

Making Social Media work for Ashbourne & District u3a

Prior to 2021/ 22

We used traditional channels to reach potential new members – solidly at c.300ish for a decade or more

- Newspaper reports of meetings
- Post Covid leaflet drop in our 5km catchment, annual Library exhibition
- Word of mouth

I was Secretary, then Chair in 2022, background in marketing and advertising

Talking to members, became very aware of the social purpose of u3a

Identified that u3a was not widely known in the area and that we could change this

Marketing objective: to **increase awareness** in our locality

How?

- At local and national level traditional media are in decline amongst all age groups
- The future is new media, specifically digital / social
- Tentatively trialled then embraced Facebook, and now increasing include Instagram

How do we use FB & Instagram?

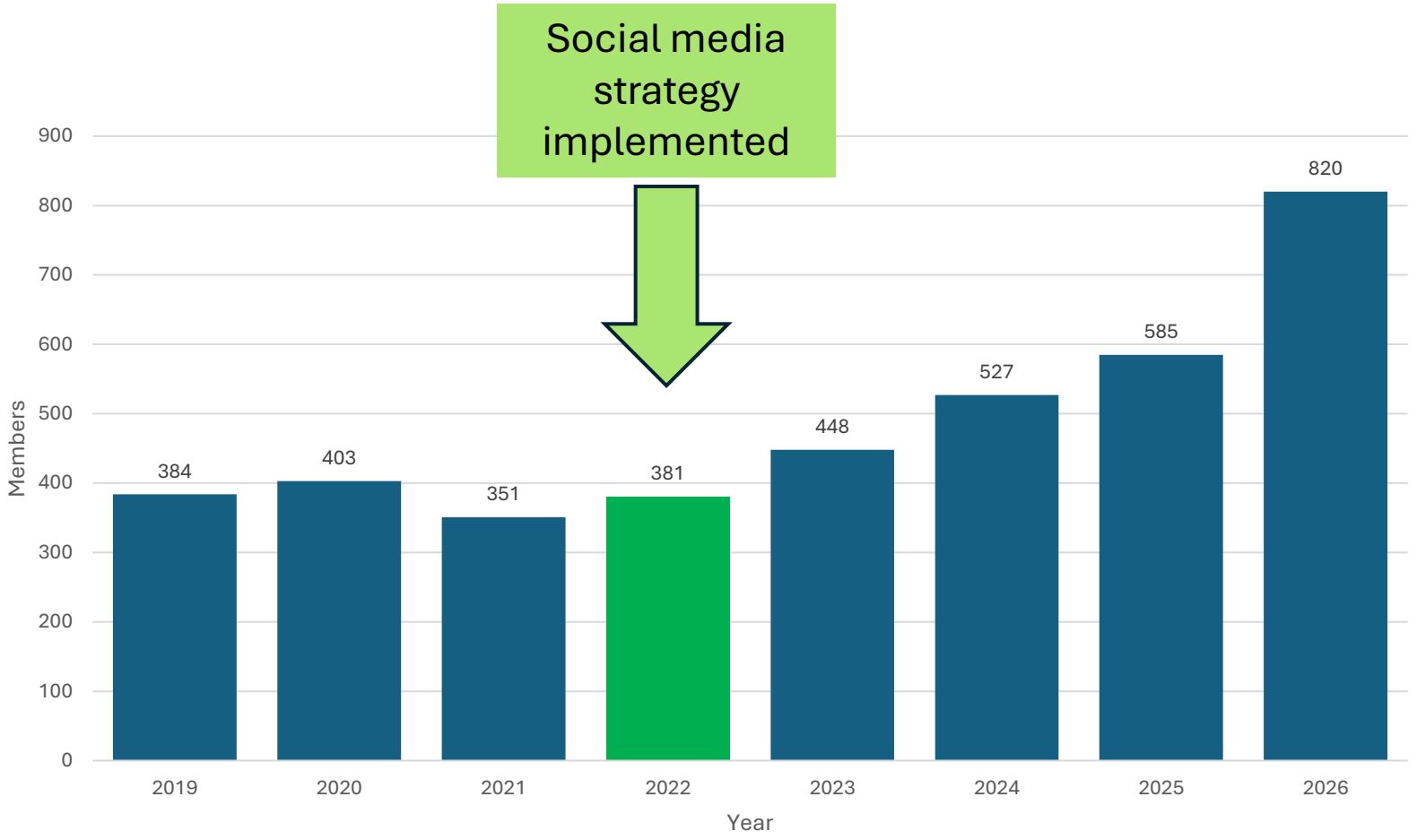
The aim was and is **to raise awareness** amongst a target audience of **potential members and influencers** (family, friends, neighbours, professionals, corporates) in **our catchment** area:

- To ensure they know that we exist
- Know something about what we do
- How to get in touch
- ***And ideally to do this by spending nothing***

Our objective is **not** to recruit new members:

- Recruitment is a natural result of raising awareness … the rate of growth will slow down eventually!

So what happened?



So what happened?

Membership currently more than 800 and rising

Lots of initial scepticism and concern about ‘social media’ in the committee, but even the biggest sceptics became vociferous supporters

The result is a profile of members which is increasingly younger and more diverse … appreciated by all members

Groups have proliferated in type and number. A local Bridge group joined en masse!

Social media is now the single most important element of our media mix by far – we still use newspapers, leaflets, Library exhibition

A growing number of u3as do what we do, and the uptake is accelerating

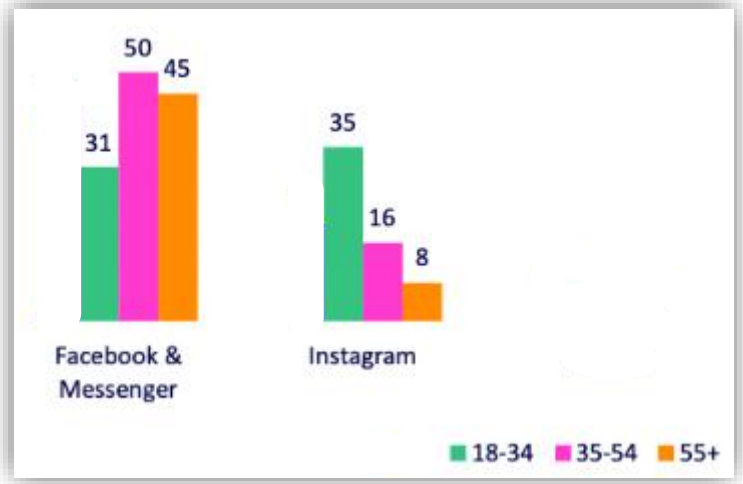
Most popular social media platforms UK

Source: Statista 2026

Base: internet users aged 16+

Rank	Platform	Estimated UK Reach / Penetration	Key Demographic & Usage Highlights
1	WhatsApp	~79% - 82%	Most used app overall; highly favoured for both personal communication and brand-to-consumer messaging.
2	YouTube	~78% - 85%	Reaches the broadest age spectrum; UK adults spend an average of nearly an hour per day watching videos.
3	Facebook	~72% - 73%	Remains essential for users aged 35+, community groups, and local events.
4	Instagram	~50% - 60%	Heavily favored by Gen Z and Millennials for visual storytelling and community engagement.
5	Facebook Messenger	~50% - 56%	Key tool for instant messaging and direct peer-to-peer communication.
6	TikTok	~35% - 40%	Holds the highest engagement rate; UK users

Age profile:



Source: Ofcom2026

Facebook is the best place to start because:

Sheer size, community focus

Targets a wide demographic, including older people

Very flexible – can post many types of content … photos and **videos**, articles, **links to websites**, etc.

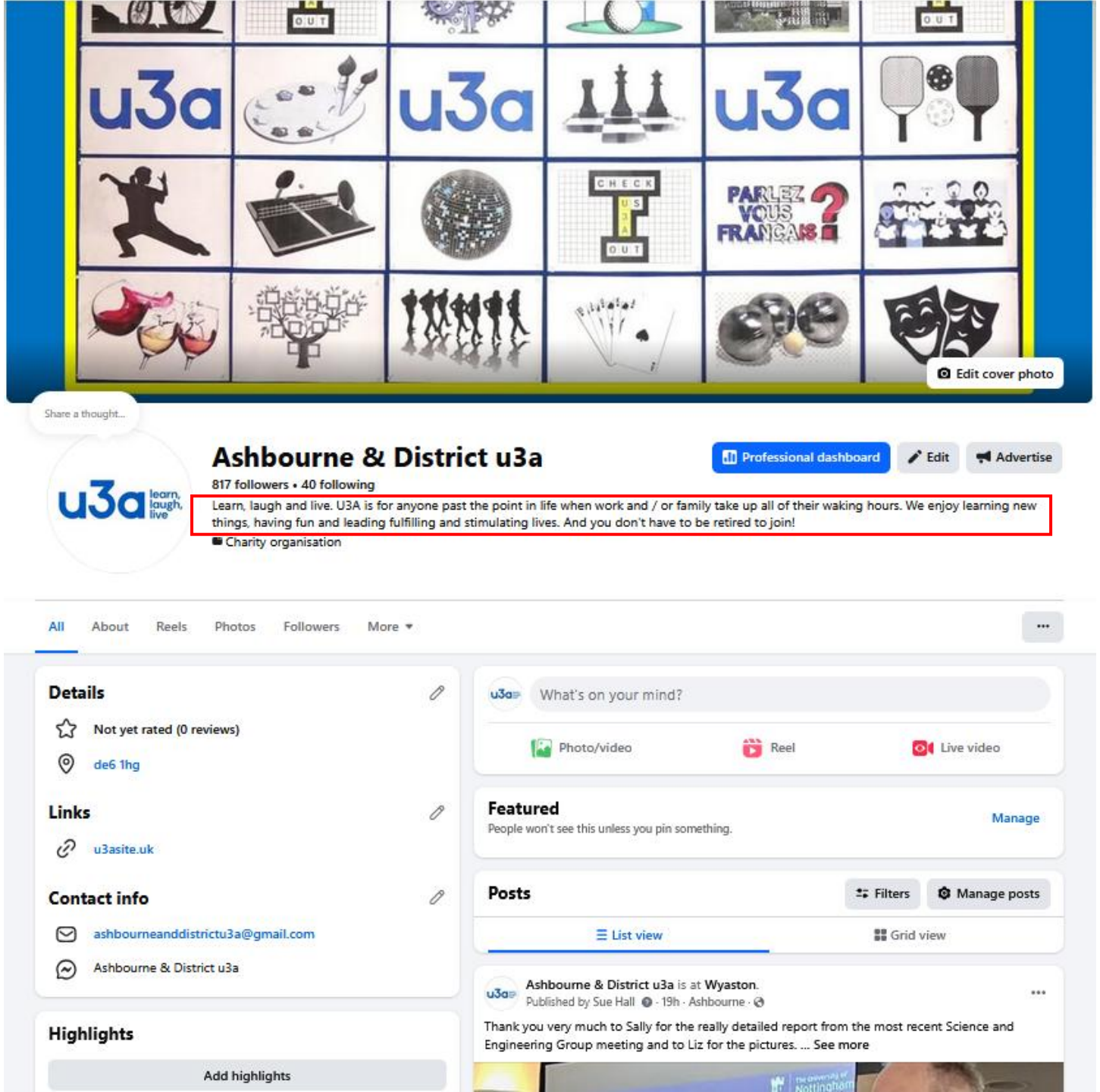
FB advertising can be focused by geography and / or demographic – and is cheap

- <£20 to target adults over 60 living in our 5km geographic catchment with a 7-day campaign

Tools via ‘Meta Business Suite’:

- Cross-posting from FB to Instagram
- Scheduling posts
- Analytics

Our page looks like this:



Typical posts:

Ashbourne & District u3a is at **RSPB Burton Mere Wetlands - Dee Estuary.**
Published by Sheila Crawley · 17 February · Neston ·

Natural History visited RSPB Burton Mere on Thursday on an unseasonably warm, still day. 30 species spotted, lovely trip. New members welcome, see the Groups page of our website for more information or reply to this post. https://u3asites.org.uk/ashbourne/page/110922



Ashbourne & District u3a
Learn, laugh and live. U3A is open to everyone who is past the point when w...
WhatsApp

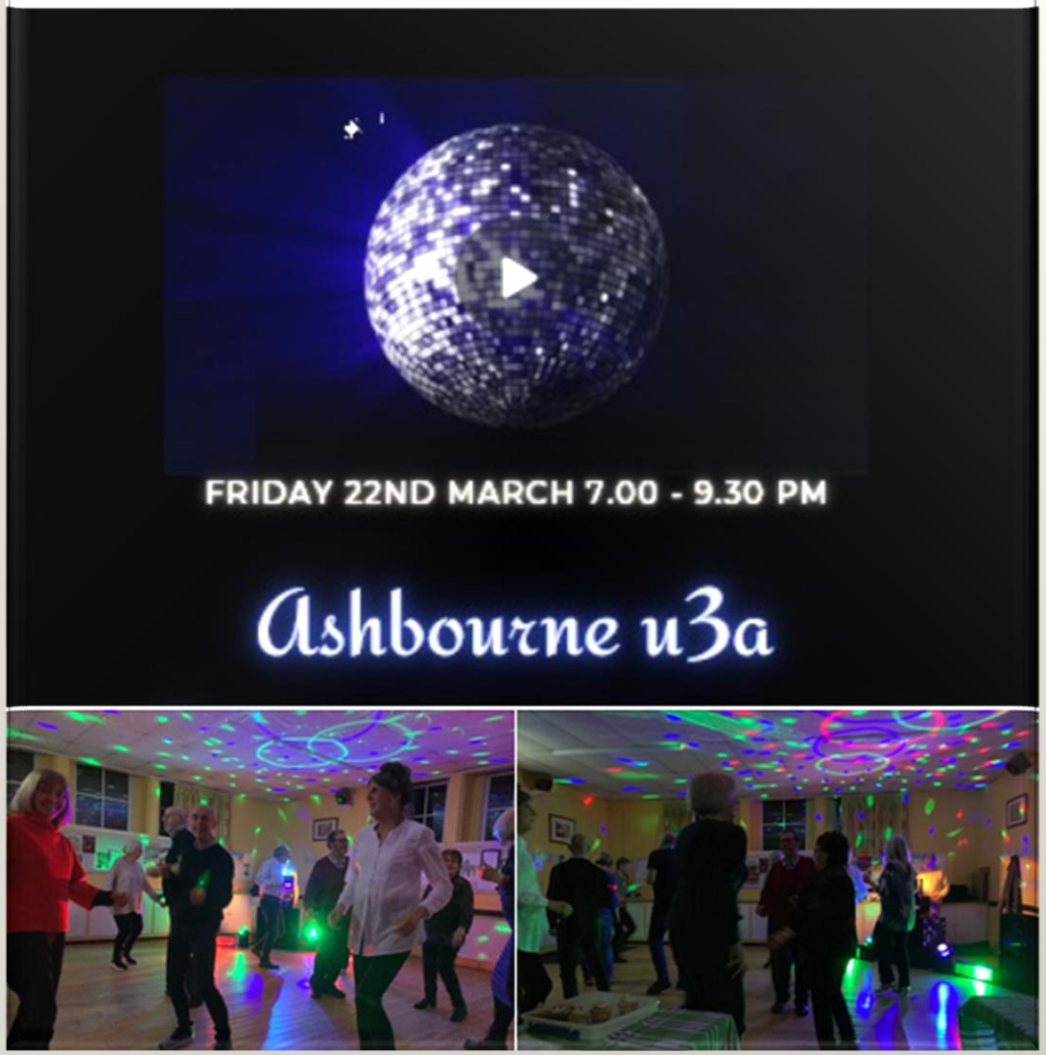
Ashbourne & District u3a
Published by Sheila Crawley · 4 May ·

MYTH NUMBER 2: u3a is just for posh types who went to university. WRONG! u3a has something for everyone. The ethos is co-operative, in one group you may be a learner, in another a leader, encouraging others to share your interest or passion. We work together to create a friendly and enjoyable approach to learning based around well-loved interests. And we have a load of fun doing it!



Ashbourne & District u3a is at **St. John's Church, Ashbourne.**
Published by Sheila Crawley · 16 March · Ashbourne

Our next Disco and Social meet up is a week earlier than normal because of Easter. It's this coming Friday 22nd March at St John's Church Hall 7.00 to 9.30pm with DJ Adrian. The cost is £5.00, please bring your own refreshments. Contact Trisha here or via the Group's page on our website if you'd like to be there: https://ashbourne.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/disco-social-group/

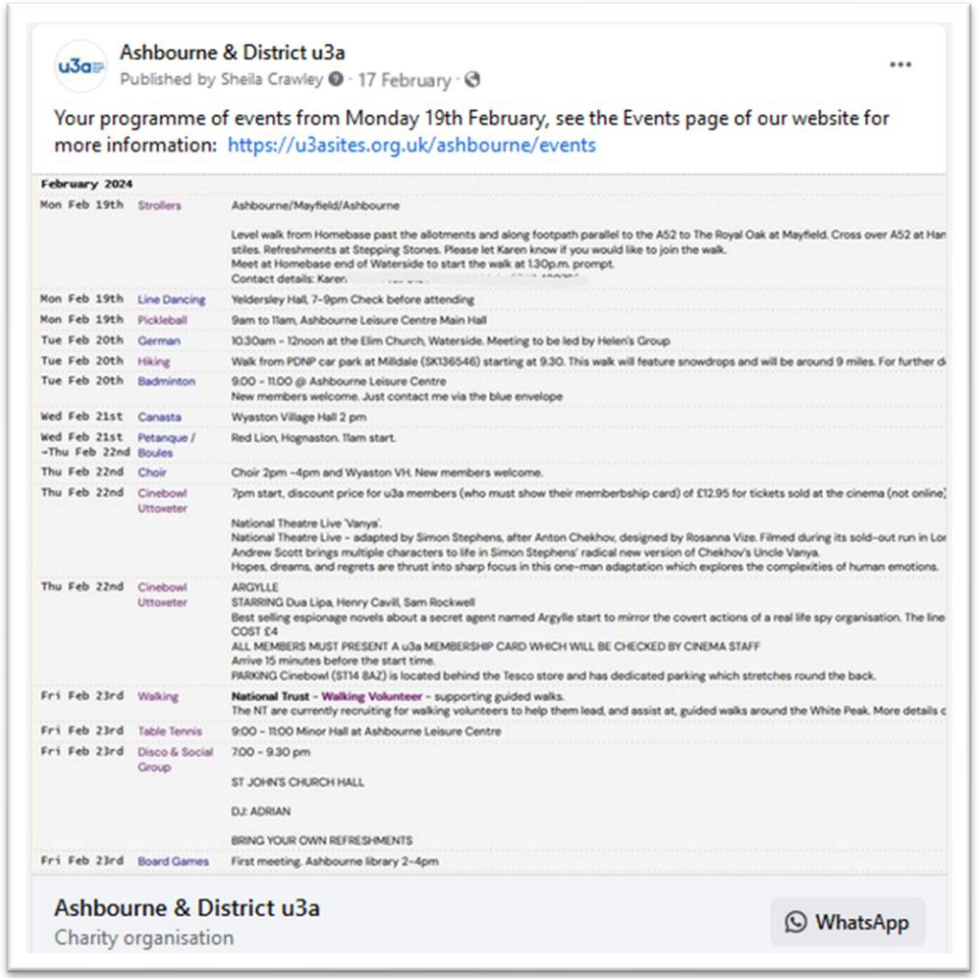


Ashbourne & District u3a is at **Ashbourne Library.**
Published by Sue Hall
· 4d · Ashbourne ·

It's great to report that yesterday our Spanish Group had their first meeting and now officially exists. Hurrah!
We are delighted that we have found a local Modern Foreign Languages teacher, Soleine, who has agreed to help us start up and run a sparkly new group. This will be at an 'improvers' level for those who already speak some Spanish but want to improve their fluency and confidence.
Yesterday members met Soleine and took part in several speaking, listening, reading an... **See more**



Our best performing posts are ALWAYS next week's programme … but we're always learning!



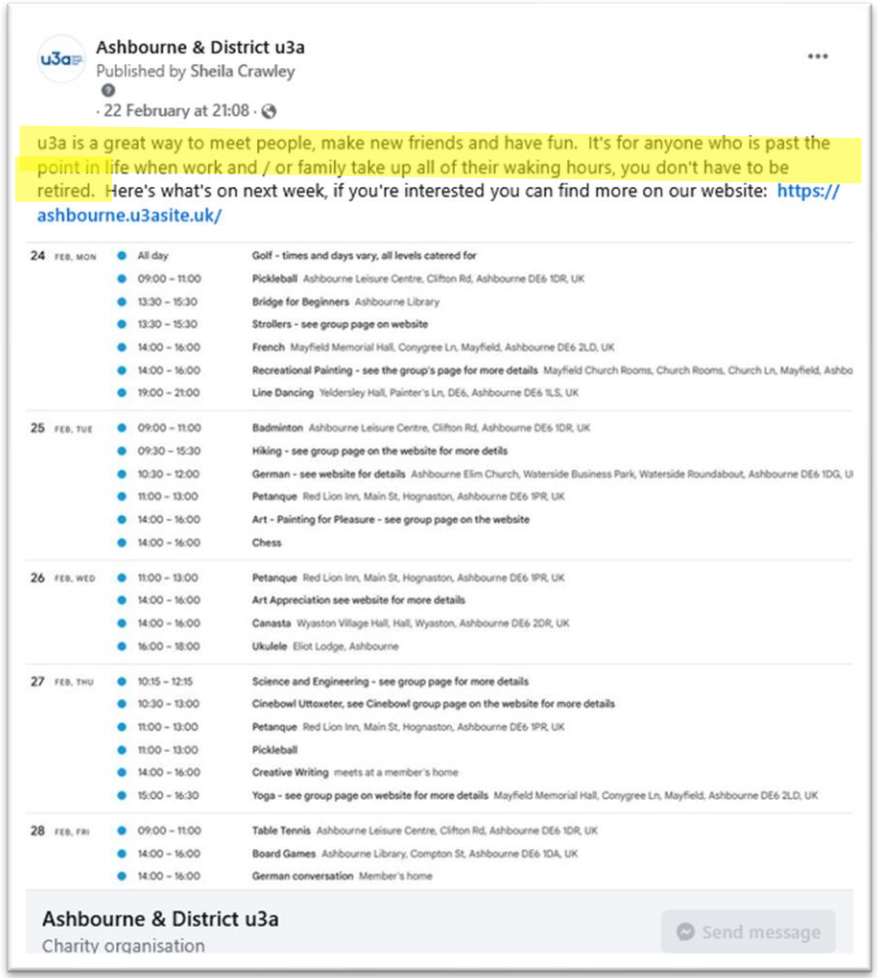
Ashbourne & District u3a
Published by Sheila Crawley · 17 February ·

Your programme of events from Monday 19th February, see the Events page of our website for more information: https://u3asites.org.uk/ashbourne/events

February 2024

Mon Feb 19th	Strollers	Ashbourne/Mayfield/Ashbourne Level walk from Homebase past the allotments and along footpath parallel to the A52 to The Royal Oak at Mayfield. Cross over A52 at Har stiles. Refreshments at Stepping Stones. Please let Karen know if you would like to join the walk. Meet at Homebase end of Waterside to start the walk at 1.30p.m. prompt. Contact details: Karen
Mon Feb 19th	Line Dancing	Yeldersley Hall, 7-9pm Check before attending
Mon Feb 19th	Pickleball	9am to 11am, Ashbourne Leisure Centre Main Hall
Tue Feb 20th	German	10.30am - 12noon at the Elim Church, Waterside. Meeting to be led by Helen's Group
Tue Feb 20th	Hiking	Walk from PDNP car park at Milldale (SK136546) starting at 9.30. This walk will feature snowdrops and will be around 9 miles. For further d
Tue Feb 20th	Badminton	9.00 - 11.00 @ Ashbourne Leisure Centre New members welcome. Just contact me via the blue envelope
Wed Feb 21st	Canasta	Wyaston Village Hall 2 pm
Wed Feb 21st -Thu Feb 22nd	Petanque / Boules	Red Lion, Hognaston. 11am start.
Thu Feb 22nd	Choir	Choir 2pm -4pm and Wyaston VH. New members welcome.
Thu Feb 22nd	Cinebowl Uttoxeter	7pm start, discount price for u3a members (who must show their memberbship card) of £12.95 for tickets sold at the cinema (not online) National Theatre Live 'Vanya'. National Theatre Live - adapted by Simon Stephens, after Anton Chekhov, designed by Rosanna Vize. Filmed during its sold-out run in Lor Andrew Scott brings multiple characters to life in Simon Stephens' radical new version of Chekhov's Uncle Vanya. Hopes, dreams, and regrets are thrust into sharp focus in this one-man adaptation which explores the complexities of human emotions.
Thu Feb 22nd	Cinebowl Uttoxeter	ARGYLLE STARRING Dua Lipa, Henry Cavill, Sam Rockwell Best selling espionage novels about a secret agent named Argylle start to mirror the covert actions of a real life spy organisation. The line COST £4 ALL MEMBERS MUST PRESENT A u3a MEMBERSHIP CARD WHICH WILL BE CHECKED BY CINEMA STAFF Arrive 15 minutes before the start time. PARKING Cinebowl (ST14 8AZ) is located behind the Tesco store and has dedicated parking which stretches round the back.
Fri Feb 23rd	Walking	**National Trust - Walking Volunteer** - supporting guided walks. The NT are currently recruiting for walking volunteers to help them lead, and assist at, guided walks around the White Peak. More details c
Fri Feb 23rd	Table Tennis	9.00 - 11.00 Minor Hall at Ashbourne Leisure Centre
Fri Feb 23rd	Disco & Social Group	7.00 - 9.30 pm ST JOHN'S CHURCH HALL DJ: ADRIAN BRING YOUR OWN REFRESHMENTS
Fri Feb 23rd	Board Games	First meeting. Ashbourne library 2-4pm

Ashbourne & District u3a
Charity organisation
WhatsApp



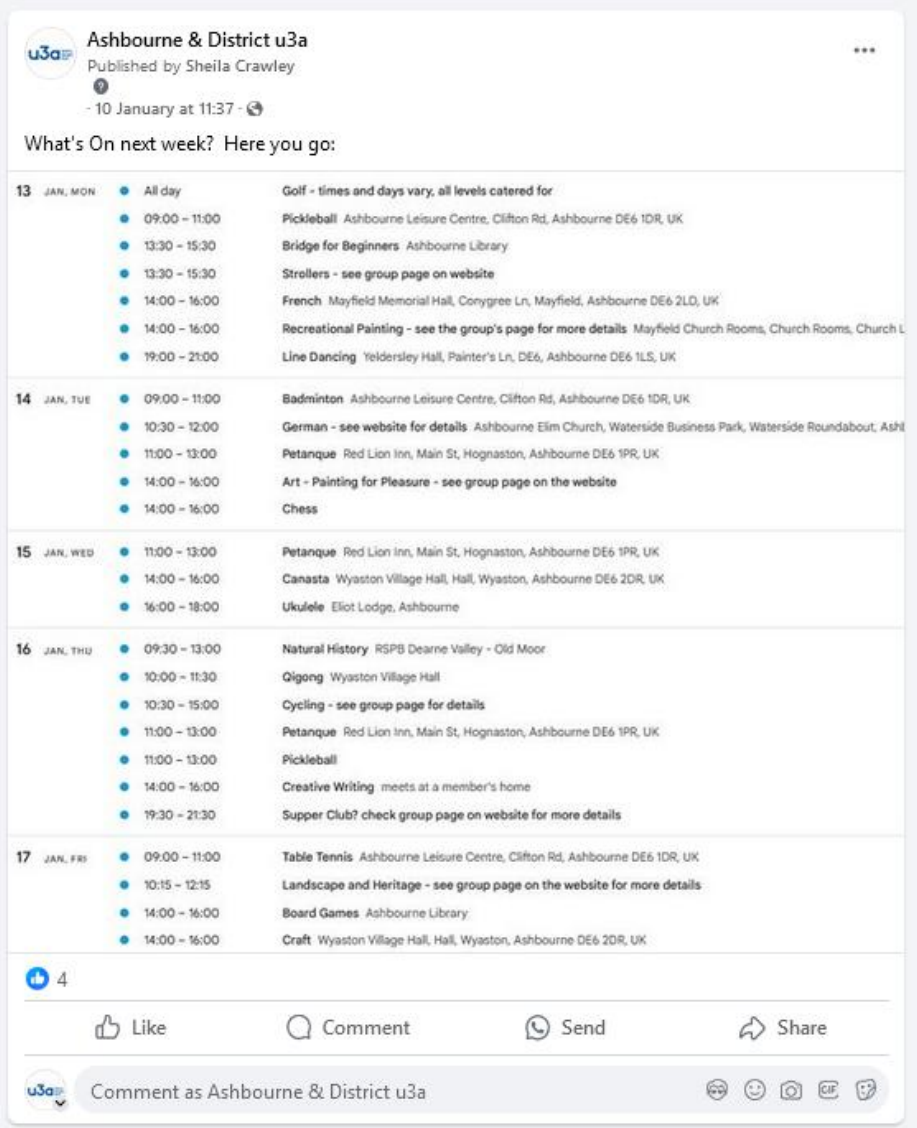
Ashbourne & District u3a
Published by Sheila Crawley
· 22 February at 21:08 ·

u3a is a great way to meet people, make new friends and have fun. It's for anyone who is past the point in life when work and / or family take up all of their waking hours, you don't have to be retired. Here's what's on next week, if you're interested you can find more on our website: https://ashbourne.u3asite.uk/

24 FEB, MON	All day	**Golf - times and days vary, all levels catered for**
	09:00 – 11:00	**Pickleball** Ashbourne Leisure Centre, Clifton Rd, Ashbourne DE6 1DR, UK
	13:30 – 15:30	**Bridge for Beginners** Ashbourne Library
	13:30 – 15:30	**Strollers - see group page on website**
	14:00 – 16:00	**French** Mayfield Memorial Hall, Conygree Ln, Mayfield, Ashbourne DE6 2LD, UK
	14:00 – 16:00	**Recreational Painting - see the group's page for more details** Mayfield Church Rooms, Church Rooms, Church Ln, Mayfield, Ashbo
	19:00 – 21:00	**Line Dancing** Yeldersley Hall, Painter's Ln, DE6, Ashbourne DE6 1LS, UK
25 FEB, TUE	09:00 – 11:00	**Badminton** Ashbourne Leisure Centre, Clifton Rd, Ashbourne DE6 1DR, UK
	09:30 – 15:30	**Hiking - see group page on the website for more details**
	10:30 – 12:00	**German - see website for details** Ashbourne Elim Church, Waterside Business Park, Waterside Roundabout, Ashbourne DE6 1DG, U
	11:00 – 13:00	**Petanque** Red Lion Inn, Main St, Hognaston, Ashbourne DE6 1PR, UK
	14:00 – 16:00	**Art - Painting for Pleasure - see group page on the website**
	14:00 – 16:00	**Chess**
26 FEB, WED	11:00 – 13:00	**Petanque** Red Lion Inn, Main St, Hognaston, Ashbourne DE6 1PR, UK
	14:00 – 16:00	**Art Appreciation see website for more details**
	14:00 – 16:00	**Canasta** Wyaston Village Hall, Hall, Wyaston, Ashbourne DE6 2DR, UK
	16:00 – 18:00	**Ukulele** Eliot Lodge, Ashbourne
27 FEB, THU	10:15 – 12:15	**Science and Engineering - see group page for more details**
	10:30 – 13:00	**Cinebowl Uttoxeter, see Cinebowl group page on the website for more details**
	11:00 – 13:00	**Petanque** Red Lion Inn, Main St, Hognaston, Ashbourne DE6 1PR, UK
	11:00 – 13:00	**Pickleball**
	14:00 – 16:00	**Creative Writing** meets at a member's home
	15:00 – 16:30	**Yoga - see group page on website for more details** Mayfield Memorial Hall, Conygree Ln, Mayfield, Ashbourne DE6 2LD, UK
28 FEB, FRI	09:00 – 11:00	**Table Tennis** Ashbourne Leisure Centre, Clifton Rd, Ashbourne DE6 1DR, UK
	14:00 – 16:00	**Board Games** Ashbourne Library, Compton St, Ashbourne DE6 1DA, UK
	14:00 – 16:00	**German conversation** Member's home

Ashbourne & District u3a
Charity organisation
Send message

Reaches many thousands of FB users within 24 hours



Ashbourne & District u3a
Published by Sheila Crawley
· 10 January at 11:37 ·

What's On next week? Here you go:

13 JAN, MON	All day	Golf - times and days vary, all levels catered for	
	09:00 – 11:00	Pickleball	Ashbourne Leisure Centre, Clifton Rd, Ashbourne DE6 1DR, UK
	13:30 – 15:30	Bridge for Beginners	Ashbourne Library
	13:30 – 15:30	Strollers - see group page on website	
	14:00 – 16:00	French	Mayfield Memorial Hall, Conygree Ln, Mayfield, Ashbourne DE6 2LD, UK
	14:00 – 16:00	Recreational Painting - see the group's page for more details	Mayfield Church Rooms, Church Rooms, Church L
	19:00 – 21:00	Line Dancing	Yeldersley Hall, Painter's Ln, DE6, Ashbourne DE6 1LS, UK
14 JAN, TUE	09:00 – 11:00	Badminton	Ashbourne Leisure Centre, Clifton Rd, Ashbourne DE6 1DR, UK
	10:30 – 12:00	German - see website for details	Ashbourne Elim Church, Waterside Business Park, Waterside Roundabout, Ashb
	11:00 – 13:00	Petanque	Red Lion Inn, Main St, Hognaston, Ashbourne DE6 1PR, UK
	14:00 – 16:00	Art - Painting for Pleasure - see group page on the website	
	14:00 – 16:00	Chess	
15 JAN, WED	11:00 – 13:00	Petanque	Red Lion Inn, Main St, Hognaston, Ashbourne DE6 1PR, UK
	14:00 – 16:00	Canasta	Wyaston Village Hall, Hall, Wyaston, Ashbourne DE6 2DR, UK
	16:00 – 18:00	Ukulele	Eliot Lodge, Ashbourne
16 JAN, THU	09:30 – 13:00	Natural History	RSPB Dearne Valley - Old Moor
	10:00 – 11:30	Qigong	Wyaston Village Hall
	10:30 – 15:00	Cycling - see group page for details	
	11:00 – 13:00	Petanque	Red Lion Inn, Main St, Hognaston, Ashbourne DE6 1PR, UK
	11:00 – 13:00	Pickleball	
	14:00 – 16:00	Creative Writing	meets at a member's home
	19:30 – 21:30	Supper Club? check group page on website for more details	
17 JAN, FRI	09:00 – 11:00	Table Tennis	Ashbourne Leisure Centre, Clifton Rd, Ashbourne DE6 1DR, UK
	10:15 – 12:15	Landscape and Heritage - see group page on the website for more details	
	14:00 – 16:00	Board Games	Ashbourne Library
	14:00 – 16:00	Craft	Wyaston Village Hall, Hall, Wyaston, Ashbourne DE6 2DR, UK

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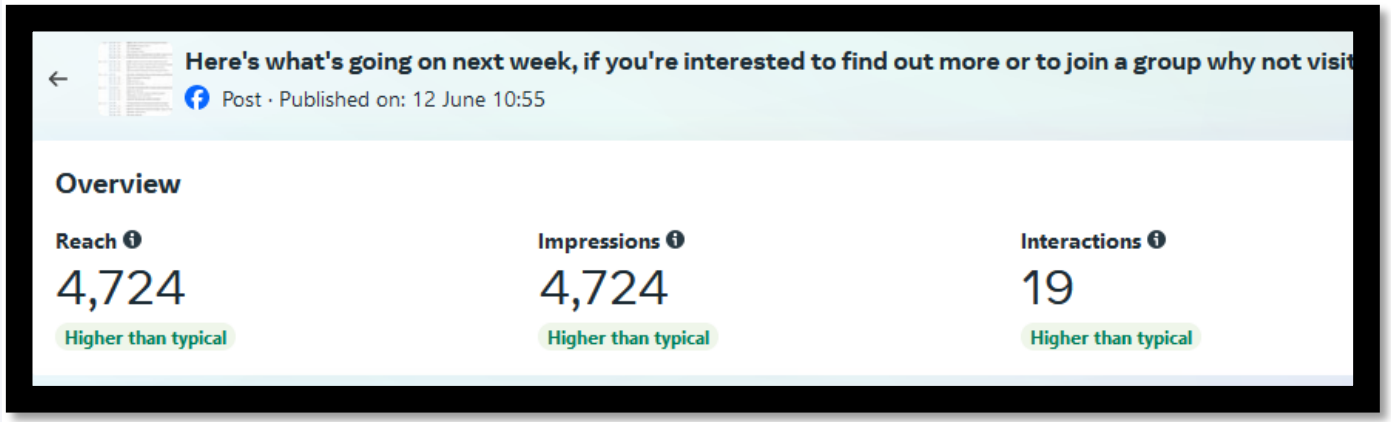
Like Comment Send Share

Comment as Ashbourne & District u3a



Here's what's going on next week, if you're interested to find out more or to join a group why not visit

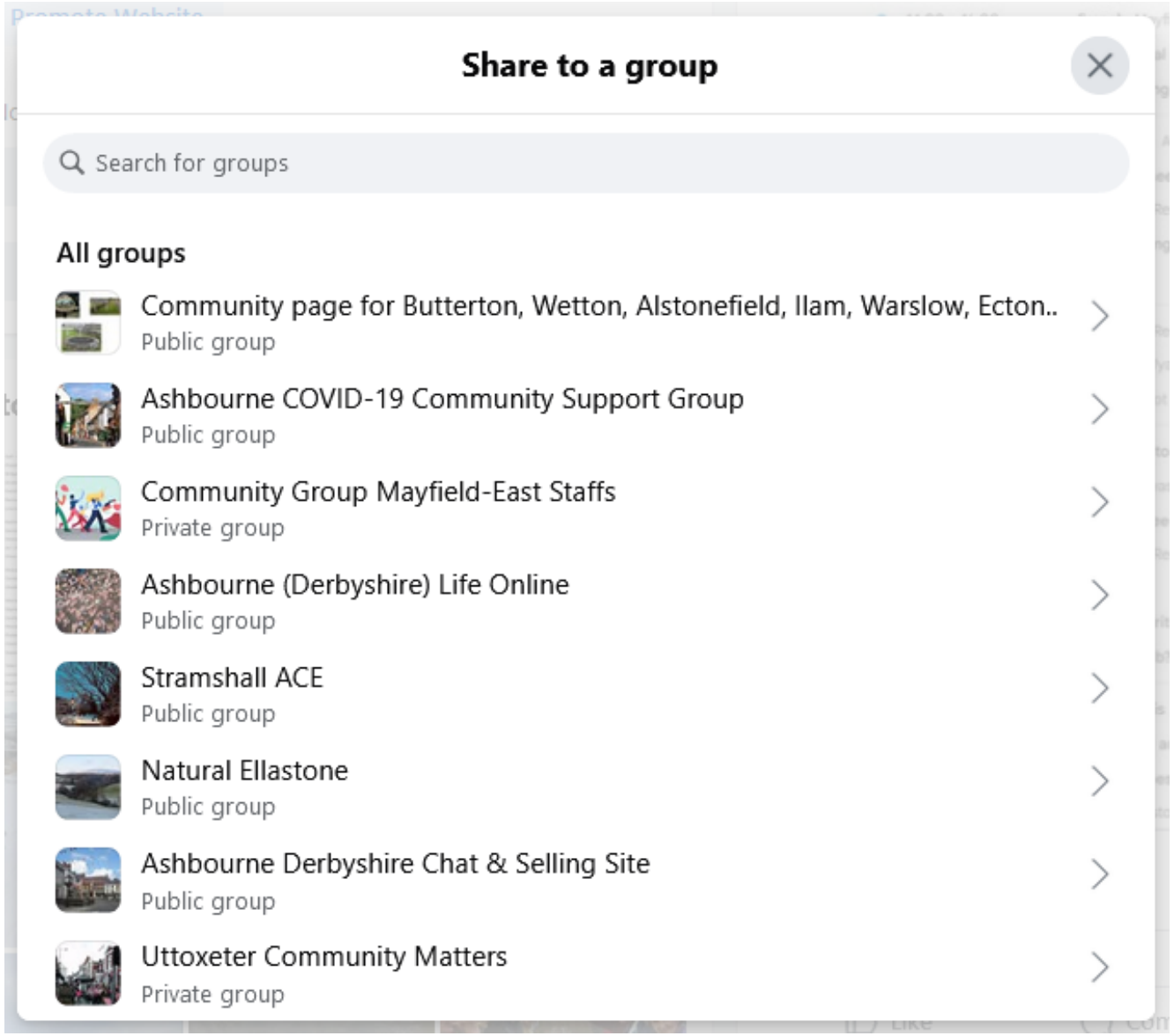
Post · Published on: 12 June 10:55

Overview

Reach	Impressions	Interactions
4,724	4,724	19
Higher than typical	Higher than typical	Higher than typical

Why?

Because it's shared with more than 25 local groups and pages:



So – how to get the best out of Facebook?

It has to be a **public PAGE**, not a GROUP

Keep it **professional and clean**

Regular posts – a few per week ideally

Posts should be **visually engaging** and with a **short, punchy message**

Always include a '**call to action**' - a way to find out more:

- WhatsApp / Facebook Messenger / phone response button
- A link to the website – so an up to date / informative / friendly website is really important

CRUCIALLY: **Broadcast** your post

- Join other local Facebook Groups and Pages and share your posts to them to spread the message – but don't bombard them

Analyse what works best and **repeat**

At the start …

Keep it simple, focus on getting a few posts out there

And consider how you can keep up regular posts

Think about how you will get good royalty-free / copyright-free images to use to illustrate your posts:

- Take photos of your groups
- Ask groups to take and supply their own
- Or generate images using tools like Canva and other AI options

Don’t worry too much about the analytics, just keep posting

3 last things:

When you see another u3a's Facebook and Instagram posts '**like**' them, and '**share**' applicable ones that suit your objectives. This includes national posts. Amplifies reach for all of us.

Regions and Networks can do the same.

Let's talk tech, AI group, etc

There is a new u3a Social Media support group on Facebook, a closed group for u3a SM admins and potential users:




Like
Comment
Share
One Message.
Many People.
Stronger Community.
Instagram