



u3a Council Representatives for the East Midlands

April 2026

This is the first News Bulletin from John Butler and Rosie Allen, the two new u3a Council Reps for the East Midlands Region, working collaboratively with the East Midlands Region Support Team.

We are both enthusiastic about the opportunity to work on behalf of u3a members across the Region to ensure your voice is heard at the Third Age Trust (TAT) and that issues important to you are worked upon.

We recently attended our first Council meeting where, as newbies, we were able to put faces to names and to learn about the role of Council Representative and how it fits together with the Third Age Trust, the overarching charity of the u3a movement.

A number of initiatives are taking place at present: TAT has identified three key focuses for their work:

Promote

Do more research to better understand what our members think and need, so our decisions are based on stronger evidence. Make greater use of digital marketing to track what's working, and help us plan and communicate more consistently.

Support

Making the movement more resilient by addressing the challenges faced by existing u3as and supporting the development of new u3as

Strengthen

Creating more opportunities for members to come together / Identifying and sharing Best Practice between members and u3as. Delivering increased value for members through a national offer.

Each of the Trust's development areas is linked to one of these three key focuses.

Recruitment

is identified as a key priority for both for TAT staff and for Council members to focus on:

- A group of Council members are working to develop a renewed “Toolbox” which will catalogue documents relating to recruitment and retention of u3a members. The information to be put it into a useable format in the form of a roadmap, signposting to existing promotional materials.
- Another group are working on ideas for the recruitment of new members and to committee roles in smaller u3as. The Council Reps for Wales have already been working to identify key issues for u3as with under 100 members. They propose to work on a test case, and through that to recruit a working party to develop practical proposals for specific help for smaller u3as.

Marketing

is another key priority and has been boosted by the appointment to the staff team of Sam Dukes, Head of Marketing.

- We are encouraged to forward any newsworthy stories to communications@u3a.org.uk. These should be particularly stand out topics to attract attention from the wider community who do not already know about the u3a.
- One focus has been on surveying the membership to give a clear picture of members views and needs. The outcome has been the production of a stronger evidence-based story of why u3a matters with a summer launch planned, supported by PR and a social campaign.
- An in depth survey titled “Inside u3a”, is being conducted by an independent survey team on the Trust’s behalf across a representative sample of 200 u3as, including 22 from our region. An email has recently been sent to to the chosen u3as, and if your u3a is one of the chosen ones then you are urged to respond to make the findings as valid as possible.

John and I are keen to get to know you all. We would like to meet you face to face and to attend your Network or Neighbourhood groups. The purpose of these meet ups is to hear from you so we can feed back to the Council. We also want to let you know what is being done on our behalf by the Third Age Trust to support our u3as.

We are now **your** representatives, so please feel free to contact us about any ideas or issues you have and to invite us to your meetings.

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