

Hello all, and welcome to our Autumn 2025 Newsletter

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From The Chair

Hello everyone

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the newsletter. I hope you've had a great Summer. The weather has certainly been remarkable, although keen gardeners may have seen it differently! This newsletter ushers in Autumn and the new u3a year. It has plenty of updates on what has been going on, and what is planned for the first term.

In July we launched our new online application system, and I hope that members have found the experience a positive one. Inevitably, we had to make accommodations for some, and there were a few who struggled to get to grips with Beacon and online payment. However, it was a largely successful transition, and thanks go to Alan Pickering, Horace Letchford and Jayne Twomey who comprised the project team, and provided excellent guidance and support. Next year it should be even smoother and trouble free.

We hope that most people have been able to get on the course(s) they wanted, although we are aware that some are oversubscribed. Our plan is to find new convenors or group leaders in the popular areas during the course of the coming year. We have been trying hard this Summer to raise the profile of our u3a, and we have a number of new programmes on offer. Inevitably, the marketing draws more people to the courses that are well subscribed to, so we have had some challenges in offering everyone what they want. Such is our dilemma. However, we have retained

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our commitment to giving existing members the chance to renew their membership, ahead of new applicants, and recognised the importance of the social dimension of the groups.

As we look forward to the new year, we are always looking for new volunteers to help on the committee. As you know, we have a largely new team from last year, who I hope will be staying on, but we do want some more people to lighten the load for them. We are all volunteers and there is a lot to do to ensure that your u3a operates efficiently and effectively. Please get in touch with me if you would like to lend a hand in any capacity.

So can I finish by extending a big thank you to all the Committee and the Convenors, for the commitment and hard work they have put in to make Wimborne u3a such a successful operation.

Have a great 2025/2026 and enjoy your membership to the full.

Ashley Rowlands

Group news

There are several new groups starting this year, but we've also said goodbye to the Book Club and to one of our walking groups.

- **German** Having thought that the group would fold, we have had some interest so John Brassington has agreed to run his German group once again. We know that several members were disappointed that it was not originally in this year's programme. There are still places available however, so please contact John or Horace Letchford if you would like to join. The group will run on Tuesdays in the Liberal Hall starting at 10:00. John's email is: johnbrassington@hotmail.com
- **Jazz – 'The Sound of Surprise'** Convenor Vic Grayson. Every 2nd Monday, 2:00–4:00, beginning 6 October at the Convenor's house in Rowlands Hill (parking for 3 cars only). The course is planned, but it is very flexible and adaptable. The first session will be very important. As well as learning something about ourselves and about jazz, I hope we'll have a little fun as well. Wait and see ...
- **Politics – The Long View.** Fortnightly starting Thursday 2 October, 3:00–5.00. Wimborne Family Hub, Gordon Road off Leigh Road adjacent to Wimborne Rugby Club. Convenor Ashley Rowlands. This course is full for this year.
- **Tai Chi** – new beginners group. Due to to great demand, we have been able to put on an additional group. There are still places available. If you would like a place in the group please e-mail Horace Letchford, Membership Secretary.
- **World Religions** – Convenor Mark Healey (01202 849006), Venue: Annexe at Allendale House, Hanham Road, Wimborne BH21 1AS. This course is full for this year.
- **iPads and Phones don't bite!** – Convenor Dave Evans – Fortnightly, starting 2nd Thursday of term; 11:30–1:30. This course is intended for those who have just acquired an iPad or iPhone and want to learn how to use it effectively.
- **Pickleball** – introduced on a trial during last year, this has been very popular addition. In fact so popular that we have filled two groups and there is a waiting list.
- **Mindfulness** – this was also piloted during last year, and has also been very popular, such that we have filled two groups and there is a waiting list.

Also: a note from Sue Williams who runs the **Classical Music** group and has spaces available. The group meets once or twice a month in each other's homes and members take it in turns to present a 'concert' of music (often loosely based on a theme). They're a friendly bunch and enjoy discussing music, so do go along for a taster session if you're thinking of joining.

There are quite a few other groups with spaces, so have a browse through the list on the website to see if something takes your fancy. Remember if you've paid your dues it's all free.

u3a Talks

Janice Deane is putting on a series of talks again this year. The Autumn series is as follows:

Privacy, press freedom and the public's right to know

On October 24th come and discover what the Press can say about you as award-winning journalist and editor Ian Murray brings over 45 years of experience in the UK media to a compelling talk on the delicate balance between public interest and personal privacy. Expect insights into high-profile cases—from Sir Cliff Richard to Phillip Schofield—and the ongoing battle to keep private lives out of the headlines.

The world of auctions

On November 21st antiques lovers will not want to miss as Senior valuer and auctioneer at Dukes of Dorchester, Michael Roberts, as he shares his expert knowledge of the antiques market, drawing on nearly two decades of experience across the UK. Attendees are invited to bring small items for ad-hoc valuations and enjoy a lively Q&A session.

The birth of British pop music

On December 12th, presenters Jacqueline and Brian Sutton celebrate the legacy of pioneering sound engineer and record producer Joe Meek, whose influence shaped hits like "Telstar" and the legendary Tea Chest Tapes. This feel-good presentation promises toe-tapping tunes and a heart-warming trip down memory lane.

All talks are taking place at the Wesley Hall, Methodist Church, King Street in Wimborne at 10:00 for a 10:30 start.

No booking required. Only £2 for u3a members and £4 for non-members if you want to bring a friend. Please support them if you can.

Our Summer Publicity Campaign

Over the Summer we've been trying to raise the profile of u3a through a few initiatives:

- **Leaflets** – hopefully you have had sight of the u3a leaflet that we have been displaying around the town and outlying areas. This is a general awareness-raising leaflet encouraging people to go to our website and access the Programme. We're also just distributing a special leaflet for the u3a talks that are taking place this term. If you haven't seen the general leaflet and you'd like a copy please contact the Chair; if you can think of somewhere local to you which might hold a few copies for people to see, again, please contact the Chair.
- **Advertising and press releases in the print media** – We have used a local PR person to help us contact all the local papers, including the Echo, to provide information about us and again direct people to the website or to the Membership Secretary. There have been two stages to this, one in July and one in September. Your Chair has also been interviewed on Radio Wimborne and Forest FM.
- **Library 'drop-ins'** – Committee members held successful visits to three local libraries – Wimborne, Colehill and Corfe Mullen – during July and August. The library staff were very welcoming and helpful. Visits to our table and display by interested members of the public varied depending on the time of day but were mainly complimentary and encouraging.

We will be doing a full evaluation of the campaign and the relative merits and effectiveness of each of these activities.



Upcoming meetings

There are a number of meetings planned for the Autumn.

Apart from a Christmas Convenors meeting, we are holding a new Members' coffee morning **at The Reef Community Centre, Colehill Lane, adjacent to St Michaels School** on October 7th at 10:30. The meeting will be hosted by the Chair, Ashley Rowlands, the Treasurer, Jayne Twomey and the Membership Secretary, Horace Letchford. We'll be able to explain more about u3a and hopefully answer all your questions.

The AGM is a main event of the term. This year we have decided to postpone it until November, to ensure we can present, and get ratified, our new constitution. This is a requirement from the Third Age Trust who are our parent body. Our previous constitution was no longer fit for purpose and required updating. The AGM will be taking place on **November 1st at 10:00 for 10.30 in the Wesley Room at the Wimborne Methodist Church, 4A King Street**. We do hope you will come along to get an update on our work. We need to be quorate in order to approve the constitution and elect the Committee, so we need to be sure of a good turnout.

Before the AGM, the committee will be meeting on October 17th to review the year and plan for the next and beyond. Before that meeting we would love to have your thoughts on what you think is working well, but also your thoughts on how we could improve and maybe do things better. Please contact Ashley by email: chair@wimborneu3a.org.uk. While we, as a committee, try to keep our proverbial ears to the ground, we need your help to get the full picture.

Obituary (from the Third Age Trust)

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the death of Eric Midwinter, one of the visionary co-founders of the u3a movement in the UK.

Eric, alongside Peter Laslett and Michael Young, established University of the Third Age in 1982 with the belief that later life should be a time of continued learning, connection, and contribution. Eric's commitment to challenging negative stereotypes of ageing, and to creating spaces for older adults to share skills, knowledge, and friendship, has shaped the lives of hundreds of thousands of u3a members over four decades.

Eric's vision has flourished over the years and we know that his legacy will continue to inspire new generations to embrace lifelong learning and positive ageing.

We extend our deepest sympathies to Eric's family and friends at this time.

You can watch a conversation between Eric and Liz Thackray about the movement, recorded in 2022 for our 40th Anniversary, on our YouTube Channel.

Best wishes,
Iain Cassidy
CEO of the Third Age Trust

