

Connect

West Midlands Region

Shropshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire.

Jan/Feb 2023

u3a learn,
laugh,
live

A message from your Regional Trustee



What Will 2023 Bring For The u3a Movement?

A Happy New Year to all u3a members in the West Midlands and I really hope that everyone was able to spend some quality time with family and friends over the holiday period.

If you are anything like me, you may remember the year 2023 as one of those futuristic years that we used to read about in comics and books with flying cars, robots all over the place, and space travel for all. Well, it's here and it's real, (albeit without flying cars, etc) and for many of us we may not feel much different, and it may seem that not a great deal has changed. But if you look around you, the impact of technological change is everywhere, and social standards and expectations have slowly but surely changed. So what does 2023 have in store for the u3a? What do we need to keep and where do we need to change?

The focus during the year will be sustainability – the ability of u3as, networks and regional teams to become and remain successful in the long term. Whilst many u3as are successful and progressive, many more struggle to get new members, and particularly to get members to take responsibility. Committee vacancies such as chair and committee officers, are a national problem even in some successful u3as, and persuading members with specific skills like financial or technical skills to step up is even more difficult. In addition, whilst the movement has a tried and tested formula of local face to face social interaction that will surely continue as a fundamental building block, not all members are able to, willing to, or prepared to attend face to face sessions. Finally, u3a is one of life's best kept secrets – as the 17th largest voluntary member organisation in the UK, the u3a profile in national, regional and local media remains low, and current u3a membership makes up less than 0.1% of the UK's 11m over 65s.

So the challenges for the year are clear – how can your u3a contribute?

Allan Walmsley. U3a Vice Chair and WM Regional Trustee,

Email contact:- allan.walmsley@u3a.org.uk

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.

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

CLICK HERE

Find out more about the work going on within u3a

the nexAs part of greater efforts at transparency various parts of the Third Age Trust are holding open discussions about their work and progress with current activities. They are entitled “Conversations With ...” and they will be publicised in the national newsletter.

The last one was 'Conversations With the Internal Services Team' which took place on Tuesday 17 January. — Register for the newsletter and look out for the next one.

Exploring World Faiths – National Zoom Events, Jan-March 2023

Please register to attend on the Exploring World Faiths subject page on the u3a website. Queries to Dr Peter Rookes at pjrookes@gmail.com

Details of the next 3 webinars are as follows -

Mon 30th Jan – 10.0 am The Holocaust, Genocide and Antisemitism

Hear Ruth Jacobs, Jewish Community Leader

Alex Maws, Head of Education and Heritage, The Association of Jewish Refugees, and a Camp Survivor – to be confirmed

The Webinar will include:-

A short introduction to Judaism – including Mitzva Day

What is antisemitism, and why does it occur

What is genocide, and what leads up to it

What was the Holocaust, how did it happen, what were the consequences, and what have we learnt

Mon 20th Feb – 10.0am Who was St Valentine, and What is Love

Love is a common theme through many faiths

Hear perspectives on Love from a Christian and a Baha'i presenter,

Patricia Earle, Women's Federation for World Peace and David Earle, Universal Peace Federation.

Mon 13th March – 10.0am Reflections,

Ideas and Experiences of Setting Up and Running Local Exploring World Faiths Groups. Your opportunity to raise questions, tell us about your ideas, and your experience of what worked and what didn't work.

Linda Morris will reflect on her experience in setting up an Exploring World Faiths Group in Milton Keynes,

Mon 17th April – 10.0am Fleeing for Faith

In April we commemorate the Jewish Passover, when the Israelites fled their enslavement in Egypt. We will explore this, and other occasions when people have fled because of their faith.

Please register to attend on the Exploring World Faiths subject page on the u3a website. Queries to Dr Peter Rookes at pjrookes@gmail.com

GRANTS AVAILABLE TO u3a's in 2023

Changes are being made to make more grants available for 2023/24.

Grants are aimed at raising awareness of the u3a movement (locally, regionally, or nationally) and encouraging the recruitment of new members, and from April they will also be made available for events of national significance and to groups of u3as and networks. Grants are not intended to cover all the costs of events, but are a contribution and u3as will need to be clear what resources (including financial) they are contributing, at the outset. From April, the following grants will be available.:

Start Up grants (£300 maximum)

Relaunch grants (£100 fixed amount)

Special events grants (£150 maximum)

Workshop, exhibition, festival grants (£500 maximum)

Large National Grant (£5,000 maximum),

u3as seeking any of these grants should send an email in the first instance with the relevant application form to the Regional Trustee via email. All grant applications must be made to and approved by the Regional Trustee prior to the activity taking place.

Following the event, the u3a must email the Regional Trustee, outlining what the money has been spent on and the identified outcomes.

Payment of the grant will not be made more than 12 weeks in advance of the event.

Application forms and more information are on the national website – see link below - under Support For u3as/Financial Matters – To reach the website click the box

[CLICK HERE](#)

When you reach the website you may need to sign in (or register if you are a new user) then click on “Support for u3a’s, then Financial matters and you will see the link to grants information section at the bottom of the page.



How will your u3a be celebrating Off The Wall?

Our event at Hadrian's Wall on 10 May 2023 is starting to take shape. We have a new logo (see above) and our first events have just been confirmed.

These include talks by Andrew Birley FSA, CEO and Director of Excavations of the Vindolanda Trust and Rob Collins, Senior Lecturer Archaeology at the University of Newcastle.

Ann Keating, who is helping to organise the day, says “This event will only be successful if members step forward and take part. The Trust will be there to help and support but we need you to get out there and make this a really exciting occasion.”

The full programme will be available on the national website shortly

Register your interest in the day by emailing thewall@u3a.org.uk

A Request for Help from Allan Walmsley your Regional Trustee

The u3a movement relies almost totally on volunteers willing to use part of their time to help develop ideas and support activities. Whilst most activities are locally based, there are also networks and regional teams that rely heavily on u3a members bringing their ideas and experience together to create a range of opportunities and activities beyond local u3as.

In the West Midlands, I operate as a regional trustee with the support of a small team of u3a members. We meet virtually around 6-8 times per year and I find it really helpful to hear feedback from u3as and networks around the region as well as discussing the latest developments from around the movement. These support volunteers can then explain the various initiatives and opportunities to their u3as and networks.

I am now keen to add new members to the team. There are no specific requirements other than a little enthusiasm and energy; and the role is certainly not onerous. I am looking for u3a members who can keep me up to date with a local flavour from u3as and networks, and to help me with the organisation and delivery of regional events such as study days, regional conferences, or recruitment fairs.

Depending on location, skills and personal interest, you may be interested in providing support with websites and social media support, with regional communications, help to identify gaps in u3a presence, or identify local organisations, events, initiatives or personalities that we can link into.

I'll ensure that you are aware of the need for confidentiality, equality and data protection, and I'll help you to keep up to date with new u3a material relating to policy, practice, legislative and constitutional changes.

If you think you can help me and support u3as in the West Midlands Region, I would love to hear from you. Email me on: allan.walmsley@u3a.org.uk

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](#)

West Midland Police – Fraud Bulletin

The latest edition of the Fraud Bulletin is now available on the West Midland u3a web site

To access the bulletin click here

[CLICK HERE](#)

Interested in Crown Green Bowls?

Click the box to read the Crown Green Bowls Newsletter on the WM Region Web Site

[CLICK HERE](#)

Do you use u3a Subject Advisers ?

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

[CLICK HERE](#)

[Poetry Competition](#)

The u3a Poetry Competition is back. There is no theme for the competition this year, so there is plenty of scope to exercise your imagination.

Your poem should be a maximum of 16 lines (plus title), on any topic, and be submitted by **12 noon on Friday 27 January 2023**.

The competition details are on the national website or click on this link: [u3a - Poetry Competition 2022](#).

The three winning poems will be published in Third Age Matters and on the u3a website.

This year we are on track to receive a good 500+ entries but we need to recruit a few judges. Judging will be carried out remotely (ie in your own home) and will start in February. Judges will be given 6 weeks to return their scores.

Would you be interested in being a poetry judge? Drop a line to Katie Hull in Member Services on Katie.Hull@u3a.org.uk

[Insurance](#)

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

[CLICK HERE](#)

INSPIRING RECRUITMENT

New recruitment and retention toolkit

This toolkit is intended for use by your committee and any sub-committee or team that you set up. The purpose of the toolkit is to provide you and your u3a with tools to assist you in your efforts to recruit members and retain your current ones.

The Toolkit has a number of different types of tool: PowerPoints, videos, How to guides and a checklist.

To find out more : -

See the National Office mailing about the Recruitment and Retention Toolkit.

By clicking the box [CLICK HERE](#) here -

[CLICK HERE](#)

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](#)

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

Facebook



Twitter



Instagram



YouTube



THE BRAND CENTRE

The first tranche of merchandise is available on the brand centre. This includes mugs, bags and badges. You can use these to promote your u3a and on u3a day. More merchandise over the next few months.

Click [HERE](#) to go to Brand Centre Registration Page on the National Web Site

THE IMAGE LIBRARY

The national image library has been updated. This is full of u3a member photos, from walking to ukulele playing. Use these on your u3a websites and publicity materials. The Trust will be updating this image library once they start doing photoshoots again.

Access the image library via the Main U3A Web Site

Let's Talk Tech

A dedicated website full of helpful guidance and user experiences for u3a Hybrid (or Alternative) meetings has just been launched.

As experience builds the website will grow with more tips and techniques

To access the Website click the box

[CLICK HERE](#)

You can also join the Facebook group, where you can find details of weekly Zoom drop in sessions for more help and support. To join click the box

[CLICK HERE](#)

[Are You Looking For Something Different?](#)

The Trust Board has now decided to fill all three vacancies on the Board for Regional Trustees, which includes the West Midlands Region. The mailing has just been issued to all u3as, inviting nominations is accessible by clicking the box

[CLICK HERE](#)

Let me know on allan.walmsley@u3a.org.uk or mobile 07713 511 941, if you want to know more. This is a great opportunity for anyone with a bit of time on their hands looking to get more involved in the u3a movement. It can also be a hugely rewarding experience interacting with like-minded u3a members and visiting u3as throughout the region.

ARE YOU A u3a CHAIR IN THE WEST MIDLANDS ? IF SO :-

Every Friday, I hold a “Fireside Chat”, a very informal Zoom session where Chairs exchange their news and views about u3a.

If you're a Chair and haven't come along yet, please email me and I'll send you an invitation. — Allan

If you want to contribute to one of our newsletters or if you'd like to know more about any of the items featured

OR if you just want to say hello, email

allan.walmsley@u3a.org.uk



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
