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- Our Theatre Group is officially under way with its first bookings.
- Walking Football and Walking Cricket are keeping members active at Everest Community Hall.
- The Health & Wellbeing Group provided vital insights into stroke awareness.

PLUS MUCH MORE...

## A Word from the Chair

As we move into May, it is important to recognise the substantial contribution made by our group leaders and deputies. The sheer amount of time and commitment you have dedicated to your roles this year is the backbone of our organisation, and your hard work does not go unnoticed.

We also recently held a successful meeting for our newer members, expertly organised by Janet, Elaine, Lyn, and Natalie. It was wonderful to have the support of eleven Group Leaders and twelve Committee members on the day; it was a pleasure to meet those who have joined us recently and to hear how they are settling into our community.

### Committee & Volunteer News

I am delighted to announce that **Sandra Leach** was co-opted onto the Committee on the 18th April 2026. Sandra has joined us as Assistant Secretary and will be shadowing Simon McCarthy until he steps down at the AGM in July 2026. We are very grateful to Sandra for ensuring a smooth transition.

Looking ahead, we are seeking a **co-opted assistant to work alongside our Treasurer, Philip**, with a view to taking over the role in 2027/2028. If you have the skills to help in this area, please do get in touch.

**Expanding our volunteer base** is a wonderful way to ensure our u3a remains a vibrant and sustainable community. By sharing your time and diverse talents, you help maintain the high standard of activities and support that make our organisation so special. We are looking to set up a rota of volunteers to help us set out and put away the chairs at our monthly meetings, as well as volunteers to help with admin tasks.

Even if you only have a small amount of **time to spare**, please **contact me directly to chat about volunteering roles**. I would love to hear what skills you have that could help our u3a.

### Group Development

There has been some great progress in our group development thanks to Elaine's hard work. We have seen 11 new groups launch already for the 2025/2026 period, with a further six starting this month! This includes **Golf Practice** and a **Coffee Afternoon** at **Sherfield Oaks Golf Club** bringing our total to 100 active groups.

### Looking Ahead

Note also the **summer picnic** at **Sherfield Oaks Golf Club** 10<sup>th</sup> June. If you have room in your car, please check if another member of your group needs a lift, as some of our members do not have transport. Sadly, I cannot make the picnic as I am away, but I am sure you will all have a wonderful afternoon and I hope you are blessed with sunshine.

Finally, don't forget to bring your **empty medicine blister packs** along to the monthly meeting!

### Toni Shaw

Chair, Basingstoke Old Basing u3a

## Group news

### .... from Military History Group



The Military History Group had an interesting outing on April 15<sup>th</sup>.

We visited the ruins of Basing House, in Old Basing Village.

Basing House was ruined after a siege by Oliver Cromwell in 1645 during the English Civil War (1642 – 1651).

We were given a private guided tour by Alan Turton who was curator at Basing House museum from 1987 until 2011 when he retired.

He is a well-known local Historian and is a noted expert on the English Civil War.

We meet on the second Wednesday of every month, 10am - 12noon at the St Leonards Centre in Oakley.

Our next meeting is on May 13<sup>th</sup> when Alastair Sim will be giving a talk on 'Battlecruisers'

If anyone is interested in joining this group please go through the [Basingstoke u3a Portal](#)  
Tim Parry is Group leader.



As supplied by Alastair Sim

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## Group news

### .... from Ballroom Dancing Group



On 27 March 2026 our Ballroom Dancing Group held an end of term Easter Dance where we practised many **Ballroom** and **Latin American Dances** plus a few “party dances”.

We currently have some space for new **couples** to join the group. If you are interested, please contact: [pearlkent2@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:pearlkent2@yahoo.co.uk)

As supplied by Pearl Kent and Norman Wynn  
Joint Group Leaders

## Group news

### ... Theatre Group

Many thanks to those of you who attended the inaugural meeting of the Basingstoke U3a Theatre group. This is a summary of the meeting.

Members present endorsed the idea of establishing such a group to facilitate attendance at local theatres and to encourage discussion and appreciate stage productions. It was recognized the group would need to cater for a range of tastes and interests. Jane Lawrence and Tim Parry agreed to act as Group Leaders.



The mode of operation would be to identify four plays per year and then hold a discussion group to share views and experiences of the production. It was agreed that a timeline for attending productions would need to be established with a follow up discussion group taking place within two weeks.

The group agreed that the first two shows for group discussion would be *The Nightmare Room* at the Haymarket 21-23 May 2026 and *Murder Before Evensong* at the Watermill Theatre Newbury 25 Sept - 14 Nov. 2026

If anyone is interested in joining this new group or for further information please contact Tim at [dtimparry@gmail.com](mailto:dtimparry@gmail.com) for further information or join through the [Basingstoke u3a Portal](#)

As supplied by Tim Parry

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## Group news

### ... from Health & Wellbeing Group

#### Strokes

This month's presentation April 9<sup>th</sup> was from three members of the Basingstoke support branch for the **Stroke Association** who gave us a very sobering presentation on strokes

A stroke is a brain attack; at a stroke your life will change which is why the word stroke is so apt.

After a stroke you could die, or it could leave you with lifetime debilitating disabilities such as: not being able to talk, walk, cook, cloth yourself, stability issues, concentration problems, loss of memory, exhaustion, inability to write, weakness in limbs, changes of personality, fatigue bladder and bowel control, pins and needles, difficulty swallowing, muscle and joint pain, numb skin, 60% have vision issues and 80% experience issues with movement. A really worrying list and all of these can lead to anxiety and depression.

We were giving some thought-provoking facts. There are 100,000 strokes a year that's one every 5 minutes. 1.4 million stroke survivors live in the UK and strokes cost the UK £26 billion a year. Stroke survivors often need one to one support which is why the costs are so high. Two out of three people having a stroke will be left with a disability and it is the 4th largest killer in the UK.

Did you know 16% of strokes happen under the age of 60 and they can happen in the womb?

There are two types of strokes;



1. Ischaemic – a blood clot that blocks off the oxygen to your brain. 85% of strokes is type 1 and if you get to a hospital quickly, a clot busting drug can be administered.
2. Haemorrhagic - a brain bleed, 15% of strokes

Around the blockage and the bleed, brain cells are dying so it's important you get attention quickly. The brain does have the ability to rewire around these dead cells so there is hope.

There is a useful acronym used to help you remember, it's called acting **FAST**

**F**acial weakness - can't smile

**A**rm weakness - cannot hold both arms up

**S**peech problems - people can't understand you as you may sound either drunk or cannot talk

**T**ime to call 999- the brain is dying do not wait to make this call and when you get through tell them that you think that the person is having a stroke now!

A haemorrhagic stroke can often present as a very severe headache like a thunderclap going off in your head. You can have a stiff neck have nausea and vomiting these are common symptoms

A TIA is a mini stroke where blood supply is temporary disrupted. Symptoms do not usually last more than 24 hours. A TIA is a medical emergency so call 999. You should see this as a warning because you may be more susceptible to a full stroke in the future.

The care you receive will depend on where you live. When you leave hospital, you must get a care plan, but you'll find that it may only last for about 6 months and the effects of a stroke last a lot longer. With ongoing therapy there could be continued improvement, they suggested that if you can afford it, get it.

It's important to remember every stroke is different and the damage done is different depending on where the blockage or bleed happens.

### **Reducing your risks**

The biggest risk is your age, which you can't do anything about but there are others; atrial fibrillation, which is an irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, (remember eating a lot of salt can increase your blood pressure) diabetes, high cholesterol, taking drugs(non-prescription)

Lifestyle - smoking, being overweight, drinking too much alcohol, and being inactive.

Family history.

Ethnicity - unfortunately black people have a higher tendency for strokes.

The Stroke Association has an excellent website which also signposts you to a helpline for support post stroke

[www.stroke.org.uk](http://www.stroke.org.uk).

Our local stroke support group meet weekly at Hillrise Hall in Brighton Hill doing things like exercise sessions, socialisation and it's all funded by donations.

The final piece of advice is - if you are having a stroke try, as difficult as it may be, to stay calm because you use less oxygen that way.

The next meeting is on 14<sup>th</sup> May when Dr Charlotte Hutchins will talk about heart health and St John's Ambulance will join us to demonstrate CPR and the use of a defibrillator.

As supplied by Elaine Budd Group Leader.

## Group News

### ...Easy Paced Walking Football



Easy Paced walking football got off to a 'flying start', - well, a gentle stroll, in April.

Eight people turned up, bright eyed and bushy tailed. We did some warm up exercises, practised some drills and played an easy paced game.

The match was quite even, with some good goals scored. We made sure we warmed down too.

There were smiles from the group as the endorphins kicked in.

Well done everyone. See you in May.

For anyone interested in joining add your name via the members portal.

We meet once a month at the Everest Sports Hall - 5pm till 6pm. Thursday 14th May is the next session.

As supplied by Lynn Clement Group Leader

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## NB. Beacon Data

### .... Emergency contacts

We have been doing a spring clean of our Beacon data and noticed that some of our members haven't added an emergency contact number to their records. It would be helpful if you could also add the relationship to this information e.g. daughter, son, husband

Some members only have a landline contact number on Beacon and it would be useful if we could have your mobile number as well, assuming you have one. This is especially important if you go out on trips as part of your group and you go missing and the Group Leader needs to contact you.

To summarise can you check and add to your records, if necessary:

- Your mobile number
- An emergency contact number
- Who the emergency contact is

You can amend and add to your own record via the Portal. If you have a problem doing this please pass your details to Richard Field - [beacon@basingstokeu3a.org](mailto:beacon@basingstokeu3a.org)

Janet Field, Group Facilitator, Basingstoke Old Basing u3a

## New Members Meeting

### .... You asked we listened

One suggestion to come from the New Members Meeting was to add a map to the website with all the venues marked, so that a member could see venues near where they live and click through to find what groups meet at those venues.

In response to this suggestion, we have added such a venue map, which can be found by navigating to Groups > Venue Map from the website home page, or directly via <https://www.basingstokeu3a.org/venue-map>

The page is an embedded Google map, which includes many of the facilities provided by Google maps elsewhere, such as the ability to zoom and move around the map, and also to access Google Street View. The map initially loads with the town centre (specifically The Tavern on London Street) in the centre but can be moved to show other venues. To get more information about a location of interest, hover over a pin to see the venue name, click the pin to see the venue address, then click on the address for the venue page with a list of groups at that venue, or click on "Directions" for to have Google Maps prepare a route to the venue (car, bike, walking and public transport routes can be requested).

All the venues our groups use are shown on the map (some may be out of view initially) except for those groups which meet at a member's or group leader's home, which it would be inappropriate to show on a public website.

Expertly Done by Charles Miller – Systems & Web Master

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## Monthly Meetings

**13 May 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:** 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.

**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

**Volunteers Opportunities:** If you're interested in supporting your u3a during your free time - whether by helping with administrative tasks, arranging chairs, or preparing tea, please contact [volunteer@basingstokeu3a.org](mailto:volunteer@basingstokeu3a.org) to learn more.

**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:** 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.

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

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### ***A few new groups starting in May.***

The **Theatre** group are visiting their first production.

**Pilates** group 2 starts enhancing their cores.

Our first **Coffee afternoon** hit the caffeine .

**Walking cricket** are going to have plenty a few "dibbly dobblys" and "daisy cutters" but hopefully no "biffing" around Everest Community Hall.

Two **Golf** practices groups will be hitting the driving range and putting greens.

If you would like to lead a new group, please contact [newgroups@basingstokeu3a.org](mailto:newgroups@basingstokeu3a.org)

## Third Age Trust

Basingstoke-Old Basing u3a is a member of the Third Age Trust, which provides information and help for all u3a members.



You can find more information about these by following the links below:

[National u3a Website](#)

*The website of the national u3a movement - offering online learning, online interest groups, a blog, monthly podcast and more*

[u3a Radio Podcast](#)

*The u3a radio podcast, set up in 2020, showcases the amazing things happening across the movement. It's created by a team of u3a members who all have radio experience and features interviews with members, interest group leaders, Trustees, national volunteers and Subject Advisers.*

[National u3a Friends Newsletter](#)

*The u3a Friends newsletter shares news, learning opportunities and member stories from across the u3a movement. Signing up to the newsletter means you are up to date and in touch with all that's happening across the movement as it happens. You'll also gain exclusive access to our Friends Extra website - a range of offers, discounts and services. Each issue of the Friends Newsletter includes a link to the Friends Extra benefits website.*

[Interest Groups Online](#)

*Interest Groups Online (abbreviated as IGO) is an online u3a community that gives you the opportunity to join groups, talks and courses from the comfort of your home. Note that this has a separate joining fee (currently £12).*

[National u3a Learning](#)

*A schedule of activities complimenting what is provided locally and connecting members across the UK*

[World u3a](#)

*Links to other u3a's worldwide*

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## ...and Before you go...

Survey by Willis Museum and Sainsbury Gallery about life in Basingstoke in 1990s.

**Our u3a has been contacted by the Willis Museum in the Market Square for any assistance with research for an exhibition they are holding from mid-July.**

The exhibition is about life in Basingstoke in the 1990s. The Museum is looking for real memories and quotes from people who remember the town.



Members can pop into the museum (Wednesday - Sunday 10 -4 and fill in the questionnaire, which must be completed by early June.

Here are the questions they are asking:

What were you doing in the 1990s? Did you go to school, or were you at work? What did you do for work? And what was your office/environment like? What technology did you use and what memories did you have from your time there? (If you were at school, just change out work for school) What did the town look like? What shops did you go to? How did you spend the day in town?

Where did you go to have fun at the weekend? Who did you go with? What is your most treasured memory of an event or moment which happened during your time in Basingstoke in the 1990s? If you have more than one, feel free to share as many as you'd like!

Finally, do you have any photographs or objects to help illustrate your stories that you would be happy to loan to the museum for the course of the exhibition? Please list them.