



Introduction from Iain Cassidy

Dear Friends,

I hope you had a wonderful summer and are all set to try something new this month as part of our u3a week celebrations. Do share your u3a week stories with us or join one of our online events.

We're pleased to share the findings of our member survey: *u3a and me*. Designed with u3as in mind, the report highlights the powerful impact of u3a on members wellbeing, social connection and quality of life. We also have some suggestions on how your u3a might want to share the findings locally.

It's not long now until our AGM on Wednesday 14 October. Open to all, we've shared details below on how you can book your place to attend the event, either in-person or online.

We also have several vacancies for Trust Volunteer roles. Maybe a new thing you could try this year is one of these roles, helping us support u3as from across the movement.

With very best wishes

Iain Cassidy

CEO of the Third Age Trust

Join us for the AGM

This year's AGM is on **Wednesday 14 October at 11am**. We'll be sharing updates on our new marketing approach and our plans to deliver the new strategy for the Trust. If you're on a u3a committee, make sure your u3a has registered in advance to either proxy your vote or be ready to vote on the day. Full details are on our website at: u3a.org.uk/AGM.

Headline photos: York's Chocolate Story, one of the locations of the u3a getaways tours; members of Winchcombe Area u3a taking a summer evening walk; members of Guildford u3a attending the DIY solutions group

from the Trust

u3a and me, our new report

The u3a and me research project explored the difference u3a makes to members' lives. The findings are very positive: 95% of respondents say u3a has improved their life in some way, while 90% say u3a gives them opportunities to keep learning and stay curious.

We've shared the report [on our website in the Impact section](#) where you can also find a set of resources we've developed for u3as who would welcome support in marketing their u3a locally.



friends events

Expand your horizons this u3a week

This year u3a week runs from 19–27 September and we've been encouraging everyone to try something new just for fun! [Do let us know what you try by emailing communications@u3a.org.uk](#). We'd love to feature as many members as possible on our social channels throughout the week.

Plus, there's still time to sign-up for one of our u3a week online events:

- Monday 21 September – *Secrets of the human brain: Sleep and dreams*
- Tuesday 22 September – *The Enchanted Archipelago – a journey through the Galapagos with HX*
- Thursday 24 September – *Promoting brain health: from evidence to action*
- Friday 25 September – *Live cookery demonstration – try something new*

Visit [the u3a week page](#) on our website to book your place.

Run the TCS London Marathon as part of Team u3a

Could you, or someone you know, take on this iconic race? We have charity places for the *TCS London Marathon* on Sunday 25 April 2027. Open to members plus your family and friends, applications close 19 October. [Apply now on our fundraising page](#) and let us know your connection to u3a and your fundraising plan.

Book a u3a getaway

This November, why not join our *Yorkshire Festive Treats* getaway, that gives members the opportunity to experience one of Britain's biggest Christmas markets plus York's rich confectionery heritage.

You can also plan ahead, as the Tours for 2027 are taking bookings. Learn about aviation heritage in March, explore *Dartmoor Zoo* in April and experience expert-led wine tasting in May. Each trip offers learning opportunities and a chance to meet u3a members from across the UK.

Have a browse and reserve your place at: theukholidaygroup.com/u3agetaways.



Pictured: York's Chocolate Story, one of the locations members will visit on the tour.

friends news

from Council Chair, Sue Russell

With the Summer coming to an end, I am returning to my u3a groups with enthusiasm. I was recently invited to visit the Southeast Region Summer School and enjoyed chatting with people and hearing about the groups they belong to in their u3as. There is such a wide variety of options available; Local History through to Robotics and AI.

A common problem is encouraging people to lead a group. Several factors come into play such as how much work does it involve, do you have to be an expert? What seems to be missing is the knowledge that leading a group can be great fun, and no, you don't need to be an expert, just willing to have a go.

This year, the Council is looking at ways to reduce the workload for group leaders, such as utilising AI to help with the administration. We're also gathering ideas on how to encourage the cautious, so members know they can have a great time.

How do you encourage new group leaders and show that you value and support current ones? Let me have your thoughts. Email me at sue.russell@u3a.org.uk

from the members

Furry friends and friendship

Roding Valley u3a's Dog Walking Group is about more than taking their canine friends out and about for daily exercise. As group leader Maureen explains, "The dogs may have been the starting point but our group is about companionship, conversation, learning, laughter and enjoying life together."



Members who may never have crossed paths in ordinary life have become friends through this group. Every Thursday gives us something to look forward to; a new walk, a new conversation, a new piece of knowledge, and, most importantly, the company of people who genuinely care about each other".

Award winning Chiltern u3a

Chiltern u3a was delighted to be recognised by Amersham Town Council in its 2026 Awards as the community's 'Health & Wellbeing' Champion.

In presenting the Award, Mayor Simon Woodhead highlighted the health and social benefits for local residents participating in u3a activities. Mayor Woodhead also recognised the contribution, commitment and dedication of more than 200 volunteers who enable Chiltern u3a to thrive.



Introducing u3a Rewind

Share your memories of the music and youth cultures that shaped your younger years in our new learning activity. What songs got you dancing? Who did you see live? What did you wear and who inspired your style? Help us to create a unique collection of u3a members experiences for everybody to reminisce and enjoy. [Submit your stories and photos at u3a.org.uk/u3a-rewind](https://u3a.org.uk/u3a-rewind), and suggest a song for the u3a rewind playlist.

Join our celebration event

We would love as many members as possible to join us on Friday 16 October for this year's Essay Competition online awards ceremony! This years theme was *The most incredible journey*. Find out live which essay has won the top spot, out of 140+ entries, and celebrate the writing talents of u3a members. The event starts at 2pm. [Sign up via the Online learning events page on our website.](#)

Trust Volunteer opportunities

Could you be our next **Yoga or World History Subject Adviser** or join a team helping users make the most of the features in Beacon, the membership management system for u3as. Many Trust Volunteer roles can be covered with as little as an hour a week. Your time will help support members from across the u3a movement. [Read about the roles on our Volunteering for u3a webpage.](#)

Workshops to support u3as

This Autumn our workshops series includes *Finance matters* on 8 October and our updated EDI workshop, *Making your u3a a welcoming space for everyone*, on 29 September. [To find out more please visit the Workshops page in the Members area of the website.](#)

Bringing something new to Guildford u3a



Paul and Jan set up a new DIY solutions group soon after joining u3a, sharing their valuable skills with others.

Having to take early retirement, my wife was looking for something meaningful I could still be involved in, somewhere to share my knowledge and experience. A friend suggested u3a.

The group we imagined didn't exist so we approached the u3a with our idea. We started with advice on putting together a basic tool kit. Then we moved on to a drilling session – for most a very daunting task. By the end of the second session we were drilling and using battery screwdrivers. Much fun was had by all, what an achievement!

The majority of our group are new to DIY so we start each session by learning how to safely and confidently use the tools. We've worked together to install a grab rail, use a Tenon saw and have plans to demonstrate tiling and grouting.

Hopefully others will be inspired to start new groups like we did. It's a great way to pass on your knowledge and experiences, at the same time meeting new people along the way.

Pictured above, from left to right, Brenda, Duncan, Paul (standing), Alicia and Sylvia.

Do you have a u3a story to share? We love hearing what our members discover and learn through u3a, so get in touch to feature in a future newsletter. Email us: communications@u3a.org.uk.

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