The East of England Bulletin is produced by the East of England Regional Team for ALL u3a members within the Eastern u3a Region.
Chairs and Secretaries, please share with your u3a members by placing it on your websites and by email attachment distribution to members.

East of England Region u3a

Deadline for December2026 issue:Wednesday 26. 11. 2026 laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

Trustees' Week 2026



Are you a u3a Trustee/Committee Member?

Trustees' Week 2026 is here! In this event, you'll connect with fellow u3a trustees/committee members and discuss successes and challenges.

Trustees' Week 2026 takes place from 9-13 November to celebrate and support nearly one million charity trustees across the UK.
You're invited to join us on **Tuesday 10 November from 2:00PM-3:00PM** for a relaxed online gathering to celebrate the amazing work of u3a trustees/committee members like you!

In this event, we'll shine a spotlight on u3a trustee/committee members and you'll have the chance to connect with fellow u3a trustees/committee members to share successes and discuss common challenges.

Location: Online zoom event

How to register for event: Book onto the event here

This is well worth a visit – also see exciting news and **save the date** of a face to face meeting for the East of England Region – coming up….laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

Barrie Hyde of Bedford u3a uses AI to fulfil his musical dream



At a time when artificial intelligence is attracting criticism from across the creative industries, 72-year-old Barrie Hyde from Bedford is proving that AI can put musical dreams within reach of people who would never previously have set foot inside a recording studio.

Barrie has already written and published four books. But a lifetime of songwriting had never been progressed.

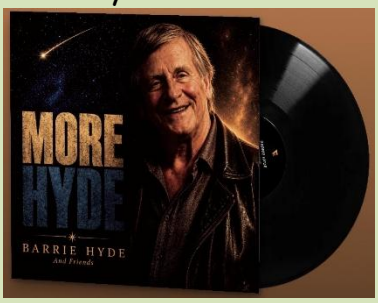
"I've written songs over the past 50 years, but I'm a lousy guitarist and a very average singer," he admits. "In the past, that would have been the end of the story."

AI changed all that.

Using his own songs, lyrics and musical ideas, Barrie embraced AI as a recording and production tool, transforming his material into fully arranged tracks. His first album, Young Man's Dream, was released earlier this year and it reignited his passion for music.

Now Barrie is preparing to release his second album, More Hyde, on 26th October. It includes his single, Christmas Comes But Once A Year, which has already received encouraging reactions from listeners.





"People who've heard it tell me it's funny," says Barrie, "bright and perfect for Christmas. So, fingers crossed!"

Barrie believes his experience challenges the assumption that older people struggle with modern technology.

"People assume that my generation is inept when it comes to Technology, but at 72, I'm embracing it, learning as I go and producing music I could only have dreamed of making before. Recording studios have used technology for decades, yet when ordinary people use computing to help their music, suddenly there's an outcry."

Barrie thinks that AI puts powerful production into the hands of ordinary people.

"You can start with a smartphone, guitar, your own songs and the willingness to experiment. I understand that there are concerns about AI, particularly around how the technology is developed. But I can speak from personal experience about the opportunities it has given me. AI has helped me share my music."

With four books published, two albums to his name and a Christmas single on the way, Barrie Hyde is showing that retirement need not mean slowing down. His message is simple: you're never too old to dream, and technology can help you make those dreams a reality. The opportunity to reinvent yourself can come at any age.

Gayle Holliday, Co-Secretaries, Bedford u3

An inspirational story, Barrie, and very much in line with u3a thinking! I hope you share some pictures with the u3a **Still Got It** project. Does your u3a have "a Barrie"? We want to know! laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

To contact Barrie Hyde: Email barriehyde@hotmail.com
Mobile +44 (0)777 271 5549 Website https://barriehyde.wixsite.com/books-seller

From Ruth Freedman, our u3a Regional Council Representative



I attended our half-yearly meeting in London, along with Ian Mathews and the other 20 Council Representatives around UK. It is a very useful (but long) day as we not only hear about changes and activities within the Third Age Trust but get a chance to share information and experiences with our colleagues.

I attended a new member gathering at East Suffolk u3a recently. There were over 100 members there and they enjoyed tea and cakes while hearing very helpful information from key committee members after a warm welcome from Gail Cornish, Chair.

I do enjoy attending such events as it gives me the opportunity to see how the hard work put in by many volunteers makes for a vibrant and flourishing u3a.
Of course, not all u3as are so lucky – some struggle to get volunteers for committee or interest group leaders and it is those u3as I would also like to visit or talk to – I am sure that we can find solutions to some common problems.

I am a great believer in an Open-Door policy –sharing with you and u3as sharing with their neighbours. I do know that some u3as already offer this policy and I would like it be our 2027 goal.
This can work particularly well if a small u3a is struggling to start new interest groups, fill a coach for an outing etc. The last thing we want is for a u3a to close due to a lack of activities.

We talk about growing our u3as –I don't think this means get bigger, but more vibrant – have more to offer.

So, please do get in touch – send me an email – ask a question – or invite me to visit.
As Council representatives, it is our role to be there for you – to listen, advise and even congratulate you!!!

Ruth
Ruth.freedman@u3a.org.uk

SAVE THE DATE: Thursday 4th February 2027!



Third Age Trust is hosting a series of face-to-face workshops, alongside the online programme.
The East of England region has secured a date – **Thursday 04th February 2027**.
The day will be held in **Chelmsford, Essex** and an invitation will go out to all u3as very soon – please look out for the email!

From Ian Mathews, our u3a Regional Council Representative



October has been another busy month for both of us. I have attended committee meetings, AGMs and attended a Council meeting in London.

I am arranging for another AI presentation in the New Year following our successful previous presentations. If anyone has any particular AI issue they might want to have covered, please get in touch.

Ruth and I have been made aware that there is a change to the information/help team at the u3a Trust which means there may be delays in response. With that in mind please contact Ruth or me to deal with any issues you may have.

Just a reminder of our role as Council Representatives, Ruth and I are here to assist with any issues arising with u3as in the region. As Council Representatives for the region our role is to be the communication link between the region's u3as and the Third Age Trust.

If the need arises our contact details are below. We are both also available for u3a visits. So, if any u3a would like us to attend any network(cluster), committee or AGM meetings please let us know, our diaries fill up quite quickly.

Thank you,

Ian Mathews, East of England Council Representative
Ian.mathews@u3a.org.uk Mobile :- 07471 211347

Demise of u3a Friends Extra

For those of you that subscribe to the u3a Friends newsletter you will be aware that as a bonus you are also subscribed to Friends Extra, a free online benefits and discount platform

Regrettably, due to the slow take-up and the relatively low level of usage, the TATTL Board has decided to discontinue the Friends Extra service. The service will close in April 2027.

We have been asked to discourage members from subscribing to Friends Extra.

☹ Sadly, a classic case of use it or lose it!

Keep Pets Safe November 2nd – 8th: Firework Noise Fear!



If you have a dog, cat, rabbit – any pet – you will know how firework noise terrifies some animals. Keep them indoors, but there are other strategies. Some valuable advice for pet owners generally. Fireworks - RSPCA - rspca.org.uk

Barry Linton of Thorpe Bay u3a receives Volunteer of the Year Award from Essex Police



I joined Thorpe Bay u3a when I retired in 2010 from a career in the IT Industry. u3a activities suited my retirement perfectly as I have always been occupied doing something new. However, I could never have imagined that one day I could receive an Award from Essex Police.

Back in 2017, when I had become chair of Thorpe Bay u3a, our July General Meeting speaker was the Chief Constable of Essex Police. He talked about the challenges of modern policing and went on to give statistics about a new threat called cybercrime and its targeted effect on older people.

I remarked to the Chief Constable that teaching our members how to spot these scams could advise them of the actions to take. Because of my background, I asked to meet with a cybercrime officer to produce a seminar to help our members. He agreed and I was introduced to David Gibb, the force's current cyber protection specialist. We got together and created a PowerPoint presentation. David included some scary online gizmos to demonstrate these scams.

We presented the talk in October 2017 to 200 of our members. In January 2018, we presented it again, to an even larger audience from members of the six other u3as in Southend-on-Sea. With tremendous support from CEO Sam Mauger, and Eastern Trustee Barbara Cordina, we had a full diary through 2018 and 2019 delivering the talk all over the county, plus repeats at the National Conference at Nottingham. With new threats continually emerging, our challenge was keeping the talk up-to-date and relating what is happening right now, especially to older people.

In 2020, Essex Police appointed me official volunteer within the enlarged Protect & Prevent team. But then - we entered Lockdown. The Trust Online Learning events team arranged for us to present the talk over Zoom. Such was the demand in that explosive period of online scamming, that the talk was delivered every month until Covid was over, and is still being presented at quarterly intervals over Zoom.

After lockdown we continued the talk all around Essex and to a few in Kent and Suffolk; to u3as and also to WI branches.

By July 2026 the years were catching up with me. I had made over 150 presentations to at least 8000 people, so it really was time for me to hand back my Police Badge.

In October I was invited to the Essex Police Awards event as I was shortlisted as Volunteer of the Year. I was in shock when my name was read out to receive the award presented by our new Chief Constable Rachel Nolan. This recognition was beyond my wildest dreams!

Barry may have been shocked to win this award, but for those of us who have benefited from his advice and enthusiasm, it was no surprise. Well deserved, Barry, and thank you.

Eileen Damsell of Hutton u3a receives Charity Worker of the Year 2026 from Brentwood Chamber of Commerce Awards



Eileen Damsell was a founding member of Hutton u3a in 2009, and throughout the years since its establishment she has been the Social Secretary and a committee member. She also supported the provision of a range of talks on zoom during the lockdown period when we could not hold face-to-face meetings – an important source of contact for many lonely people.

As well as her committee role, Eileen is Group Leader of the Discussion Group, Assistant Group Leader of the Ukulele Group and host of the Money Matters in the News Group and the Television Group. She also belongs to eleven other groups: Computing Help, Dance Group, Family History, History, Photography, Pickleball 1, Play Reading, Shakespeare, STEM, Table Tennis, and Trips and Visits Group. Her participation in all of these is highly valued because, as former committee member Ian Cameron puts it, "She injects life and fun into everything. Always a pleasure to be around, encouraging others to join in."

The u3a makes a huge difference to the wellbeing of our members, bringing happiness through social interaction, and Eileen is at the heart of so much of it. New member, Sharron White, writes, "Following the Open Morning, I joined u3a and enrolled on the Table Tennis and Dance groups and the Pickleball group. I have been recovering from acute liver failure, which led me to become isolated and anxious. However, the physical exercise and welcome I got from these groups has played a vital role in my recovery. I must draw attention in particular to Eileen Damsell, who has gone out of her way to help relieve my anxieties."

After 17 years Eileen is standing down from the committee, will continue to run groups and remain as leader of our events subcommittee. Eileen has arranged many events: a cheese and wine evening in a church hall has now included an Annual Dinner Dance at the local banqueting hall, a Spring Party, 15 Christmas parties, barn dances, murder mysteries, quizzes and an Activities Day, where renowned speakers introduce new and interesting topics in settings such as New Hall School.

Eileen says, "I just want people to have a lovely time." That only happens when someone like her puts in hours of work and ensures that no detail is overlooked.

Long-time member, Judy Warner, writes "She makes living in Brentwood a better experience for every resident who has contact with her. We all benefit from her ability to treat everyone equally and with a degree of tact, understanding and sense of humour. I can't think of anyone who deserves this award more."

Steve Marsh, Secretary Hutton u3a

What a remarkable u3a member. Eileen, I would like the secret of your energy! Do you have a u3a member who seems tireless? Let us know.laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

Second call on digital services migration



INITIAL response to the idea of a regional discussion session for u3as using both Beacon and Siteworks on digital migration issues was limited.
The regional support team has been asked to set up a workshop to discuss difficulties around migration of digital tools to a single platform. So the peer support idea, if it takes off, will now start in early December or January.
Expressions of interest to regional team facilitator Ray Hardisty by email please at rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com but he is unlikely to lead on this one.



Bespoke historic guided walks of Ipswich on offer

THOSE u3as looking for something special for their 2027 programme of events could do worse than consider bespoke guided walks of Ipswich. Walks can be tailored to suit many special interests.
For those fascinated by history, there are walks focussing on Ipswich's wealthy merchants, pioneering mariners, innovative engineers, remarkable women, cinemas and theatres, education through the ages, or areas well known to famous artists, John Constable and Thomas Gainsborough. Indeed, Gainsborough's tercentenary will be celebrated nationally and locally in 2027. And a walk could be combined with a visit to the artist's museum tin Sudbury, making a day of it.Ipswich volunteer guides have over 30 years' experience and a wide-ranging knowledge of the town's past, present and future.
The cost for group walks is £6 a head. A deposit of £60 is required when the booking is confirmed. Contact: ipswichtouristguides@gmail.com to discuss requirements.



Study looking for volunteers to talk about stress

VOLUNTEERS are being sought by a masters degree student for a study entitled "Thought Style Impact on Stress Perception and Coping".It is grounded in self-assessment through an online questionnaire as well as reflection and feedback through the interview.
The study aims to explore thoughts and perceptions of stress, and coping strategies.The student is Liz Broom and It has received ethical approval from the Wrexham University Research Ethics Committee. It has also been designed with 'Do no harm' and 'Respect' at its centre.
The online questionnaire presents study information, including participants' rights to stop participating at any point, not answer questions, and withdraw their data up to two weeks after participation if they change their mind.
In the literature, participants also receive data management information in line with GDPR.
The student's email address is also provided so participants can ask questions.
Thoughts and influencing factors - Online Surveys | Online surveys
Student Investigator: Liz Broom Principal Supervisor: Dr. Natalie Roch
Email: s19005509@mail.glyndwr.ac.uk Email: Natalie.Roch@wrexham.ac.uk

Driving with Confidence Sessions Aimed at Mature Drivers

My name is Victoria Storey and I am one of the Road Safety Technicians for the Safer Essex Road Partnership's Road Safety Team. My colleague Liam Collins and I cover Mid Essex and provide Road Safety Education to your area.



In 2025, 58 people lost their lives on our roads. Vision Zero is our ambitious campaign to reduce road deaths and serious injuries in Essex to zero by 2040. We believe all road users in Essex should be free to use our road network without harm. It is our collective responsibility.

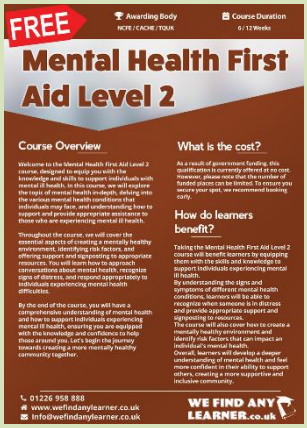
We would like to offer to deliver one of our Driving with Confidence sessions aimed at mature drivers aged 60 and above. The interactive talk is 45 minutes and has the aim of supporting people to keep driving for longer. The session offers hints and tips through thought provoking discussions.

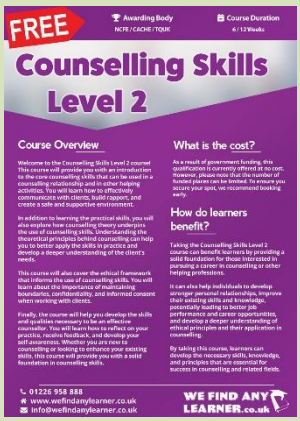
At the end, there is an opportunity to also sign up to receive a free of charge 'Driving with Confidence' session with a driver coach which is flexible around the needs of each person. It offers support with any areas which may need confidence building whilst giving practical tips and advice – please see leaflet attached for more information.

Please confirm as soon as possible to secure your booking. If you have any questions, please email me. To find out more information please visit our website Safer Essex Roads Partnership.

Please reply to Victoria Storey victoria.storey@essexhighways.org

Free Courses on Offer







Laurene Henderson has been contacted through the East of England by Susan Doyle who is offering free online courses.

These are offered subject to certain criteria, but we have been informed they are free. Contact Susan Doyle for more information

susan.doyle@wefindanylearner.co.uk

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2026	Event	Link
Monday, November 2-November 23 2 PM-4 PM	Preparing for an AI world Discover what AI can do for you in this practical four-week course, 2 November: AI overview, getting started with an AI chatbot and basic chatting 9 November: AI images – producing, editing and analysing images – and using documents 16 November: Advanced prompting and other AI tools 23 November: AI and ethics – societal implications and implications for personal use By popular demand, this is an updated repeat of the course held in February 2026.	Preparing for an AI world Tickets, Monday, November 2-Monday, November 23 • 2 PM-4 PM GMT+0 | Eventbrite
Wednesday, November 4 10 AM - 10:45 AM	Laughter Yoga with Judith: October 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	Laughter Yoga with Judith: November Tickets, Wednesday, November 4 • 10 AM - 10:45 AM GMT+0 | Eventbrite
Thursday November 5 10am to 11am Friday 13th ,20th & 27th November 10am to 11am	1. From Movie Theatre to Hit Factory: The Birth of Stax (1957–1965) 2. Friday 13th November, 10am to 11am. The Sound of Southern Soul: Stax at Its Peak (1965–1968) 3. Crisis, Control, and Black Power: Stax in Transition (1968–1972) 4. Friday 27th November, 10am to 11am. Collapse, Legacy, and Afterlives of Stax (1972–Present) Each session will be accompanied by selections from the Stax music catalogue.	Soulsville USA series - The History and Legacy of Stax Records Tickets, Thursday, November 5 • 10 AM - 11 AM GMT+0 | Eventbrite
Friday November 6 2 PM - 3:30 PM	**Melancholy as a creative force: Joni Mitchell's Blue album** Explore how Joni Mitchell's Blue transforms melancholy into a creative force, opening a path to self-awareness and self-possession by Professor Christopher Dowrick.	Melancholy as a creative force: Joni Mitchell's Blue album Tickets, Friday, November 6 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM GMT | Eventbrite
Friday November 6 10 AM - 11:30	**Staying Safe Online - A u3a Presentation with Q&A** Keeping you safe in an electronic age: A repeat talk by Barry Linton of Thorpe Bay u3a. *Please note this is a repeating talk that has been given previously. Barry regularly updates the talk with the most recent advice and new and emerging risks.*	Staying Safe Online - A u3a Presentation with Q&A Tickets, Friday, November 6 • 10 AM - 11:30 AM GMT | Eventbrite

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2026	Event	Link
Monday November 9 10 AM - 11:30 AM GMT	**Exploring World Faiths: faith & interfaith** Explore how interfaith encounters can shape our beliefs, deepen understanding and change the way we see other faiths. **National Interfaith Week** takes place during the second week of November each year.	Exploring World Faiths: faith and interfaith Tickets, Monday, November 9 • 10 AM - 11:30 AM GMT | Eventbrite
Wednesday November 25 10 AM - 11:30 AM	**Shaping fashion: the Elizabethan bodice, buckram and busks** Explore the changing shape and style of women's dress in 16th-century England, from the 1530s to the end of Elizabeth I's reign. Constance Mackenzie will look at how the fashionable fitted bodice developed and how women achieved the distinctive structured silhouette that we associate with Tudor and Elizabethan clothing.	Shaping fashion: the Elizabethan bodice, buckram and busks Tickets, Wednesday, November 25 • 10 AM - 11:30 AM GMT | Eventbrite
Thursday November 19 10 AM - 11:30 AM	**Mindfulness and meditation continuation session: November** Join us each month as we continue the practices introduced in the Mindfulness and Meditation Series, and introduce new ones.	Mindfulness and meditation continuation session: November Tickets, Thursday, November 19 • 10 AM - 11:30 AM GMT | Eventbrite
Tuesday November 24 11 AM - 12:15 PM	**Screening to prevent stroke: do we do too much or too little?** Professor Jonathan Mant explores the pros and cons of earlier identification of risk factors for stroke such as atrial fibrillation.	Screening to prevent stroke: do we do too much or too little? Tickets, Tuesday, November 24 • 11 AM - 12:15 PM GMT | Eventbrite
Tuesday November 24 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM	Laughter Yoga with Judith: October 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	Laughter yoga with Merrie Maggie: November Tickets, Tuesday, November 24 • 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM GMT | Eventbrite
Wednesday 25 November 2 PM - 3 PM	**Thinking ahead: housing, care and support options in later life** This presentation from Jane Ashcroft provides a factual and practical overview of the options, including ageing in place, co housing, services at home, retirement villages, extra care and care homes, and considers the different housing, tenure and financial models available.	Thinking ahead: housing, care and support options in later life Tickets, Wednesday 25 November • 2 PM - 3 PM GMT | Eventbrite

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2026	Event	Link
Thursday November 26 10 AM - 11:30 AM	**The ultimate guide to editing your creative writing** Sara Grant discusses her systematic approach to editing and shares practical tips and simple exercises to help you improve your short story.	The ultimate guide to editing your creative writing Tickets, Thursday, November 26 • 10 AM - 11:30 AM GMT | Eventbrite
Thursday 26 November 2 PM - 3 PM	**Learn about the Lords** To celebrate UK Parliament Week, we are delighted to be joined by members of the House of Lords. You'll get an insight into Members backgrounds, and the work and impact of the House. They will discuss the work of the Numeracy for Life Committee, sharing information about the report's findings and recommendations.	Learn about the Lords Tickets, Thursday 26 November • 2 PM - 3 PM GMT | Eventbrite
Friday November 27 10 AM - 11:30 AM	**Ethical aspects of AI in public services: the need for a code of ethics** Dr. Carla Bonina explores: would you want to know if a computer helped decide your benefits, your hospital appointment or a planning application? Would you know whom to ask if you thought it got things wrong?	Ethical aspects of AI in public services: the need for a code of ethics Tickets, Friday, November 27 • 10 AM - 11:30 AM GMT | Eventbrite
Monday November 30 2 PM - 3:30 PM	**Learn bridge online with u3a** Discover the joy of playing Bridge in this introduction to the game, and find out how to play online, with u3a Bridge Adviser, Steve Carter.Join us for a friendly and informal online session with **Steve Carter**, the u3a Bridge Adviser, and some volunteer mentors from the national Bridge programme.	Learn bridge online with u3a Tickets, Monday, November 30 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM GMT | Eventbrite
Tuesday December 1 10 AM - 12 PM	**Flight Inspirations Aviation Group: Dec** Discover the wartime history of RAF Pocklington, the challenges faced by its bomber crews and the human stories behind their sacrifices.	Flight Inspirations Aviation Group: December Tickets, Tuesday, December 1 • 10 AM - 12 PM GMT | Eventbrite
Thursday December 3 10 AM - 11 AM GMT	**Capturing your youth: memoir writing in 12 easy steps** Lynne, u3a Creative Writing Subject Adviser will take you through 12 easy steps to help you create a compelling memoir that others will want to read.	Capturing your youth: memoir writing in 12 easy steps Tickets, Thursday, December 3 • 10 AM - 11 AM GMT | Eventbrite