



Introduction from Iain Cassidy

Dear friends,

There have been a lot of exciting conversations about the future this month.

I was part of an induction meeting with the new Council Representatives and Trustees, as well as attending the first Board meeting and the first Council meeting. It was great to get everyone together in one room and to discuss how Council Representatives will engage with u3as in their region, to ensure member voice is central to all we do. You can read more about this in Allan's piece, further down the newsletter.

I was invited to Wokingham u3a's 35th Anniversary this month. Not only was I able to meet loads of members, I got to watch close up magic and eat cake!

It's always great to see the impact u3as have on a community first hand. Another example of this is Wyre Forest u3a who have adopted Kidderminster Station. You can read more about their work further down this newsletter.

I'm writing to you all just before the Easter weekend begins – an opportunity to relax with family or friends or just to (hopefully) enjoy the sunshine.

Very best wishes

Iain Cassidy

CEO of the Third Age Trust



Meet the new u3a Council

The Council met for the first time this month. The new Council is made up of representatives from each region and their role is to be the voice of u3as.

To find out who your Council Representatives are, [visit the u3a website](#).

Wyre Forest u3a transform Kidderminster Station

Members of Wyre Forest u3a have been recognised for their work as adopters of Kidderminster station. They were shortlisted at the *Community Rail Partnership Awards* in the *It's Your Station* category.

The station adoption has been championed by member Sue. She says, "We were amazed and exceedingly proud to see that we had been shortlisted and especially placed in the GOLD category of *It's Your Station*. It certainly made all of our efforts worthwhile that we had been recognised after a very long road to get our projects underway."

Together, the team have created a 'bug hotel' to attract wildlife, planted a herb garden from which commuters can pick herbs for dinner, transformed a long bank at the station into a well-cared for woodland and refurbished an old boat into a planter with a sign highlighting Kidderminster's connection with its twin town, Husum.



Pictured: Wyre Forest u3a member Sue (wearing a yellow jacket), who has spearheaded the project, along with representatives from various train companies.



Coventry u3a open their doors

A recent open day at Coventry u3a was a resounding success, with twelve new members signed up on the day. The event showcased the range of activities available at Coventry u3a and attendees could take part in a glass painting workshop.

Pippa, Secretary for Coventry u3a, says, "members new and old shared coffee and biscuits. About 40 people had a go at the glass painting at various times through the event and produced some lovely pieces to take home."

friends news

... from Chair, Allan Walmsley

We are up and running! The new governance arrangements have finally become effective from 1 April, and already there has been an informal meeting of the new Board with a first formal meeting scheduled for 14 May.

The first meeting of the new u3a Council has also taken place this month, with Regional Council Representatives excitedly meeting face to face for the first time.

The first meeting was all about set up arrangements, how the Council and Board will work together, and how representatives will communicate with u3as. I explained at that meeting that representatives are at the beginning of a new adventure, and they have a great opportunity to shape the new Council to meet the needs of u3as.

The Board has appointed Sue Russell as the Council Chair and her message to the Council members was about great opportunities to work together and make real progress.

friends learning

Learning more about wildlife

We are delighted to introduce the new Wildlife Subject Adviser, Peter, who leads a group at Duns and District u3a.

Speaking of where his interest first began, Peter explains, "My passion for wildlife was stimulated by a school field trip to the Welsh coastal town of Solva, which included a boat trip to the Islands of Skomer and the Gannet colony on Grassholme.

Although my career took a different turn, into technology, I never lost my love of wildlife, especially everything that flies. I regularly monitor the moths in our area and am an active member of *Butterfly Conservation* and *RSPB*."

As Subject Adviser, Peter can provide support and advice for existing u3a wildlife groups or u3as looking to set up a new group. Find out more on [Peter's Subject Advice page](#).

Picture taken by Peter.



friends events

Save the date: u3a week

Every year, we celebrate u3a week, an opportunity for your u3a to showcase fun and learning. This year, it is taking place between 20-28 September 2025.

Get inspiration for how to celebrate on [the u3a week page](#) and keep us posted with your plans by emailing u3aweek@u3a.org.uk.

A booming sport at Beeston u3a



Malcolm (pictured above, centre, wearing a red shirt) started a pickleball group at Beeston u3a which has transformed his social life.

I was first introduced to Pickleball on a visit to Boston to see my brother. As an ex-tennis player, this wetted my appetite to get back on the court.

Once home in Beeston, I could not find a club, despite enquiring at sports facilities in the area. By chance I saw an advertisement for an open day held by Beeston u3a. I went along and expressed my frustration to the Tennis groups. I was accepted with open arms after explaining my enthusiasm for Pickleball. The Group Coordinator at the time was very enthusiastic and I agreed to be the Facilitator for a new group.

With the excellent help from the committee, we started the group at the beginning of January 2024. Initially, we had 6-8 interested players and together we learned the rules and played twice a week.

The growth in our first year has been beyond my expectations. We now have four groups playing every week. We recently had our first anniversary party attended by most of our 56 members (pictured above).

The personal satisfaction from joining u3a and the excellent cooperation from the committee has been amazing. From having only close family friends before joining u3a, I now have at least 60 new friends, all enjoying a healthy sporting lifestyle. The camaraderie is indescribable.

u3a has given me a new lease of life at the tender age of 82!

u3a
156 Blackfriars Road
London, UK
SE1 8EN

Contact u3a Office
Tel: 020 8466 6139
Email: info@u3a.org.uk
u3a.org.uk

 facebook.com/u3auk

Headline photos: Easter baskets created by Weston Turville u3a's craft group; members of Wyre Forest u3a working on a planter at Kidderminster station; this month Lymm & Thelwall u3a's Fun with Flowers group created flower arrangements inspired by simnel cakes.