

A message from your Regional Trustee

Hello from Jean, your new Regional Trustee



In this newsletter I'd like to celebrate the achievements of u3as across the Region, and let us share things that will help u3a groups to thrive. Our expert editorial team, John and Margaret Aston, have agreed to create a quarterly newsletter, while I can email info if it's urgent. However, as I'm new to the u3a Trustee role, I'd also like to take this opportunity to introduce myself.

I began my career as a teacher of English, and retrained to become one of IBM's first female computer salesmen. After that I spent many years working both in education and IT, e.g. as head of marketing & comms for a start-up that provided technology for schools. In my last role before retirement, I was part of the team that set up the digital training academy for Rolls-Royce, so I have plenty of experience relevant to u3a. I'm also a Trustee for the International Longevity Centre UK, which highlights the issues presented by an ageing population.

Locally, I belong to Lichfield u3a and was a committee member for some years, responsible for publicity and for booking speakers. I'm still part of its Art, Art Appreciation, and German Language groups. Their Art group has had to raise its fees from 50p to £2 per session to cover hall hire, but it's still a bargain, which is one of the many things I appreciate about u3a.

I was a member of Allan Walmsley's Regional team and hope that you'll consider joining the new Regional Team; they let me know what's going on in the Region and plan Region-wide events. In August I'm going to the North-West Region's Summer School in Carlisle; if we can form an active Regional team, we could run a similar event locally next year. The u3a offers grants, so we could create a low-cost high-quality event. If you're not sure about joining our Regional team, come along and see what you think. There's an open invitation for you on Page 2.

I'm going to follow Allan Walmsley's excellent example of running "Fireside chats" for u3a Chairs: on the first Monday lunchtime of each month, I'll be available on Zoom if there's anything you want to talk about – and in the meantime, please feel free to call or email me. I'll be happy to attend any of your local u3a events and make a presentation or answer questions as required. I'd just like to end by thanking everyone who sent questions about the u3a Council, and special thanks to Laurence Wale, Chair of Worcester u3a, for agreeing to be the W Midlands Council Representative.

I look forward to hearing from you – and thanks for voting for me!

Jean Jackson, Regional Trustee u3a West Midlands,
Jean.jackson@u3a.org.uk; 07310 183428

u3a West Midland Region Needs You



Jean, your Regional Trustee, invites you to join

WEST MIDLAND REGIONAL TEAM— Zoom June 13

YOU ARE INVITED to attend the first meeting of your Regional Team since Jean Jackson became Trustee. The team will meet each quarter, and in person at some point. Please join us to find out what it's all about – and pass this invitation on to others.

The Regional team gives feedback about what's happening in the Region and decides what we can do on a Regional basis to benefit members, e.g. we might decide to run a Study day/week, a Recruitment seminar, a Treasurers' get-together, whatever the u3as suggest that they would benefit from. Jean hopes to see you soon.

AGENDA:

Introductions

Feedback on what's wanted by u3as

One thing to work on – to deliver in Sept?

Regional meeting on 19 July in Sutton Coldfield – agenda and CEO questions.

AoB : please call with any queries, 07310 183428

All are welcome to join this Regional Committee meeting

Time: Tuesday Jun 13, 2023 2pm until 3:30pm.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88560537493>

Meeting ID: 885 6053 7493

Regional Meeting 19 July at Sutton Coldfield

In the past this meeting WAS a Regional Chairs meeting – but, especially as it's our first face to face meeting post-Covid, any interested member of u3a can come along. We're hoping that Chairs will invite others as well as attending themselves.

Our special guest at the event is Sam Mauger, our u3a CEO, and we need questions to put to her. If you have questions that you and/or your u3as would like answered, please email them to Jean.Jackson@u3a.org.uk.

Please book your place via Eventbrite: lunch is provided so we need to know numbers.

All the information is both on Eventbrite and on the Regional website.

Links are below:

Direct to Eventbrite



Via Regional Web Site



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 : -



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

GRANTS AVAILABLE TO u3as in 2023

The Third Age Trust offers grants to u3as, networks or other groupings of u3as to help to raise the profile of the u3a movement. The u3a should submit the relevant application to the Regional Trustee via email, confirming this is the only grant they are applying for in this financial year. All grants need to be approved by the Regional Trustee prior to the activity taking place. Payment of the grant will not be made more than 12 weeks in advance of the event.

Click the box to access grant procedure

[CLICK HERE](#)

Types of grant:

Start up grants (£300 maximum): for new u3as during their set-up process. Contact Linda Hodson at Linda@u3a.org.uk.

Relaunch grants (£100 fixed amount): This is to cover disbursements made on a relaunch. However, a u3a should not apply for a relaunch grant if it has sufficient reserves to cover the costs of a relaunch. The intention is that the grants will apply to those u3as whose membership numbers have fallen away significantly (by more than 20% in a year).

[Relaunch grant application form August 2021 \(583.74 KB\)](#)

Special events grants (£150 maximum): to support events aimed at raising awareness of & recruiting new members.

[Special Event grant application form May 2022 \(568.35 KB\)](#)

Workshop, exhibition, festival grants (£500 maximum): to assist with the organisation of workshops/exhibitions/seminars/festivals or similar on topics relevant to the running and future development of u3as or recruitment. Activities must normally involve networks or groups of u3as. The grant may, for example, be to cover the cost of taking a stand/exhibition space at a local or country show or similar events or the travel expenses of trainers or guest presenters. It may also be used to support members on national activities designed to raise the profile of the movement. In all cases, however, there must be a clear indication of how this will raise the profile of the u3a movement and enable recruitment.

[Workshop grant application form August 2021 \(583.58 KB\)](#)

Large national grant (£5,000 maximum): a new grant being trialled during the 2023/24 financial year, to enable u3as (or groups of u3as) to have a presence at events that attract a large national audience with a significant number of visitors in the u3a demographic. The u3a, network or region coordinating u3a involvement must provide an operational plan that describes in detail how the u3a presence at the event will be planned, managed, executed and followed up, including details of how the impact of attendance will be measured.



WANTED — PR Advisor for the West Mids region

Become part of a team run by Chris.Winner@u3a.org.uk
Contact her directly or your Regional Trustee Jean Jackson
Willingness to help is more important than experience

[To find out more click the box to see the job description](#)

[CLICK HERE](#)

Out and about

10 Years of Much Wenlock and District u3a

In late 2012, the late Alan Cavalier booked a hall to find out whether there was enough interest to form a u3a in the Wenlock area. In the beginning 72 people signed up as members, and 33 topics of interest were identified. Not all were viable, but by April 2013 there were 22 groups with a group leader. Eight of those early groups (Art and Watercolour, Creative Writing, Italian, Play Reading, Political Studies, Ukulele, Walking and Wine Tasting) continue to thrive. They also began a series of monthly talks.



Members of Much Wenlock u3a

Their membership has continued to grow, and by March 2020 they had 270 members. Although numbers fell during Covid, they're now back to 250 members with 30 activity groups - 5 of them devoted to Italian! So, if you'd like to give it a go, remember *Tentar non Nuoce* (there's no harm in trying)

In April 2023 they celebrated their tenth anniversary with an afternoon tea in the Priory Hall where it all began, organised by Jean Buswell a long standing Much Wenlock member. They were joined by Duncan White (Mayor of Much Wenlock), Allan Walmsley (Vice-Chair of u3a), Jean Jackson (W Midlands Regional Trustee), Glynis Nicholls, (Chair, Shropshire Area Network) and Mary Rogers (Chair of Wrekin u3a). In addition to the music provided by the Guitar Group, they were entertained by a table magician, Jack Dent and a good time was had by all.



Robert introducing Alan Walmsley

Robert Toft, former Chair

10 Years of Kingswinford u3a's Ukulele Group

Kingswinford u3a was formed over 20 years ago and before lockdown had grown to close to 600 members with over 30 groups. But like many other u3a's it lost members during lockdown and is now slowly recovering. Today it has 25 active groups, meeting once or twice a month, mostly at Kingswinford Community Centre and holds regular events including Coffee Mornings and Speaker Meetings, and a programme of Day Trips in summer months. The day trips have proved so popular that long queues of members waiting to book places had formed at Coffee Mornings and a ticketing system had to be introduced to control the queues.

Kingswinford Community Centre



Ukulele Concert

This year was the 10th anniversary of the formation of their Ukulele Group which has now grown to over 50 members. The anniversary was celebrated by a Ukulele Concert, held at the Community Centre. The event was a sell out with close to 130 people enjoying the music and an afternoon cream tea.



Tamworth u3a celebrate the King's Coronation

While u3a's are non-political and non-religious, we are always up for a good time, and the historic Coronation offered the opportunity to celebrate. Tamworth u3a did it in style at their historic Assembly Rooms. The leader of the Photography group was photographer for the day, and members were serenaded by a singer. This was the first of a series of events that Tamworth are running this summer – they've already visited the RHS Bridgewater Garden in Salford, in June they're off to Babbacombe for 5 days, and there are more garden trips, the next one to the Dorothy Clive gardens in Shropshire. Perhaps due to all this, membership continues to grow rapidly, with 14 new joiners at the last meeting. **Congratulations, Tamworth!**

The King Lear awards –

The national creative competition for the over-60s



[King Lear Prizes](#) (LINK TO THEIR WEBSITE)

"Whether you're a keen amateur picking up again after many years, or dabbling in a new hobby for the first time, the King Lear Prizes should be just the prod you need to get going," says Gyles Brandreth, who judged in 2021.



There are many categories for creative awards, but not many competitions formally welcome the over-60s. Here's your opportunity: you can enter the **King Lear awards** either individually or as a group.

Each entry costs £5 but there are over £3000 of cash prizes for winners and those shortlisted, and certificates for Highly Commended entries.

The categories are **Art, Poetry** and **Short Stories**.

More details on their website, and you need to get your skates on: **deadline is FRIDAY 14 July**

•CATEGORIES ARE: ART, POETRY, SHORT STORY

[Exploring World Faiths: national webinars, 2023](#)

organised by Dr Peter Rookes, PhD. MPH. DHS.A. FETC. RCNT. RGN. RNMH
National Subject Advisor, u3a Exploring World Faiths; **07703 336088**

I am pleased that so many members are continuing to enjoy our monthly webinars, so please book on Eventbrite in the usual way by clicking –

[u3a website](#) – [Learn](#) – [Subject Advice](#) – [Exploring World Faiths](#) – [Upcoming Webinar](#) –

Katie will then send you the Zoom link in the week before the webinar takes place. These webinars are open to all members of the u3a.

Mon 19th June – 10am, Reflections, Ideas and Experiences of Setting Up and Running Local Exploring World Faiths Groups. This is your opportunity to raise questions, tell us about your ideas, and your experience of what worked and what didn't work. Robin Wilcockson will start us off by telling us about his experience in Keyworth, Nottinghamshire.

Mon 17th July – 10am, Faith and the Environment World Environment Day is in June, so in this webinar we will explore the different faiths perspectives on the Environment. Dr Chris Martin (Quaker) will tell us about the work of Faiths Footsteps for a Low Carbon Future. Presenters also from EcoSikh UK and from the Buddhist environmental justice group.

Mon 21st August: Faith and Youth World Youth Day is in August. Three young people from different faiths will tell us about their faiths and how that affects their lives.

RETAIN & RECRUIT U3A MEMBERS

A Working Party of members from 65 u3as has produced 35 tools to help with the retention and recruitment campaign.

There are papers, presentations & videos, showing how a bit of thought & lateral thinking can help u3as to stem & reverse reductions in membership and adjust an ageing profile.

The Toolkit is on the main u3a website to access it click the blue box

[CLICK HERE](#)

Police – Action Fraud

The latest news from Police Action Fraud is now 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](#)

Classic Rock & Pop Music



by Subject Advisor Martin Hellawell

Martin is a member of Lichfield u3a.

Why become u3a's Subject Advisor for Rock and Pop?

I love music, and must confess to being ex lead singer of a rock group (Leo Molgrape!) back in the 70s. When I first looked at u3a Groups, there were several for Opera and Classical Music, but not for modern music. It's less intimidating than Classical, but also has a wealth of information attached to it. For example, did you know that MTV originally didn't broadcast any "black" music? – and didn't until record companies threatened to withdraw their funds. There's a lot to discuss, and I've spoken to people from all over the country about how best to start up and run a Rock & Pop group in u3a.



What kind of help or advice can you give?

If people want to set up a Rock and Pop group, I ask them to consider:

Genre/theme – by taking turns to choose a topic, everyone can indulge their own particular interest. It works best to keep the overall theme as wide as possible. For Lichfield I chose the music of the 50s, 60s and 70s, which covered a wide range of possibilities. In reality, the list is almost endless: The Beatles, singer/songwriters, Christmas songs, Female/male vocalists, instrumentals, favourite albums.

Format of meeting – do you want your meetings to be educational or just a vehicle for playing music? For the former, you'll need a stream of people to host or 'give the talk'. I created a hybrid, where one member chooses the topic for the next meeting, and each member selects 2 songs within the topic and presents them with interesting snippets of information.

Technology – When people call me for advice, this is their No 1 question. Pre Covid my group used to find and play tracks using Spotify. Post Covid, I've played the choices using YouTube clips. This has worked very well, because video is something that reinforces & interprets modern music; you find that people have retrospectively added video to older tracks – there are plenty of Elvis videos for example.

Could you become a Subject Advisor? Yes, if you have a passion for a subject, that you'd like to share with others. To find out more, look at the list of u3a subject advisors on the national website and the Information pack that's there:

Click the link to visit the subject advisors page on the national website

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/subjects>

National News- letter

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



GUIDANCE Constitutions and Covid

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



Insurance

The insurance policy covering all u3a members undertaking u3a activities during calendar year 2023 is available for download, 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



The Ticket Factory

BRINGING A GROUP?

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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 NETWORK LINK SUMMER MEETING,

JUNE 13TH, 1000–1200

The Network Link Team have an exciting meeting planned and would like to invite you to

The Network Link Summer Meeting, to be held via zoom, on June 13th, 10am to 12pm.

John Alexander, Documentation and Training Lead, will talk on "**Beacon, the Benefits and its relevance for Networks**"

Alan Russell, Chair Beacon WordPress Steering Group, will give a progress report on **SiteWorks and the migration from SiteBuilder**.

As usual, there will be opportunities for questions to both of the speakers and the meeting will conclude with an **Air and Share** session. If you would like to contribute to the Air and Share session, could you let Sue Russell know in advance at Sue.Russell@u3a.org.uk so that she may have an idea of numbers and likely topics.

Attendance is free, and open to all u3a members –

registration is via TicketSource – please click on the box and follow the instructions to register. Please answer the two questions – if your u3a is not currently a member of a network, or if you are not sure which one, please say so.

[CLICK HERE](#)

If you have any problems with registration, please contact Avis Furness at u3anetworklinkmeeting@gmail.com

The Zoom link will be sent out nearer the time to all who have registered.

Sue Russell Chair Network Link

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 -

16—24 September 2023

21—29 September 2024

20—28 September 2025

19—27 September 2026

Zoom Drop-in for u3a Chairs, first MONDAY of each month 1pm-2pm

If any u3a Chair would like to have an informal chat with your Regional Trustee, then Jean's available at lunchtime on the first Monday of each month.

The Zoom link's below and on the Regional website. Jean says "If any u3a member wants a chat anytime, call me on 07310 183428. You're very welcome!"

Jean's MONTHLY Drop-in meeting in on FIRST MONDAY OF MONTH at 1 pm:

ON — Jun 5; Jul 3; Aug 7; Sep 4; Oct 2; Nov 6; Dec 4,

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Monthly by clicking the box. The files will appear in your downloads folder

[CLICK HERE](#)

To Join Zoom Meeting click the link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84374744946> Meeting ID: 843 7474 4946

One tap mobile: +442080806592,,84374744946# United Kingdom

Dial by your location: +44 208 080 6592 United Kingdom

Meeting ID: 843 7474 4946

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kbdlm1Eblld>

