



Group Convenor Newsletter

November 2025

This is the first edition of a newsletter written specially for the volunteers who convene our u3a groups. We hope to produce this newsletter 3 or 4 times a year and we want your contributions. Cindy, as Groups Coordinator and Jo Wiggins, as newsletter editor, are putting together this first issue. However, we hope it will increasingly become your space. Do you fancy editing an issue?

This will be sent by email to all group convenors but you are free to forward it to others in your group, perhaps especially anybody who helps to run the group with you. We genuinely do want to hear from you so please let us know what you think.

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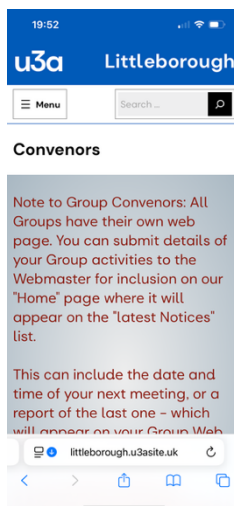
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1. Information and News

Littleborough u3a website: the Convenors' page



We are setting up a new section on our website specifically for group convenors. Here you will find all the documents that you might need to get hold of, look up or print out along with some of the national information that is available to support group convenors.

What would you like to see on these pages? How can we make them more useful to you?

You know that a group of crows is called a murder? Well, technically, it is only murder if there is probable caws.

Potential members who come to try a group meeting: new national u3a rules

There has been a change in the national u3a policy about non-members who are thinking of joining and who can therefore come along to sessions to 'try before they buy' (only with permission of the group convenor and if the group is not full of course). We used to be able to allow them to come to up to three sessions. This has now been reduced to TWO sessions only, after which they must either decide not to join or complete the application process. It helps if you have a few application forms available for anybody who is trying out your group.

Littleborough u3a types of membership – do you know the difference?

Most members of Littleborough u3a are **full members**. We pay £15 a year and can join as many groups as we like and attend monthly meetings and join trips and other events as we choose. Full members receive all information, monthly newsletters (also by post if they do not have email) and invitations to events, outings etc.

However, we have two other kinds of member: **Reciprocal members** and **Associate members**. You do need to know the difference:

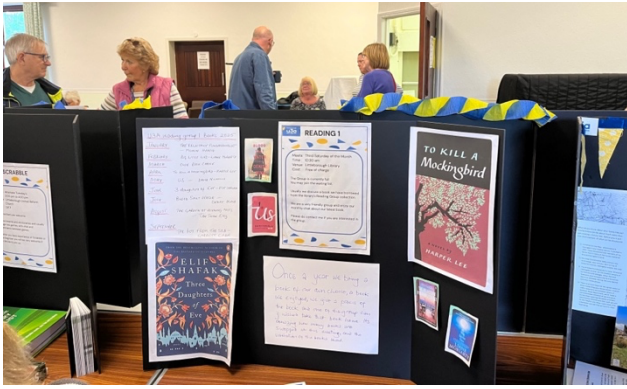
Associate members are members of another u3a who have also joined Littleborough u3a. They have all the same rights and access as full members. The only difference is that they pay a lower fee because they do not need to pay twice the £4 that we return every year to the national u3a from your membership fee.

Reciprocal members are members of Todmorden u3a who ask to join one of our u3a groups. They do not pay any membership fee to Littleborough and the arrangement only allows them to access the group or groups. They are not entitled to come to monthly meetings or to join other events unless we specifically open these up to them. They do not receive the newsletter. This is an agreement we have with Todmorden u3a and it means that our u3a members may also join their groups if there are spaces available. Both of our u3as have very busy monthly meetings – hence we restrict these to those who are full or Associate members. Obviously if Todmorden u3a members want to join the rest of our u3a activities, all they have to do is sign up as Associate members. Every kind of member will complete a membership form – the right one for their category of membership – and Mike, our membership secretary checks, on an annual basis, with the membership secretary of Todmorden u3a that our reciprocal members are still on their lists. All members will appear on your group list on Beacon – and there is also a box on Beacon which tells you what class of membership they have. Remember, however, we only have a small number of reciprocal and associate members. All membership forms will be available on the new convenors' page on the website.

Why do Kois travel in groups of 4? To protect themselves from predators. When they are attacked, Kois A,B, and C go in one direction and the other is the D Koi

Littleborough u3a Day on Saturday September 27th: a brief review

We had a good response to the evaluation of the open day and the feedback will help to inform next year's open day. Here are some of the key points from convenors and visitors:



The best things about the event were:

- Showing the full range of what the u3a groups do – it looked impressive
 - Making the display boards makes you realise how much your group does and how much it is enjoyed by members
 - It was a great opportunity to chat with other convenors
 - It was good to talk to new people interested in the group
- Finding out about all those national groups and activities as well
 - We signed up 14 new members on the day – and this with limited publicity

What we would like to see in future:

- More publicity – open it up to the wider public
- It was quite a lot of work for a limited return in terms of new people joining the group
- Keep the display boards for next year – they can be amended but now we have a pattern.

Next year this event will again take place in or near u3a week in September and we will be coming to you for further detailed suggestions and help in the planning. From the survey, we already have a list of volunteers for next year. Thank you all for your work on and for the day.

The first song from the new ukulele group The Palindromes is called: If I had a hi-fi.

Littleborough u3a Race Night: naming the horses and jockeys



The horse names are charging in, leaping the fences with their colourful jockeys. Here are some examples and a puzzle for you – which groups named these horses and which groups named the jockeys? It's not so hard to guess. (Answers at the bottom of the newsletter).

- Dolce Vita, ridden by Leonardo Dettori
- Celestial Whisper, ridden by Nagatha Christie
- Ace of Spades, ridden by Luciano Pavarotti
- Green Dragon, ridden by Pierre Piston

I am collecting the names so please do send me yours. It's a fun activity for your group.

The Race Night is on Saturday March 14th. If your group would like to reserve a table for your members, please let us know when you buy your tickets in January – £8 each. Supper (pie and peas) is included in the price and the bar will be open.

Managing the Beacon Timeout

If you are frustrated because Beacon times you out before you have finished the task (this happens to me every time I send out the member newsletter because the system takes a long time to complete the transmission!) this is because Beacon has reset your timeout under Personal Preferences to 20 minutes.

To change this, all you need to do next time you go to logon: you will see the cookies information on the left hand side of the screen. Click 'accept additional cookies'. Once logged in, go to Personal Preferences and change your time out from 20 minutes to whatever is best for you.

If you have any queries, please contact our Beacon Administrator: Lynn Wild via the u3a website Contacts page.

What do you call a group of rabbits hopping backwards? A receding hareline.



2. Christmas in the u3a groups

Whilst the main Christmas meeting for the u3a is on Monday December 8th in Dearnley Methodist Church – and some of our groups will be preoccupied preparing for their performances on that day – u3a groups are also planning their own celebrations. Here are just some examples of what groups are doing. If your group is not here, that's because we didn't receive any information but you could send a photo of your Christmas fun for the next issue of this or for the member newsletter.



Beryl Tattersall – Art for Beginners

The group will be painting Christmas cards and sharing homemade mince pies with their tea or coffee.



Anne Howard – Spanish for Beginners

Our Spanish group has been established for 18 months now and our Christmas 'do' is scrummy tapas at the Lake Lounge. It doesn't need to be Christmas for us though as we go out regularly for tapas. We love to learn together and to socialise together. Cheers!



Sandra Kokocki – Spanish Advanced

We will be celebrating Christmas with tapas at La Mancha.

Pat Greenall – Yoga

Once stretched, the yoga group is going for coffee and mince pies in a café in Littleborough after our last session.



Jo Wiggans – Italian Intermediate

To beat the January blues we are going out for lunch after Christmas to Siro, the Italian restaurant in Rochdale. The staff are Italian so it's a chance to practise too.

Glenys Italian Conversation

At our last meeting before Christmas, the members of the group are tasked to find some information about Christmas in Italy to share with the group and to bring some Italian themed nibbles. Expect amaretti biscuits, prosecco and dolcelatte.

Jo Wiggans – Birdwatching

Hollingworth Lake to see the birds followed by lunch at Riva on the lakeside.



Liz Walker – Mahjong

We are only a small group at the moment so we won't be having a big party but we may have something a little stronger than tea at our last meeting before Christmas.



Christine Duckworth – Spanish Beginners 2

We are going out for lunch to the Wagon in Milnrow. Great food, great tapas and great company. No doubt there will be lots of fun and laughter as usual! FELIZ NAVIDAD!

Sandra Kokocki – Craft Group and Quiz Group

Members of the Craft Group are making Christmas table centres on December 4th.
The Quiz Group will have a Christmas themed quiz in the Red Lion on Thursday December 18th.

Sue Robinson – Italian Beginners Plus



We have decided to research Italian traditions at this special time of the year. To help with this we will be having a meal at a traditional Italian restaurant where we will enjoy good food, good company and raise a glass to good health and friendship. We wish everyone in Littleborough u3a BUON NATALE!

Alison Gavagan – Reading Group 2

We are going to have a story-telling session from Phillip Pullman's book retelling Grimms Fairy Tales

Christine McMillan-Bodell



The three bridge groups are hoping to come together on Friday 19 December to celebrate as one group. Our tradition is for each of us to bring along a plate of nibbles to share and, after enjoying the food, we plan to round off the occasion with some friendly bridge play. We're looking forward to marking the season in good company.

Seasons Greetings!



Marilyn Aldred – Poetry Appreciation

This group is finding, selecting and reading poems about the Christmas feasts and celebrations.



Marilyn Aldred – Psychology

After our December meeting, which is continuing the discussion about Child Development, we are going to Gladwins for a Christmas lunch.

Jeff Meek – Guitar Group

We are performing at the u3a Christmas meeting on December 8th, then have our normal meeting on Tuesday December 9th when we will be performing Christmas songs for the Mums and tots group. Then, on Friday 12th we are again performing for a larger group of parents with their children again at Milnrow library. Next, who knows ... Top of the Pops?! Hehehe. – or is it HoHoHo!



3. Convenor chat

This section is for you to occupy with questions you would like to ask either the u3a committee or other convenors, with ideas you have to keep your group happy, and any other topic that you want to share with other group convenors.



Here's a starter for ten: as a convenor do you do everything or just some things? For example, the things that might be needed to do:

- Manage the Beacon list – enter and remove members from the list, use it to contact members and to download the next of kin information etc.
- Organise the meetings – contact everyone to remind them of when and where.
- Book the rooms and collect money and pay for the rent.
- Organise the refreshments.
- Something else?

The thing is that sometimes it suits us to do it all and sometimes it's just too much! Some groups share the tasks. It would be good to hear how this works in your group. Answers for our next issue please, along with any other questions or ideas you want to share.

N.B. As far as BEACON is concerned, you don't need to do it all yourself. We need to have your name and contact information as convenor so that we can be in touch when necessary, with your group via you. You are the contact person. However, Cindy Drinkwater, as Groups Coordinator, will manage the membership list on Beacon for your group if you want her to. And there is always help to manage it yourself if you prefer.

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That's all for this issue. We hope you have found something interesting or useful in here. I hope you don't hate the jokes too much (I absolve Cindy of responsibility for these). We can't wait to hear what you think. Good or bad, just let us know.

Meanwhile, we are sending you a huge thank you for all you do to inspire, entertain and provide friendship and interest to our members. **Thank you very much.**

Happy Christmas celebrations and very best wishes to you all from

Cindy Drinkwater – Groups Coordinator

Jo Wiggans – Newsletter Editor

Horses and Riders

- a) Italian and Art for Beginners
- b) Astronomy and Reading Group 1
- c) Bridge and Italian 2
- d) Mahjong and French