

OCTOBER 2026

‘Self-help educational and leisure activities organised for and by older people’

Editor’s Notes (John Peat)

Welcome to our October Newsletter. Some unusual content this month including early information on 2027 Charity support, holidays, and Open Meetings. There is also a wider topic of ‘Opportunities’ that now embraces more than learning events, in this instance, with a request for volunteer drivers to take patients for medical appointments, and conversely, how to find a volunteer driver to take YOU to a medical appointment.

NB November Coffee morning dates and times

KEY POINTS TO NOTE

Committee Messages	2027 Charity support
u3a Travel	Latest news on trips and holiday contact details
Membership	New members.
Groups	Two potential new groups?
Opportunities	Volunteer Drivers required, and do you need one for you own use?
Notice Board 1	More Meetings Volunteers required.
Notice Board 2	Dates for Your Diary (including 2027 Open Meeting details)
Notice Board 3	Important announcement regarding holidays in 2027
Activity Reports	Wimpole Hall visit
APPENDIX A	Wymondham Central Hall Fire Evacuation

1. Committee Messages

1.1. Chair’s Report (Georgette Vale)

1.1.1. Visit from Ruth Freedman

We were very pleased to welcome Ruth Freedman, our Third Age Trust East of England Council Representative on the 17th Sept. We were actually her first visit in her role, and she said she was very impressed with the things that we do, and how our coffee morning was buzzing with activity. We found her very approachable and there are a couple of issues that she is going to look into for us. As I took her to the station to catch her train back to Colchester, she said she would give Wymondham u3a a gold star. One of the things she talked about was how difficult it is to come to a meeting for the first time. It is something of which we are always mindful. We do have our Host Team at coffee morning, but there is always room for improvement. I do hope no one would ever give any new member the kind of cold shoulder Ruth experienced on her first encounter with her u3a!

1.1.2 Visiting other organisations

Chris Thornton and I have been out and about a bit, visiting a few other organisations similar to us. We stressed that we were not there to poach members, but it does no harm to have a bit of cross fertilization between organisations.

We were welcomed at the Chit Chat Group who meet at Great Ellingham Village Hall every Wednesday Morning. They have activities, talks, outings etc. as well as the opportunity to chat and relieve a bit of

loneliness if that is what is needed. Several u3a members were already members there, and we have had three new members from Chit Chat enticed by the groups we have.

Next it was the Meeting Point held at The Town Green Centre on a Friday Morning (behind Wymondham Methodist Church). Again, we were similarly met with familiar faces! This is certainly another vital community resource (and the cake was nice)

If you know of any other clubs and societies that would like a visit from us, please let me know.

1.1.3. Visiting your groups

I would also like to get to know some of our own u3a groups and members a bit better. It would be nice to have a chat and gauge what members really want from their membership. If you would like to invite me or Christine (or any other Committee member for that matter!) then do feel free to get in touch.

1.2. Coffee mornings

1.2.1. October 1st.

Please do not forget that our South Norfolk MP **Ben Goldsborough** will be visiting us. This will not be political in any way. He genuinely wants to meet people and find out what his constituents need from him.

1.2.2. N.B. November coffee morning times

Please note Time changes, see Notice Board 2

1.2.3. Charity Coffee Morning(s)

WANTED Cake Organiser

A very successful part of our Charity Coffee Mornings is the Cake Stall that Linda Luxmore and her team have been running. Linda has done a wonderful job over the years organizing this, but it is now time for someone else to take up the wooden spoon of planning who is making what and sorting it all out on the day.

If you can offer help, either alone or part of team, we will be pleased to put you in touch, and Linda will help you get started.

The last Charity Coffee Morning of 2026 will be on November 5th, supporting Guide Dogs for the Blind

These two gorgeous rag dolls are being auctioned. To put your bid in see me at coffee morning or email me [REDACTED]

Please state whether you want the one in the dress and hat. or the one with the green jacket and blue jeans.

Any donations for these causes can be made at Thursday coffee mornings.

A Tombola helper will be present to receive your donations with many thanks.

If you wish to arrange donation drops at other times, please contact Carole [REDACTED]



1.2.4. Charity Coffee Mornings 2027

The following charities have been selected for our support at our 2027 Charity Coffee mornings.

February: **The Red Cross** because we have had all the first aid training at no cost to us.

May: **It's On The Ball** supporting people who have had testicular cancer.

August: **Little Lifts** a breast cancer support charity. So, we have something for both men and women.

November: **NARS**, Norfolk Accident Response Service.

1.3. Open meetings

Refreshment makers needed for Speakers Open Meetings

Our Speaker Seeker team has got a wonderful programme of speakers lined up. (have a look at the noticeboard in the corridor). Teas and coffees are very welcome and necessary, but we could do with more help in this area.

1.4. Fire Evacuation at Wymondham Central Hall (John Peat)

I can report that the independent Fire Risk Assessment for Wymondham Central Hall has taken place. As u3a we are now waiting to be told the results, and to see if it makes any difference to room capacities and escape routes.

As for now for current details See Appendix A

2. U3a Travel Updates (see Notice Board 3)

2.1. Coach Day Trips (Kerry Ingram-Smith)

Well, the summer coach trips have come to an end, with 35 of us visiting Wimpole Hall on 18th September.

I'd like to thank you all for your support and kind comments over the past 6 months, during this, my first year of organising the trips.

I'm still putting together the itinerary for the trips in 2027, but I should be able to advertise these soon.

The Christmas trip to **Holkham Hall** is sold out. For those of you who have secured a place, the final payment of £30 is due by the end of October.

If you're no longer able to attend, I'd appreciate you letting me know and I can offer your place to members on the waiting list.

I'll be at the **Thursday coffee meetings on 1st, 15th and 29th** October to take your payment, which as usual, can be by cash or card.

There is no further news at the moment on the availability of tickets to visit The Bayeux Tapestry. They go on sale again in October.

2.2. Holidays (John Dollimore) See also Notice Board 3

John Dollimore will no longer be at coffee mornings for the first Thursday every month.

From now on contact will be by email only to [REDACTED]@gmail.com

Payment(s) will be direct to Cairngorm Travel.

3. Membership (Linda Armour)

3.1. Our membership continues to grow and with 18 new members this past month, we now have a total of 769, so please give a warm welcome to our new members below:

Ralph Morgan, Linda White, Christine Fuller, Lindsay Ellis, Brian Statham, Michael Burrows, Jacqueline Burrows, Sally Kent, Eileen Blake, Ann Reeve, Valerie Barber, Margaret Moore-Vale, Linda Ford, Carol Palik, Peter Riches, Neil Cliff, David Levy, Gaynor Levy, Denise Smolkovic.

3.2. Welcome Hosts

We have a celebration in that our WELCOME HOSTS have been in place for a year now and they are doing a grand job welcoming new members and introducing these to u3a, explain how it all works, the groups they can belong to, and what we have to offer. So, if you see someone with the Welcome Hosts badge, give them a smile and a wave to say thanks!

They are not just there for new members, so if you have a question, please ask them. If they don't have the answer, I feel certain they will know someone who does.

4. Groups (Christine Thornton)-

4.1. Potential new groups

- a) I have been asked if there is a group doing short walks of approximately 2 miles. Is there anyone else who would be interested in, and preferably prepared to lead/organise, such a group? If so, please get in touch by email. (See below).

- b) Are there any members that would be interested in a Poetry group based in Wymondham and someone be prepared to lead/organise it. Based on previous experience it would be a small group meeting held at a member's house and requiring minimum administration.

Anyone interested please contact Chris Thornton by email (see below)

4.2. The Pickleball group has had to close due to lack of support

4.3. Play and Say Group

A selection of plays is performed at each Play and Say session, which takes place at 1.30pm in the Tiffey Room of Central Hall, on the first Friday of each month.

The topics covered by the plays are then discussed.

here is space available for more members to join the group and if you are interested in doing so, please contact tony, [REDACTED]

4.4. u3a Members REMINDER

Members of u3a SHOULD NOT ATTEND Group activities WITHOUT JOINING THAT GROUP (apart from a taster session)

This is important because:

any group member is covered by u3a insurance for your particular activity.

Wymondham u3a can manage attendance numbers in a hired facility to meet Fire Regulations

- 4.5. If anyone has a suggestion for any other new group! Please, if possible, come & discuss your ideas and the proposed arrangements with me at a Coffee Morning, or by email to me, see below.

For these or any other Groups related matters, please contact Chris Thornton by email at groups@wymondhamu3a.org.uk

4.6. Bridge Group

4.6.1 Congratulations to Ralph Morgan and Sandy Holdom who came second in the Wymondham heat of The National Handicapped Pairs Tournament organised by the EBU.

When the handicaps were applied Stephen and Jenny Cobb came 1st Nationally out of 335 pairs.

Jenny Knight and Val Smith came 10th

Thank you to all our members who took part.

4.6.2 Bridge Lessons

We have had to postpone the Autumn lessons as enough members did not come forward to make them viable. We are therefore going to try again in the New Year.

Bridge Improvers will start on Tuesday 12th January 2027 at 10am

Bridge Beginners 3 will start on Tuesday 12th January 2027 at 12.15pm

Bridge for Absolute beginners will start on Friday 15th January 2027 at 09.45am

In an ideal world we need 20 players for the improvers course and 12 each for the beginners.

The courses will last for 12 weeks and will cost a maximum of £96, but we are hoping to charge less

Any members interested in joining one of these courses should apply as soon as possible to John Dollimore [REDACTED] stating clearly which course they wish to join.

5. Opportunities

5.1 Learning activities

The Committee continue to investigate other suitable topics for future presentations. If you have any ideas based on your own personal experiences that you feel should be shared, then please contact me (John Peat) at newsletter@wymondhamu3a.org.uk

5.1.1 The Skills for Life Tech Team

The team were kept busy with I.T. queries when they came to our coffee morning recently, and it is likely that they will come back on a regular basis. We will probably have them on the **29th of October**.

Do not forget, if you cannot wait that long, you can always book your own session in the library. Contact details: Phone: 01485 536420.

Email: techskillsforlife@norfolk.gov.uk

Website: www.norfolk.gov.uk/techskillsforlife



5.1.2. Third Age Trust Activities

a) East of England Third Age Trust Bulletin

We have been asked to pass on to our members the published East of England regular bulletin.

If you are interested in what goes on at other East of England u3a Branches. Rather than clog your inbox, we are providing the direct link here. www.eastofengland.u3asite.uk/publications

b) u3a Courses on-line

If you wish to find out more about these on-line courses, then please follow the instructions below.

Click on the link right. <https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/educational-events>

You can then view what is on offer and register your interest.

5.1.3. Internal learning activities

a) Driving for Older People (Georgette Vale)

The Driving for Older People on the 5th of October is going ahead, and we have booked another date for the 1st of March 2027, and yes, it does seem a long way off.

b) First Aid courses (Georgette Vale)

I am booking more First Aid Courses, both the basic one and the next level up which deals with breaks and bleeding. To put your name for these, either find me at coffee morning or email me [REDACTED]

5.2. Volunteer Drivers and Personal Transport Requirements

We welcomed Fiona Robinson to a coffee morning to tell us about the **Travel Norfolk Scheme**. This is run by Norfolk County Council, and it puts volunteer drivers in contact with those who need transport due to their age or disability.

Fiona's role is to match driver availability with the requests that come in.

- a) **To be a volunteer driver**, nothing special is needed other than a driving license, a car, and a DBS check (they provide that). You do need a bit of time on your hands, but it is nice to think that our Driving for Older People sessions fit nicely here.
- b) **If you need to arrange transport for yourself**, you register with them to start with. You need to book a trip at least 3 days in advance by phone (and you can book up to two weeks ahead). The longer notice they get the more likely it is they will be able to help you. You pay the driver 55p a mile from their home to yours and then 60p a mile to and from your destination. It is a shame they cannot (as yet) take wheelchairs.

For more information either to volunteer or if you need transport for yourself go to:

<https://www.travelnorfolk.co.uk/travel-norfolk-car-scheme/>

NOTICE BOARD 1: VACANCIES

CHARITY COFFEE MORNINGS TEAM

WANTED: Cake Organiser

A very successful part of our Charity Coffee Mornings is the Cake Stall that Linda Luxmore and her team have been running. Linda has done a wonderful job over the years organising this, but it is now time for someone else to take up the wooden spoon of planning who is making what and sorting it all out on the day.

If you can offer help, either alone or part of team, we will be pleased to put you in touch, and Linda will help you get started.

OPEN MEETINGS

WANTED: Refreshment makers needed for Open meetings

Our Speaker Seeker team has a wonderful programme of speakers lined up. Teas and coffees are very welcome and necessary, but we need more help in this area.

NOTICE BOARD 2: DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

TALKS AND SPEAKERS 2026

3rd December	Christmas Allsorts	tbd
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TALKS AND SPEAKERS 2027

Date	Subject	Presenter
Jan 7th	Zeppelin over Suffolk	Mark Mower
Feb 4th	Cloudesley Shovell's shipwreck and his impact on longitude	Cathy Shelbourn
March 4th	My creative journey Amanda Sutherland	Amanda Sutherland
April 1st	Faberge	Maria Pennington
May 6th	Barrow to Bagdad	Philip Caine
June 3rd	Adventures On the Norfolk Broads (What You May Not Know)	Wally Webb
July 1st	Gilly on Poetry	Gilly Spencer
August 5th	A Beginning A Muddle and an End	Bobbie Darbyshire
Sept 2nd	A brief synopsis of Sir Arthur Sullivan's life and works	John Balls
Oct 7th	Subject tbd	Dr Richard Hoggett
Nov 4th	When birds sing	Saffron Sommerfeld
Dec 2nd	Chanters Jig	Malcom and Elizabeth

COFFEE MORNINGS

Thursdays

Oct. 1st. 15th. 29th	09.00 – 12.00
Oct. 8th. 22nd.	09.00 – 11.00
Nov. 5th. 19th, 26th	09.00 – 12.00
Nov. 12th	09.00 – 11.00

Sundays

Every Sunday in the Tiffey Room
10.00 —12.00

Thursday 1st October 2026

At 2.00 p.m.



Wymondham Central Hall

Monthly Talks

Ralph Jackman

How to become a Roman Empress

Award winning author and historian Ralph Jackman will provide an entertaining exploration of the 10 characteristics, traits and skills required to be a Roman Empress



From exile to empress and beyond; accusations of incest and murder...this will be fast paced, humorous and intriguing

Free for members

£2 for non-members (Cash only please)
For more information about Wymondham u3a
wymondhamu3a.org.uk

EXTRA TALK IN OCTOBER

Thursday 29th Oct 2026

At 2.00 p.m.



Wymondham Central Hall Monthly Talks Extra

Charging Ahead!

The Ins and Outs of Electric Vehicles

Steve Broderick EngD

A talk on the electric vehicle including hints and tips,
a bit of history and today's EV models.



Free for members

£2 for non-members (Cash only please)
For more information about Wymondham u3a
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Thursday 5th November 2026

At 2.00 p.m.



Wymondham Central Hall

Monthly Talks

Kelsey J.R.P. Byers, PhD

Dr. Kelsey Byers will talk about pollination, the magical - and not always friendly! - partnership between plants and animals.

More than four fifths of the world's flowering plants depend on animal pollinators to reproduce.

Kelsey will talk about the evolution of animal pollination and why as humans we should care about it too, as well as the history of studying pollination and how plants manage to attract their animal visitors.

The talk will finish with some tips on how we can help native UK pollinators in our own back gardens."



Free for members

£2 for non-members (Cash only please)
For more information about Wymondham u3a
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NOTICE BOARD 3: HOLIDAYS AND COACH TRIPS

2027 HOLIDAYS: IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

There will be no planned holidays in 2027.

There may be short-notice opportunities from Cairngorm Travel notified to the members through John Dollimore



Contact Arrangements for remaining 2026 holidays

John Dollimore will no longer be at coffee mornings for the first Thursday every month. From now on contact will be by email only to [REDACTED]

Any further information relating to 2026 Holidays will be by email from John Dollimore

Any payment(s) will be direct to Cairngorm Travel.

COACH TRIPS 2027 (Kerry Ingram-Smith)

The 2027 Coach Trips will appear here

A £10 deposit secures your place on the coach.

Contact Details

For expressions of interest and paying deposits please contact Kerry as below.

At Central Hall coffee mornings, normally on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month (09.00-12.00)
OR by email at outings@wymondhamu3a.org.uk



6. Activity Reports

6.1. Journey to Citizenship by Linda Scoles on September 3rd. (Georgette Vale)

This was really fun to listen to. A lively presentation, full of quirky humour.

Linda was brought up on a ranch in Washington State. When her husband was posted to RAF Lakenheath, they lived off base at Great Barton and they both fell in love with the village and, importantly, the British way of life. After leaving the air-force he got a civilian job teaching adult education on base. Unfortunately, he passed away soon after retiring.

Linda and her daughter got into property development. However, this was made more complicated as they were American Citizens with only "Settled" status in the UK, so they decided to apply for British Citizenship.

Linda explained the process and the cost. In her words, "It is not free and it is not easy." That is how it should be." Linda and her daughter passed first time having completed the Life in Britain test in record time. However, 95% of all applicants failed the first time, and they met one couple who had just failed for the 11th and 13th time, respectively. It is actually more of a test of how to do the test and the ability to retain that kind of information for short term use only. The test must be done on their computers and there are heavy penalties for looking away from the screen. That is difficult for anyone to do or see the reason for it.

We collectively did one of the tests answering the Life in Britain questions. We failed. If you want to see some of the questions and have a go yourself just google “Life in the UK test questions.” It is a bit addictive. However, some of the questions I would seriously debate whether the answers are correct or not.

Linda gave us a recent example of how her other daughter who lives in the States was seriously ill on a recent visit to the UK, and the family are sure that the treatment was much better than she would receive in the USA. Her American insurance paid the NHS what to us is a staggering amount of money.

Why does Linda love life in the UK so much? She gave many examples, but on the whole, she appreciates the way that British people are generous, kind, cultured, tolerant, and the list goes on. She is also proud of her American roots and relishes in having the dual nationality. She quoted Bill Bryson (I informed her he used to live in Wramplingham). He said the easiest way to get British citizenship is to “worm your way into an appropriate womb and wait nine months.”

6.2. Coach trip to Wimpole Hall (John Peat, Editors privilege)

This was the last coach outing of 2026. The coach trips this year have been under the new management of Kerry Ingram-Smith.

Kerry, on behalf of the members and the Committee, we all thank you for your efforts in providing a varied programme of coach trips for this year.

Wimpole Hall is a National Trust property of a beautiful old house, great parklands and, most importantly for our trips, good café and restaurant.

Please note that this is not a formal report as I was not even there, but since Allison Billet sent me this “full frontal” I just had to find an excuse to use it.



APPENDIX A

WCH REMINDER FIRE EVACUATION (John Peat)

We continue to review our fire safety procedures especially for Coffee Mornings and Open Meetings. We are working closely with Wymondham Central Hall and professional Fire Teams. The current information each of you needs to know is as follows.

N.B. UPDATE: The Storeroom is NO LONGER considered a fire escape route.

Room Exits: locations in each room / area, exit routes depending on source of the fire.

- a) Main Hall: two exits directly out of the building with one (furthest from the stage) having a ramp. There are two exits leading to the Foyer Area.
- b) Foyer: Exit directly through the Main Entrance or main Kitchen.
- c) Tiffey Room: main exit is out through the Tiffey Room external door. Main Hall exits can be accessed.
- d) Becketts Room: Exit either through Tiffey Room, or Main Hall
- e) Main Kitchen: Rear door exit to outside world.
- f) Cavick Kitchenette: Exits either through Tiffey Room, or Main Hall

Level Exits

There are level exits in the Main Hall (non-Stage end), Foyer Main Entrance, and Kitchen. These can also be accessed from the Becketts Room, Cavick Room, and Tiffey Room.

Stepped Exits.

The stepped Exits are the Main Hall (stage end) and the Storeroom.

Personal Abilities

You now know which exits are suitable for YOU.

If you still feel that you may need help exiting the building, then pair yourself up with a Buddy to help you.

Assembly Point

The Assembly Point from all exits is beyond **the back of The Library** avoiding the main area of the car park.

Fire Marshalls

Fire Marshals will be sweeping the building (including toilets) to make sure everyone is out.

As the Fire Evacuation process is developed and assessed, any updates will be notified to you.