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Witham and District (Essex) u3a

NEWSLINK

Your guide to latest updates and what's on our web site

Issue 4

September 2026

Apologies for the delay in producing our newsletter

THIS edition has been delayed far longer than I hoped.

Sadly, the loss of my traditional publishing tools through changes at Microsoft, threw my personal efforts all out of kilter.

I have had to go right back to the beginning and learn a completely new process.

And I have no access to any files because the 2026 Microsoft will not let me access any of the old files I carefully saved.

We considered asking other members, using different systems, to produce an update, but, with the info channels then needed from me to them, further issues arose.

So I have studied a brand new design system with various new facilities including sending you a newsletter that did not have to be in PDF format but that has had gremlins too.

Instead you have a Newslink produced the new way but still arriving by PDF.

Ray Hardisty



Publication updates

How Newslink will inform you

WHAT this Newslink will do is bring you up to date with committee discussions so far this year.

And cover the obvious reports on the change to the membership system and web site.

And, as decided when the current web site was introduced, it will tell you what has been added to the pages.

From last year onwards members have been asked to update themselves by looking at the web site.

Those leading groups now have a simple way of uploading words and pictures of their happenings.

So there is no need to do everything twice!!

Instead, Newslink will list what has been updated.

But we realise committee communication is still an issue.

Accordingly, editions will be produced monthly from now on but will be far shorter and concise than the old style newsletters and have fewer pictures.

Please look on Newslink as an information prompter to look for any greater details you want elsewhere.

One of those is the need for a new u3a treasurer from November's AGM. The present one has done her maximum six years, so must be replaced.

So, this request goes to all of you with any financial experience with clubs or business to help us out.

Ray Hardisty

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Committee notes

HERE is a guide into topics and issues the committee have been discussing in 2026.

1 The new membership renewal system Members were asked to fill in their details on the web site and then arrange membership payment by personal visits or transfers via their banks. It was all introduced to avoid new charges introduced by our bankers, Lloyds, for depositing cheques and cash.

Generally, it worked well and will be repeated this time around.

2 Settling in of new Membership Officer Marion, considering she was faced by a new renewal system straight away, has settled in well. Congratulations.

3 Revising and updating health and safety policy After a member fell on her way out of the monthly meeting hall and broke her hip, the committee worked immediately to revise the policy and introduce new announcements at meetings to mitigate it happening again.

4 Realising unused assets to free storage space Items such as speakers, microphones and the like that were used at Spring Lodge but not at Witham Football Club have been disposed of.

5 Monitoring Witham Town Football Club plans for a padel centre Freeing space was essential once we knew there are plans for a multi court padel centre running alongside the present building, including the present storage space.

6 Making enquiries over a possible new meeting site Obviously, a go-ahead for the padel plans will again leave us out on a limb for a meeting place. So the committee has been making enquiries around the town because return to Spring Lodge is not practical.

7 Enhancing digital systems to help our treasurer We will discuss in September a simple operating system for the new treasurer who will be elected, hopefully, at the AGM.

Ray Hardisty

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New on web site

Monthly meetings the full list of topics for 2026 is on the web site.
October is a session on edible and drinkable plants.

Quiz nights The next Witham and District u3a quiz is on Friday, September 18, at 7.30pm in the Henry Dixon Hall at Rivenhall.
Individuals welcome. Cost is just £3. Bring own drinks and nibbles.

Art Appreciation Check the site for details on visits and discussions accompanied by selections of photos.

Birdwatching Again, there are detailed reports of meetings, some with photos, and lists of birds spotted.

Carpet Bowls Details of what the group does and some photos.

Church Visits Details of where members have journeyed and details of what was found there. All with photos.

Creative Writing No photos but the bonus in this section is a monthly short story to read and enjoy!

Family History Details of what the group does.

Fruit and Veg Reports and updates with photos.

Gardening Check in on the monthly meetings of visits or talks.

Photographic Scores of photos from visits taken by members around the area.

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More web site

Strollers Regular monthly reports of group walks in words and photos.

Talking Shop Reports of topics discussed at monthly meetings all chosen by members.

Walkie Talkies Another section of ramble reports in words and pictures to inform us.

Wine Appreciation Reports in words and pictures of sampling and the verdicts of the tastings.



Top: Walkie Talkies and Left: Strollers, both March. Left: Bocking Church from Church Visits and right: Fruit and Veg glasshouses.

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Update on groups and co-ordinators

GROUPS need members to keep them functioning.

We have lost a number this year. It means there are fewer chances to dine out, go to local theatre productions or take part in board games. And suggested ideas to take their place have gathered only limited support.

So, if there is anything you are interested in but you have not contacted Jane Barton, the group facilitator, or Ray Hardisty on the monthly meeting information table, please do so.

We are always looking for fresh ideas to maintain member interest in activities.

Please get in touch if you have a skill or interest to share.

Placing group reports on the web site

GROUP co-ordinators who have not yet uploaded details on activities onto the web site can still get help to do so.

Under the system that has been set up, words and pictures are submitted through user friendly forms.

So you type as you would an email and upload any photos in the way you would send as attachments to messages.

Then your reports will be placed onto the web site in the style demanded by other volunteers.

Contact web master **Pete Booth** for assistance.

The u3a is unique, exciting and joyful!



THE u3a is a unique and exciting organisation which provides, through its member u3as, life-enhancing and life-changing opportunities.



Retired and semi-retired people come together and learn together to learn with each other. Not for qualifications but the sheer joy of discovery. The learners teach and the teachers learn.

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