

AUTUMN 2026



COMMITTEE

Chair – Julian Kern

Phil Cook – Business Secretary

Sarah Hewlett – Membership Secretary

Claire Watkins - Treasurer

Chriss Pickles – Groups Organiser, IT Manager (Beacon and Web)

Joan Anderson – Press & Publicity officer

Valerie Noble – Coffee Social Coordinator

Jane Beesley – Welfare Officer

Ann Baines – Data Protection and Policies Officer

June Slater – Newsletter Editor

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Member

I have now started my second year as Chairman for Woodspring U3a.

I was a little disappointed with the turnout at the AGM in May. It was, however, the start of what seems to have been a non-stop series of heatwaves, so you may have been avoiding the heat. The AGM was quick, but we announced two new committee posts; Data Protection and Policies officer and Welfare Officer. Both posts have subsequently been filled, and I am grateful to Ann Baines and Jane Beesley for putting themselves forward. Your treasurer, Claire detailed the healthy state of our accounts and reminded groups that the grant scheme remains open. Next year we propose to hold the AGM at a different venue to reflect the different communities in which our members live.

Following the formal proceedings of the meeting, our guest speaker Chris Yeo recounted stories from his time on the Antiques Roadshow and shared his opinion and professional valuations of the items brought in by members. No priceless finds unfortunately.

During the summer we once again visited the Penny Brohn Centre for a delicious cream tea and a talk from their volunteer gardening staff who maintain the beautiful grounds of the centre.

Woodspring U3a is still thriving, adding new members and increasing our activities. We are planning our first subsidised day trip by coach and there are more details in this newsletter

Don't forget your groups can still apply for a grant towards appropriate activities (see below). Claire will be pleased to hear from you.

Best Wishes
Julian

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

I thought that in this edition it might be helpful to let you know about some of your Woodspring u3a membership benefits. As a charity, we are not allowed to build up profits, therefore we are investing some of your membership fees back into supporting our membership and our aims.

Coffee Socials

Our monthly coffee socials rotate round Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead, where most of our members live. For the remainder of this year, we are pleased to pay for your first coffee/tea from our funds. You just need to order them at the counter, and the venue will bill us. If you would like cake or biscuits and the venue offers them, then please purchase these yourself. We will review this at our January Committee meeting and hopefully be able to continue. We are also hoping to try out some new venues. There is always at least one committee member attending, and you can sit anywhere (if you don't know anyone then we will introduce you). If you would like to help with "Meet and Greet" at the door, please get in touch. People who are hoping to join u3a, or new to u3a, also find these social events very enjoyable as our members are so welcoming to them.

The next Coffee Socials are:

- Monday 21st September at Scotch Horn Leisure Centre, 2-3.30 pm
- Tuesday 27th October at The Refectory, Portishead from 10-11.30 am. This is a new venue for us and is opposite Wetherspoons (where we used to meet)
- November TBA

Social events

We have been able to subsidise two visits to the Penny Brohn Centre in Pill for a garden tour and afternoon tea. Both events have been well attended. I went this year, it was very enjoyable afternoon, they made us very welcome, and the garden guides were excellent.

Our Treasurer, Claire, has organized a coach trip for the first time, again subsidised from our funds. The visit to Shrewsbury includes a river trip and afternoon tea. This has proved very popular and all the seats on the bus were quickly reserved. If successful we hope to be able to arrange more outings in the future.

Grants for Interest Groups

Group leaders can apply for financial grants to further their cause (although sadly not for a purely social event!). To date we have awarded grants to the recorder group for sheet music, to the astronomy groups for a telescope, to the quiz groups for a microphone, to a book group towards the cost of a visit to a Literary Festival, and to the guitar group for music stands. You can apply at any time, and the application will be discussed at the following committee meeting. Further information and an application form is at the back of this newsletter

Sarah Hewlett, Membership Secretary. s.hewlett103@gmail.com

INTEREST GROUPS NEWS

Welcome to our late summer newsletter. I'm sorry the group update had to be omitted from the Spring newsletter, so to make up for the lack of information I've asked group leaders to let me have

any update they would like to have published for their groups - not limited to whether or not there are vacancies! If you have any general queries, please email me at chrisspickles@email.com

Book Bugs Reading Group

Bryan has asked that we publicise some changes. The group now meets at the Old Inn in Clevedon on the second Monday of the month at 10:30. We read modern, contemporary fiction, those books that are top of the best sellers in Richard and Judy's world. We ask for group suggestions - we do have vacancies so get in touch if you're interested brynhatch17@gmail.com

Discovering Interesting Women 1

We currently have 3 vacancies in our group. We have been meeting for about 7 years in each other's homes and over the years have come across so many fascinating women, who until they are brought to our attention we had never heard of. Of course, we also look at the lives and achievements of many well-known women too. Recent 'Interesting Women' we have researched are: Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Pamela Harrison, Florence Price and Ada Lovelace. Do look them up if you have never heard of them - they all led fascinating lives. Corrie Ten Boon is our subject for July. We meet in the morning of the fourth Tuesday of the month. Do contact me if you would like to join us - Jennifer Day j.m.day@talk21.com or 07900 964496.

Discovering Interesting Women 2

We are a very friendly group who meet on the first Tuesday of the month, from 2-4pm in members houses where possible. We take turns to present an "Interesting woman" who we have researched. We then discuss things arising from the presentation. We usually do 2 Women at each meeting, so you don't need to feel you have to talk for a long time. Please email me if you would like to join us or even just try us out debsjt@aol.com

Greek Conversation

This group has now been suspended because of other commitments, but if you feel you have sufficient experience of the language and would like to help the group reconvene, please get in touch

Historical Reading Group 1

This group now has vacancies. We have now changed to be a more general reading group with a historical bias. Most books are borrowed using the library scheme for book groups giving extended loans. Occasionally, to allow us to read books that the library has only a small number or copies, we combine library and digital books.

Meetings are in members home, once a month on Wednesday morning. A sociable morning.

More details from Diane Bennett

dbknit@blueyonder.co.uk

Lunch Group 2

Lunch Group 2 would welcome some new members. We usually meet on a Monday or Tuesday, generally in Nailsea because there seem to be few options elsewhere. Not everyone can make every lunch - we all like our holidays! We have some members who are 'singletons' but we are not a singles group, just some people who like to meet up for a nice lunch and a chat approximately once a month. Contact junevslater@live.co.uk

U3a Philosophy Group

I would like to start a philosophy group

When: 3rd Tuesday afternoon from 2pm to 4pm

Meeting at: 11 Valley Road Portishead BS20 8JU

Book: A C Grayling. The Meaning of Things - Applying Philosophy to Life

If interested please contact : heatherwestonuk@aol.com

'Possetiamo' Italian Conversation Group

We are a recently formed group who meet every 2nd and 4th week a month in Portishead to try and improve our Italian. We all have a little knowledge, some more than others, and no teacher. Therefore, we support each other in our efforts, we have a theme for each meeting, so we have some time to prepare, and there is laughter as we are a very friendly group.

There are usually six of us, sometimes fewer if we are on holiday or have other commitments. We would welcome any new members who would like to practise with us. If you're interested, please contact Val valwilko1@gmail.com

Quiz Group 2

Last year, my brother-in-law, Andy Clarke, husband, Simon, and I joined U3A. We were all keen to join the quiz group. We found the group was already full to capacity, with a lengthy waiting list although we were lucky to join a couple of the quizzes when there were temporary places. We decided we would research starting a second quiz group if there was sufficient interest, and an available venue. Therefore, after several meetings and much advice and support from Chriss Pickles and Phil Cook we held our first quiz in May. We meet on the first Thursday of the month in The Consti, Clevedon between 2 pm and 4 pm. Andy, Simon and I take turns in setting and presenting the quiz questions every month. Coffee and biscuits are served halfway through the quiz which gives people a chance to chat and get to know one another. Quiz questions are carefully kept secret from each other in the lead up to the quiz, so we can take turns in joining the groups, usually tables of 4 or 5. The quizzes are designed for all abilities (or none!) and meant as a fun, social opportunity not to be taken too seriously and maybe to learn new facts. We welcome new members. If you're interested contact Carolinestannard10@gmail.com

Recorder Group

From member Sal: Sue (our leader) had asked that I write a short piece for the U3A newsletter about joining the recorder group: Having retired at the beginning of February 2026, I have been a regular attendee at the Woodspring U3A Recorder Group ever since. We meet on the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month and play a range of music from classic Tudor-style pieces through to 80's pop songs and everything in-between. Everyone has made me feel very welcome. We all try our best. If we make a mistake, no-one minds. We are looking for a few new members to join our happy group. If you can read music and have played any recorder in the past, we would love to see you. I hadn't played since school, but it's reassuring how the muscle-memory kicks in. Playing is also good for our well-being, mental health, lung capacity, and general dexterity. If you're interested, please contact Sue on suerudge654@hotmail.com

Rummikub

If you have ever wondered what Rummikub is all about, why not come along and find out. The group does have one or two vacancies and new members are always very welcome. But what is it you may ask? Rummikub is the classic tile game that blends strategy, luck, and quick thinking — and it's perfect for players of all ages! Is Rummikub good for your brain I am sometimes asked. It is a game that feels relaxed but is secretly doing a lot for your brain. It can sharpen problem solving, sequencing and pattern recognition skills. It can also boost memory and strategic thinking. For more information please contact me Pat Sandy, email : redcote@hotmail.co.uk. Thank you.

Sea Shanties

This successful group is in its 3rd year now and amassed lyrics for approximately 30 sea shanties to sing. We sing them for fun and without musical knowledge or instrumentation. We always welcome new members and to this end we will have a "taster" session on Tuesday 15th September. We meet 2-4pm at the Community Hub, No. 65 High Street, Nailsea. If you're interested in joining or even just having a taster session, please contact Tony on tonytublin@aol.com

Sunday Lunch Club

The Lunch Group meets monthly, usually on the third Sunday of the month. It is always a treat to taste the food that our local pubs and inns offer. We are a cheerful small group. We always enjoy our chats and each other's company on a Sunday. More members, singles or couples, will be made very welcome. For more information, please contact Marianne Ryman on 01275 852521 or email: marianneryman@gmail.com

U3a Literature Group

The u3a Literature Group meets on the first Thursday of the month, 2pm at 65 High Street Nailsea. We are a friendly group consisting of about 18 members, not all of whom are able to attend each time, so we average about 10 members per meeting. The books are chosen by the members and this session we have read books by Jonathan Coe; Robert Harris and Elizabeth Taylor amongst others. For our session beginning in September, we will be reading books by Hilary Mantel, Isabel Allende and Kazuo Ishiguro amongst others so you can see we cover a wide range of genres. Presently the group is full but there is no one on the waiting list as I always try to accommodate new members and fit them in as quickly as possible. Please contact me at janebaggley@hotmail.co.uk

Any queries? Contact me directly

Chriss Pickles
Groups Organiser
01275 878927
chrisspickles@email.com

WOODSPRING U3A GRANT SCHEME

Your Woodspring u3a Committee is pleased to be able to offer groups the opportunity to apply for a grant towards a special event or activity, in line with the group's aims. This might be a visit to an exhibition, or a site of particular interest to the group. It might enable the group to invite an expert to speak or to collaborate with another u3a group. Each group is free to choose what they want to do provided that it is in line with their stated aims, it should not simply fund a social event!

Grants will be for a maximum of £25 per participating group member, up to a total of £500. Groups may also make their own contribution towards the total cost. At their discretion, the group may open the event to other Woodspring u3a members. For insurance reasons non-members may not participate.

Grants may be paid prior to the event, if needed, but only if final costings can be provided and there is confirmation that the event will go ahead. Where the grant has been paid, but the event is cancelled, the grant must be repaid. Applications should be submitted via email to treasurer.woodspring@icloud.com for consideration at the next committee meeting. Any queries should be addressed to treasurer.woodspring@icloud.com

The Committee hopes that groups will enjoy taking advantage of this opportunity but please be aware that funds are limited.

An application form is on the next page



Grant Application

Name of Group

Group Leader

Contact email.....

Amount Requested £.....

A brief description of the proposed event/activity (no more than 200 words) and an estimated itemised budget (attach supplementary pages if necessary):