

# East of England Region u3a

February 2026 Monthly Bulletin and News Issue 2/26 Page 1

This monthly bulletin should arrive by the first week of February 2026.

Deadline for the March 2026 issue is by Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2026.

You can receive this Bulletin directly: Email [laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com](mailto:laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com)

## The Power of the Bulletin's Inspiration Interest Groups!

### Chelmsford u3a: Rock & Pop Group Hits the Right Note Thanks to the Bulletin



Chelmsford u3a has struck gold with a brand-new **Rock & Pop Appreciation Group** — and it all began with members sharing the **East of England Bulletin** more widely.

Member Bruce originally imagined a cosy gathering of 10-12 people meeting in someone's living room to chat about favourite tracks over a cup of tea. But once the call for interest went out, the response

was overwhelming. More than 60 members signed up almost immediately. Bruce was briefly aghast — had he opened Pandora's Box?

An initial planning meeting drew around 30 enthusiastic music lovers. The early idea was to split into several small "satellite" groups meeting in members' homes. But then one member suggested a different approach: why not ask Hot Box, Chelmsford's community-driven live-music venue, whether they might host us? Bruce went to investigate, and the result couldn't have been better. The manager immediately understood what the group hoped to achieve and generously offered the use of the venue free of charge for a few hours each month. Hot Box — known for its inclusive ethos, wide musical tastes, and commitment to supporting community activity [hotboxlive.co.uk](http://hotboxlive.co.uk) — turned out to be the perfect fit.

Members can bring their own vinyl, CDs or Spotify playlists, and the Hot Box team will handle the technical setup. With a licensed bar, great sound, and a relaxed atmosphere, it's an ideal home for a group built on shared musical passion.



The first meeting has already taken place, ironing out the practical details, and monthly sessions are now eagerly anticipated. What began as a simple idea has grown into a vibrant new group — and Bruce is absolutely over the moon.

**This success shows just how powerful the Bulletin can be when it's shared: one spark can ignite a whole new community of interest.**

Thank you to Lesley Wood of Chelmsford u3a for sharing this. If you have an unusual/interesting/inspirational Interest Group, please let us know - you never know what may happen!

Send details to Laurene Henderson [laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com](mailto:laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com)

## ITALIAN STEP 2 DACORUM U3A



Our group started with the name Italian Beginners some years ago. We decided to change the title to Italian Step 2 when we no longer felt like beginners, but had not yet achieved the ultimate goal of fluency. We're still not fluent, but we're improving all the time.

We number 16 and are lucky in having 2 native speakers to help us along. Tina Leach started the group and is our group leader. You can see her in both photos. Then there's young Maria who joins us when she can.

We are a very friendly, good-humoured lot and enjoy our weekly sessions even if our homework isn't perfect. Now and again we play games, do role plays and as you can see, we spent one memorable session making pasta under Tina's expert guidance! We all look very serious trying to copy Tina's super strong kneading technique.

Thanks to Tina, we each made good enough pasta to cook at home for a very tasty meal.

VIVA L'ITALIA!

Valerie Broadhurst Group Member  
of Italian Step 2 Dacorum U3A



What a great idea to include the food and techniques of a country as well as the language. We have featured a Norwich u3a Arabic group, which also shared some recipes. Do any other language groups do this? Let us know... Send details to Laurene Henderson [laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com](mailto:laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com)

## We need more Interest Groups to Feature!

Each month we feature a u3a interest group from one of our East of England Region u3as. Find them here: [Inspirational-Groups-Jan-2025.pdf](https://eastofengland.u3asite.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Inspirational-Groups-Jan-2025.pdf) <https://eastofengland.u3asite.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Inspirational-Groups-Jan-2025.pdf>

**We want to hear about your groups.** Please send photographs and a brief write up. Don't forget to mention your u3a and please make sure that any photographs featuring u3a members have the participants permission to appear. Send submissions to [laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com](mailto:laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com)

[Thank you to the many groups who have contributed so far](#)





From Ian Mathews, our u3a Regional Council Representative

A very Happy New Year to you all.

I am nearly at the end of my first year as your Council representative and have decided to remain for at least a second year.

This year, has been really a learning curve for this new role and I am glad to say that I am getting more and more invitations to network meetings, monthly meetings, committee meeting and AGMs. **If you would like me to attend an event at your u3a then please call or email me.**

There are two key events that are occurring this year:

## Council Representative Nominations/Elections



We are now in the process of nominations for the 2<sup>nd</sup> East of England Council representative.

**Nominations are open until Tuesday 3 February**

**Voting opens: Tuesday 17 February and closes Tuesday 24 March**

Results will be announced in the week commencing 30 March.

**If you are interested in the role of Council Representative and would like more information, please contact me.**

## 2026 u3a Festival



This bi-annual event is again being held at York University this year between the 1st to the 3rd of July.

Glenys Bailey and Philip Brodie are the u3a coordinators for the sports section at the Festival and are asking if any u3a groups have these active sports groups?

Kurling, Walking Sports (Cricket, Netball Football), Petanque, Badminton, Pickleball, Table Tennis, Tennis, Croquet and Running that would like to be involved in the Sports Section of the Festival please make contact with Glenys on

[frankandglenys1@btconnect.com](mailto:frankandglenys1@btconnect.com)

The website address for the festival is

: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/festival-2026>

Best Regards

Ian Mathews

East of England Council Representative [Ian.mathews@u3a.org.uk](mailto:Ian.mathews@u3a.org.uk)

Mobile :- 07471211347

## National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2026	Event	Link
Mondays 2 - 4 pm 2 February 9 February 16 February 23 February	<b>Preparing for an AI World</b> During this course, the AI-for-Everyone Project team will explore with you how to use AI and what AI can do for us as individuals. By popular demand, this is a repeat of the course held in October 2025	<a href="#">Preparing for an AI World Tickets, Mon, Feb 2, 2026 at 2:00 PM   Eventbrite</a>
Tuesday Feb 3 10am to 12pm	<b>Flight Inspirations Aviation Group: Space and Aviation -The New High ground</b> The line between air and space is fading fast. This talk reveals how space systems now underpin aviation.	<a href="#">Flight Inspirations Aviation Group: Space and Aviation -The New High ground Tickets, Tue, Feb 3, 2026 at 10:00 AM   Eventbrite</a>
Tuesday Feb 3 from 2pm to 3pm	<b>After Alzheimer: Memory, Ageing and What Comes Next</b> Join Dr. Mike Bender, retired consultant clinical psychologist and nationally recognised expert in memory and ageing, as he walks you	<a href="#">After Alzheimer: Memory, Ageing and What Comes Next Tickets, Tue 3 Feb 2026 at 14:00   Eventbrite</a>
Wednesday Feb 4 from 10am to 11:30am	<b>How do your medicines work? -</b> Mike Trevethick discusses hypertension, the drugs used to treat this condition, and the science of how they work in the body.	<a href="#">How do your medicines work? - Hypertension Tickets, Wed, Feb 4, 2026 at 10:00 AM   Eventbrite</a>
Wednesday Feb 4 1pm to 2:30pm	<b>The technological challenges in delivering the HS2 railway line</b> John Butler of u3a Let's Talk Tech discusses the technological civil engineering challenges being overcome with this project.	<a href="#">The technological challenges in delivering the HS2 railway line Tickets, Wed, Feb 4, 2026 at 1:00 PM   Eventbrite</a>
Thursday Feb 5 2pm to 3pm	<b>Smashing particles - behind the scenes at CERN</b> In this talk, Dr Octavio Dominguez CERN explores the European Laboratory for Particle Physics in Geneva.	<a href="#">Smashing particles - behind the scenes at CERN Tickets, Thu, Feb 5, 2026 at 2:00 PM   Eventbrite</a>
Friday Feb 6 10am to 11am	<b>The Mathematicians' Library</b> Thomas K. Briggs explores some of the publications that have been instrumental in the development of mathematics throughout history.	<a href="#">The Mathematicians' Library Tickets, Fri, Feb 6, 2026 at 10:00 AM   Eventbrite</a>
Tuesday Feb 10 2pm to 3:30pm	<b>Tech for All: Innovations supporting disability and ageing</b> Matthew Quarless from AbilityNet explores how emerging technologies can empower disabled and older people.	<a href="#">Tech for All: Innovations supporting disability and ageing Tickets, Tue, Feb 10, 2026 at 2:00 PM   Eventbrite</a>
Friday Feb 13 2pm to 3pm	<b>The Calendar, Time and the Cosmos part 3</b> Accounting for time has numerous purposes. Irene has traced the progress of this accounting from pre- and early history up to the present. Part 3 - Aboriginal concept of time as expressed in the Cosmos	<a href="#">The Calendar, Time and the Cosmos part 3 Tickets, Fri, Feb 13, 2026 at 2:00 PM   Eventbrite</a>

## National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2026	Event	Link
Wednesday Feb 18 from 10am to 11:30am	<b>How do your medicines work? - Pain Relief</b> Mike Trevethick explains how common medicines for pain relief were discovered and the science of how they work in the body.	<a href="#">How do your medicines work? - Pain Relief Tickets, Wed, Feb 18, 2026 at 10:00 AM   Eventbrite</a>
Wednesday Feb 18 10am to 10:45am	<b>Laughter Yoga with Judith: February</b> Laughter Yoga combines hearty laughter exercises with deep yoga-style breathing (pranayama). Hosted by Judith Anne Walker of Edinburgh u3a. "We don't laugh because we're happy, we're happy because we laugh." - William James	<a href="#">Laughter Yoga with Judith: February Tickets, Wed, Feb 18, 2026 at 10:00 AM   Eventbrite</a>
Thursday Feb 19 10am to 11:15am	<b>Mindfulness and Meditation Continuation Session: February</b> Join us each month as we continue the practices introduced in the Mindfulness and Meditation Series, and introduce new ones.	<a href="#">Mindfulness and Meditation Continuation Session: February Tickets, Thu, Feb 19, 2026 at 10:00 AM   Eventbrite</a>
Friday Feb 20 10am to 11:30am	<b>Gravy or Grave? The ghost in literature</b> Mary Phelan explores the development of the ghost through the history of literature. Gravy or Grave? The Ghost in Literature explores why ghosts have lingered so persistently in our stories—and what they reveal about the society that imagined them.	<a href="#">Gravy or Grave? The ghost in literature Tickets, Fri, Feb 20, 2026 at 10:00 AM   Eventbrite</a>
Friday Feb 20 10:30 to 11:30am	<b>Live Cookery Demonstration - Winter Warmers</b> Chef Alex from 'Vegetarian for Life' demos his delicious winter recipes live on Zoom, especially for u3a members.	<a href="#">Live Cookery Demonstration - Winter Warmers Tickets, Fri, Feb 20, 2026 at 10:30 AM   Eventbrite</a>
Friday Feb 20 2pm to 3pm	<b>Memoir writing with Jenny Newman</b> Everyone has a story to tell. Writing a memoir can be a precious act of self-discovery, and a way of finding meaning in your life.	<a href="#">Memoir writing with Jenny Newman Tickets, Fri, Feb 20, 2026 at 2:00 PM   Eventbrite</a>
Tuesday Feb 24 3:30 to 4:30pm	<b>Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie: February</b> Bring more joy and laughter to your life with Laughter Yoga - an aerobic exercise with playful exercises combined with deep yogic breathing.	<a href="#">Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie: February Tickets, Tue, Feb 24, 2026 at 3:30 PM   Eventbrite</a>
Wednesday Feb 25 10am to 12pm	<b>Introduction to Cryptic Crosswords</b> Try your hand at solving cryptic clues on this two-hour taster session with Henry Howarth, u3a Subject Adviser for Cryptic Crosswords. This is a repeat of a previously run session.	<a href="#">Introduction to Cryptic Crosswords Tickets, Wed, Feb 25, 2026 at 10:00 AM   Eventbrite</a>

## National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2025	Event	Link( Control&click)
Tuesday Feb 24 11am to 12pm	<p><b>Cures from within: can we use chemistry to teach the body to heal itself?</b>            Professor Angela Russell introduces the field of regenerative drug discovery and how it is beginning to impact diseases of ageing. This event is hosted by the u3a Science Network.</p>	<p><a href="#">Cures from within: can we use chemistry to teach the body to heal itself? Tickets, Tue, Feb 24, 2026 at 11:00 AM   Eventbrite</a></p>
Wednesday 10am-11.15pm 25 February 4 March 11 March 18 March 25 March 1 April	<p><b>Mindfulness and Meditation Series</b>            We welcome back the six week course of Mindfulness and Meditation led by members of Sheffield u3a Mindful Ageing Group John, Mike and Ruth.            Please note that you only need to sign up once for all dates shown on the left.</p>	<p><a href="#">Mindfulness and Meditation Series Tickets, Wed, Feb 25, 2026 at 10:00 AM   Eventbrite</a></p>
Friday Feb 27 10am to 11:30am	<p><b>AI News February: AI in Government</b>            Twelve months ago David Knott of the Cabinet Office told us of government plans to improve services and efficiency through the application of AI. A year on, and we are excited to hear an update on progress from Rob Thompson, Chief Digital, Data and Technology Officer of the Home Office.</p>	<p><a href="#">AI News February: AI in Government Tickets, Fri, Feb 27, 2026 at 10:00 AM   Eventbrite</a></p>
Monday Mar 2 2pm to 3:30pm	<p><b>How AI can save you hours when researching your family history</b>            Steve Doyle shows how, using simple non techie approaches, you can use AI to vastly increase the effectiveness of family history research.</p>	<p><a href="#">How AI can save you hours when researching your family history Tickets, Mon, Mar 2, 2026 at 2:00 PM   Eventbrite</a></p>
Tuesday Mar 3 10am to 12pm	<p><b>Flight inspirations aviation group: the new space race</b>            The new space race, led by private companies like SpaceX, is transforming exploration through reusable rockets and commercialization.</p>	<p><a href="#">Flight inspirations aviation group: the new space race Tickets, Tue, Mar 3, 2026 at 10:00 AM   Eventbrite</a></p>
Thursday Mar 5 10am to 11:30am	<p><b>Beyond the beam: what we do with lasers</b>            How beams of light are reshaping science, medicine, and our understanding of the universe.</p>	<p><a href="#">Beyond the beam: what we do with lasers Tickets, Thu, Mar 5, 2026 at 10:00 AM   Eventbrite</a></p>
Friday Mar 6 2pm to 3pm	<p><b>Novel writing with Jenny Newman</b>            This workshop is about becoming a novelist: your sources of inspiration, skills and techniques to develop and how to sustain your writing.</p>	<p><a href="#">Novel writing with Jenny Newman Tickets, Fri, Mar 6, 2026 at 2:00 PM   Eventbrite</a></p>

Full details of learnings events can be found at the link below. Late booked events may not be on this list. [u3a - Online Learning Events](#)



## Hullbridge u3a present Trophy to the 2025 winner of the Keith Wooderson Image of the Year



Hullbridge u3a have just completed **The Keith Wooderson Image of the year 2025**, won by David Windle. Keith Wooderson served the greater community as a policeman and when he retired, he joined the Hullbridge u3a. During his membership Keith held the post of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Groups Coordinator, History of London Group Facilitator and was a valued member of the Snooker and Digital Photography Groups. When Keith passed away, we thought it would be a fitting memorial to Keith to present a Trophy in his name each year. **The Keith Wooderson Image Of The Year 2025**, is an award open to all our members and the winner selected by our members. Providing a lasting legacy to a man who gave so much. Going forward we are working on exhibiting the top 20 images at Hullbridge library and taking entries for the Keith Wooderson Image of the Year 2026.

*Phil Perry, Hullbridge u3a*

## National Festival needs sports enthusiasts



ORGANISERS of the sports section of the second u3a National Festival this summer at York University are on the hunt for members to participate.

They particularly want to hear from u3as with these active sports groups:

Walking Sports (Cricket, Netball Football)

Petanque,  
Badminton,  
Pickleball,  
Table Tennis,

Kurling,  
Croquet  
Tennis,  
Running



Co-ordinators Glenys Bailey and Philip Brodie want players involved in these to join in activities at the festival from July 1 to 3.

The pair said: "We need to get things moving, in respect of the sports as soon as possible. "There is a lot of planning to do and we look forward to promoting these sports to other u3a members nationally. We will talk you through the registration process, and the proposed plan for their particular sport". Those interested can Facebook message them, email: [frankandglenys1@btconnect.com](mailto:frankandglenys1@btconnect.com) or ring on 01765 635236 or 07971 093907



## Resolve to test the u3a's new search engine



IT'S not too late to make a special resolution for 2026 ... and that is to visit the revamped Siteworks section of the national website. Because it now has a super search function linked to it. Called Oversight, the facility covers almost 700 Sitework sites to give fast information of locations of u3as for non-members and details of group activities

for members.

Those desiring to take part in a group not provided by their u3a can search for the nearest u3a to them providing it.

The whole search is United Kingdom based but you can click down to our region and then your county to make results manageable.

And with some 27,170 groups to discover, the chances are you can discover what you want near you.

[Here's how to get there:](#)

From the home page click on 'Find a u3a'

Then scroll down the page that opens and click on 'Oversights'

At the top of the page you arrive at click on 'Find a group'

Enter what you are looking for in the search function, click search and add East of England, then your county.

Info is being regularly updated, so the findings are current.

**Happy searching!!**



*Ray Hardisty, PR and Media Adviser*

## Helping to raise awareness of Fostering



BREAK, the local East Anglia children's charity, are reaching out to a small number of community groups who are known for their strong values around care, passing on knowledge and supporting others locally.

They are currently seeing an urgent need for more part time foster carers (one weekend every six weeks) and full time foster carers across East Anglia. They have asked us to spread the word to members, or their relatives and friends, in case it interests them. For example a short mention in your u3a newsletter or email (they can provide ready-to-use text or a small graphic) or displaying a few leaflets or posters at meetings.

They are available for meetings suitable for a [short talk](#) or information stand.

There's absolutely no obligation - even advice or signposting would be hugely appreciated.

Many people don't know about part time fostering where your linked with one child throughout but it's incredibly rewarding. If interested, contact

Jules Parker, Break Communications Team, <https://www.break-charity.org/foster>



## Your u3a East of England Regional Team: here to help

**Why not join us?** Below is a job description of this **East of England u3a Regional Team** volunteer role:

### General

- All members to be trained and registered with the Trust as Trust Volunteers.
- All will work as part of the team within the region to support its elected Council Members, assist u3as to run smoothly and efficiently and encourage them all to link with national communications so they stay fully informed.
- All to attend team meetings and communicate and liaise regularly with regional Council Members.
- All to support the team with regional communications such as newsletters, website, social media and presentations both online and face to face
- All to assist with the delivery and organisation of forums, meetings and conferences as agreed by the Regional Team.
- All to actively pursue the Regional Team's aim of established geographical Networks across the region and support those in operation.
- All to make full use of their skills and experience to serve on the Regional Team with defined responsibilities which may adapt and change over time due to updating of policies or Council and Board priorities.
- All to be prepared to attend u3a training on topics like u3a creation, dealing with disputes and handling of risk, as may be required or considered helpful within their adopted team roles.
- All to be prepared to visit u3as in their area, by invitation. Notes of any such meeting to be provided to the Team Leader and Council Members.

### Council Member Notifications

- Any matters of a constitutional nature, or relating to any potential risk, safeguarding or other legal or insurance matter, to be referred immediately to the relevant Council Member for action and Team Leader to be informed.
- Any disputes, or potential disputes to be referred immediately to the relevant Council Member for action and Team Leader to be informed.
- All to identify potential areas or situations for new u3as and advise the relevant Council Member to follow up and Team Leader to be informed.

January 2026

Contact Ray Hardisty, Team Leader:

[rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com](mailto:rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com)

For contact details of the complete team:

<https://eastofengland.u3asite.uk/>

