

**learn, laugh, live**

**Welcome**

**to**

**2023**

**Happy  
New  
Year**

## Chair's Hello

I wish you all a very Happy and Healthy New Year.

As you read this, we will be entering 2023. A new year always bring fresh hope and positive thoughts of the future. The days will be getting longer, the bulbs will be peeping through the earth and we begin to look forward to sunshine, warmth, planting seeds, making holiday plans. I hope all you are wishing for comes about.

The Committee is also planning ahead for what will be a busy year for Swindon u3a. We will be working hard to try to make the transition in funding arrangements for 2023-24 as straightforward as possible and to give as much support to members and GOs as we can. Important issues already on our agenda are improvement of our website and working on the details of the financial aspects of the new model. We are delighted to welcome onto the Committee our new Web Manager, Dave Todd, who has already started to do a lot of research into the future of our website and IT systems.

Many of you already have experienced the recent problems and frustrations, especially in our ability to send out general emails to all members. Unfortunately, for the moment this is a difficult issue to resolve, caused not by our website, but by issues to do with spam control by our email provider. You will have noticed that for the time being I am sending out 'mass' emails to you all from my personal email address. I do hope that we enter the new year with this issue resolved.

But looking ahead positively, there are many interesting things planned for the new year. The Events Team has been planning a full programme of Monthly Meetings and events/activities that we can all enjoy. They are a great way to meet other members of our u3a and to learn and enjoy new things. I hope to meet some of you there. There are other ways in which I hope the Trustees can meet with members during the year, get to know you better and listen to your feedback such as Focus Groups, New Members meetings and Volunteers meetings.

As always, I am sending out a plea for new Trustees. We have two vacancies at present, for a General Secretary and a Publicity Manager. What is required? Attendance at the monthly Committee meeting and then mainly work from home (emailing, planning, thinking!) At present these tasks are being carried out by existing Committee members increasing the burden on them. The more Trustees we have, the more the work we need to do is eased by being shared. Why not get in touch with me for a chat if you think you might be able to help. Could you support your u3a? Could this be your New Year's Resolution?

I would like to send a special thank you to all those volunteers who have contributed to keeping our u3a up and running during the last year.

And to all our members I wish you the very best for 2023 – health, happiness, enjoyment of your friends and family and, of course, learning, laughing and living together in your u3a.

## Monthly Speakers' Meetings

### Monday 9th January 2023 - 2.00 pm - Ellendune Community Centre

After all the Christmas and New Year festivities, we will launch the programme for 2023 with Ken Ingamells giving a talk on 'Global Warming - Fact or Scaremongering'.

For 40 years Ken was a weather forecaster in the Met Office, working in many parts of the UK and overseas - from the Arctic to the Antarctic and Hawaii to the Indian Ocean. He was also a keen sailor and photographer.

The world has gone through many warm and cold periods. What is different now? Ken will explain in very simple terms the science of global warming so that people can make up their own minds and hopefully be able to distinguish fact from false news.

So please come along on Monday 9th January, 2.00 pm for a 2.15 pm start, at the Ellendune Community Centre, Wroughton.



### Monday 13th February 2023 - 2.00 pm - Ellendune Community Centre

In February, our speaker will be Cat Attewell, Community Engagement Officer for Home Instead Swindon, on the "Art of Ageing Well". Cat has been leading and supporting community groups with older people for a number of years and is passionate about people retaining and developing their individual interests and joys throughout their entire lives.

In a workshop style talk, we will look at what we can learn to positively help ourselves through the inevitable experience of getting older. We will look at people who do it well, consider the trials and triumphs of the journey, and add some ideas that might help. Through shared discussions we will discover our own individual strategies to enable us all to enjoy ageing well.

If you are able to book online, this is really helpful and gives us a guide for numbers attending. However, if you just turn up on the day, you will be very welcome.

**Sue Cook**

Thank you team, this was excellent. I found the whole course very interesting. The approach to use it or lose it was not as I expected but that made it even more interesting.

Now that I've retired and have time on my hands it's important to me that I maximise my physical and mental health in order to get the most out of life for as long as possible. My expectations have been met!



## **Use It Or Lose It**

### **Living Longer, Living Well**

The next course will take place on the 16<sup>th</sup> Feb, 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb and 2<sup>nd</sup> March starting at 2.00 pm at Western Community Centre, Somerset Road SN2 1NF. The cost, to cover photocopying and refreshments will be £2 per person per course. This popular course comprises of 3 two-hour sessions. In it we consider various aspects of living longer and living well. We'll look at natural ageing and cover the latest thinking on how to keep our minds and bodies active. Due to the nature of the course we can only take a maximum of 16 people, so if you are interested please click on the link below to register your interest.

***The Use It or Lose It Team***

## **Ukuleles on Mondays**

Ukuleles on Mondays is a new ukulele group meeting on Monday afternoons at Eastcott Community Centre. There was a lot of interest in learning to play the uke at the Open Day in September but all the existing groups were full so a new group was set up. Most of the group were complete beginners just a few weeks ago and are now progressing well. We still have room for new members, whether they are learners or more experienced players. If you would like to join us, please contact us through SuCAS or through the u3a office.

***Lorraine and David Holland***

## Concert Goers Group

The concert goers group needs new organisers to take over the running of this popular group. Forty of us enjoyed a trip to Birmingham last week, but there will be no more such concert goers group trips unless new organisers can be recruited. We already have a group membership list of over a hundred u3a members interested in going to concerts.

We have been to some great concerts over the years and now we need new organisers so that existing and future u3a members can continue to enjoy great live music.

All you need is enthusiasm, a love of music and a bit of organising ability. The outgoing organisers will be very happy to offer advice and support. You choose the event and the venue!

For further details contact [Nina Stimson](#) or [Cindy Matthews](#) by clicking on the name.

## Fine Music in Birmingham

The Concertgoers' Group visited Birmingham to hear the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra on Wednesday 7th December.

We first stopped off at the Christmas (German) Market in the city centre, where some hot Glühwein was welcome on a bitter day! Then on to Symphony Hall, which has some of the best acoustics in Britain.

The main feature was the popular but enigmatic 5th Symphony of the Russian composer Shostakovich, but before that we heard a Brahms Overture and a more modern (1911) violin concerto - a virtuoso piece- by the Danish composer Carl Nielson. Your correspondent found the atonal sections difficult, but the solo playing was excellent and virtuosic, with the quiet melodic sections wonderful.

The full CBSO of 90 musicians under Alpesh Chauhan's baton gave a superb reading of the Shostakovich, filling the whole hall with a Russian 'solidity'. And in the jokey 'scherzo' movement sometimes reminding me of Stravinsky and his 1911 'Petrushka' sound with its burlesque and circus marches - and bringing out the great orchestration and instrumentation. It's one of my favourite symphonies, and I liked Chauhan's slightly slower tempi in the first movement, plus his great contrast between stormy highs and calm melodic sections that in 1937 perhaps hinted at some sort of bright future for Russia even in Stalin's time; who knows?

Altogether a very rewarding trip, and the experience stayed with me for some days. Our thanks as ever to Nina Stimson and Cindy Matthews for their organisation.

***Robin Clegg***

## Travel Group J

### Visit To Strawberry Hill House and Windsor

Thursday 2nd February 2023

Strawberry Hill House & Garden, created by Horace Walpole in the 18th century, has been open to visitors for over 250 years.

This extraordinary building is internationally famous as Britain's finest example of Georgian Gothic revival architecture and home to an increasingly important collection of paintings and objects.

The visit will include a 90 minute guided tour of the house with time to explore the house at your leisure.

Light lunches, at own expense, such as rustic filled Baguette or Flatbread are available in the on site café.

After lunch we will visit historic Windsor before departing for Swindon.

To find out further details on the venue visit [strawberryhillhouse.org.uk](http://strawberryhillhouse.org.uk)

Departure times and pick up points:

8.15 am Ellendune Centre Wroughton

8.30 am Coate Water

4.00 pm Depart for Swindon

The cost is £31 per person which includes entrance to house, coach and driver's gratuity.

The cost per person may reduce subject to uptake for the trip.

All members and friends/relatives welcome.

Contact [Ken Ivie](#) by clicking on his name.



## Focus groups

Focus groups were held in 6 different venues towards the end of November. Thank you to those of you who volunteered to take part. Each meeting was run by a Trustee with Gill Brain, Linda Young, Chris Ockwell and Jill Kelly each taking one or more meetings. Thanks to Sylvia Alexander, Brenda Lammin, Shirley Upton, Drusilla Attwood and Sue Cook who shared the task of note taking.

Discussion at all 6 meetings was interesting and constructive. Both a full and summary report are being produced and will be shared with members as soon as they are complete.

## New Members' Meeting

It was very good to get to know new members who came to the meeting at Coleview on 26th November. Trustees and volunteers gave information about their roles and key aspects of how u3a operates. Some light-hearted activities and a refreshment break gave everyone a chance to get to know each other better. Thanks, as ever, to Monica Brian and the refreshments team. Small discussion groups then allowed for people to share their experience of u3a so far, ask questions and offer suggestions. It proved to be both an enjoyable and productive meeting.

If any New Members who were unable to attend have feedback they would like to share or questions to ask, please contact me by clicking on my name.

*Jill Kelly*

Membership Liaison Secretary

## Anyone interested in something new?

Recent Focus Groups and the New Members' Meeting resulted in some suggestions for possible new interest groups. These were **Cribbage**, **Walking with dogs** and a **Cinema** group. If enough people are interested in any of these ideas I would be happy to put people in touch with each other.

Other ideas raised were possible 'one off' workshop type events on:

Overcoming your fear of Facebook

How to give an effective talk or presentation

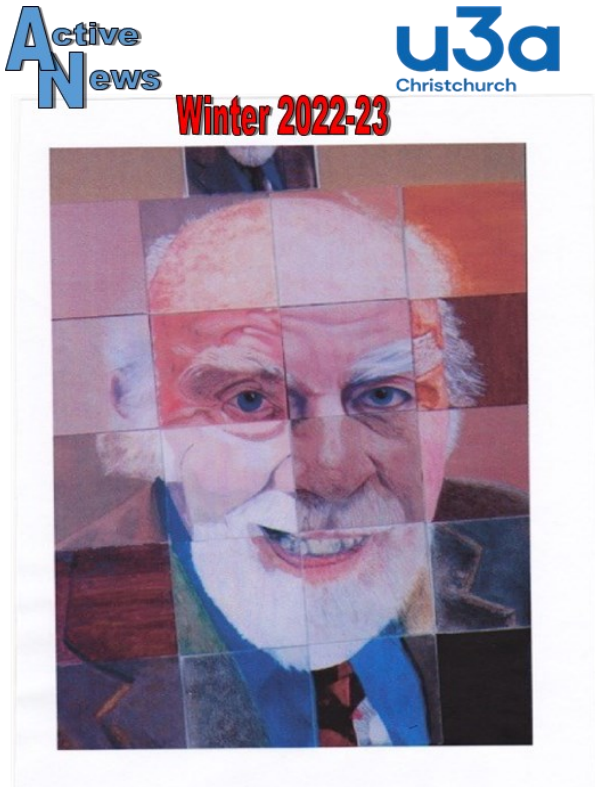
To express an interest, please contact me by clicking on my name.

*Jill Kelly*

## **Norman Richards – Our President**

The eagle eyed amongst you have spotted that in the last Newsletter I moved Norman from Christchurch to Chichester. I stand corrected! I thought you might also be interested in this portrait of Norman created by 13 Christchurch u3a members pooling their talents to capture his features.

I have sent Norman a card from Swindon u3a to congratulate him on his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.



## **Your Finance Team needs your help**

Following the loss of some of the team over the last few months we are now very short on members. This is impacting on the payment and expense reimbursement processes and making appropriate financial reporting difficult due to the need for timelier detailed understanding of some transactions including card payments.

If you think you might be able to help us provide our u3a with the appropriate level of service to manage our u3a finances smoothly please let me know.

The key areas needing help are bank management support including banking, reconciliations, analysis of credit card payments and assistance as part of a rota for authorising payments and expenses. There are other areas where assistance will be greatly appreciated but these are the key ones. No experience is needed, if you manage your own online bank account you can do this with ease.

If you're willing and able to help, please contact the Treasurer by clicking on the name below.

Thank you for your support.

***Andrew Hancox***

## List of Email Addresses

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Newsletter contributions		<a href="mailto:newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk">newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk</a>
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Accommodation		
Banking		
Visits		
Web Manager	Dave Todd	

## Office

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(entry is by middle door on right hand side of building)

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Charity Number 298853

### Copy Dates

Items for the **February** Newsletter must be received by

**19th January**

Items for the **March** Newsletter must be received by

**16th February**

All contributions must be sent to the Editor using the Newsletter contributions e-mail address:

[newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@swindonu3a.org.uk)

**Geoff Bryan**

The Editor reserves the right to amend or abbreviate any entries submitted.  
We should also like to point out that any views expressed are not necessarily those of the organisation or of the Editor.