

NORTH WEST REGION

Trustee Newsletter March 2025

u3a
learn, laugh, live



Region Council Representatives

This will be my last newsletter as the Region Trustee. The recent voting in the Fit for the Future elections means that on 31 March the position of Region Trustee will cease to exist and the new position of Council Representative will be created.

In common with all other u3a Regions the North West Region will have two Council Representatives. These will be myself and Gill Russell. You will all know Gill from her present role as Chair of the North West Region Committee.

The role of the Council Representatives will be as follows:

- Act as a conduit between the Trust and your members
- Being a representative of u3as in your region/nation ensuring their views, activities and achievements are recognised and considered as part of the work of the Council
- Support and promote u3a-wide initiatives
- Act as a spokesperson for the u3a movement in your region/nation in line with agreed messages from the Trust
- Promoting the ethos, principles and benefits of affiliation to the Trust

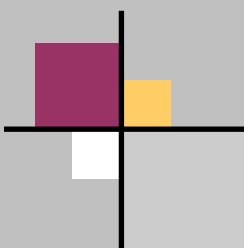
Both Gill Russell and myself look forward to our new roles in working with the 97 u3a's that make up our Region to building an even stronger and active u3a movement in the Region.

David Blanchflower

NW Region Trustee

Contact Details Email: David.blanchflower@u3a.org.uk

NW REGION WEBSITE : <https://northwestregion.u3asite.uk>





North West Region Summer School



**August 12th – 15th
at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU).**

Full details at:

<https://northwestregion.u3asite.uk/summer-school-2025/>



Archaeology around Cottonopolis

Tutor : Maggy Simms

Manchester became the world's first industrial city in the 19th century. Based firmly in textile production, it attracted the nickname 'Cottonopolis'. But in the rush to create wealth, the older past was damaged, scattered and largely lost. In our few days together we'll explore the sites that throw light on what that distant past looked like.

An Introduction to Ancient Egypt

Tutor: Neil Stevenson

This course is aimed at anyone interested in learning about Ancient Egypt, from the predynastic to Greco-Roman period, covering four thousand years of Egyptian history. The course is suitable for complete beginners with no prior knowledge and also those with some knowledge and a desire to learn more.



Intermediary Ukulele

Tutor: Debra Smith

The course is for players at an intermediate level. Enrolees must bring their own ukulele. Amongst other areas suitable for the experience of those attending the course will cover the following;

- Reading tab and playing an instrumental piece
- Using your ukulele as a percussion instrument
- Bass melody lines and riffs

The list of courses available at the Summer School is as follows, with full details of all courses available on the above website link

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Literature 'I have something to say' | Tutor: Meg Shaw |
| Art - A Pot-Pourri | Tutor: Gill Baynes |
| Art - Challenges | Tutor: Jacqueline Cartwright |
| Folk Music | Tutor: Gill Russell |
| Uzbekistan - Heart of the Silk Road | Tutor: Kelvin Rushworth |
| An Introduction to Ancient Egypt | Tutor: Neil Stevenson |

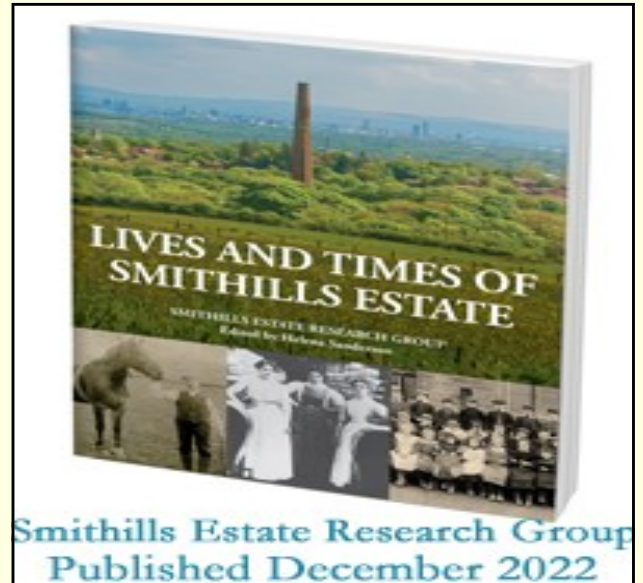
Woodland Trust Smithills Estate

Would your u3a like to have a speaker attend your speaker meeting to speak on the Woodland Trust and the project at Smithills Estate ?

Smithills Estate is the largest site the Woodland Trust has ever acquired in England, steeped in history and shadowed by the famous Winter Hill TV mast. The site is a mix of grassland, farmland, moorland, woodland, wooded cloughs (ravines) and bog habitats, crisscrossed by dry stone walls, with panoramic views over Bolton to Manchester. The site features several active farms and a myriad of interesting walking routes.

Speakers are available from the Smithills Research Group to attend u3a's and speak on a diverse range of topics relating to the Smithills Estate and surrounding area. Full detail from:

Tony Greenwood at email: smithillsresearch@gmail.com



DATE FOR DIARY

1st July 2025



North West Region AGM and Conference 2025
Venue: Quaker Meeting House Liverpool

ONLINE LEARNING

A member can access a wide range of free online talks, workshops, and courses through their membership. Most sessions are led by fellow members, sharing their expertise, with additional talks from notable speakers and organisations.

All events are bookable via Eventbrite. Please ensure you can attend when booking and cancel if you're unable to make it so others can participate. Events are exclusively for u3a members.

Our online events are hosted on Zoom. We have some 'How to Guides' for using Zoom if you are unfamiliar with the platform. The guides can be seen at:

ONLINE NATIONAL LEARNING EVENTS CLICK BELOW
<https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events#Events>

This was a face-to-face meeting. Main items discussed:

Elections for Board Trustees and Council Representatives – The CEO provided a report summarising the completion of the elections for the new Council and the new Board, both to take effect from 1 April. It was agreed that work is required to encourage greater participation in the election process and to improve the registration and voting process to combat the apathy shown by a low turnout in both the hustings and elections. In view of the need to encourage more candidates to come forward in future elections, the Board decided that other than a notification of successful candidates, it would be unwise to publish more details of voting results as it may deter candidates from coming forward. Any u3a wishing to know the details of votes could approach the CEO.

Update of Strategy Implementation Groups – All three SIGs had met at least once, and all groups had terms of reference that would guide future work. There were some concerns expressed around purpose and interactions with other groups – concerns that will require clarification as the groups and the new Council find their feet.

Resolution 500k – The Board received a report on progress during the first year of campaigns to secure 500k members by the end of 2028/29. Traffic to the website from Facebook had doubled as a result of Facebook ads, with the reach, clicks and engagement all showing an increase. The two advertising campaigns on Boom Radio and associated social media campaign and survey had also produced a spike in engagement. Additional media articles in the Times, Guardian and Sunday Times in November/December had also helped to raise the profile of the movement. Pass It On and Bring A Friend trials in select u3as had generated new recruits, and the Friends Newsletter contacts had now reached almost 54,000. Members recognised that tracking increases in membership is only possible on an annual basis, but they expressed some concern that expressions of interest were not being adequately captured.

Financial Matters – The Board received the TATTL and Trust Q3 accounts and noted that the group position was some £129k positive to budget. The Year End Forecast is £195k above forecast, both largely due to savings and better than expected revenue on magazine advertising. The TATTL 2025/26 Business Plan and budget was received for information. The Board also approved the Trust Business Plan and Budget for 2025/26 which focuses on proposals for investing in the staff teams, systems and processes to improve services to the membership.

TATTL Status Report – The Board noted that the current status of all TATTL risk areas was considered to be positive.

Risk Management Framework – The Board approved the Framework prepared and recommended by the Governance Committee. The CEO will be responsible for managing the risk register and enabling the top risks to be monitored regularly by the Board.

Scheme of delegation - The Board considered and approved the Scheme that enables delegation of part of the Board's decision-making powers to the CEO to enable day to day operations to be carried out. The Scheme had been prepared and recommended by the Governance Committee. It is required under the Articles of Association and this particular Scheme is an update on the previous version approved by the Board in 2021.

Learn To Live Outreach Survey – Members received a summary of the steps that had been taken to publicise the Learn To Live report launched in October 2024. In addition to regular u3a channels, the report had also been promoted using a range of strategies and had received positive responses from various MPs and MSPs. The outreach programme would continue with further contacts with potential influencers and additional copies would be produced for circulation.

Valedictory – The Board concluded the business in its present form and members were thanked for their commitment and efforts over their terms of office. A new Board will take effect from 1 April 2025.

Please note that official minutes are the true record of discussions and decisions taken at Board meetings. This is a brief summary of the main topics discussed and should not be taken as an authoritative statement. If you require any further detail about any item, please contact the CEO.

NORTH WEST REGION WEBSITE

The design of the new region website is modern and visually much more appealing than the old website. The site contains lots of useful information that is designed to assist the regions 98 u3a's in providing an excellent and meaningful experience for their members.

Region u3a's are asked to up date their own websites to ensure they link to the new name for the region website which is <https://northwestregion.u3asite.uk>

u3a

North West Region

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Welcome to the website of the North West Region of u3as

All About Us

Every u3a is a member of the Third Age Trust and across the 9 regions and 3 nations of the UK there are now over 1000 u3as, and over 400,000 members.

The North West Region of u3as stretches from North Cumbria to South Cheshire and from the Pennines to the Isle of Man. Our trustee is David Blanchflower.

We are a very diverse and exciting region, including seaside resorts, rural farming villages and large metropolitan areas. We currently have 98 u3as with around 43,000 members. The u3as within our region are equally diverse, reflecting this diversity. We all have one thing in common: we all like to learn, to laugh and to live!



HAVE YOU CONSIDERED SUBSCRIBING TO THE u3a MAGAZINE

Have you considered subscribing to the u3a national magazine. Five issues of the magazine will be posted to your home each year for the annual cost of £4.

The magazine contains a host of information and also many discounted offers.

If you wish to subscribe to the "u3a Matters" magazine please speak to your u3a membership section.

I do hope that you have enjoyed reading this newsletter and found it informative. May I please ask that you circulate this newsletter to your u3a committee members and to members of your u3a

David Blanchflower
NW Region Trustee