

Huyton u3a Newsletter

Spring 2024

Chair's Overview

Hello and welcome to our spring newsletter, the first of four I hope to produce this year. I will use this format to keep you abreast of the status of the Huyton u3a, the events we have planned, ideas we have and the help we need for the future.



The Old Schoolhouse

I also want to use it to tell you about any key initiatives the Third Age Trust (the national governing body for the u3a) have planned. Also, and perhaps more importantly, I would like your input for future newsletters.

To ease the effects of the cost-of-living crisis leading up to Christmas 2023 we delayed gathering our membership renewal fees for the 2023/24 year, only starting in January 2024. I am pleased to say that 71 members have renewed to date which does represent a drop from a peak of 88 members last year but includes several new members which is a pleasing trend to see, and I hope this is a trend that will continue. We maintained our membership at £10 for this year, which is exceptional value compared to most u3as across the country. We will probably have to increase fees for next year to keep abreast of running costs, but we will monitor this through this year.

Like all u3as we are run by our membership, everyone has the opportunity to have a say in what we do or should be doing. The day to day running of our u3a relies on a small committee (trustees) voted into office by you, the membership. The committee is made up of volunteers who have offered their time to undertake key roles that are required to manage our day to day needs and help make our u3a relevant to you, our members.

Your current committee members (Trustees) are: -

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| Chairperson | Ken Groves |
| Deputy Chair | Frank Nicholson |
| Treasurer | Marilyn Carricker |
| Secretary | Eddie Dobson |
| Event's Organiser | Ken Morrow |
| Gordon Lever | Trustee |
| Ann Helsby | Trustee |



Frank, Gordan and Eddie are long standing members whilst the rest of us are relatively new. Eddie is standing down as secretary at the end of March and we desperately need someone to fill this role – volunteers please? I hope Eddie will continue to author the regular “quiz” but there is always room for others to contribute alternative activities. There is also room for a couple more committee members to add experience to the group.

Recently in role, Ken Morrow, has booked an interesting group of speakers for our monthly meetings during 2024 and is actively looking at adding shorter presentations on safety issues and visits to local areas of interest.

Non speaker events coming up later in the year are a “Strawberry Tea” in June, the annual coach trip in August for which we need to finalise the destination and the Christmas Meal in December. We will also be looking for volunteers to support us at the annual Knowsley “Feelgood Festival” on the 3rd of August where we run a stall to promote our activities.



I recently emailed out, at very short notice, a request for assistance for a reminiscence event for "Their Finest Hour" on the 2nd of March at the Liverpool Central Library? It was a kind of "antiques roadshow" to collect reminiscences of the Second World War for this project run by the University of Oxford. I am please to say that at least one of our members volunteered for this event and found it very rewarding. Apparently, some big stories were recorded on the day. You can find out more on their website at <https://theirfinesthour.english.ox.ac.uk/about>

The success of any u3a relies in creating and maintaining interest for its members. A key objective of the u3a movement is to provide vehicles for engagement, wellness and learning and, again, the enabling factor here is that we have volunteers from within the membership who utilise their skills and knowledge to facilitate activity groups that allow members to try new things and meet new people. We, the Huyton u3a, need more group activities if we are to remain sustainable and therefore, we need people to come forward and offer to lead new group activities or join current groups which are desperate for your support. The following is an overview of our currently operating groups.

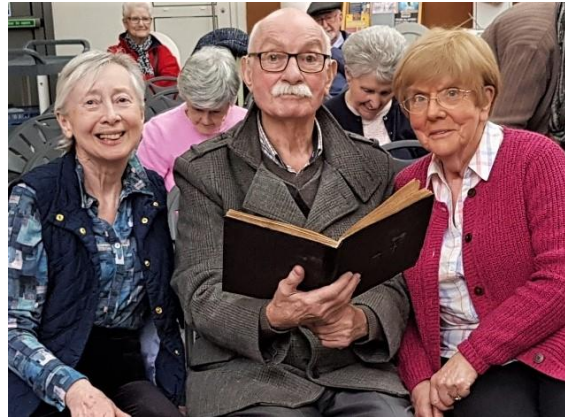
Theatre – Group Leader/Co-ordinator Vera Whitfield

Opportunities throughout the year to visit productions at local theatres. Generally, matinee performances are booked as these are preferred by members.

Creative Writing – Group Leader/Co-ordinator Vera Whitfield

A group who enjoys writing short stories and sharing output on mutually agreed topics.

The Group meet at The Old Schoolhouse on the 1st Tuesday of the month, new members are welcome.



Knit & Natter – Group Leader/Co-ordinator Vera Whitfield

A well supported group of enthusiastic knitters who enjoy a natter. All knitted items are donated either to a specific charity or local hospitals. Since the group started just before the Pandemic, members have contributed a vast quantity of cardigans and hat sets to Whiston Hospital's Special Care Baby Unit.

They have also supplied comfort blankets for use by patients affected by Dementia and knitted tiny hearts to be distributed to a body supported by the Bereavement Service at Whiston Hospital. Staff at the hospital are always very appreciative of all the donations the group has made. The Group meet at Vera's house on the 1st Saturday of the month, new members are welcome.

Garden Visits – Group Leader/Co-ordinator Gordon Lever & Vera Whitfield

This group has recently come under new leadership and a programme of events for 2024 is being established. So, if you are interested in visiting beautiful gardens covered by the "National Garden Scheme" across the region, or, perhaps travel further to the likes of "Bodnant Gardens" then this is the group for you. Due to the cost of coach hire and to keep visits affordable then car sharing will generally be required.

Science – Group Leader/Co-ordinator Frank Nicholson

The group discuss and have presentations on a wide variety of topical scientific and technical matters. Frank has studied Geology and Physical Geography Environment for many years and uses this knowledge as the basis for the groups programme of events.

The Group meet at The Old Schoolhouse on the 4th Thursday of the month, new members are very welcome.

Singing for Pleasure – Group Leader/Co-ordinator Vera Whitfield

An informal group of mixed voices sharing the enjoyment of singing together. You don't need a perfect voice just come along and enjoy the fun. You will always be welcome.



The Group meet at The Old Schoolhouse on alternative Wednesdays of the month, new members are essential to keep this group afloat.

Walking – Group Co-ordinator Ken Groves



Walks average around 10km/6 miles. We take food and drink for lunch and equip ourselves, based on conditions, with necessary clothing and footwear.

Our walks cover Merseyside, Cheshire, Lancashire, and Greater Manchester areas. Generally travelling via public transport.

The Group normally meet every Monday (bar Bank Holidays) at 09:50am at Huyton Station for onward travel, new members are always very welcome.

Don't forget to check out our website at [Huyton u3a: Home \(u3asites.org.uk\)](http://u3asites.org.uk) The website lists all the current group activities, dates and meeting locations and is kept as current as possible. Also find links to other organisations and the national u3a website.

In summary I would urge you all to join in the available activities or seek to create new ones. I would also like you to speak out if you feel you are not represented or don't feel included. Thank you for your support. Ken Groves, Chairperson, Huyton u3a