

Woodley & District U3A – One Year On



Woodley & District U3A
1st Anniversary

Our very best wishes for the first Anniversary of Woodley & District U3A. And what a year it has been!

Following our inauguration meeting on 5 June, 2019, our membership rapidly grew to some 300 members and we now have some 50 groups run by dedicated and very much appreciated group convenors offering a wide variety of activities from Ballroom to Badminton, Cooking to Crafts, Spanish to Scrabble and lots more besides.

We have been fortunate to have had some excellent speakers at our monthly meetings, social meets at The Waterside, a picnic at Dinton, and very enjoyable social get-togethers at our quiz night at Sonning Golf Club, Christmas Extravaganza at Christ Church and Christmas Meal at Toby Carvery.

It has been a real pleasure for us to have been part of developing an organisation which has, from the many kind comments received and from our own observations, had such positive benefits for our members. However, since March the pandemic has led to millions of people worldwide being affected either physically and/or mentally, socially, financially and indeed through bereavement. This makes it all the more important that, where we can, we continue to support each other (at a distance!), continue to do things or to find new things that interest and absorb us, and to try to focus on the little things that make us happy. We are still unsure when we will be able to resume our full meeting status but envisage a situation where people will eventually be able to get together in small groups, indoors as well as outdoors, while continuing to meet 'virtually'.

In the meantime, we wish you well and will keep you updated on developments via our newsletter and the website which we recommend checking on a regular basis. I have made a number of additions to the website, which I have explained on Pages 4/5 of this newsletter. Please note that some of the category items are work in progress and those pages show under construction. These will shortly be completed.

Jane Wolsey, Webmaster & Newsletter Editor

Happy Anniversary everyone. Where did the last year go! In that time, I am truly delighted that we have achieved so much and a very special thanks has to go to the Committee and Group Convenors for all their hard work. Without them, and the enthusiasm and support of all our members, Woodley & District U3A could not have become the successful organisation that it is one year on. Our second year brings many challenges when we all have to look at new ways of doing things but can assure you that we will continue to do our best to build upon our successes!

Paul Atkins, Chairman

Update from the Chairman on Current Developments

Amidst lockdowns and knock on effects, I am delighted that Paula and so many Group conveners have been able to keep numerous groups running in a virtual way, and indeed starting some new ones!

Joining Online Meetings and Groups

As we have stated previously, because of the strange circumstances of this year, all members are still considered to be active whether or not they have paid their membership for the current year. ***Adjustments will be made for those members who have already paid when we are again able to open to our full extent.*** So please feel free to join any online meetings or groups if they have spaces.

Looking forward

We are advised by Government and the Third Age Trust that ***face to face meetings, for no more than 6 people, can take place outdoors in private gardens or other spaces. Two-metre Social Distancing Guidelines should be followed.***

We are also looking at the possibility of starting up some outdoor activities whilst conforming to Government and U3A Trust Advice.

When we are allowed to resume further U3A activities beyond those already permitted and taking place, we will send out an update advising the new situation and any restrictions.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

In the meantime, stay safe.

Best Wishes,

Paul Atkins

CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

Committee News

Michael Brenchley-Hole has taken over the role of Vice Chairman from Trudi Collis.

Many thanks to Trudi for all her work over this past year.

A warm welcome to **Tessa Dove** who has taken over the role of Business Secretary from **Michael Brenchley-Hole**. Many thanks to Michael for all your work as Business Secretary and we are very glad we are not losing you completely!

Our thanks to **Lucy Hughes** for all her work this year as Speaker's Secretary.

She has resigned her role due to other work commitments which means we now have a vacancy. If anyone is interested in taking up this role or seeks further information, please contact **Tessa Dove**, Business Secretary.

COMMITTEE

Group News

A number of our groups are continuing to meet virtually. Of these groups several would welcome new members namely - Afternoon Film Group, Photography, Discovering Science and Indoor Board Games.

If you think a group that you are a member of, could run virtually please contact Paula, the group co-ordinator, Groupsc@woodleyu3a.org.uk, to discuss the possibility. Offers to help support your convenor to get the group running on-line are very welcome.

Our virtual visit group had two very successful trips one to Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam and the other to the Guggenheim, Bilbao in May with twenty people attending each one. The virtual days out runs trips to places around the world – last month was to Monterey Aquarium in California. Next month we are going to Machu Picchu. Both groups have been very popular but we still have spaces for a few new members.

The new on-line book group is now on its second set of books after some interesting reviews and discussions via email.

The new Spanish conversation for Beginners has now started and could fit in one more member.

We would like to start an on-line Rummikub group and need one or two more members to make it viable.

Now that lots of people have access to great Theatre on-line wouldn't a Theatre discussion group be a great idea? Anybody out there willing to convene such a group?

Contact Paula, Groupsc@woodleyu3a.org.uk, to find out more about any of the groups listed above.

In addition to groups meeting virtually we have several private Facebook groups that all members can join. The topics are Photography, Travel, Culture, Gardening and Indoor Board Games. Please contact Paula if you wish to join any of these or if you have an idea for another Facebook group.

Entries have been coming in for the 1st Woodley U3A Poetry Competition. Last day for submission is 15th June.

Thank you for all of your positive comments about the Arts Newsletters – I do appreciate the feedback. I will be issuing them every month during lockdown and I welcome your suggestions for things to include.

Paula Dove, Groups Coordinator

Stop Press

Are you a lone cyclist who would like to cycle with other members during lockdown? If yes then please contact David, Indgames@woodleyu3a.org.uk or Paula to find out more.

The group will obviously, conform to all current COVID-19 government guidelines and will be limited to six people.

Website News

This month sees some additions to our Useful Information pages. Clicking on the last link on the main menu bar or the link pasted below will take you to a Menu page https://www.woodleyu3a.org.uk/useful_info.html. This will provide a clearer view of the minimised screenshots below - added here for explanation purposes.

The first box items provide links to newsletters (current and the previous month) :- **Woodley & District U3A Newsletter (General)** (this newsletter) and to the **Woodley & District U3A Newsletter (Arts)** produced monthly by Paula Dove during this lockdown period.
(These newsletters are also sent by email).

The second item on the Menu page :- **Woodley & District U3A Useful Links to Ideas for Interests & Activities** provides links to 12 categories of pages which cover a range of interests from Healthy Eating to Science & Technology (as shown below).

Woodley & District U3A Useful Links to Ideas for Interests and Activities 		Healthy Eating & Tasty Treats	Games & Puzzles
		Exercise	Learning Online
		Books & Literature	Around the World
		Music, Films & Theatre	Galleries & Museums
		Crafts	Computers & IT
		Gardening	Science & Technology

On reaching the category page, you can select the category in which you are interested. All the categories contain links to websites and videos with lots of relevant ideas and information. You Tube videos are a wonderful resource across all the categories. Their videos are usually free (with short ads) or you can pay a monthly fee for a premium service with no ads. I would stick with the free option. In relation to the categories, please note that six out of the twelve have now been completed. I am aiming to have the others completed next week.

<p>HEALTHY MEALS & TASTY TREATS</p> <p>Here, you will find some ideas for quick and easy, healthy meals for breakfast, lunch or supper. For those in need of some 'comfort' food from time to time, we have also provided some tried and tested tasty treats! Includes Gluten Free, Dairy free and Vegetarian options.</p>	
<p>EXERCISE</p> <p>Seated and more energetic work-out videos for beginners and the more experienced, including Tai Chi and Yoga. Some are supported by British Sign Language and Subtitles. Be sure to read the disclaimers and guidance for those with medical conditions. Optional donation to NHS charities.</p>	
<p>BOOKS & LITERATURE</p> <p>A number of websites offer free books to read on-line or to download, One of the most useful is your local library which enables you, through on-line services, to join the library, borrow books and audio books, as well as read current newspapers and a wide range of magazines.</p>	

Have to mention when seeking out and selecting the go-to sites for the Healthy Meals & Tasty Treats page, I made careful note of recipes that really appealed (to return to for the sake of the waistline)... So often all good intentions for a healthy snack go out the window en route to the fruit bowl - becoming a diversion to the biscuit tin!! Think I need to put it into 'lockdown'.....For the same reasons, in choosing the sites for the exercise page and testing them all out (briefly), I recognised the need to do a great deal more than just test!....Who will join me ?! Need a 'virtual exercise buddy' or two to compare notes and keep me focused!

The third item on the Useful Information Menu page:-

Woodley & District Local Area provides information about local government and facilities in the local area. Some of the markets in Woodley centre are set to open this month and it is likely that this will also be the case for pubs with gardens (later in the month or early July) such as the George and The Waterside. These and others with gardens are marked in the pubs category and I will shortly be adding pubs in the Hurst/Twyford and Wargrave areas. Leisure Centres remain closed for the foreseeable future but the parks are open for those who are not self-isolating. Also included is a link to 4 walking trails.

Woodley & District Local Area		Woodley & District Local Area provides links to information about Woodley Town - its MPs, town councillors, mayor, council and civic duties, its history, parks and facilities, projects and partnerships, and a calendar of town centre events that take place including Farmers' Markets, French Markets, Artisans Markets, Vegan Markets, Car Boot Sales, Musical Concerts, Woodley Carnival, Christmas Extravaganza. Some events restarting in June as lockdown eases.
Woodley Town Council		
Woodley Town Centre Events Programme		
Leisure Facilities		Main Sports and Leisure facilities in the Woodley Area with website links. Includes main parks, nature reserves, trails, leisure centres.
Pubs and Restaurants		Pubs & Restaurants in Local Area with contact details. Currently closed but some with outdoor gardens set to reopen June/July. Updates will be posted.

Items four and five on the Menu page are linked to the **Third Age Trust** and the **Thames Valley Network**. The **U3A Trust website** has links to all the latest Government guidelines and contains stories, information, advice and more. The **U3A Trust monthly Newsletter** is also available to download via the link. The **Thames Valley Network** normally runs study days and events throughout the year for their 38 branch members, of which we are one. (Cancelled until further notice)

The U3A Trust Vision & Principles Advice, information, learning, quizzes, challenges and more. Access to U3A Trust Newsletter Latest U3A News		The Trust is using their website to keep members informed on the latest government advice concerning coronavirus covid-19. It is also filled with information, stories and advice from across the U3A movement on how to keep safe and occupied during this difficult time. The Trust Newsletter, produced monthly, contains latest Trust news and reports on projects and events in which individual U3As have been involved.
Thames Valley Network Thirty eight U3A branches, including Woodley U3A, are affiliated to the Thames Valley U3A Network.		Established to enable "networking" between groups of U3As, and also to run study days and special events. All members are welcome to participate in any of the events arranged by their Network. A list of study days/events and application forms are normally displayed on their website but are currently suspended due to COVID 19.

A couple of reminders. Watch out for the remaining categories and links being posted on the website in the coming week.

Secondly, my request for exercise buddies to keep me on the straight and narrow!



Image : Moonpig

Offers of Help

One of our members, **Richard Perry**, has very kindly volunteered to provide help, free of charge, to other members who may have emergency home care or car maintenance issues during the lockdown period.

He can be contacted via perryspain@gmail.com or 07914 049762.

Another member, **Eileen Bravey**, has also very kindly volunteered to provide one-to-one sessions for members who would like to be able to start using Zoom to join in meetings. Contact Paula (email address below) for further information.

OFFERS OF HELP

Contacts

For General Enquiries

Email: Paul Atkins chairman@woodleyu3a.org.uk

For Membership Queries and Suggestions for Speakers

Email: Mary Brenchley-Hole membershipsecretary@woodleyu3a.org.uk

For Business Matters and Arrangements

Email: Tessa Dove businesssecretary@woodleyu3a.org.uk

For Queries about Groups and Related Activities:

Email: Paula Dove groupsco@woodleyu3a.org.uk

For Queries about Additions to Newsletter

Email: Jane Wolsey at webmasternews@woodleyu3a.org.uk

For Queries about Social Events

Email: Jane Wolsey at socialevents@woodleyu3a.org.uk

For Urgent General Enquiries

Telephone the duty officer on **07565 585545**.

CONTACTS