

Dear Member,

On Wednesday, 12th March, 2025 we held the 13th Annual General Meeting of the Much Wenlock, Broseley & District u3a. The committee was delighted to see so many members there, so thank you for coming. For those of you who couldn't make it, here's a summary along with the latest news from our study and social groups.

The headline news since our last AGM is that we have a new website. This is based on SiteWorks, a web authoring system, facilitated by The Third Age Trust and based on the widely used WordPress software. Our webmaster, Neil Lloyd did a tremendous job of migrating us across from the old SiteBuilder platform and continues to work hard, keeping the site up to date and relevant. If you haven't already visited it, I would encourage you to do so and please do get in touch if you would like to add to the content.

The website is proving useful as a reference point for our u3a's documentation (see <https://much-wenlock.u3asite.uk/administration-policies/>). It also reflects everything that's happening in our u3a. We have more than 250 members with many of our more recent recruits joining because of a particular interest group. Here is a list of all our 26 groups: <https://much-wenlock.u3asite.uk/groups/> and the only one missing is the new, and very popular, History group. If you click on any of these headings, you can learn more about the activities of that group. For example, the Walking for All group lists their upcoming routes as well as useful tips. The Ukulele group has posted its songbooks, playlist and even a video of them rehearsing! The Creative Writing group offer you a Book of the Month featuring extracts read by the author.



If you want to find out more about our monthly meetings, they are listed here: <https://much-wenlock.u3asite.uk/events/> with more detail available again if you click on the headings. We have Jean Buswell to thank, along with her team, for arranging our excellent programme.

Talking of thanks, I would like to take this opportunity to say a very Big Thank You to everyone who has contributed to the continuing success of our u3a this year including, but not limited to, our Group Leaders, the Refreshments team at our monthly meetings and everyone who has helped at our promotional events such as this Uke3a and guitar group concert and information day in The Square last September.



Not forgetting of course ... our hard-working committee. If you want to know more about any of us, it's available via 'About Us' on the website, <https://much-wenlock.u3asite.uk/about-us/> and you can also send a message to us <https://much-wenlock.u3asite.uk/contact/>.

Twelve of our thirteen committee members stood for re-election but Linda Wallace who has served as Chair, Vice Chair and Groups Co-ordinator during her nine years on the committee stepped down and we thank her for all that she has done for our u3a.



Your officers for 2025/26 are:

Chair: Alison Richards

Vice-Chair: Neil Lloyd

Secretary: Jane Hague

Treasurer: Glynn Emery

and the Executive Committee Members are Jean Buswell, Ian Cohen, Jo Cohen, Linda Davies, David Foster, Christina Gore, Bill Hague, Neil Lloyd, Michael Theobalds.

At the meeting we presented the Financial Statement for 2024 and the budget for 2025 as prepared by our Treasurer, Glynn Emery. The accounts were examined by Heather Sower. We thanked both of them for their hard work and you can see the numbers here: <https://much-wenlock.u3asite.uk/administration-policies/>.

Whilst we have a healthy closing position, we are also eating into our bank balance every year as we are currently incurring annual losses. We have never increased our fees from £15 for individuals and £28 for a couple living at the same address, since the inception of our u3a. This is despite increases in the contributions required by The Third Age Trust (which are now £9 per member per annum) and inflation generally. We also have an issue with cashflow as our membership year currently runs from 1st May to 30th April but our most significant cash outflow is to the Third Age Trust in April (prior to subscriptions being received).

Consequently, the committee tabled two resolutions and proposed:

- Item 9 - Agreement of Membership Fee for 2025/26 - that we move, & temporarily reduce the length of the next membership period, but do not change the subscription charges.

Thus from 1st May, 2025 to 31st January, 2026, the charges would remain at £15 for individuals and £28 for a couple living at the same address.

A vote was taken via a show of hands that showed a clear majority in favour of the resolution.

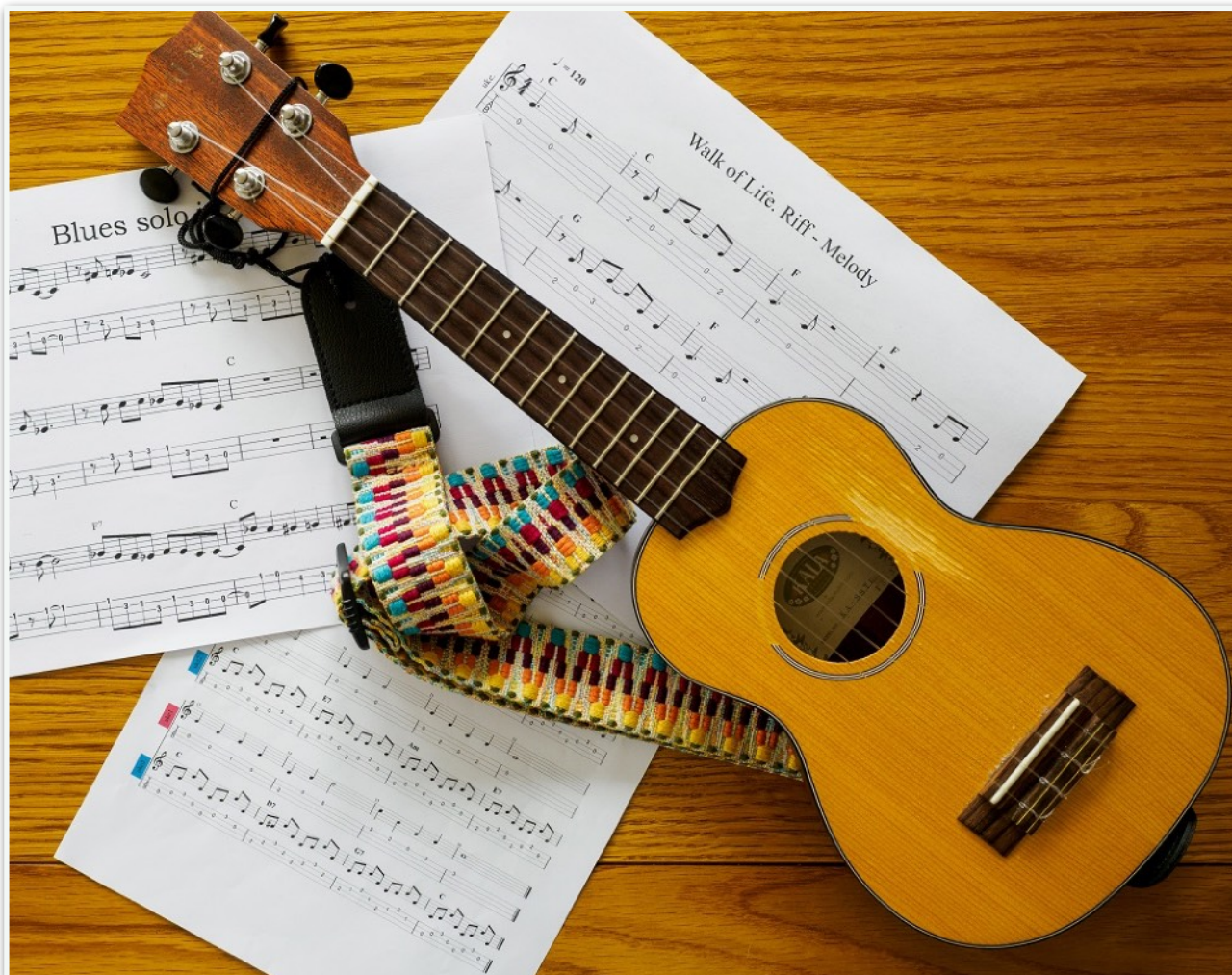
- Item 10 - Agreement of Membership Fee for 2026/27 - that the membership year for 2026/27 runs from 1st February, 2026 to 31st January 2027 and that we raise the subscription charges to:
£18 for individuals and £34 for a couple living at the same address

A vote was taken via a show of hands that showed a clear majority in favour of the resolution.

The AGM was followed by a poignant talk from Natalie Cumming: 'The Fiddle', a moving, true story about how her Aunt Rosa survived the Holocaust, playing the family violin in concentration camps. Tracing the precious instrument across landscapes devastated by war and terror, we learnt how it came to safety and restoration in 21st Century Britain at the BBC's Repair Shop. Read more here: <https://much-wenlock.u3asite.uk/natalie-cumming-the-fiddle/> .

Now it's time for news from our groups:

The **Melodic Ukulele** group is now in its third year. Being a small group of seven allows for a more informal gathering than is possible in the larger groups. We have tackled a variety of tunes, some solo, some multi-part.



These range from anonymous renaissance style melodies originally written for the lute, to modern film music, such as Chariots of Fire and classical pieces including “Ode to Joy” from Beethoven’s 9th and the theme from Dvořák’s New World Symphony. Making mistakes, attempting to play awkward bits and trying to keep together is all part and parcel of being in the group, but we have progressed and on occasion we do come together and sound good. It is also fair to say we all continue to learn, whether that be musical theory or the technique of how to play something more easily.

Neil Lloyd

Italian Group 3 - This group continues to flourish. One of our favourite activities is Settimana Scorsa (Last Week) in which we talk about, you've guessed, last week. We have been doing this for many years now and so we know the preoccupations, families, hobbies and holidays of each other very well. We've been reading short stories too. Under the capable leadership of Melanie Milan we practise our pronunciation and grammar with vigour! We have a lot of fun and laughter together.

David Foster

Psychology Group - Our learning continues via our animated and thoughtful discussions. Our topics have spanned the work of eminent Psychologists; different types of therapeutic treatments: for example: EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitisation Reprocessing), Deep Brain Reorienting and Psychosynthesis. We reflect and discuss aspects that impact upon our ways of being, such as: attachment, introversion and extroversion and trauma. We work collaboratively with members choosing topics and identifying resources to share. We are informal and friendly, we welcomed some new members last



year and oh yes, ... we always look after ourselves with refreshments and treats!!

Cherril Wilson-Toft

The Monday morning **Intermediate Spanish** combined study & conversation class continues with 8 regular attendees, which is sadly the maximum we can accommodate in each other's homes. The class consists of 1 hour of formal study followed by one hour of informal conversation in Spanish. We are nearing completion of a study book "Pasos 2" and we intersperse this with an online resource called Notes in Spanish.

Peter Houlder



The Monday afternoon **Spanish chat-togethers** are gently going on. We now are five - could welcome two or three more. Three members are highly proficient, but everyone's happy to keep at the "fun level". The experts get a special kind of practice, as they work together to assist those who

are much, much less fluent (in Spanish, of course). We have no course books, but take pleasure in reading and discussing amusing tales, written for learners.

Peter Tyler

The **Bridge for Beginners** group was formed 2 years ago and has "turned up Trumps". The members meet weekly and are progressing well, enjoying both the bridge and the chatter. We look forward to another year of friendship, fun and learning.

Linda Davies



The [Art 1](#) group continues with a steady membership of regulars including Catherine Downes who attends whenever her health permits and gives us the benefit her artistic expertise. We enjoyed visiting the Secret Severn Art Exhibition in Jackfield which inspired us to have a go at various techniques. We've experimented with collage, printing with natural materials, stencil making and drawing with twigs and ink. Now we are working on our own pictures (examples on this, and the following two pages) to produce some new work to display in the Guildhall exhibition for Much Wenlock artists in June. Please pop in and take a look.

Jo Revell





The **Music Appreciation** group has been suspended during February and March because of Ken Wallace's accident but we started it again on 5th March. Otherwise, nothing really to report. We will carry on doing what we have done since the group's inception.

Trevor Halsey

The **Play Reading** Group is very healthy, we currently have 11 members so the group is full. We meet fortnightly to read a variety of plays ranging from Ibsen to John Godber, we are very fortunate to have David Foster as a member as his wealth of experience in acting and knowledge of drama are invaluable to us.

Christina Gore

Nationally, there are now over 1000 u3as with around 400,000 members. The headline news at the Third Age Trust is all about their new structure. This consists of a smaller Board, focused on governance and finance, and a new "u3a Council" where elected representatives highlight and resolve issues that u3as want to be addressed. You can read more here: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/latest-news>.



The Third Age Trust has also asked us to share this report with you - Learn to Live: A blueprint for better health and wellbeing - which is now available on their website: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/our-impact/u3a-reports/learn-to-live>. It showcases the transformative impact of the u3a model on members' lives.

Thank you all for being part of Much Wenlock, Broseley and District u3a and on behalf of your committee, we look forward to sharing another lively and enjoyable year.

Best regards,
Alison Richards, Chair

