



Introduction from Iain Cassidy

Dear Friends,

The last month has been full of u3a activity. We celebrated *u3a week* at the end of September and, as ever, u3as took the event on with full enthusiasm. You can read some of the ways they celebrated further down this newsletter.

We held the *Third Age Trust AGM* last week. This annual meeting allows us to look back on our achievements from the last year and to look forward to where we, as a movement, want to be in the future. We officially welcomed Sheila Crawley into her new role as Vice Chair and I spoke about our new draft mission and vision for the Third Age Trust – a new strategy which will help us further support the u3a movement.

I ended the AGM by reading out a quote we recently received from Thanet u3a member Anne in response to this newsletter. It's easy to get caught up in what we're doing at u3a and to forget why we're doing it. Anne's message moved me as it reminded me of the very real difference that u3as are making to individual people's lives. Anne is just one member – but she represents many more who have found community and friendship in our movement. Thank you to all of you for your support of and involvement in u3a. Together, we are doing something that makes a real difference.

I also want to wish a very happy Diwali to all the u3a members who have been celebrating this week.

With very best wishes

Iain Cassidy

CEO of the Third Age Trust



u3a Week

In September, u3as across the movement celebrated *u3a week* with events which welcomed the community and enabled members to meet together. Chalfonts u3a marked the week with a game of walking cricket (pictured), Dereham u3a challenged its members to a quiz and

many more u3as held open days and public displays.

Danish Longball in London

South East London u3a play Danish Longball in the lovely surroundings of Greenwich Park. The game is a mix of rounders, cricket and dodgeball. Group leader Mary says, "This is a game for people wanting to have a laugh rather than to show off any remaining sporting prowess. We have players who trot a bit as well as those that can run, and players who try to whack the ball very hard as well as those who drop the bat and run."



South East London u3a are keen to play against other u3a groups – so if you're a u3a with a Danish Longball group, [get in touch](#).

friends events

Share your skills at u3a Festival 26

u3a Festival 26 is coming to the *University of York* from 1–3 July 2026, promising three inspiring days of learning, laughter, and connection. We're looking for members to lead workshops and sessions and we're especially keen to find performers and leaders for music workshops, along with speakers on both fun and more academic topics. If you have a talent to share or a talk to give, please get in touch at festival@u3a.org.uk

friends stories

Since joining u3a after the death of my fantastic husband, I have been given something each month to look forward to. It's helped me cope with grief. The coffee mornings and talks with very friendly company helps. Thanet u3a are a supportive and friendly group of people.

I am now looking forward to online events which are invaluable when I'm unable to go far.

Anne, Thanet u3a

What did you think of the Trust's AGM? Did you watch it live or will you wait for the recording on YouTube? Were the speeches and presentations interesting? Was there a good balance between the speeches and visuals? Did we answer your questions? Please let us know.

Considering that AGMs are not usually exciting, I thought it went very well. There have been a few favourable comments and very few technical issues, and at just over 2 hours long, it seemed about the right length.

Two of the most interesting long-term developments were mentioned at the AGM. One is that the Board is considering a new Vision and Mission for the Trust that could broaden the remit, and focuses on promoting, supporting and uniting the u3a movement. The second looks at how new technology can be better used to provide a seamless digital service to u3as. Both have a long way to go, so watch this space and watch out for the opportunities to comment as our thoughts develop.

friends learning

Photographing u3a members in action

Inspired by Mike Longhurst's photography initiative, *Still Got It*, which champions positive ageing, we are asking members to photograph activities that capture the vibrant spirit of u3a members. A selection of submitted photos will be featured in our online gallery. Find out more on [our learning pages](#).



Pictured: one of the photos from Mike Longhurst's Still Got It photography collection.

Virtual Visits

Our new learning activity encourages members to share the galleries, museums and gardens they visit, creating a collection online where members can explore the cultural world from their armchairs.

So if you visit a gallery, museum or garden, whether in the UK or abroad, share your photos and experience with us. Your record will be used to create simple presentations, and these can be shared across our community for inspiration, discussion and exploration for fellow members and interest groups. Find out more and get involved on [our learning pages](#).



Rocking out with u3a



Monmouth u3a member Jim had always loved guitar but never found like-minded people to play music with until a chance encounter at a u3a meeting.

I used to play six-string guitar in bands at school but I went off to college and never really clicked with people who liked the same music as me. And somehow life, and thinking I wasn't that good, got in the way of doing any kind of music.

I joined u3a when I saw an interesting Science and Technology talk advertised. That was the first group I attended. I had a *Hard Rock Cafe* T-shirt on and afterwards was approached by another member, Al, who asked if I played the guitar. I said, 'yeah, but badly'. He suggested a jam session.

Although we'd talked about getting together, we didn't quite manage it until a u3a email asking members who'd played instruments in the past to meet for a chat. As a result, some formed a jazz combo and five of us became the rock/blues group. The first jam session just worked and the rest is history. I now think, 'I don't really care now if people think I'm bad, let's just get out there and do it!'

Monmouth u3a is an exciting group. There is always lots on, whether you want to get fully involved in or just dip your toes in, as and when you want to. There's no pressure.

Picture taken by Monmouth u3a Marketing team.

Headline photos: Hurst, Hassocks & Ditchling u3a shared this photo on *Facebook* following a visit to a pumpkin patch; a postbox topper created by Lowestoft u3a to celebrate u3a week; Ravenshead u3a members at their open day.

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