

April News Edit 2026



welcome
APRIL

- Welcome to the April edition of the u3a newsletter
- This month, we're highlighting upcoming events, members achievements, and opportunities to get involved in our vibrant community.
- Please take note of the various venues so as not to miss out on the exciting activities and monthly meetings.

A Word from the Chair



Welcome to the April edition of the News Edit. As the spring blossoms finally begin to show their faces and the days stretch out, it's wonderful to feel that sense of renewal in the air. I hope you all remembered to put your clocks forward recently—the extra daylight is a very welcome trade-off for that lost hour of sleep!

It has been a busy month across our many groups. It's been particularly heartening to hear about the deep connections forming in our new Meditation group at Sherfield Oaks, and the wonderful social atmosphere of our Walkers and Strollers, who continue to enjoy their weekly outings and chats. Our Health and Wellbeing group also had an informative session, gaining practical advice on everything from cancer support to fall prevention.

Looking ahead, please make sure you have our Annual General Meeting (AGM) firmly marked in your diaries for 8th July at Queen Mary's College. These meetings are vital for the smooth running of our u3a, and they are also a great chance to catch up with one another. We are particularly excited to welcome back the brilliant Tony Harris, who will be joining us as our guest speaker for the afternoon.

Our local survey is currently live, and if you haven't had a chance to fill it out yet, please do. It is completely anonymous and provides the Committee with essential insight for our future growth. We've had a fantastic response so far with nearly 350 entries, but let's see if we can reach a target of 1,080!

Finally, please don't forget to contact me once you've had a think about how you might like to help your local u3a. We are always looking for extra hands to keep our community vibrant. We have plenty of "one-off" simple tasks available, as well as some great opportunities for fun full-team working. volunteer@basingstokeu3a.org.

Wishing you all a wonderful, sun-filled April.



Your Invitation Reminder

.... to the New Members Meeting

We have been delighted to invite all members who joined **u3a** since January 2025 to our upcoming New Members Meeting on **Wednesday, 8th April 2026**.

Our Committee members will be there to welcome you, and—more importantly—our Group Leaders will be on hand to share their experiences, answer your questions, and provide insight into their specific groups. We will also be providing a light lunch before joining our usual Monthly meeting.

Venue: Queen Mary's College, Cliddesden Rd., Basingstoke, RG21 3HF.

- ❖ We look forward to meeting you and helping you make the most of your membership. You would have received your individual invitation via Beacon e-mail.
- ❖ If you require further information contact Lyn Franklin at pr@basingstokeu3a.org.

Group news

.... from Creative Writing group

I'm pleased to report that members of the creative writing group have had a good month.

Cathy Foster and Diane Hope tied second in Short Story writing competition in the literature section of the Basingstoke Music and Arts Festival.

Diane has also written the short story *The Celebration* for our April podcast https://youtu.be/ZK_alleA9lc



Cathy and Diane



Lyn with her book

Lyn Clement regularly writes for online magazine, *Cafelit*. This month she has had two stories selected to be in, 'The Best of *Cafelit*,' book 15. Her flash fiction piece, *Bohemian Woman*, was written to a prompt set by the group.

The other short story won the overall prize for Creative Writing, at The Basingstoke Music and Arts Festival 2025. Titled, *The Visitor*. It is about three sisters in a séance. Since joining the group, Lyn has had stories published in 'The Best of *Cafelit*', 11,12,13, and 14.

As supplied by Guy Caplin Group Leader

Congratulations Everyone!

Group news

.... from Health Wellbeing group



This month the Health and Wellbeing group had two sets of speakers. The first was on **Cancer support** and the second on **fall prevention**.

Representatives from the Ark Cancer Support Centre at Basingstoke Hospital, outlined the many side effects that chemotherapy, immunotherapy, radiotherapy and surgery can have on patients and the fact that these can last for many years. They ran through the treatments offered such as lymphatic drainage, acupuncture, reflexology and massage and how these are proven to alleviate the side effects and generally relax very anxious patients, which aids recovery.

This service is part of the NHS for people in Basingstoke but is not offered proactively, so it is important to ask.

A really informative presentation that helped me better understand the journey some of my family had been through and gave ideas for improved outcomes.

You can support the Ark with donations of clothes and textiles (regardless of quality) at the 27 bright yellow drop off points in Basingstoke.

The second presentation was from Steph Wallis a member of the live, longer, better group, where I represent the u3a. Members include healthcare professionals and councillors and is run by the Basingstoke Council. Steph came armed with leaflets and free resistance bands. She went through why we incur more falls as we age and what exercises we can do to improve things like balance, grip and posture. I think a lot of us took away the resistance bands and their instructions with renewed vigour to get moving.

Next month our presentation will be from a local charity that supports the **Stroke Association**. There will be 3 speakers, one whose wife had a stroke, and a husband and wife. She had a stroke and is recovering.

They will talk about:

1. What are the different types of strokes
2. What causes strokes
3. What can you do to avoid them
4. How to spot when they are happening
5. Actions to take and support available

I do hope you will join us on April 9th.

As supplied by Elaine Budd Group Leader.

Group news

.... Walkers and Strollers group



The **Walkers and Strollers** group is a social weekly event held every Wednesday. We park and meet at Waitrose for a 10am start.

The **strollers** do a short walk at their own pace, chatting on the way, with tea/coffee involved at some point. It's an opportunity for anyone who might struggle to walk far but would like to get out for some fresh air and to meet other people for a chat.

The **walkers** do a longer faster walk, but NOT speed walking! Probably around 3 miles round trip with a break for tea/coffee and a chat. It's as much social as it is exercise!

Over the last year we've got to know and look out for each other and look forward to meeting up. Not everyone can come every week but that's fine, we've all got things going on.

The walkers and strollers are usually back at Waitrose within two hours (break included), and we're a friendly bunch!

If you are interested in joining this group or discussing with the group leader, please contact Janet Field at groups-jf@basingstokeu3a.org and I will pass your details on to Lynne

As supplied by Janet Field Group Facilitator

Group news

.... Meditation - Ancient Wisdom

We came together for the first time to share why each of us wanted to begin—or deepen—our meditation practice. It was lovely hearing everyone's stories and recognising how valuable a group can be in supporting one another on this journey.

There was a real sense of openness and trust in the room as we talked about both the benefits of meditation and some of the challenges that can arise along the way.

As many people were new to meditation, it felt like a very natural place to begin, with everyone exploring from a similar starting point.

We also touched on some of the ideas behind meditation, including the difference between the ego and the higher Self. Often it's the ego that criticises us when we feel we're not living up to its impossible standards. This led to a conversation about self-compassion and the importance of being kind to ourselves as we practise.

It was a wonderful beginning, and we're all looking forward to our next meeting at Sherfield Oaks Golf Club, in a beautiful room overlooking the green.

As supplied by Karen Blakeley Group Leader

Group news

.... Pop the Question



Pop the Question Music Quiz with local DJ's James & Christine Rowley on Wednesday 25 March

How close the rounds were, with music clips from 80's, Mods & Rockers, Festival Headliners and the usual picture round, just 3 point between the winners and runners up.



Picture of members during their tea/coffee and biscuit break.

Please note: Our next Pop the Question Music Quiz has a slightly different date:

Wednesday 29 April which is the fifth Wednesday 2pm till 4pm at Sherborne St John Village Hall, plenty of parking.

Music clip rounds will include:

- James Bond and Secret Agent Themed Songs
- Banned on the radio in the UK & US
- 70's Singer Songwriters

Local Heroes in **Picture Round**

As supplied by Christine Rowley Group Leader

Group news

.... Book Club

Author visit - Tuesday Book Club 28th April 10am

This month's Tuesday book club has an exciting author visit. Sam Holland will be joining us to discuss Gallows Wood which she wrote under the name Louisa Scarr, the book which is a crime novel featuring a police dog handler is a great read. She is going to discuss the book, how she came to be an author and is keen to answer any questions.

If you aren't a book club member, but fancy coming along, grab the book and let Group Leader, Elaine Budd know on NewGroups@basingstokeu3a.org

Behind the Scenes

...Volunteer Opportunities

Our u3a activities are thriving but to keep our bold spirit moving forward as we continue to grow, the pressure on our core team increases.

To put it simply: we need more volunteers to support you.

Without extra help behind the scenes, we cannot maintain the vibrant, well-run community we all enjoy.

Whether it is a small, one-off task or a more formal Committee role, your involvement is what makes this work.

If you have administrative skills, help stacking and packing chairs or simply a desire to see our u3a succeed, please consider stepping forward. You will have plenty of support from the current team as you find your feet.

Please email: volunteer@basingstokeu3a.org for further information.

April Monthly Meeting



08 April 2026

Meeting Schedule

- **13:30** – Tea, coffee & biscuits: Time for chatting
- **14:00** – Main Presentation
- **15:00** – Q&A, followed by refreshments to finish

Guest Speaker: Dr. Sohail Husain.

Topic: Beyond Beliefs: One Family's Incredible Story

Venue: Queen Mary's College - Cliddesden Rd., Basingstoke, RG21 3HF.

Future Monthly Meetings

13 May 2026

Guest Speaker: Ian Worley

Topic: Charles Darwin

Venue: Popley Fields Community Centre, Carpenters Down, RG24 9AE

10 June 2026

You are invited to the u3a summer picnic. Full details will be available soon.

Venue: Sherfield Oaks Golf Club, Wildmoor Lane, Sherfield On Loddon, RG27 0HB

08 July 2026

Annual General Meeting

Venue: Queen Mary's College, Cliddesden Rd., Basingstoke, RG21 3HF

Guest Speaker: Tony Harris entertains as Donald Trump



Notice Board

Late Joining Fee: If you know anyone wanting to join, those joining after 1st March pay a reduced fee of **£30** for the remainder of the membership year.

Recycling: Please bring your empty foil blister packs to the monthly meetings for collection.

Explore Groups: Log in to the [Basingstoke u3a Portal](#) to view all groups and arrange taster visits.

May News Edit: Got a story? Email Lyn at pr@basingstokeu3a.org by mid-April (Max 500 words).

...and Before you go...

Contribution from a Member

“Karen Blakeley runs the Thursday Meditation Group which I have attended twice, it's once a month and it's really making me think about me, my life and what I do. It's great to get back to creative writing. It's a light hearted piece about how we get away from some of the troubles in the world, something we can do walking but reflecting on how I felt.” ...Christine

Walking in the Woods

Turn off the News, let's have a break,
put your feet up, enjoy some cake.

Go for a walk, listen to the birds sing,
turn off our mobiles, no ping, ping, ping.

Walking in silence in a lovely wood,
listening to nature, now I feel good.

A simple pleasure, it's also free,
with so many delightful things to see.

All Earth`s creatures sharing this space,
ancient trees, bluebells and wind in my face.

I've cleared my thoughts, walked a mile
on my return home, with a great big smile.

Written by Christine Rowley