

u3a Council Representatives

Rosie Allen & John Butler

November 2026

October was a very busy month for John and I with the first of our Regional Workshops being held in Lincolnshire and the following day the National Third Age Trust AGM in Manchester. We wrote about the Workshop in a previous Bulletin but suffice it so say it was a great success.

National Third Age Trust AGM

This was a valuable opportunity to hear from the Chairman, CEO and Officers about progress with the Board strategy another year on from the major change in the structure of the organisation called Fit for the Future.

AGM slides &recording are available on this link: **https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/agm-2026**

Also on that page are links to some short videos advertising the value of the u3a.

Resolutions at the 2026 AGM

A member-initiated resolution, and two amendments to it, were debated at the AGM.

This resulted in the following resolution being voted on and adopted:

"This AGM calls on the Third Age Trust Board to conduct a formal consultation with u3as before undertaking any activity that would involve the Trust in advocacy, campaigning or public policy outside the promotion of the u3a movement. Where such a consultation is undertaken, the Board shall publish the responses together with a reasoned statement of its conclusions and proposed actions, and report to the next AGM on how those conclusions have been acted upon".

The Council

Sue Russell, Chair of the Council, presented our report at the AGM and then we held our second in person Council meeting a week later. A short You Tube video was produced by John Butler & taken at the meeting which explains the purpose & value of the Council https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39VnywUPjec&t=6s

The Council's focus in 2025/2026: These issues remain and continue to be worked on.

- Recruitment and retention: Supporting local committees and driving project 500k
- Communication: Streamlining enquiries to main office
- Website upgrades: Resolving internal search engine issues and poor content
- Brand shop: Evaluating quality, demand and efficiency

Emerging Themes:

- Marketing support: Connecting national and local activities
- Finance and banking: Consultation and support to overcome banking hurdles
- Social media support: Proactive support and advice for u3as on social media usage
- AI integration: Saving time and reducing admin and marketing burden

There has also been considerable activity on practical strategies to support struggling u3as with a focus on small u3as. A pilot is taking place in Wales and the lessons learnt from that will enable other Regions to try out approaches.

If any of you would like support to help you with the running of your u3a please contact John and I as we will be very happy to work together with you.

East Midlands Region

The East Midlands Region has an excellent **website** which relies on you forwarding items of interest and relevant dates so please message Terry Moore, Web Manager, using the Contact us tab on the website: https://eastmidlandsregion.u3asite.uk/contact-us/

One resource of great value is the **Social Media Support facebook Group** run by Sheila Crawley. https://www.facebook.com/groups/1089142077409793

East Midlands Regional Support Team
We are very lucky to have an extremely active and supportive team in the East Midlands Region with representatives from each of the counties. Much of their time is taken with the planning of the Regional Workshops and there are two more dates for your diaries:

11 March 2027 (10-2.30) at Langton Community Hall, Stonton Rd, Church Langton, Market Harborough LE16 7SZ
13 April 2027 (10-2.30) at Hasland Village Hall, Eastwood Park/Hasland Rd, Chesterfield S41 0AY

Each workshop is open to u3a members across the region and you are very welcome to attend both. Themes will be advertised nearer the dates but if you have any good ideas, please email John or me.

Networks:
Derbyshire: Consideration was given to a review of the value of the Network, its purpose and operation. A very favourable response was received and all u3as in the county are encouraged to attend.

Alert: If you use Beacon, it is imperative that you back up your own data as this is not done for each u3a. The Beacon system is backed up but not your own individual data. If you look in the Beacon user guide there is a way of doing this. We will be sending some more information about this in a separate communication.

Leicestershire & Rutland: The recent meeting on 19th November involved a very productive discussion regarding Insurance and risk assessment requirements of the u3a as well as considerations of best practice when dealing with members with specific care needs.
Lincolnshire:
East Lincs Neighbourhood Group is meeting on 26 November. A facebook page re Speakers has been set up.
Lincolnshire Neighbourhood Group is meeting on 2 December.
South Lincs Neighbourhood Group is meeting on 1 December.
Northamptonshire: At the recent Network meeting the group split into a Chairs and a Treasurer's forum. Each were able to discuss sensitive topics in an open and constructive manner. The next meeting in March will include a Speakers' Forum. There is also a Network Publicity Group which has met face to face.
Nottinghamshire: have recently revised their constitution, elected their committee and revised their subscription fee at their AGM. They are also considering running a Study Day in the summer of 2027.

Anniversaries:
At every AGM the anniversaries of u3as which have been open for key milestone periods are celebrated. These are the ones from the East Midlands Region for the period April 2025 to March 2026. Congratulations to all of you.
NB: John and I would love to be invited to your anniversary celebrations!
10 Years: Bolsover District, Brackley & District, Daventry & District, Edwalton, Gamston & District, Stapleford & District.
20 Years: Ise Valley, Southwell (2026), West Bridgford
25 Years: Grantham (2026)
30 Years: Vale of Belvoir and Glossop
40 Years: Derby and Northampton (2026)

Thank you for the invitations to your Network meetings and individual u3as. Both of us feel privileged to represent you and to feel able to support you.
Enjoy your Christmas festivities with friends and family and we look forward to meeting up with you all again in the New Year.

Rosie Allen
Rosie.Allen@u3a.org.uk

John Butler
John.Butler@u3a.org.uk