



MONTHLY MEETINGS

Our previous monthly meeting took place on 31st August when we had two guests, viz. Speaker, Roger Browne, and the newly appointed West Midlands Trustee, Jean Jackson. The committee was very pleased with the improved attendance of forty-six.

Roger's presentation was titled "The Great American Songbook," and audience feedback was very positive. Roger was extremely versatile; he sang, told a good story, and expertly tickled the ivories. The committee considered that he is well worth booking again in the future.

The committee was delighted to meet Jean Jackson, and noted that many members also took the opportunity to have a chat. All arrangements worked out well on the day, and Jean subsequently sent an email thanking the committee and branch members for a lovely day.

28th Sept: Trevor Bevan will present "A Dickens of a Tale." Trevor is a Member of The Pickwick Bicycle Club, which is the oldest cycle club in the world, and the oldest Dickensian society still in existence.
Since the branch will celebrate its 12th birthday during the meeting, branch catering officer, Diane will provide celebratory cup-cakes.

26th Oct: Sheetal Walklate will present a talk titled "Restorative Justice Interventions."
Sheetal works for the Youth Offending Team.

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

MEMBERSHIP

At the branch committee meeting held on 14th September, it was reported that the count of members was 386. This was an increase of 11 relative to the previous month. 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

Interest Groups online community

The u3a "Interest Groups Online Community" is running a week of free taster sessions between Monday 2nd and Friday 6th October. The aim of the Fair is to increase the membership of interest groups that meet online.

If anyone has any thoughts on u3a governance, finance or strategy, you may join a new Facebook group titled "u3a fit for the future." It is a forum for u3a members, and committees to direct the future vision of the u3a movement.

National u3a Newsletter

You can still sign up on the national website at <https://u3asites.org.uk> to receive the National Monthly Newsletter by email. It's worth taking a look to see what is going on in other u3a's and you might even be inspired to try something new yourself.

FOCUS ON GROUPS

Computer Group

As stated in last month's Newsletter, group leader, Joe Neilson, has suspended the group for a short time due to a lack of attendance. Joe will recommence should enough members show a renewed interest. Joe informed the committee on 14th September that he had received three expressions of interest, and would consider resumption should the number rise to six.

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 10th October, 10.00am to 11.15am. It will take place in Stoke Library, which is located in the Council Hub close to the Market. Unfortunately, due to the constraint of the room size, the group is now fully subscribed.

The planned meeting for September was unfortunately cancelled due to the two group leaders not being available; the subject under discussion for October will therefore remain:

Protest for change!

Group leader Bob Jones can be contacted on 01785 817743.

Family History Group

The next meeting will be held at the Tollgate Hotel, Blurton, at 2pm on Friday 6th October. The group normally meets in the restaurant. New members are welcome.

Group leader is Les Waller, who may be contacted on 01782 394431.

Gardening and Nature Lovers

The next meeting will take place at Fletchers Garden Centre, Eccleshall, ST21 6JY, on Friday 13th October at 10.30am. The group will also take the opportunity to visit the adjoining Gentleshaw Wildlife Centre.

Christine Whitfield also operates a "WhatsApp" Page in support of the group.

New group contact is Josie Peirson whose 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 10th October, and the group leader is Maureen Cumming, who may be contacted on 01782 331797.

Mexican Train Dominoes Group

We are again encouraging members to join this very small group. Post Covid, the number of attendees has remained low, with recent numbers being only two or three. The meeting planned for 20th September was cancelled because group leader, Pauline had another commitment. 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 dates are 4th and 18th October.

Outdoor Bowls

Group leader, Dave Darby, has confirmed that the last meeting of the group for the 2023 summer season will take place on Wednesday 27th September. Dave is hopeful that the group will resume at Fenton Private Bowling Club in April 2024.

Ukulele Group

The group has now agreed to share leadership responsibilities. Meetings are held every Monday at Longton Central Hall, commencing at 1.15 pm. Additionally, it has been agreed that the new group contact will be Derek Lloyd mob: 07880 821727.

Walking Group

The three planned walks during the month of October are:

Monday 2nd October: Barlaston Downs. mainly flat, some slopes.

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

Monday 16th October: Hem Heath Woods, Trentham Estate and Canal towpath. Flat walk.

Meet for 10.30am start at Hem Heath Woods car park on Trentham Road (A5035), ST4 8FR.

Monday 30th October: Trentham Park. Short, flat walk.

Meet for 10.30am start at the entrance to the Blue Diamond Garden Centre, Trentham Gardens, Stone Road, ST4 8JG.

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

Branch Publicity

The branch has received an invitation from Tim Davies, a Social Prescribing Link Worker with the Stoke South Central Primary Care Network, to attend a Carer's Event on Tuesday 14th November. The Event will provide the u3a with the opportunity to publicise who we are, and our range of activities. This type of event has in the past proved fruitful in recruiting new members. Accordingly, branch publicity officer, Phil Rowley, has accepted the invitation and at least one other committee member will attend the event at St. Paul's Church in Longton Hall Lane.

Good and continuous publicity is of course vital to member recruitment. Unfortunately, branch membership has not fully recovered, and is presently still some one-hundred lower than Pre Covid numbers. Should anyone have any good ideas to publicise the branch, please speak to Phil Rowley or any member of the committee.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

CPR / Defibrillator

The August-September Newsletter contained a request for members to register an interest if they would like to attend an evening CPR/Defibrillator instruction session. Although no members have registered an interest, entertainments co-ordinator, Beverley Maher, remains interested in arranging a hands-on presentation, and has alternatively proposed a daytime session. Therefore, if anyone would like to attend a day-time session, please register your interest with Andrew Devin, whose contact details are at the end of this Newsletter.

Student research

In last month's Newsletter, the committee agreed to publicise a request from a Staffordshire University student, Rosemary Sibley, who is carrying out research into the experience of adults over 65 in relation to loneliness. She requested that participants complete her questionnaire. We again publicise her request should anyone be interested.

You may contact Rosemary:

By email: sr910968@student.staffs.ac.uk or Mob: 07774 679268.

Heritage Open Days 2023

Heritage open days for 2023 concluded on Sunday 17th September. The ten days of events, which focussed on the area's unique industrial heritage, again proved very popular with excellent attendances at all events. Many u3a members were in attendance and we are sure that they will join the branch in thanking the Potteries Heritage Society for all of their many hard months of planning and implementation. Branch secretary/publicity officer, Phil Rowley, again led a number of the presentations; so, on behalf of the branch a special thank-you to Phil.

Day Trips

The Branch has a number of members who are also members of the "Closer to Home" walking group. The 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 at a cost of £25 per trip, 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 Sheffield on October 12th. You may contact Carole Arrowsmith on 07871231767 for further details.

Longton Library

Anyone who uses Longton Library regularly will notice a change to the fixture and fittings after Friday 22nd September. The Library Service has been successful in securing government funding to refurbish Longton Library. The refurbishment will enable the creation of a modern, flexible library and community space.

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

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, 16th October 2023. Tel: 01782 942352 or email: a.devin2@gmail.com