

A message from Jean Jackson your Regional Trustee



Hello West Midlands u3a-ers!

I'm looking forward to u3a meetings with the usual mix of excitement and concern – when will I have time to find out about the Fauvists? Will I get lost on the way to the u3a? The last mile is often a problem when you're visiting – but I hope to meet many more of you this year, so please book me in.

We're all busy and receive a LOT of u3a information, so I aim to make this as useful and brief as possible, not monthly, but as needed.

This Regional newsletter offers you:

2 Free events to learn tried and tested methods of recruiting u3a members

3 opportunities to let your u3a know about the u3a Council

Insight into Artificial Intelligence, from the u3a AI Subject Adviser

Links to the [Future Lives](#) and [Exploring World Faiths](#) series of seminars

The booking link for the u3a Festival at the University of York in July – rooms are going fast

A reminder about the national u3a Chairs' Forum

A link to the next Regional Support team Zoom, Tues 27 February: join us to plan what we can do on a Region basis – e.g. our next Region meeting and perhaps a Summer School?

There are some things (like events such as Study days etc) that it's easier to do if we get together, so please let me know your ideas.

Many hands do make lighter work: Paul Martinez's Recruitment events are a good example of that – he's gathered information from many u3as about what's worked well for them, and he's run this seminar to packed audiences in Leeds and Manchester. So don't re-invent the wheel – come along and see what might work for you, whether you need new members or just to reinvigorate the existing ones.

Thank you for all your help in 2023, and I hope we can give our members an even more interesting time in 2024.

Jean Jackson, West Midlands Regional Trustee

07310 183428

RECRUITMENT



You're invited to a FREE Recruitment workshop

At the last AGM, a resolution was passed to increase the number of u3a members to 500,000 by 2028. That seems a realistic target, as we have over 440,000 members now, but post-Covid,

some u3as are still struggling to attract the newly-retired and also members willing to serve on the committee or be group leaders.

The West Midlands region's doing its bit to grow u3a by running two FREE workshops, open to all, that explore how to recruit and retain members.

Don't miss your opportunity to network with like-minded individuals and gain insights from Paul Martinez, leader of the "Pathfinder" u3a recruitment team. Learn valuable tips and tricks on how to recruit and retain members for your u3a group. You will be provided with the tools you need to attract and retain u3a members. Reserve your place now and unlock the secrets to a thriving u3a community! All welcome.

You can register via the Eventbrite links below, OR you can call, text, or email, Jean Jackson your Regional Trustee and she will add you to the list. The events run 10-13:30; we're keeping it simple by not offering lunch although we'll sustain you with tea, coffee etc.

These first events are in the north and centre of the region: if your u3a or your network would like to host such an event, please email/phone Jean Jackson and we'll arrange it.

THURSDAY 7 MARCH, Stoke on Trent:

Click the box to book via Eventbrite

[CLICK HERE](#)

WED 13 MARCH, Balsall Common (near Coventry, Solihull & Birmingham):

Click here to book via Eventbrite

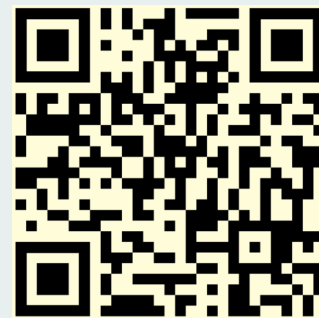
[CLICK HERE](#)

The links and details are on the West Midlands Region website

Click the box for access

[CLICK HERE](#)

QR Code to Access u3a
WM Region Web Site



QR codes are similar to click links, and are just another way of linking to information. This QR code is a link to the WM Region u3a website but the link can be to any document, website or source.

To open a QR code:

Search and download a QR code scanner app from your app store.

Open the app and hold your device so that the QR code appears in the Camera viewfinder.

The QR code will open immediately.

Thanks to Ross on Wye u3a for the idea.

Use this code to access the web site on the device used to scan it.

For direct access to the W Midland Region Web Site click on the link below : -

[CLICK HERE](#)

Use this link to access the web site on this computer.

Would you like to help your Region?

You can help by joining the Regional Support Team

If you're interested in joining the Regional Support Team, please Zoom in on TUESDAY 27 FEBRUARY 13:00- 14:00.

The link is below AND on the Regional Website under Events, with an outline agenda. Click the box below for direct access to the Events Web page.

[CLICK HERE](#)

The Zoom link is as follows

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9879921635?omn=89196609230>

Meeting ID: 987 992 1635; One tap mobile: 02080806591

Please just Zoom in or call Jean Jackson 07310 183428 to discuss.

The Chairs' Forum – open to all Chairs and Vice-Chairs.

If you're Chair of a u3a, I hope you've heard about the Chairs' Forum, which runs monthly via Zoom.

About 400 Chairs currently join, to share their experiences and opinions about u3a.

The idea for the resolution to increase u3a membership, passed at the last AGM, originated in the Chairs' Forum. We didn't all agree, but the idea was debated there!

The Forum isn't organised by the Third Age Trust; it began as a local initiative, which has spread.

We usually get 200+ people online, willing and able to help each other by exchanging ideas, and we have a small group of volunteers who chair the meeting so that everyone can be heard.

We also have a Facebook page which you can see here:

[CLICK HERE](#)

Click the box to go the Chairs Forum—Facebook

If you'd like to know more, or join us online, or simply receive copies of the meeting notes, please drop me an email u3achairsforum@gmail.com.

Laurence Wale

Chair, Worcester u3a

[Find out about the proposed u3a Council](#)

There may be a resolution put to the 2024 AGM to make the u3a Board smaller, focused on the business of the organisation, while a u3a Council represents u3a groups' interests. There's much to be done before this becomes a resolution, so u3as need to understand and be able to question what's proposed.

A "pilot Council" met in 2023 to test the idea. In the West Midlands, Laurence Wale, Chair of Worcester u3a, was invited to be your representative. Now, he and I will run a series of Zooms where you can ask questions and exchange views about the Council.

If the resolution is adopted at the next AGM, the Region will be invited to elect 2 Council reps– do you know someone who would stand?

There'd also be national elections for a new, smaller u3a Board.

If you want to find out more: join any one of the following Zooms.

Everyone is welcome, not just committee members. The more participants the better! No need to register.

FRIDAY 1st March 14:00-15:00

Meeting ID: 987 992 1635; One tap mobile +442080806591; +44 208 080 6591

[CLICK HERE](#)

MONDAY 4 March 12:30-13:30

Meeting ID: 987 992 1635; One tap mobile +442080806591; +44 208 080 6591

[CLICK HERE](#)

TUESDAY 5 March 10:00-11:00

Meeting ID: 987 992 1635; One tap mobile +442080806591; +44 208 080 6591

[CLICK HERE](#)

The links are also on the u3a West Midlands Region website

Click the box to access the Events Web page

[CLICK HERE](#)

Call Jean Jackson 07310 183428 with any queries.

[Join the Exploring World Faiths series of webinars](#)

Dr. Peter Rookes, Subject Advisor for "Exploring World Faiths" has begun a new series of webinars, at 10am on Mondays, on alternate months throughout the year.

The ones in March and May are shown below and on the Regional website.

Mon 11th March, 10am: Women in Faith: following International Women's Day on 8 March, we explore the roles of women in different faiths.

Mon 13th May, 10am: Religious Mysticism: What is mysticism? It's an important part of many religions. We explore mysticism in the Christian, Hindu and Sufi traditions.

To book and for more details, go to the national website here

You'll receive the Zoom link the week before the webinar.

[CLICK HERE](#)

The u3a Future Lives group needs you!

Future Lives is a national u3a group which meets regularly online and occasionally in-person, to share information and resources to inspire, influence and inform members about how we can improve our lives in the future: how can we add life to our years, and maintain our independence and quality of life for as long as possible?

What can we do to improve unsuitable homes or products, isolation and poor health? Good design can be liberating – and the reverse is true! Let's use our collective voice to bring about change. Through a series of online webinars, we share ideas that will help us all live our best possible future lives.

If you want to know more or have an ideas for a new topic for our webinars to explore, please contact Jean Jackson.

The webpage: "u3a - Future Lives" gives details of the series of webinars. On 16 January, there was one on AI, and we're currently investigating how you manage your digital legacy, what remains when you're gone.

To access the Future Lives webpage click here

[CLICK HERE](#)

Police — Action Fraud

The latest news from Police Action Fraud is available on their web site

To access the latest news click here

[CLICK HERE](#)

Interested in Crown Green Bowls?

Click the box to read the latest u3a information on Crown Green Bowls

[CLICK HERE](#)

Do you use u3a Subject Advisers ?

Discover more about u3a Subject Advisers on the u3a subject advice page

[CLICK HERE](#)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) – how can we find out more?

Barry Claydon's the u3a Subject Advisor for AI and is happy to talk to any u3a about AI. Jean Jackson's part of his newly-formed AI team, who meet regularly online.



AI is already affecting our lives.

Many of us have Alexa, which was set up using AI.

Back in 2011, instead of programmers writing code, the developers of Alexa invited groups of people to walk through rooms reading scripted questions, so that Alexa could learn, decipher their language, and respond quickly to a range of queries.

It seems to have worked - so there are benefits to AI, as well as possible hazards and like everything it depends how well it's done:

I guess many of us have been frustrated by an online chat-bot much less advanced than Alexa.

What can we do with AI?

It can automatically generate images (a goose sitting on a rocket? No problem!), create video from pictures in an instant, write compelling stories, advertising copy, etc.

If you try it, you'll see that already some safeguards have been put in place: e.g. if you request an image, you'll soon find that there are restrictions, such as if you ask for an image of a real named person.

Click to try: [Microsoft](#) and [Google](#) both offer free AI assistants – Bing and Bard.

Barry's built up a library of information and insight that can help us to take advantage of the opportunities AI offers and become more aware of the dangers that it also presents.

Here's the link to the '[AI for everyone](#)' library, and link to a [AI short course](#).

Email Barry u3a.ai.adviser@icloud.com to subscribe to the monthly AI newsletter.



National News- letter

To access the archived copies of the National Newsletter click the box below.

[CLICK HERE](#)

GUIDANCE Constitutions and Covid

To access the link to u3a mailings on constitutions and Covid guidance, click the blue button below

[CLICK HERE](#)

Insurance

The insurance policy covering all u3a members undertaking u3a activities during calendar year 2024 is available for download, click here

[CLICK HERE](#)

GET THE NATIONAL U3A NEWSLETTER!

[Sign up here](#)

It's a great way of finding out what's going on in u3as across the country and you can copy all the best ideas!

MODEL

CONSTITUTION

The **new** Model Constitution has arrived and is available on the main u3a website under **Support For u3as/ Document Downloads.** Look for Document U3A-KMS-DOC-035.

Alternatively, I

[CLICK HERE](#)

More News

For more news and information on a variety of u3a matters try the u3a Sources blog

To access Sources

Click the box

[CLICK HERE](#)

Social Media News

Have you ever explored our social media presence if not then now is the time to take a look via the below links to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube : —

[Click the buttons below to see our social media profiles and connect with us.](#)

Facebook

Twitter

Instagram

YouTube



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BRINGING A GROUP?

If you are heading to an event with **10+ people, you could be entitled to...**

DISCOUNTS

FREE TICKETS

COMPETITIVE RATES

FLEXIBLE RESERVATION PERIODS AND PAYMENTS

BOOK NOW, PAY LATER SCHEMES

SCHOOLS OFFERS

EXPERT ADVICE FROM OUR DEDICATED GROUP BOOKINGS TEAM

The Ticket Factory in Birmingham is the official box office for the NEC Group. Group discounts apply to all RHS events, Horse of the Year, concerts and other events. View some of the events by clicking the box below

Call or email the Ticket Factory Team

[CLICK HERE](#)

on **0800 3580058** or email groups@theticketfactory.com

u3a Festival YORK

Sign up for the
u3a Festival,
18-20 July 2024



Several u3a Regions run Summer Schools – this is a national Festival where members will offer all kinds of activities from talks to sport, music and workshops.

Your Regional Trustee Jean is running a Life Class and a Portrait workshop.

Join for all or part of the event: it's £35pp for three days, excluding accommodation - which you can book now, at £61.80 B&B on-site at the University of York.

Details on the u3a website: [u3a - Festival 2024](#)

Newsletter Express

To read the latest copy of the National Newsletter Express click the box below

[CLICK HERE](#)

ADVANCE NOTICE

U3a day celebrations are now extended throughout a week. Be prepared for the week of u3a celebration.

The dates for the next five years are -

21—29 September 2024

20—28 September 2025

19—27 September 2026

Would YOUR u3a host a visit from Liz Thackray, Chair of Trustees?

Liz Thackray is trying to visit all u3a Regions and has asked me to organise a week of visits to the West Midlands.

She wants to see what u3as do, speak to people, and is prepared to either observe or join in groups as appropriate.

If you'd like to host Liz, please email or call me, and I'll try to create a sensible sequential programme of events.

Your event need not be all-day: a Monthly Meeting or a visit to couple of groups is ideal. **We're looking for dates in APRIL, MAY, or even June.**

Please let me know if your u3a groups would like to show what they do.

If a Network would like to volunteer, that would be great.

Jean Jacksson Regional Trustee