

u3a

Shepton Mallet News

March 2023

inside

FROM THE CHAIR

WHAT'S ON

Speaker meeting

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Come and join us

GROUP NEWS

MEMBERS CORNER

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL NEWS

USEFUL LINKS

cover – Janet Sherwin

U3a is a UK wide collection of over 1000 charities that provide the opportunity for those no longer in full-time work to come together and learn for fun. Explore new ideas, skills and interests with your local Shepton Mallet u3a.

FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members,

Snowdrops over, daffodils dancing – it must be spring! Birds are nest-building and many of us are thinking about our own nests – a bit of decorating or renovating, maybe even moving? I'd like to pass on to you what I learned from a recent u3a Zoom seminar on housing called "**Homes for our Future**". Many people reach retirement age or a few years more and want to downsize, but find it's not so easy as there is a shortage of suitable homes. So they stay in a house which is too big and too expensive to maintain, not to mention heat!

There are 11 million over 65s in England now, the vast majority homeowners. The best time to move is between the ages of 65 and 75, as after that it becomes harder to make a wise decision and health may well have declined. The process of de-cluttering becomes more difficult the longer you leave it, and it's best to start this as early as possible.



We all know about the blocks of **flats** built by firms such as McCarthy & Stone, where you buy the flat and pay charges for maintenance, sharing some facilities and a garden. Many people like this idea, but there are other options. One is co-housing, where the housing and age-groups are mixed, with a community garden but some private space. This is much more common abroad than here but there are some schemes.

Some people can **adapt their home** to later life by making a bed-sitting room and bathroom downstairs, maybe creating a flat upstairs. Often an attached garage can be converted. Some people instal a stairlift or mini-lift when stairs become a problem.

There are also **retirement villages** such as the setting for Richard Osman's novel, "The Thursday Murder Club", where everyone has a flat and there are facilities for recreation, with a care home on site. These tend to be on the expensive side! Another option for older people is **ownership shared** with a housing association such as Peabody. If you own 75% you don't pay rent on the rest as normally happens with shared ownership. There's a government scheme called OPSO (older person's shared ownership). For those needing help with daily life, there is **sheltered housing**, where some sort of help is on site, and **extra care sheltered housing** where it is provided at a higher level.

If you Google “extra care housing in Somerset” you will find a list, though none of them are in Wells or Shepton Mallet. There are some in Frome and Street though. Another idea is to **home-share** a house, either with someone in your own age group or younger, in which case they could give you help and support in lieu of rent. You would need to draw up a contract to avoid problems with this but it can be a great solution. Apparently, GPs can make referrals for this sort of set-up. The great thing is, start thinking and talking about this early. Don't wait until your situation becomes really difficult. Do some research, involve family members, go and visit some of the possibilities. And get on with that de-cluttering!

Janet Sherwin

Shepton Mallet u3a Speaker Meetings

From 10.00am til 12.00 at the Salvation Army Hall. A cuppa, friendly company and an hour or so of discovery. Entrance is £2 members, £3 non-members, includes refreshments. Other Thursdays SMu3a coffee morning – from 10:30am in Dobbies Café.

Thursday 2nd March 2023 –

We welcome speakers from Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance to tell us about the critical care work that they do across the counties and about Pegasus, their AgustaWestland 169 (AW169) helicopter.

In April there is a General Knowledge Quiz (with a prize) and further speaker events for the year include Skydiving stories, the RNLI, Local history and the International Space Station!

Thursday 2nd February 2023– Nature as your Neighbour with Higgy



February's Speaker meeting with Higgy gave lots of tips and advice for developing a garden to encourage wildlife in. A bath found in a skip becomes a pond and an old tray a bird bath. For those of us with less than tidy outdoor spaces we left feeling proud that our log piles and long grass provide a natural habitat for overwintering bugs, bees and insects...maybe Hedgehogs and even Grass snakes too!

March Meeting



Helpers are needed to help with serving the refreshments occasionally!
Please come forward if you can boil a kettle or open biscuit packets!

Thank you to all who help, YOU are appreciated.

NSA conference 24th March



Everyone's invited to this exciting event in Wells Town Hall on Friday 24th March. NSA is the network of 10 u3a groups in north Somerset, including Wells, Shepton Mallet, Norton Radstock, Burnham, Weston-super-Mare, Winscombe and Castle Cary. The event only costs £5 for the whole day, including tea/coffee and lunch, (a bar will be available if you fancy a glass of wine or lemonade with your lunch) so it's extremely good value!

Sam Mauger, CEO The Third Age Trust

The purpose of the conference is to give members a better insight into what goes on at national u3a, plus a chance to make our own views known. After all, £4 of your annual subscription goes to the national office! In the afternoon we will be hearing from two local experts about wildlife in Somerset and the possible effects here of climate change.

This is a rare chance to look beyond our own u3a group and meet members of other groups as well as a few of those who actually run the main organisation! The programme starts at 9.50am and concludes at around 4.30pm, and breaks for a buffet lunch at 12.30

Outings

Friday 17th March – Winchester

Winchester is the county town of Hampshire with its world-famous cathedral, excellent shops, the Great Hall where you can see King Arthur's Round Table, and a good market. We'll leave by minibus from Dobbies at 9.30 and be back by 6pm. Again, lunch can be booked if people want it. This trip will cost £22 each. Very informative website:

www.visitwinchester.co.uk

Please let Janet Sherwin know as soon as possible if you would like join us.

The Skittles Lunch in January was enjoyed by 14 members, lots of enthusiasm, matched with skill and luck for some, made a fun game! Sadly, it was our last visit to the Poachers Pocket as the pub closed at the end of January. Hopefully someone will be found to take it on. Skittles lunch has now found a new home at the Horse and Jockey in Binegar. Watch this space!

Sherborne – 21st February

Twelve members, including four from Wells u3a, had a great day out in Sherborne. We loved the magnificent abbey, dating back to the 8th century although mainly 15th century. Some visited the small but interesting museum, most found a bargain or two in the many classy charity shops, and our lunch at the George Inn was very good. We finished up at the excellent garden centre for tea etc. We even had some sunshine! All agreed that a summer visit when the castle is open would be a good idea, maybe including the artisan market which is on once a month.

Janet Sherwin



The Sherborne shufflers

GROUP ACTIVITIES

The table below represents the usual meeting dates for groups. The actual dates may vary. Coffee mornings every Thursday at Dobbies, except when there is a Speaker Meeting on the first Thursday of the month.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Monday	Walking	Discussion 10.30am Art 2-4pm	Walking Woolcraft 2pm	Art 2-4pm
Tuesday	Book Group 10.30am Photography 2pm Bridge 2pm Table Tennis 2pm	Collectables 10.30am Table Tennis 2pm Bridge 2pm Needlecraft 2pm	Bridge 2pm Table Tennis 2pm	Table Tennis 2pm Bridge 2pm Needlecraft 2pm
Wednesday	French conversation 10am Short Tennis 4-5pm	Play-reading 10.00am Short Tennis 4-5pm	French conversation 10am Short Tennis 4-5pm	Short Tennis 4-5pm
Thursday	Speaker Meeting 10.30am	Coffee 10.30am Scrabble 2pm	Shorter Walks Coffee 10.30am Strollers 1.30pm	Coffee 10.30am Scrabble 2pm
Friday	Table Tennis 2pm	Table Tennis 2pm	Munch Club Table Tennis 2pm	Singing for Pleasure 10.30-12 Table Tennis 2pm

Contact group leaders below for more information and confirmation of dates.

Art	Jane Burman Graham Cooper
Book group	Janis Thomson
Bridge	Joan Bennett
Classic Car Appreciation	Jonathan Fowle
Collectables	Liz Nash
Cricket	Jonathan
Appreciation Discussion	Fowle Harry Thomson
French	Jane
Conversation	Burman
Munch Club	Maggie Hardy
Needlecraft	Liz Weeks
Outings	Janet Sherwin
Photography	John Law
Play-reading	Janet Sherwin
Scrabble, Cards/Board Games	Joan Bennett
Singing for Pleasure	Val Sherring Jane Burman
Shorter Walks	Jenny Wehrfritz
Short Tennis	Eric Wehrfritz
Solos	Janet Murray
Strollers	Josh Hartley
Table Tennis	Mike Burr
1 and 2 Walking	Liz Weeks
Woolcraft	Pam Mitchell

Insurance reminder

Members of Shepton Mallet u3a are reminded that the Trust arranges Third Party Liability and Product Liability Insurance on behalf of the affiliated u3as. The cost of this is included in the annual subscription fee that SMu3a pays to the Trust. It should be noted that there is no personal accident insurance included in this arrangement. Members of SMu3a join in activities at their own risk and, should they feel they wish to be covered for personal accidents or personal property, it is necessary for them to make their own private arrangements.

GROUP NEWS

Longer Walks

Kilmersdon 6th February

14 of us headed off from Kilmersdon village hall carpark on a 6 mile walk around Babbington House area. It was a glorious winter's morning, with frost on the ground and mist in the valleys. A little nippy but dry. From Kilmersdon we took the footpath across several fields and up through the woods to emerge in bright sunlight at an old entrance gate pictured below. Shortly we arrived at Babbington House where we admired the lovely grounds and snowdrops. We continued by road and track, crossed the old railway cycle path and circled back round to the house across the fields from the opposite direction. We followed the path down past the old stable yard (now very exclusive apartments – unfortunately none available tonight!). After crossing numerous fields, we came back down the hill into Kilmersdon. The promised mudbath near the end didn't disappoint, and we had ample evidence on our muddy boots that we'd done a winter walk! A change of footwear then 10 of us enjoyed a hearty lunch at The Joliffe Arms pub in the village.

Pete & Gill





A hardy group of eleven managed (just!) a 6.7 mile walk **around West Pennard and Lower Westholme**, on a rather grey morning. Apart from a challenging climb at the start it was mostly flat, with one horribly muddy stretch. The highlight was suddenly coming on the view looking down onto West Pennard church, across to the Mendips and towards the coast, but it was too misty for a good photo. This one was taken from the top of Pennard Hill, on the recce previously – you can just see the Tor in the distance.

Shorter Walk group

Frome 16th February

The short walk group walk on Thursday 16th February was just under 3 miles and started in Frome, walking along the river up out of Frome to cross a couple of fields and down to the lovely small hamlet of Spring Gardens. We then crossed a Quarry railway line to go through a small wood, which opened up on to 2 walks by the river on our return journey back to the car park in Frome. Coffee and cake awaited us in the pleasant Cheese and Grain cafe. Thankfully the weather stayed fine for us.

Maggie Cooke



Writers Wanted

Dear members

My name is *Una McKillen*. I have just joined the Shepton Mallet branch of u3a, having previously been a member of the Frome Branch. Whilst in Frome, I attended meetings of the writing group. I enjoyed both the meetings and the writing (mostly). I understand that currently there is no writing group here in Shepton and wondered whether there was any interest among members in starting one up.

As a possible starting point, I should like to welcome anyone who is interested into my home here in Shepton to talk, over tea, coffee and biscuits, about what this new group might look like. If there is an appetite for taking it further, we can go from there.

If you think this might be for you, could you please contact Kevin Hoole, the u3a news editor.

note from editor

This would be for everyone, not just those with a doctorate in creative writing. Dyslexia doesn't mean you haven't got a good story to tell, and if you're nervous about joining a creative writing group then you've probably got a lot to contribute.

Maggie's Quiz

1. Which Roman God is the God of Beginnings and Endings?
2. What is the capital of Indonesia?
3. Who founded the "In Harmony" music education programme?
4. Which nonsense poem is found by Alice?
5. The berries of which tree have been used as diuretic, an antiseptic and treatment for autoimmune disorders amongst others.
6. Who was Children's Laureate from 2005 – 2007?

See page 12 for answers

Come and join us

No longer working full-time? Children grown up? Join your local **u3a** to meet new people and explore a wide variety of interests. Make the most of life for annual membership of only £12

Contact

Janet Sherwin 01749 344627

or email info@sheptonmalletu3a.org.uk

or just come along to this month's Speaker Meeting (see What's On section).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chair	Janet Sherwin
Vice Chair	Jeanette Marsh
Secretary	Carole Mullender
Treasurer	Jane Burman
Groups Coordinator	Jeannette Marsh
Membership Secretary	Keith Taylor
News Editor	Kevin Hoole
Outings	Janet Sherwin
Publicity	<i>Vacant</i>
Speaker Secretary	Jane Morrison
Website/Beacon	Keith Taylor
Committee Member	Janet Murray
Committee Member	Liz Nash

HELP NEEDED!

Our Secretary, Carole, has to undergo a course of medical treatment and will not be able to take minutes or prepare agendas for the next few committee meetings. Is there anyone out there who could fill in for a few months? You would become a temporary committee member.

Please let Carole or Janet know. We'd be very grateful!

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL NEWS

NSA conference 24th March, Wells Town Hall (see inside).

USEFUL LINKS

www.u3a.org.uk

Shepton Mallet u3a local website

www.sheptonmalletu3a.org.uk

Answers to Maggie's Quiz

1. Janus 2. Jakarta 3. Julian Lloyd Webber 4. Jabberwocky 5. Juniper 6. Jacqueline Wilson

Interested in u3a?

If you think that u3a might be for you, please contact *Janet Sherwin* on 01749 344627, sherwinj@outlook.com, or just come along to our monthly speaker meeting at the Salvation Army hall.

Thank you to all our contributors this month. Please send items for the next u3a News (by 20th) to the editor.