

## Newsletter – July 2026



Dear Members

Wow, how is it July already? Half the year has gone!!

Whether you are relaxing in the garden, thinking about watering next door's plants or looking after grandchildren, please take a few minutes to read through this newsletter and catch up with what is happening with your u3a.

*And let us hope that we get a break from this really hot weather soon!!*

Kind regards

Sue

Chair

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### New Vice Chair

I am pleased to advise that we now have a new Vice Chair within our Committee – Mary Rutherford.

This position has been vacant since I was promoted a few years ago and I am really pleased to welcome Mary to this role.

Members who live in Harlington will know Mary from her many years as Harlington Parish Clerk but for those of you who don't know her, I will introduce Mary to you at our July Open Meeting.

If you wish to contact Mary, or any other members of the Committee, you can do so via the link on the Governance page on our website.

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## **Meet and Eat – Wednesday 29 July 2026**

Our July 'Meet & Eat' is on Wednesday 26th July at **The Halfway House, Dunstable at 12 noon.**

Irene will be taking bookings and menu choices at the Open Meeting on Monday 20 July. If you are not due to attend the meeting, please contact Irene with your menu choice to reserve your place.

Irene can be contacted on tele 07757 019996, and at [irenek.kirkpatrick@gmail.com](mailto:irenek.kirkpatrick@gmail.com)

Remember to keep an eye on our website for future 'Meet and Eats'.

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## **Poppy Knitting – Thursday 10 September**

Many of you will be aware that one of our Members, Pat Chittleburgh, is an avid 'Poppy Knitter' and you may have bought one or more from her over the past few years. This year we have decided to give Pat a hand to increase her stock and we are holding a Poppy Knitting session on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> September at Toddington Village Hall.



Pat will provide the wool and, if after checking your collection of knitting needles, you find that you don't have the preferred size, which is 4mm (or size 8), we will provide them. Just let us know when you [add your name to the list at the Open Meeting on 20 July.](#)

If you not a knitter, please come along, I am sure that there will be other Members who will be happy to help you. And if you are a slow knitter, then you will be welcome to take your poppies home to complete at your own pace (or even knit a few more).

We have booked the lounge from 2.00 to 4.30 pm and, as with all of these 'extra events', this is a free event for Members and there will of course be cake.

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## **London Walks**

Following on from the success of our London Walk in April, Tony Price is intending to lead another walk in the city for members in September.

More details will follow as soon as we have a date.

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## Calling out to all of the gents within our u3a

Is there anything that you would be interested in trying or anyone that you would be interested in hearing from that would possibly better suit one of our extra events rather than one of our Open Meetings?

Our gentleman members make up 21% of our membership so it would be good if we could find something or someone that would appeal to you.

Obviously, we would not bar our lady members from getting involved, just like our gents are very welcome to come along to our Poppy Knitting session.

Have a think and let us know.

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## Further dates for your 2026 Calendar –

Please make sure that the following dates have been added to your calendar for the remainder of 2026 –

**Monday 20 July – Open Meeting – speaker Richard Stark – a night/day at the opera, with a chorus singalong**

**\*\*Monday 17 August – Open Meeting – speaker Dave Pinion – the heroic age of Antarctica exploration \*\* Please note that this Open Meeting will be held in Toddington Methodist Church Hall and entry will be free for all Members.**

**Thursday 10 September – Poppy Knitting – Toddington Village Hall – see page 2 for details**

**Monday 21 September – Open Meeting - speaker Debbie Litchfield – Emmaus – the charity working to end homelessness**

**Monday 19 October – Open Meeting – speaker Peter Barratt – Punch and Judy**

**Monday 16 November – Open Meeting – Peter Bacon – Tudor surgery**

**Monday 9 December – Christmas Meet and Eat, Cross Keys, Pulloxhill (ticketed event)**

**Monday 14 December – Christmas Party (ticketed event)**

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## Free entry for August Open Meeting

It was agreed at the July Committee Meeting that Members would not be charged the usual entry fee for our August Open Meeting.

This was partly due to the need for a change of venue for this meeting and also as recompense for the 'below par' speaker at our June Open Meeting.

The speaker concerned advertises his services on line and has written books about Chicksands Priory so there was no excuse for him to blame his lack of visual aids on a 'broken fire stick'.

We will make every effort to ensure that our future speakers come prepared.

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## A reminder of the Groups that are available to members

The majority of members will be aware of the Groups that are available to them, but for those who are relatively new to the u3a, have not visited our website recently or may not have had the opportunity to look at our display board that is available at each Open Meeting, here they are –

|                           |                           |                                                                                    |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Art Appreciation</b>   | <b>London Walks</b>       |  |
| <b>Book Group</b>         | <b>Meet and Eat</b>       |                                                                                    |
| <b>Bridge</b>             | <b>Music Appreciation</b> |                                                                                    |
| <b>Coach Trips</b>        | <b>Photography</b>        |                                                                                    |
| <b>Computer Support</b>   | <b>Play Reading</b>       |                                                                                    |
| <b>Craft Group</b>        | <b>Poetry</b>             |                                                                                    |
| <b>Cryptic Crosswords</b> | <b>Social History</b>     |                                                                                    |
| <b>Discussion Group</b>   | <b>Strollers</b>          |                                                                                    |
| <b>Family History</b>     | <b>Ukulele</b>            |                                                                                    |
|                           |                           |                                                                                    |

The three groups highlighted above are all relatively new and all would welcome some new support.

**Play Reading** takes place once a month in Toddington library. You do not need to be a member of equity or produce evidence of previous thespian experience; it is just a good opportunity to meet with fellow members and read aloud with a bit of expression. Please consider joining them at their next session on Friday 18 September, from 2.15 to 4.15.

**Social History** already has a programme of events taking this new group into the winter. Again, this is a monthly group, which meets on the second Friday and you can read what they have planned on our website.

Members who were at our June Open Meeting had a taste of our new **Ukulele** group when Caron, our Maestro, performed one of the pieces that we play. We meet every fortnight and our next musical 'get-together' will be on Tuesday 28 July. We would love to welcome a few new members

You can find details of all of our Group Leaders, the venues, frequency and times on our display board and also on our website – <https://toddington.u3asite.uk>

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### Toddington Village Fete – Saturday 20 June

Thanks to all members who came along to our stall say hello last month. The fete was very well attended and even a few members from other neighbouring u3a's came to see us.

My thanks to Noreen, who helped me to set up, to Shelia and Marie who manned the stall with me and to Geoff who helped with the dismantling. Your help was much appreciated.

Thank you also to those members who tried to guess the name of my sheep. The correct guess, Star, was made by one of our members grandchildren and, as a result of people's generosity, I have been able to send a donation of £50 to Keech Hospice.

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## **Coach Trip to Margate – Sunday 9th August 2026**

Irene has reserved a number of tickets for us on a Three Star coach trip to Margate on Sunday 9 August.

Margate is promoted as having a “*traditional holiday-town charm, a world-class art gallery, sandy beaches, a cool café culture and tempting retro shops*”. It sounds like it is definitely worth a visit.

The cost is £29 and the coach will leave Toddington Village Green at 7.40 am.

There are a few tickets left so please contact Irene if you would like to go (tele 07757 019996, [irenek.kirkpatrick@gmail.com](mailto:irenek.kirkpatrick@gmail.com) ).



Our thanks, as always, go to Irene for organising these trips for us, which is no ‘mean feat’

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## **U3a getaways**

The u3a have recently launched ‘Getaway with u3a’. As per the [u3a website \(https://www.justforgroups.com/u3a-getaways\)](https://www.justforgroups.com/u3a-getaways) this is “*an exclusive holiday programme for u3a members. These bespoke trips have been designed to create opportunities for members to come together from across the UK to learn, discover and explore*”.

All of the information regarding these ‘*exclusive experiences*’ is available on the website or by calling 01603 886773.

Some of them look quite interesting, although the one which features a trip to Duxford and Shuttleworth, with a hotel stay in Milton Keynes, may not immediately appeal to us.

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## **U3a national website**

And just a reminder that there is always something new available on the national u3a website here - <https://www.u3a.org.uk/>

There are lots of learning activities, competitions, puzzle and games.

Our subscriptions help pay to maintain this website so please make use of it.

## **Development in Toddington, have your say**

I have been asked to help publicise 2 meetings that are being held in the Wilkinson Hall on Wednesday 29 July regarding the outcome of the 'Call for Sites' consultation that was actioned by Central Bedfordshire Council.

The meetings are being held to inform residents about the outcome of the consultation and to highlight the potential impact on the village.

As well as sharing information, there will also be an opportunity for discussion.

The 2 meetings are being held from 5.30 pm to 6.30 pm and from 7.00 pm to 8.00 pm and you are invited to choose one session to attend.

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## **And finally - please remember - to keep us up to date with any change of address or phone number**

Have you moved house recently or have you changed your phone number or perhaps cancelled your landline? Or has your email address changed? If so please let us know so that we can update our records. If you don't give us this new information then you won't hear from us.

You can email Leo, our Membership Secretary – [Toddu3a.membership@gmail.com](mailto:Toddu3a.membership@gmail.com) – or via the link on our website

or advise him at our next Open Meeting.

Thank you

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