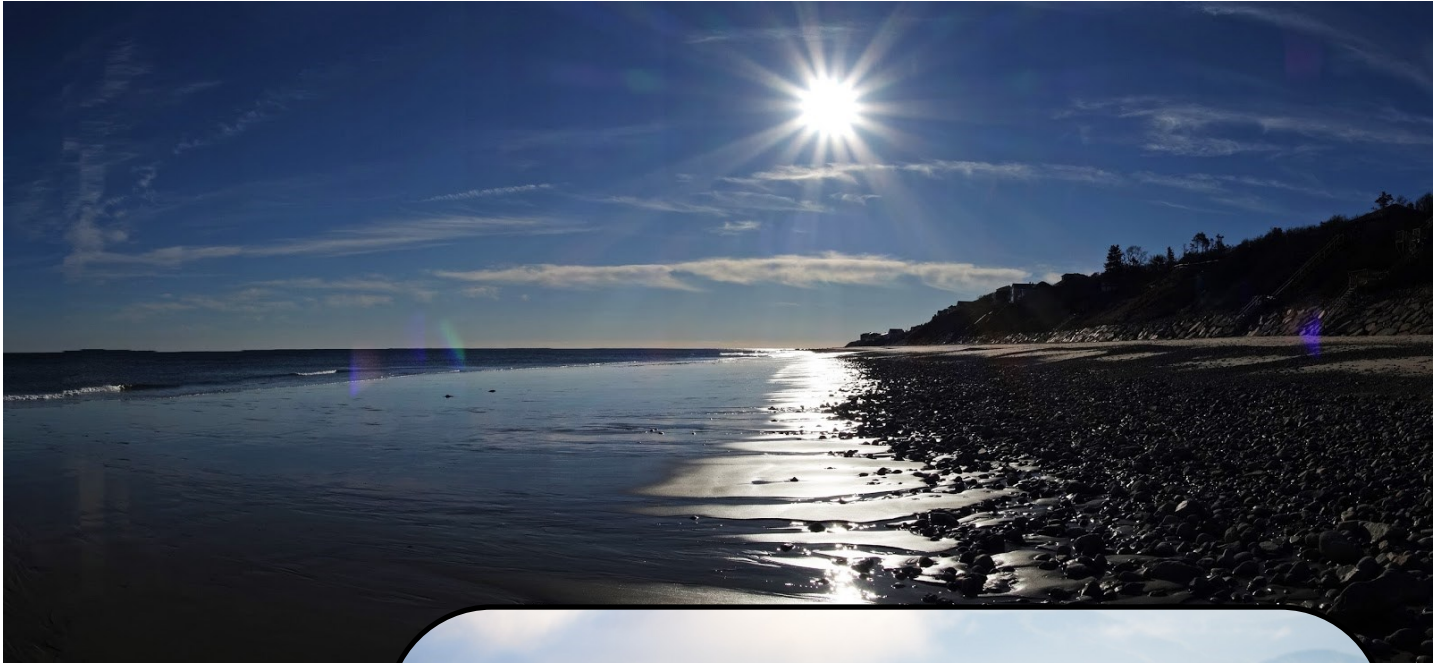


learn, laugh, live



Chair's Hello

Well, it looks like being another scorching summer and while it is lovely to see the sunshine it is a bit dispiriting to see the plants wilting, to bring the fans out of the attic, to swelter even in the evenings and to start another water ban. I do hope I'm not being too pessimistic!

Even though it's holiday season, Swindon u3a has a lot going on during this summer and autumn so keep an eye open for events, meetings, and information.

We've just completed monthly Monday events for the academic year with a super Summer Party. Thanks to all who attended and those who contributed; our Singing Group, our Maypole Dancers, our Quizmaster, and our Poetry Appreciation Group. We will be resuming our regular Monthly meetings in the autumn so keep an eye open for those.

We have held a number of publicity events during the summer including having our exhibition stand at the RWB market day, the Duck Race, the Lydiard Park Steam Rally, and the Hub in the Town Centre. Yet to come are another RWB event and a stall at Wroughton Carnival. Many thanks to the Publicity Team and all those who offered to do a shift on the stalls. Our next major Publicity event, however, is our Open Day on the 2nd September. Please put the date in your diary and tell others who might be interested in learning more about Swindon u3a.

Our Groups Co-ordinator Linda Young has now organised a series of meetings in June and early July for Group Organisers to explain more fully the way our new IT and costing system will work from September. The Committee has decided on a Membership Fee for next year of £10 – a substantial reduction on the current fee to reflect that there will be fewer central costs in the new system. Each group will be paying for their own costs shared amongst the members of the group. For most this will be the cost of the venue per meeting x the number of meetings per year ÷ by the number of members in the group. Group Organisers will be given full details at the meetings.

We are delighted to welcome a new General Secretary, Monica King, to the Committee. Many, many thanks to Monica for stepping forward and thanks to Chris Ockwell for temporarily filling the post while we had a vacancy. We remain in need of further Committee members so please consider if you could volunteer.

In the meantime, I look forward to a successful new start to the 2023-24 year. We continue to raise the profile of Swindon u3a in the community and continue to attract new members and interest in forming new groups. Enjoy the summer and return refreshed and ready to Learn, Laugh and Live with Swindon u3a.

Summer Party

Our Swindon u3a Summer Party went with a swing on the 12th June. We had a full programme of fun activities all contributed by our own members and groups – singing, poetry, quizzing and maypole dancing. Many thanks to all the wonderful members who took part and particularly all those who helped to organise the event making it a reflection of the true spirit of u3a.

Gill



Swindon u3a Financial Model 2023-24

You will all be aware by now that for the academic year starting in September, we will be operating the new financial model which we have been planning and working towards for the last 2 years. In preparation:

Linda Young, our Groups Co-ordinator and Vice-Chair, has organised 4 sessions to meet with Group Organisers to explain fully the implications of this for their groups and how the system will operate. Your GO will share this information with you, to ensure that everyone is aware of what is happening. One of the advantages of the new system is that it is transparent – everyone will know what their group/s cost to run and will only be paying for the running of their own groups. At the same time central costs will reduce substantially as the Committee will only be paying for the very basic costs of running the u3a (insurance, u3a Trust membership, banking charges etc). I am outlining here the general features of the new system.

The Office Team is undergoing training to ensure the collection of membership fees and other costs is as smooth as possible.

- The new Swindon u3a **Membership subscription will be £10 per year.** Members will be informed as to the procedure for payment.
- **Members can renew their subscriptions from Monday 7th August onwards.**
- **Members of each group will pay for the cost of running their group** – costs for most groups will consist of the cost of the venue used, shared amongst the members
- Relatively **simple calculations** will give a weekly/termly/annual cost per member i.e. hourly cost of the venue x number of hours used (per term/per year) ÷ number of members in the group.

Venue cost are all accessible to GOs on the website and are kept up-to-date by Chris Ockwell, our Venues Manager. The hourly costs of the venues used by groups varies widely from zero (free venues, those groups meeting in members' homes or not needing paid for venues such as walking groups) to £30+ per hour (a large sports hall). The majority fall between about £9 and £14 per hour.

Linda's GO sessions will give GOs the more detailed information as to method of payment.

Gill Brain

Introducing..

The Third Age Trust suggests that any u3a organisation needs at least 20% of its members to be actively involved in running it. For a group our size that means 300 people. This includes rolls such as Group Organiser, Minutes Secretary, Committee Member and Trustee. Key areas such as Finance, I.T., Office Administration, Asset Management, Venues, Refreshments, Publicity, Events, Newsletter and Data Protection all need people who are willing to share some time and expertise.

To help everyone better understand what goes on behind the scenes, we hope to have a Newsletter feature each month explaining the various different roles that members undertake in order to keep things running.

I am starting the ball rolling this month with an explanation of what my role as Membership Liaison Secretary involves. Other Committee members will be outlining their roles in the coming months.

Who knows – if you are not already involved in one of these activities, you might even decide you'd like to join in!

Jill Kelly

Jill Kelly: Membership Liaison Secretary

A key part of my role is to welcome new members. If you have joined us in the last 2 years, you will have received an e-mail from me soon after you enrolled along with a link to the Welcome Booklet which aims to give useful information to newcomers. The booklet is also available to all members via a link on the website Homepage.



So far, I have been involved in organising two New Members' meetings. These provided an opportunity for people to meet some of the Trustees, learn more about u3a and how it works, whilst getting to know other new members. The next New Members' Meeting is in the calendar for Saturday 25th November when I hope to meet with many of you who have joined us in more recent times.

I attend a meeting with the other Trustees once a month. The agenda can vary depending on the time of year but there is always plenty to discuss!

Meeting and working with other members is an important part of the role. The Publicity Team has recently developed new promotional materials. We now have a newly designed leaflet, business card and posters which we are using to raise the awareness of u3a in the local community and to encourage people to attend Open Day on September 2nd. Taking a turn on publicity stalls in recent months has allowed me to meet with other volunteers who have been willing to come along and spread the word. It is also an opportunity to talk to prospective new members and to gauge the level of awareness of u3a in the community.

Supporting the Events Team, who are working hard to re-establish a programme of activities post-pandemic, is another way I get to meet people. For many members, monthly meetings and social events such as the Christmas and Summer parties are part of the offering which makes u3a more than simply an association of activity groups.

Volunteering and shared responsibility are at the heart of u3a culture. We have already trialled an informal volunteers 'meet for coffee' session and have plans for another one soon. We have established an annual 'Volunteers' Event' as part of the calendar with the next one planned for the morning of 21st October .

Setting up and working with Focus Groups in the last 2 years has proved to be a powerful and effective way of finding out what members think about a range of issues. We plan to run more of these in the Autumn and I hope people will consider taking part.

Of all the Committee roles I think mine is the most fun! If anyone is thinking they might be interested in working with me on some of these activities, I'd love to hear from you. You can contact me via the Office.

Jill Kelly

Information Update – at a glance!

Membership Subscription for 2023-24 year is £10.00.

You can renew your membership from **Monday 7th August** onwards.

Payment by cash or cheque will not be accepted. Please pay by bank transfer or bank card. You can phone the Office (01793 614629) or call in person (Gorse Hill Community Centre). Payment terminals will also be available at Open Day and subsequently at monthly meetings.

Swindon u3a bank details will be put on the web-site.

The Office will be **closed in July**.

The Swindon u3a Newsletter will not be posted out from September 2023 onwards. A few paper copies will be made available at Monthly meetings and at the Office. Those still receiving paper copies will be contacted personally to discuss their needs.

There will be no monthly meetings in July and August. Monthly meetings will resume in September with speakers, jigsaw and book swaps.

As you know we are moving to a new Information Management system from August 2023 and your member data will be transferred to this new system. If you have any concerns or queries about this please contact :

itsupport@swindonu3a.org.uk

Swindon u3a Job Vacancies - Volunteers required to help

Please consider if you can help us with one of the roles outlined below. The more people who can help with tasks, the less work there is for any one person. If you need further information or an informal chat please click on the relevant email link.

Home Page manager (ASAP)

Creative person/s to keep the Swindon u3a Home Page and related pages clear, interesting and up-to-date. This would include uploading images, publicity about events and talks, and other content provided by u3a members. Some website design experience would be helpful but is not essential.

Contact **Linda Young**: vice_chair@swindonu3a.org.uk

Email template manager (ASAP)

Person/s to edit and manage the email templates for the new Swindon u3a system, creating, amending or deleting the current 55 templates as necessary. Good written English skills and experience of clear, succinct communication required. Experience of mail merge would be useful.

Contact **Dave Todd**: itsupport@swindonu3a.org.uk

Google Application Support (ASAP)

Person/s to help and manage the rollout and subsequent support of Google's Gmail, Meet (Zoom) and Drive accounts for Swindon u3a, using the u3a Google Workspace Portal. This would suit an organised person who is comfortable with the use of technology. Experience of IT support would be useful. Contact **Dave**

Todd: itsupport@swindonu3a.org.uk

Management Information Analyst (from September)

Person/s to produce monthly and ad hoc reports from data exported from the u3a system. Reasonable Excel (license supplied) skills required.

Contact **Dave Todd**: itsupport@swindonu3a.org.uk

Office Volunteer x 2 (from August)

Two people to join the friendly Office Volunteer Team to support members with queries and payments. The person would join a rota to attend the office one morning a week and/or to attend the monthly meeting. Experience with Excel is highly desirable.

Contact **Sylvia Alexander**: office.manager@swindonu3a.org.uk

Life in a Poem - submitted by Lesley Basu

Although included in an anthology of poetry for children, this poem reminded me of the echo chamber of social media that now surrounds us all with its never ending advice on how to live our lives !

Becky Hemsley lives in Leicestershire, with her family. A primary school teacher for 15 years, she is now an educational consultant, supporting schools in their teaching of early reading and writing. She has written three collections of poetry.

Breathe by Becky Hemsley

She sat at the back and they said she was shy,
She led from the front and they hated her pride,
They asked her advice and then questioned her guidance,
They branded her loud, then were shocked by her silence,

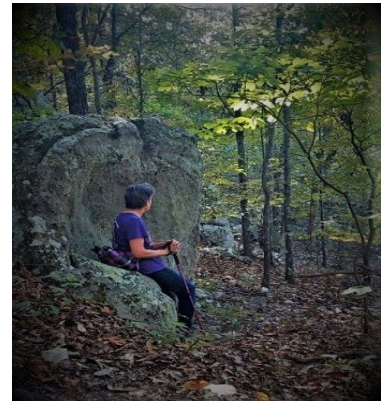
When she shared no ambition they said it was sad,
So she told them her dreams and they said she was mad,
They told her they'd listen, then covered their ears,
And gave her a hug while they laughed at her fears,

And she listened to all of it thinking she should,
Be the girl they told her to be best as she could,
But one day she asked what was best for herself,
Instead of trying to please everyone else,

So she walked to the forest and stood with the trees,
She heard the wind whisper and dance with the leaves,
She spoke to the willow, the elm and the pine,
And she told them what she'd been told time after time,

She told them she felt she was never enough,
She was either too little or far far too much,
Too loud or too quiet, too fierce or too weak,
Too wise or too foolish, too bold or too meek,

Then she found a small clearing surrounded by firs,
And she stopped...and she heard what the trees said to her,
And she sat there for hours not wanting to leave,
For the forest said nothing, it just let her breathe.



Travel Study Group J
Visit to the National Memorial Arboretum
Thursday 12th October 2023

The Arboretum is home to over 400 thought provoking memorials each with a story to be discovered.

The memorials are diverse in nature, rich in symbolism and represent a broad population of society, from military associations and charities to the emergency services.

Each new year memorials are added so there is always something new to see.

The Arboretum welcomes over 300,000 visitors to the site each year. Visitors can enjoy discovering the memorials nestled amongst some 25,000 trees, enjoy riverside walks or take a land train or buggy tour of the site.

A range of homemade tasty meals and snacks along with freshly prepared hot and chilled beverages are available in the on-site restaurant and coffee shop.

Pick Ups:

- 08.15 The Crown RWB
- 08.30 Ellendune Centre Wroughton
- 08.40 Coate Water, Bus Stop
- 15.30 Depart for Swindon

Cost: £20 pp which includes coach and drivers gratuity, admission to the memorial is free.

Contact [Ken Ivie](#) by clicking or tapping on his name.



List of Email Addresses

Chair	Gill Brain	chair@swindonu3a.org.uk
Vice Chair	Linda Young	vice_chair@swindonu3a.org.uk
All members of committee		committee@swindonu3a.org.uk
Accommodation	Chris Ockwell	accommodation@swindonu3a.org.uk
Data Protection	Sharon Finch	dpo@swindonu3a.org.uk
General enquiries		office@swindonu3a.org.uk
Groups' Coordinator	Linda Young	group.coord@swindonu3a.org.uk
Health & Safety		secretary@swindonu3a.org.uk
Membership Liaison Secretary	Jill Kelly	membership@swindonu3a.org.uk
Newsletter contributions		newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk
Office manager	Sylvia Alexander	office.manager@swindonu3a.org.uk
Office administration		office@swindonu3a.org.uk
Secretary	Chris Ockwell	secretary@swindonu3a.org.uk
Speaker organiser (Monthly Meetings)	Sue Cook	speaker.organiser@swindonu3a.org.uk
Treasurer	Andrew Hancox	treasurer@swindonu3a.org.uk
Treasury Team for Accommodation Banking Visits		treasuryteam@swindonu3a.org.uk
Web Manager	Dave Todd	itsupport@swindonu3a.org.uk

Office

Swindon u3a Office, Gorse Hill Community Centre, Chapel Street, Swindon, SN2 8DA
(entry is by middle door on right hand side of building)

Hours: Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 10am until 12 noon

Telephone: 01793 614629

(Answerphone operates when the office is closed)

Email: office@swindonu3a.org.uk

Web: www.swindonu3a.org.uk

Charity Number 298853

Copy Dates

Items for the Newsletter must be received by the Editor
by the 18th of the preceding month

All contributions must be sent to the Editor using the Newsletter
contributions e-mail address:

newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk

Geoff Bryan

The Editor reserves the right to amend or abbreviate any entries submitted.
We should also like to point out that any views expressed are not necessarily those of the
organisation or of the Editor.