



Learn, laugh, live

Newsletter – Spring 2024

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chair: Vacancy

Business Secretary: Phil Cook

Treasurer: Simon Beck

Groups Organizer, Website Manager: Chriss Pickles

Membership Secretary: Sarah Hewlett

Newsletter Editor: June Slater

Publicity Officer: Joan Anderson

Hello Everyone

In the absence of a Chair, it falls to me as Newsletter Editor to say “*Welcome to 2024 with Woodspring U3A*”. Your Committee hopes that all members are enjoying the activities offered by the various Groups. For those of you who came only to the monthly open meetings, these ceased at the end of 2023 because there is sadly no longer the capacity within the Committee to make the necessary arrangements. However, every cloud has a silver lining as they say and looking forwards, the Coffee Socials which are planned this year should give greater opportunities for members to meet in an informal, social atmosphere with more time to chat than when collecting your tea/coffee and biscuit from the T Team at the open meetings. The first of these Coffee Socials which took place on 24th January at Clevedon Community Centre was a tremendous success (see below) and others are planned to follow.

Needless to say, any and all volunteers to assist with the Coffee Socials and any other activities will always be welcomed.

Looking forward to meeting you all.

June Slater
Newsletter Editor

Membership news

Our numbers continue to increase, with over 490 members in Woodspring u3a now. Everyone's annual membership will be due for renewal on 1st April 2024, and we are taking the opportunity to review our fees. Rest assured, the annual fee will remain the same for most people. Out of the £13 fee you pay we have to send £5 per member to our umbrella organization (the national u3a) who provide administrative systems (such as our email and membership records package, a web-based database), insurance, subject advisors, and a range of online opportunities such as cryptic crossword courses, competitions, and shopping discounts. We send another £3.60 per member for you to receive the national Third Age Matters magazine (TAM) 5 times a year in the post. Many members enjoy the TAM articles and letters and find the advertisements useful, but others are not so keen on receiving this publication, or prefer to read the free online version on the national u3a website. The Committee has therefore decided to offer a reduced fee membership option for those who do not wish to receive the TAM magazines by post. The 2024-2025 fees will be:

Individual member, including the TAM magazine = £13

Joint members (two people at same address), including shared TAM magazine = £22.40 in total

Individual member, no TAM magazine = £9.40 per person

Joint members (two people at same address), no TAM magazine = £9.40 per person

There is nothing to do now, I will email or write to everyone a few weeks beforehand with information on how to renew, laying out these options for you.



To TAM or not to TAM,
that is the question!

Please do email me if you have any questions.

Sarah Hewlett

Clevedon Coffee Morning.



The First Woodspring u3a Coffee Social was held at Clevedon Community Centre on Wednesday 24th January. It was a huge success, enjoyed by everyone who could attend. It was so successful in fact another is booked at the centre in April and we've found a way to increase the number who can attend.

A heart felt thank you to Heather, Kath and Valerie, for all the work they did to make this happen.

As we try more coffee social venues the costs will vary. Some might have room hire charge others not. On occasion we will need to ask people to pay for some of the refreshments and others we'll provide or self-cater to keep costs down. Woodspring u3a is working within a budget limit.

The **next coffee social** will be held at the Scotch Horn Leisure Centre in Nailsea on Tuesday 27 February. Further details to follow soon.

It's hoped there will be a coffee social in Kingston Seymour in the near future, watch this space.

If anyone would like to run a coffee social in Portishead or anywhere else, please get in touch.

Joan Anderson
Press & Publicity Officer

Groups Update

Welcome to our regular update about some of the groups we're running in Woodspring u3a. As ever, we have a good range of topics, increasingly with emphasis on the social side of life as well as the brain-stretching, so you're much more likely these days to find a half-way intermission with refreshments and opportunities to chat.

What you may notice is that fewer groups than normal have vacancies. We would really appreciate it if you felt you could offer to lead a new group, or a duplicate of a current one but perhaps in a different location. If we can't offer places in our interest groups, we won't be able to attract new members or keep those that we currently have, which would be a great shame since over the last few years we have gone from strength to strength.

We carried out a straw poll to see which additional groups people would like to have available:

- Bus pass visits – travel by bus, free of charge with a bus pass, to a local place of interest
- Days out by train
- Visits to the theatre
- Visits to the Curzon cinema, with a meal before / after
- Mahjong
- German for beginners
- Cookery

If you'd like to lead a group like this, by yourself or with a friend / partner, you get to choose, for example, how often the group meets so you might have time to organise a theatre visit every quarter but not every month, or you make the cookery lessons occasional, perhaps focusing on something seasonal each time? Hot cross buns, summer salads, Xmas pud? Or you start a social coffee group where everyone takes turns to bring a homemade speciality for everyone to try? The sky is the limit.

I'm here to help if you would like to discuss starting a new group – please get in touch.

Regards
Chriss Pickles
01275 878927

Architecture

This group has no vacancies at the moment but does maintain a waiting list. **Contact** the group leader: 01934 833227

Astronomy

U3a Astronomy group now provides two venues for those who have an interest in the stars, sun, planets, space, satellites, the universe, and everything in between! We meet in Portishead on the 4th Wednesday of the month, followed by a repeat in Nailsea on the 4th Thursday of the month. Nailsea is an experiment to see what the level of interest is in a second group. There will be tea and coffee and biscuits.

Discussions and presentations will be pitched on a par with popular astronomy TV programs and magazines. The only requirements are an inquiring mind and a readiness to be blown away by the sheer majesty and awesomeness of the heavens above.

We have plenty of space in both venues for new and existing members, so do come along to continue your journey, or start a new one.

This year I am adding some talks that look at using the science of astronomy to illuminate art and history. We are starting with a look at how the Creature in Mary Shelly's book was influenced by the Moon.

Contact the group leader: 07456556110

French and Spanish

Both groups are full and likely to remain that way for the foreseeable future. If anyone would like to start an equivalent group, please get in touch. In the meantime, both Bristol and Weston u3as run similar groups.

Breakfast Buddies

This group has vacancies

Contact the group leader on napf2bc@yahoo.co.uk

Bridge (Portishead)

This group would appreciate new members

Contact the group leader on 07714821704

Family History Group

Our sociable, interesting and friendly group welcomes any U3A member who is interested in exploring their roots. Expert or beginner will find topics of interest which include DNA, social history, transcriptions, detective work, presentations of any aspect of family history.

Please **contact** the group leader on 01275 794646

Garden Visits

This group has vacancies

Contact the group leader on napf2bc@yahoo.co.uk

Greek for Holidaymakers

This group has vacancies and is open to people of all abilities.

Contact the group leader on 07989 816208

Italian

The Group meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 2 - 4pm in Yatton. There are currently 7 members; we could accommodate more

Contact the group leader on 01934833227

Literature

The Literature Group meets on the first Thursday of the month September through to July. Our venue is 65 The High Street, Nailsea at 2pm.

Our aim is to read a mix of modern and classical books all chosen by our members. Next month one of our members has arranged for the author of the book we are reading to come to talk to us so we are looking forward to that.

We are a sociable group, refreshments are served at each meeting and we have a Christmas lunch and summer lunch at a local pub.

We are full at the moment but vacancies do occur so please contact me if you are interested in joining.

Contact the group leader on 01275 810843

Lunch Group 2

Lunch group 2 sadly lost some members last year so there's room for a few more. We're a cheerful group who like holidays. We meet approximately once a month, pre-pandemic on Mondays, not to clash with other activities. However, it's become increasingly difficult to find pubs which are not only open on Mondays but willing to provide food so we're having to widen our horizons to Tuesdays or Wednesdays. I always consult the group before making arrangements. **Contact** the group leader on: 01275 852550

Lunch group 3

This group has vacancies

Contact the group leader on napf2bc@yahoo.co.uk

MUSIC FOR FUN

Fun! Fun! Fun! Is what we have at our Tuesday afternoon music sessions. We sing perhaps 13 songs, then we have a break for tea/coffee and either biscuits or home-made cake before singing another 13/14 songs.

We are a very relaxed group. Musicians of all different levels play, whilst they and everyone else sings. The lyrics and chords are projected onto the wall, so all can see them, and we don't have loads of photocopied sheets. We sing all the old favourites from the 50s, 60s and 70s with one or two more modern songs. We also sing a few folk songs, jazz and even some novelty songs. Anything goes!

We have more variety than ever with our musical instruments: guitars, electric guitars, keyboard, ukeleles, tin whistle, kazoos plus a variety of percussion instruments which are available for all members. From time to time, we will have a themed song session. In the photo you can see that we even dressed up for the Hallowe'en themed songs.

Like many of the U3A groups, we enjoyed a party at Christmas, with delicious food brought and shared by all the members, games and of course some singing!

Some members got together and with their friends joined us to go carol singing. We were so pleased when we raised £409.45 for Cancer Research UK (Nowhere Fundraisers)

Now we have started the new year and have welcomed some more members – although NOT a choir, we sing and make music to lift the spirits - but we do sound really quite good!

We meet on Tuesday afternoon between 2pm and 4pm every fortnight at 65 High St, Nailsea. BS48 1AW. Parking is behind us in the Station Road Carpark.

We welcome new members, although like 'the bad moon', numbers are rising all the time!!!

Contact the group leader on 07939090148



Poetry Appreciation

The group has 3 vacancies. Please **contact** the group leader on 01275 875316

Pickleball

I first started playing Pickleball about 18 months ago when injury prevented me from playing tennis. It's one of the fastest growing sports in the world even attracting many of the older elite Wimbledon stars, Andre Agassi, Maria Sharapova, John McEnroe to name a few. Just to be clear - I was NEVER good at the tennis, I just enjoyed playing!!

Pickleball is a cross between Tennis, Table Tennis and Badminton – the ball is hit over a net the same height as a tennis net, – the 'bat' or paddle is larger version of a table tennis bat and it's played on a badminton sized court. We play with a pickleball which is plastic, similar size to a tennis ball with holes in it – like the ones we used to play with at school.

Since our group started with 6 or 8 interested people last April, the group has grown to 32 members, many of whom have joined our U3A especially so they can play! We are a very mixed group, from the more relaxed to a few serious competitive players.

Each session begins with a warm-up then games are played, and we move round enabling us to play with and against different people. If we have too many people for the number of courts on Friday, there is opportunity for some people to play at another time.

We are also a very sociable group. Some people have a coffee after playing, others (those who are not able to play that week) meet up and have a coffee whilst others play. We've had 'socials,' and our Christmas meal together was very entertaining. Having a lot of members will ensure that we can keep going when many people are on holiday. If you would like to join us, or would like to find out more about Pickleball, please **contact** the group leader on 07939090148

A U3A Pickleball game in progress at Scotch Horn Leisure Centre, Nailsea



Oh no! It's not a game to be played in the pool!



Portishead U3a Book Group

The Book Club celebrated its first year anniversary in November 2023 with a breakfast in the Poacher followed by a discussion on the latest book.

Always lively, this group has been a consistent membership of 10 (our maximum) since we began. We don't all share the same tastes in what we like to read, but this is what makes book clubs so interesting and it's a great opportunity to read an unfamiliar author or a genre we have not previously experienced.

In total we have now read 14 books, 13 fiction and 1 non-fiction including ten by woman authors and four by men. The favourite book based on scores on the doors was The Offing by Benjamin Myers which scored an average of 8.2/10.

The group meets in the Poacher on a Monday morning (3rd of the month)

Contact the group leader on j.kern@btopenworld.com

Quiz

The quiz group runs twice a month on the second and fourth Thursday in the month from 2.00pm to 4.00pm at the Consti Club in Clevedon. Members are randomly allocated to a team every time and this means everyone gets a chance to play with different people. This group continues to be popular, there is a short waiting list but we do our best to make sure that everyone gets a chance to play at some point in time. **Contact** the group leader on 07986 930212

Recorder Group

This group runs in Nailsea on Fridays and does have vacancies.

Contact the group leader on 01275 877635

*** NEW GROUP *** NEW GROUP *** NEW GROUP ***

Sea Shanties

The main point of this group is to get together and have fun. Sea shanties teach us something about maritime heritage as they all tell a story. Limited singing talent will not bar membership of the crew but any reasonably tuneful singers would certainly benefit the rest of us! Musical instrument accompaniment isn't necessary but would be welcome. Reading the dots isn't required. Venue, dates and times to be agreed.

If you are interested in joining **contact** the group leader on 07770 739822

Science & Technology

There is no need to have a background in science or technology, just a curiosity in general. We have short presentations /discussions on topics of interest or on an individual speciality. We cover recent developments in science and technology and discuss their implications for society and the environment. The prime objective is to help members understand the principles and issues involved. We meet on the 4th Monday afternoon of the month in Clevedon.

The group has vacancies- if you are interested, please **contact** the group leader on 01275 878283

Solo Group This group is intended for people who are on their own. There are vacancies.

Contact the group leader on 01275 856643

Table Tennis

We meet at Mizzymead in Nailsea Tuesdays 10-12 and play doubles – we only have access to one table at the moment but everyone gets some time on the court. We'd love to see you if you're interested. **Contact** the group leader on 07811 119492

Ukulele

We started a new ukulele group recently for beginners and would welcome more members. We meet on the 2nd and 4th Monday from 10.00am till 12.00 noon in Yatton (near the railway station). If you don't have an instrument, we have some you can use on the day. If you played the ukulele a long time ago this could be the group for you. We are an informal, mixed ability group. The Thursday ukulele group is full but if you'd like to join the waiting list **contact** the group leader on 01934 838836.