

Basingstoke – Old Basing

u3a
learn, laugh, live

July News Edit 2026



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- Successful launches of new groups
- Annual General Meeting
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PLUS MUCH MORE...

Welcome to this month's News Edit.

I hope you are all enjoying the summer. Sadly, I missed our Annual Picnic this year as I was away, but I was absolutely delighted to hear it was such a resounding success. We owe a massive thank you to **Sherfield Oaks Golf Club**, who very generously provided the venue for free, helping to make it such a wonderful day for everyone.

This issue highlights just how vibrant our u3a remains. We have updates on the successful launches of the new **Theatre Group** and **Golf Practice Group**, alongside an exciting upcoming **Introduction to Tarot** course. There is also an important and highly informative summary from our Health & Wellbeing group on bowel cancer awareness.

With our **Annual General Meeting** approaching on **Wednesday 8th July**, I want to share that I have made the decision not to stand for re-election as Chair for the coming year. It has been a privilege to serve our u3a community, and I look forward to seeing many of you at Queen Mary's College for the formal AGM business.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the committee for all their support during the year. The entire team has been great, but I must give a special mention to my Vice Chair, Cynthia, who has been a huge help to me, and to Simon, who has handled our governance with such fantastic attention to detail. A small shout-out also goes to Lyn, who puts so much time and effort into making sure this News Edit all knits together so well. I wish the incoming committee all the very best.

Finally, a reminder that our next membership year runs from 1st September to 31st August. You can log on to the members' portal to renew from **1st August**, ensuring you are all set up and ready for the start of the new term. Please note that the deadline for renewals is **30th September**.



Thank you all for your support during my time as Chair.

Toni Shaw

Annual Picnic

Everyone had a wonderful time at this year's annual picnic. Members loved the venue, enjoyed the goodie bags on arrival, and appreciated the beautiful natural surroundings.

We were delighted by the excellent turnout, and the weather was kind to us. Member feedback included: ***"Best u3a picnic ever."*** ***"Fabulous venue — loved the nature around us."*** ***"I hope we can come back next year."***



Theatre Group



The Theatre group has finally been launched. After an inaugural meeting at Sheffield Oaks Golf club attended by over 25 members the groups first chosen production was **The Nightmare Room** at the Haymarket Basingstoke in May.

This production based on a story by Arthur Conan Doyle was full of twists and turns.

The subsequent follow up group discussion held at the Waitrose Cafe generated a range of views on the performance, plot and production. We seem to be developing into a group of critical theatre goers.

The next show will be **Murder Before Evensong** at the Watermill Theatre, Bagnor Newbury which starts on 25 September showing through to early November. The play is based on the bestselling novel by Richard Cole's and the setting of the Watermill Theatre should add to what promises to be an entertaining evening.

Authors Tim Parry and Jane Lawrence Group Leaders

Golf Practice Group 1

The inaugural meet of the new Golf Practice Group 1 was on Wednesday 6th May at Sheffield Oaks Golf Club. We were greeted by Luke Grudge, a lovely young man who will be looking after us for each of the sessions; setting up and providing golf balls and clubs if required. We kicked off in the bar with free tea and coffee for this first time so we could get to know each other a little. For subsequent sessions we will do this after the golf.

This group is not for beginners to golf but for current golfers or those that have at least hit a few balls before. It essentially allows you to have an hour of practice to improve your game. So once on the driving range, the golf balls were flying off the tee with some excellent hits using all types of clubs, aiming for a variety of distances and achieving at all levels. There was plenty of space for 8-10 golfers driving at the same time and Luke was there to replenish golf balls and offer encouragement if needed.

After about half an hour on the driving range we moved to the practice putting area. There were 5/6 holes to work around and balls were rolling all over the place with some great putts in from a variety of distances. You set up yourself, deciding which hole and distance you wanted to work from and then with a little putting green etiquette, we all had plenty of chances to hole a ball.

Blessed with fabulous weather and good company, a great first session enjoyed by all.

Author, group leader Sally Newcombe



Health and Wellbeing Group

Bowel Cancer – Michael from Bowel Cancer UK

Our speaker this month was Michael, a bowel cancer survivor who at 52-years-old, was diagnosed at stage 4. It led to a massive operation removing, cleaning and replacing most of his abdominal organs and removing part of his backbone. The tumour was spreading rapidly as he failed to understand the symptoms he was experiencing.

Terms:

Bowel cancer is cancer of the large bowel, rectum and anus and is known as Colorectal Cancer. Polyps are small growths, usually non-cancerous but can become cancer.

Facts:

Bowel cancer is slow growing, and it can take 10 years for polyps to become tumours. It is the 4th most common cancer in the UK. Around 46,000 people are diagnosed in the UK a year and is the cancer that is the 2nd biggest killer.

94% of bowel cancer is found in over 50's. Unfortunately, due to younger people not having as many cases, it often goes undetected and is more serious when found.

If found early, it is a cancer that can be positively addressed: Found at stage 1, 9 in 10 will survive, but found at stage 4 only 1 in 10 will survive

Symptoms:

- Bleeding from bottom
- Blood in stools
- Pain or lump in abdomen
- Change in how you pass poo, diarrhoea or constipation
- Feeling tired without a reason
- Losing weight but not sure why

Tests:

Do not ignore the bowel screening test that comes through the post-box, they are easy to use and can save your life. Screening age now starts at 50 and stops at 74.

However, if you do have any of the symptoms above, contact your GP. If you are hesitant to do so, keep a diary of your symptoms for a couple of weeks. If they do not return to normal, do not hesitate to contact your GP. You can also ask for a bowel test at any time, even after 74. The ones given out by GP's are more sensitive than the ones that come through the post.



Reducing the risk:

These are the things we hear a lot about on how to avoid many complaints:

- Eat plenty of fibre
- Eat less red and processed meat
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Quit smoking
- Limit alcohol intake
- Do plenty of physical activity – it keeps everything inside moving

Risk factors:

- Aged over 50
- Strong family history/genetics such as lynch syndrome
- Type 2 diabetes
- Inflammatory bowel disease, IBD, not IBS

Prevention:

If your screening comes back positive you will be given a colonoscopy checking for signs of cancer and polyps. During the procedure they will take samples or remove polyps.

Bowel Cancer UK

This cancer support organisation undertakes the following:

- Gives information to sufferers
- Works to save lives with research
- Education – doing community talks
- Helps to improve the quality of life of sufferers
- Creates communities in private spaces for sufferers to talk to people with the same problems. Michael's operation was very scary and complicated, but he was able to talk to people that had been through it before which helped.

If you want to help, you can donate on the Bowel Cancer UK website [Bowel Cancer | Bowel Cancer UK](#) or you can sign up to their newsletter.

Final thought: 7 in 10 people use the screening test which means 3 people ignore it. Don't be one of those people

Next month's Health and Wellbeing is about the psychology of eating: Why you eat what you do, what beliefs you have that lead to eating habits and what can you do about them.

A really fascinating perspective on our relationship with food that can improve the quality of what you eat and avoid the need to diet.

Author: Elaine Budd – Health and Wellbeing Group Leader

New Group News

.....Introduction to Tarot

Tarot is a visual and symbolic system to understand the principles of life, relationships and personal growth. It can be used in many ways to enhance your understanding of yourself and others as well as life situations.

This 10 session course will introduce you to the concepts underpinning Tarot, build your understanding and skills through learning and practice within the group. Expect some practice homework between classes.

As this is a class that builds understanding to a specific framework, we appreciate your being able to attend as many classes in person as possible.



Group Leader Nina has been a professional Tarot reader and teacher of personal development for over 40 years.

Venue Sherfield Oaks Golf Course, 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month for 10 sessions starting in July, from 10:00 – 12:00

To join visit the members portal.

Monthly Meetings

8 July 2026 - Annual General Meeting

Time: 13:30 - 16:00

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

Guest Speaker: Tony Harris entertains as Donald Trump

12 August 2026 – There will not be a monthly meeting

18 September 2026 – Friday

13:30 – Tea, coffee & Biscuits, time to chat.

14:00 – Main Presentation with guest speaker Luke Murphy.

Theme: What it is like to be a first time MP and his experiences in Parliament.

15:00 – Q&A, followed by refreshments to finish

Venue: Queen Mary's College, Main Hall, Cliddesden Rd., Basingstoke, G21 3HF

14 October 2026 – To be confirmed.

Notice Board



Volunteering Opportunities:

If you're interested in supporting your u3a during your free time - whether by helping with administrative tasks, arranging chairs, or preparing tea/coffee. Please contact volunteer@basingstokeu3a.org to learn more.

Recycling:

Bring your empty foil blister packs to the monthly meetings for collection.

Membership Renewal

Membership year is from 1 September 2026 to 31 August 2027. Renewals will be able available via the website from the beginning of August. Please renew by 30 September to avoid membership being terminated.

There will not be a News Edit in August.

September 2026 News Edit:

Got a story? email Lyn at pr@basingstokeu3a.org by mid-August (Max 500 words) including photographs or graphics

A message of appreciation for the u3a Committee, with special thanks to Elaine for her work on New Groups Development.

....."Thanks Elaine

Can I just say that I think the number and variety of groups available from our U3A is incredible and thank you for all your effort in making this happen.

I travel to North Yorkshire every 6 weeks to see family and looked up the U3A there. I was shocked to see they had less than 10 groups and 3 of those were walking.

So well done all of the committee members and group leaders for making such an effort.".....

Click on the link below to see groups:

<https://www.basingstokeu3a.org/groups/all-groups>

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.

[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

