange their presents?
9. What King was crowned on Christmas Day?
10. How many gifts are there in the *12 days of Christmas song*?
11. What country has the most reindeer?
12. Which country first decorated Christmas trees?
13. What is the most fragrant real Christmas tree?
14. What is the name of the shortest day of the year?
15. What is traditionally hidden inside a Christmas pudding?
16. What is the name of a male turkey?
17. In what year was the Queen's speech first televised?
18. In which US state would you find the town Santa Claus?
19. What were Victorian mince pies made from?
20. Which poet wrote "The Journey of the Magi"?
21. Christmas Island is in which Ocean?
22. What year was the novel "A Christmas Carol" first published?
23. Which English ruler's parliament banned the celebration of Christmas?
24. Which celebrity won the first ever "Strictly Come Dancing" in December 2004?
25. In which film did the song "White Christmas" first appear?
26. Which song has been in the Christmas Singles Chart at number 1 twice?
27. "Die Hard" takes place on Christmas Eve but in which City?
28. Which British monarch delivered the first ever Christmas message?
29. In which classic novel does the protagonist set sail for a sea voyage on a cold Christmas Day?
30. The book, "The Father Christmas Letters" was written by which famous novelist?

This Newsletter is also accessible on our website (via the News Button). Please try to share information with fellow members who do not have access to the internet.

Items for publication in the next Newsletter will need to reach Andrew Devin by Monday, 15th January 2024. Tel: 01782 942352 or email: a.devin2@gmail.com