

NEWSLETTER – Quarter 1, 2022

First some good news. The committee has been considering future plans for our u3a. Our activities during the last two years or so have been dominated by the impact of Covid. It is always possible that another variant will rear its ugly head sooner or later, but as Covid-related restrictions have now gone, the time seemed right for us to look forward. Our plans are set out on pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter and I hope you will read them.

Related to this, we have arranged a get-together for the afternoon of 4 April. Details can be found on page 3.

I am also pleased to say our monthly meetings are returning to QMC. The last one had to move to Zoom to accommodate the speaker, but future ones should be at QMC as usual. If you are not online but plan to come to a meeting, I recommend you check with another member shortly beforehand, just to make sure there hasn't been any last-minute change to the arrangements. We don't want any of our members to have a wasted journey.

Now the not-so-good news. A few weeks ago I e-mailed all members a note entitled Succession Planning. I am sorry to report that, to date, there has been just ONE positive response to it. We simply **must** have more members coming forward offering to help before our AGM in July, or we may be faced with having to close. This would be tragic, as hundreds of people enjoy the benefits that our u3a offers, but no-one will run the u3a for us – we have to do this ourselves.

Committee and group leader roles are not onerous, and newcomers will be well supported. If you might be interested but are still unsure, you are welcome to come to our next committee meeting, starting at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, 14 April at Christ Church. Just let us know in advance to expect you please. Thank you.

Rod Marshall

Your committee

Rod Marshall	Chairman	basingstokeu3achair@gmail.com
Janet Field	Business Secretary	jrfield1975@gmail.com
Margaret Hayes	Groups Facilitator	basingstokeoldbasingu3agroups@gmail.com
Sue Seamour	Treasurer	sue.seamour@ntlworld.com
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Audrey Bird	Member	audrey.bird@gmail.com
Marie White	Co-opted member	
Supported by:		
Brenda Austin	Minutes secretary	

Please send any general enquiries to:
basingstokeu3aenquiries@gmail.com

Future plans for our u3a

Here is a reminder of what our Constitution says:

Our object is the advancement of education, and in particular the education of older people and those retired from full time work, by all means including associated activities conducive to learning and personal development in and around Basingstoke.

Membership numbers

Our current numbers are still well below what the membership peaked at a handful of years ago. At the time of writing we have 722 members, and the committee has set itself a target of 100 new members for 2022/23. Every year, there are some members who do not renew their membership, for various reasons. If the number of non-renewals this summer is around the level we would normally expect, this would mean we are targeting a membership in the region of 770 to 780 for next year.

Marketing

It is widely acknowledged amongst u3as that word of mouth is the most successful marketing method, and members would hardly be encouraging friends to join if they themselves did not value their u3a membership. We hope we can rely on the continued support of our members in bringing our u3a to the attention of friends who might be interested in what we have to offer.

We are getting frequent (and free!) mentions in various local papers and magazines. This has proved successful in bringing in new members and we want to maintain this.

The national u3a organisation is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, and as part of this there will be a "u3a week" in September.

The Basingstoke Voluntary Association (BVA) is planning a major day of community work celebrations on Saturday, 17 September. This will take place in the War Memorial park and will provide a family day of fun, rather like a fête. The event will be advertised all over the town.

As part of this, BVA plans to highlight 10 to 15 local voluntary groups. We have already contacted BVA and they will be pleased to have our u3a as one of these groups. We will be able to have tables or a stall to set out things which reflect our activities, so **please start to think about any groups with which you are involved that might help us to take as much advantage as possible of this one-off promotional opportunity.**

continued overleaf

Dates for your diary

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| Monday, 4 April | - a get-together at Lychpit Village Hall (see page 3) |
| Thursday, 7 April | - a South-East <i>Spring Gathering</i> on Zoom to celebrate the u3a's 40th birthday (see page 5) |
| Wednesday, 13 April | - monthly meeting at Central Studio, QMC (see page 4) |
| Wednesday, 11 May | - monthly meeting at Central Studio, QMC |
| Wednesday, 8 June | - a picnic in the park |
| Wednesday, 13 July | - our 2022 AGM, at Queen Mary's Hall, QMC |
| Saturday, 17 September | - shared anniversaries of u3a and BVA (see above) |
| Wednesday, 21 September | - <i>Meet and Greet</i> day, QMC |

Future plans for our u3a - continued

Groups

The following is taken from a national u3a paper:

“Research has shown that vibrant u3as have a ratio of one group for every ten members. If you have a higher ratio, e.g. one group for every 12 or more members, then you have fewer groups than is ideal. This is likely to lead to more groups becoming full. This is especially discouraging for new members who cannot join the groups that they’d like to.”

Our ratio is currently close to 12:1 and the final two sentences above do apply to us.

Two issues have been identified. First, how will our existing groups be placed to cope with any increase in numbers? Secondly, how can we increase the number of different groups that we offer?

Existing groups

Each group’s situation is different. With the help of our group convenors, we want to establish what that situation is for each group (some we know already). The issues that we need to consider include:

- Does the group already have a waiting list? If so, how can this best be addressed?
- At what point would an increase in numbers become problematic?
- Would a bigger venue, or the use of e.g. two rooms, be a suitable solution if numbers became too great?
- Would the group be “splittable” if numbers are too big? Would someone be willing to lead a second group, and could we find a venue for it?

New groups

Creating new groups is always appealing, as it improves the attractiveness of what we offer to our members. Quite a few new ones were established last year and have proved very successful, but we want to do better. **We therefore encourage more members to come forward with proposals for new groups.**

Rod Marshall

Get-together at Lychpit Village Hall

We are holding an open get-together from 2pm to 4pm on Monday, 4 April to which you are invited. Members of the committee, including the chairman, will be there to answer questions and listen to members’ views on how our u3a should move forward post-Covid. There will be lots of time to enjoy a cuppa and have a chat, but we hope members will take the opportunity to share their views.

As the Hall can accommodate a maximum of 90 people, **please let us know if you plan to attend** by sending an email to basingstokeu3achair@gmail.com (this is a new email address).

While anyone is welcome to attend, we appreciate that members living towards the west of Basingstoke have to travel some distance to get to Lychpit. So if the meeting is a success, we will organise another one as soon as is practicable somewhere in the Hatch Warren area.

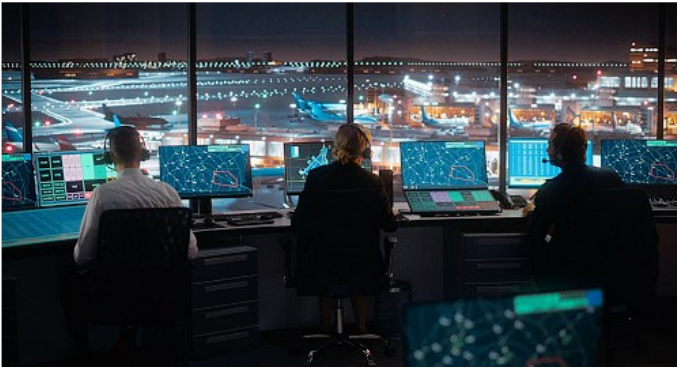
[Click here](#) to view a map showing the location of the Hall.

Monthly meetings

We are pleased to say that future monthly meetings should be at QMC. Both the April and May meetings will be held in Central Studio.

On Wednesday, 13 April we are looking forward to a high-flying talk by our guest speaker Phil Holt. The title of his talk is:

Keep calm – I'm an Air Traffic Controller



To the casual observer, looking up on a summer's day, you see the white contrails and perhaps get the inkling that there is a pattern. But who controls it? What are the systems and procedures?

Phil was an Air Traffic Controller for over 30 years, saying "I kept at it until I got it right"! He covers the history and development then brings us up to date. This humorous yet factual presentation should be fascinating, so stand by for take-off.

Linda Wain

Groups restarting

Walking football has now restarted on the astroturf at Everest Community Academy. If you're interested in playing, please email Richard Field at u3abasingstokewalkingfootball@gmail.com

Croquet will be restarting on Monday, 4 April.

Philosophy group

This group, which has been meeting via Zoom so far, has a new meeting time of 10:00 – 12:00 on the third Thursday of each month.

New members would be very welcome, and you can always join us for a single meeting to see if the sort of discussions we have would interest you.

The subject of our February meeting was the Colston Four. We discussed the rights and wrongs of them pulling down the statue in Bristol, and the subsequent trial in which they were acquitted, despite admitting they all played a part in the statue's removal during a Black Lives Matter protest in June 2020.

The topic for our March meeting was "free speech", which led to a wide-ranging discussion. Amongst other things, we touched on the Human Rights Act, hate speech, recent news in and from Russia and Ukraine, social media and the US Constitution.

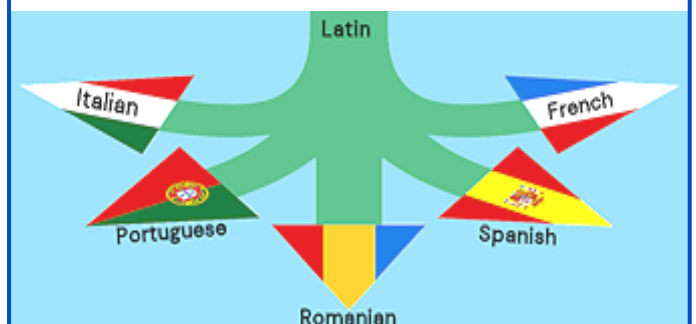
Barbara Robson

New Latin beginners group

The Latin beginners group will be carrying on next year, at Christ Church in Chineham. If there is enough interest, I would be happy to start a new beginners group in September, also at Chineham (assuming a room is available). One class would run from 13:15 to 14:15 and the other from 14:15 to 15:15.

We only have face to face meetings as the way I teach this subject is very hands-on, with games and things that might arise in a lesson and go off at a tangent.

Enid Holmes



Spring Gathering

Thursday 7 April 2022 at 9.30 a.m.
Happy 40th anniversary to the u3a
Celebrate with the South East Region

PROGRAMME

All timings are approximate. Please allow time to log in. Zoom opens at 9.15.

9.30 – 9.45 Introduction – Susie Berry, Trustee for the South East Region

9.45 – 10.45 Leigh Edward, Subject advisor for Science
Science in the 40 years, followed by Q and A

10.45 – 11.45 Clive Woodward, Professional actor
Poetry and anecdotes from the last 40 years

LUNCH BREAK

12.30 – 1.00 Breakout rooms

Topic to discuss:

What is your u3a doing to celebrate the 40th anniversary?
What other ideas do you have? (The more unusual the better)

1.00 – 1.15 Feedback from breakout rooms

1.15 – 2.15 Rodney Bucknell, subject advisor for Research
Research projects, followed by Q and A

2.15 – 2.30 Farewell and close – Susie Berry



Registration is free for u3a members. Please book electronically using this link:
www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/spring-gathering-tickets-268897147607

Eventbrite will send an acknowledgement immediately and the Zoom link a few days before the event. Please check your junk / spam box if you don't see these.

Closing date for registration is 6th April

Stay in touch by:

emailing basingstokeu3aenquiries@gmail.com

checking on our website at www.basingstokeu3a.org

joining in with us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/Basingstokeu3a

or, if you're not online, ring 07787 520281