

SANDBACH U3A



Could you shine in the Family Fun Quiz - Bottle of Wine to be won!!!

Group Showcase in March 2019

At the Members' Meeting on **Monday 4th March 2019**

there will not be a speaker. Instead, groups have the opportunity to demonstrate their creativity. If your group produces something you want to show off, this is your chance. With this early notice you have the chance to prepare whatever sort of display or performance is appropriate. Reply to secretary@sandbachu3a.org.uk or contact any committee member to book a slot.

Please note that space is limited, so book your slot early!

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Don't Forget!

To share information about planned or completed activity involving your group, please send details to the newsletter:

newsfeed@sandbachu3a.org.uk



Sandbach
& District
U3A

Group Gossip

Table Tennis Rocks!

If you believe the International Table Tennis Federation statistics, some 300 million people around the world are playing ping-pong, whiff-whaff, over-to-you, take this, take that, or whatever transfer description you care to choose.



Here, our roving reporter captures an elite group of U3A batters at full stretch in the biscuit dunking phase of the game. Notice their warm-up technique - hands wrapped firmly around their coffee mugs. The next phase of the game is much shorter and involves the violent swinging of small coloured bats (seen on the table) at little white balls. Anecdotally, bat colour is less relevant to a player's performance than the strength of his/her drink.

And now, just a few moments later, the picture is very different. Rarely seen, this all-action phase shows how the caffeine has kicked in and bats are at full whiff-whaff, regardless of whether there is a ball available. You will see a variety of footwear in use, some with laces. Fashionable, loose fitting tops are partnered with the long trousers recommended for absorbing any inadvertent coffee spillage. Soon, the players will resume their more familiar, highly polished, hot mug work.



If this exciting display has sparked your interest, we have four groups that currently meet for two hours each week (Tuesdays & Fridays). They are presently full, although you may add your name to one of the waiting lists by visiting the group section of SWISH. If you can already claim some ability as a player, we have a new, more competitive group that has recently been launched and there may be some space.

Need-To-Know

Playing Away at Another U3A?

Can I join an interest group in another U3A branch within our own *cluster*, without joining that U3A?

Currently, nine networks or clusters of U3A's exist within the North West Region, several spanning regional borders. The South East Cheshire cluster comprises the following Groups:

Alsager, Knutsford, Winsford, Holmes Chapel, Sandbach, Macclesfield, Congleton, Crewe & Nantwich, Middlewich, Northwich, Tarporley, West Cheshire Rural.
Also, from North Staffs: Biddulph, Madeley and Leek.

Gillian Russell, NW Regional Trustee, advises that there are **no branches** in U3A. Each U3A is an individual charity affiliated to the Third Age Trust and therefore, people wanting to attend more than one U3A Group must join each Group. However, some U3As will create reciprocal agreements with other local U3As that allow a member of another Group to attend an interest group, provided the leader is okay with it, especially if it is a minority interest. They are covered by insurance. The visitor should not take a place if it excludes one of the regular members, although it is up to each U3A Group committee to agree an appropriate policy.

The member should only attend the interest group that has been agreed and should not attend any of the general meetings or other activities without taking full membership. If numbers rise and there are members waiting to join, the visitor may be asked to leave.

Sandbach U3A's policy is that to be a member of any interest group **you must be a member of Sandbach U3A**, although 1 or 2 taster sessions may be allowed without being a member. It is worth noting that, the SWISH system will not allow a group leader to add someone to the group who is not a member of Sandbach U3A.

Getting Up-to-date

Contacting your Nearest – In Case of Emergency (ICE)!!

The SWISH system records personal details of all our members and has space for the name and telephone number of a person the group leader can call if a member is involved in an emergency. For many members these ICE details are missing, which might cause some distress, if they were ever needed.

Please ensure that these details are recorded either by logging into the SWISH system to update them yourself or by sending them to us to do it for you:

secretary@sandbachu3a.org.uk

Group Member – Perhaps Not?

Now that most groups carry forward their membership from one year to the next, a group's list of members may include people who don't attend future meetings, for whatever reason. The rule that normally operates is that a member who **misses three meetings of a group without explanation** may be removed from the register to allow space for someone on the waiting list. If you wish to attend a group, but you have missed some meetings without informing the group leader, please let the leader know that you wish to re-start.

Health and Well-being

Dementia Friends – Helping to Create a Dementia Friendly Sandbach



As a Dementia Friends Champion trained last year in Crewe, and a long-standing member of Sandbach U3A, I and fellow local Champions have been delivering free one hour information sessions to residents of Sandbach, in which they learn more about dementia and how they can help to create a dementia friendly Sandbach. The photo shows the friends at the first such session

Dementia Friends is an Alzheimer's society led initiative that aims to increase dementia awareness and change the way the nation thinks, talks and acts about dementia.

A Dementia Friend is someone who has attended a one-hour information session and has committed to an action that will make the lives of people living with dementia a little bit better. Anyone of any age can be a Dementia Friend and every action counts - from helping someone to find the right bus to spreading the word about dementia on social media. Dementia Friends Champions are trained volunteers who encourage their family, friends, colleagues and local community to understand a little bit more about dementia, what it's like to live with dementia and then turn that understanding into

held in Miola Coffee lounge last August, including the U3A secretary, Sandy Boyle (acting secretary at that time).

Why don't you join us and help to make Sandbach a more dementia-friendly place? Our next two sessions are:
Thursday January 17th 10am Old Hall, Sandbach

Monday February 11th 3pm Military Arms, Sandbach

If you would like to find out more about Dementia Friends please visit www.dementiafriends.org.uk or if you have any questions about running information sessions involving Sandbach U3A members, please contact me on the details below.

Dave Whitworth,
mob: 07593 533260

Bits And Pieces

Feedback

Our last issue, Autumn 2018, invited members to provide feedback on the first year of our new look Newsletter.

The number of responses that landed was, shall we say, underwhelming, although those members moved to give their views were very positive and their support is much appreciated. Some members had technical concerns and, for the most part, these have now been addressed. However, the range of individual viewing platforms is likely to mean that, unfortunately, one or two members may still experience the odd glitch.

So, a big **Thank You** to all who did respond and I hope that more members will feel motivated to write to us in the future via newsfeed@sandbachu3a.org.uk - let us know what you like, don't like or wish to tell us about anything that is happening, or you would like to happen in your U3A. This is your forum and an avenue to get in touch with the committee and other members. **Ed**

New Committee Member

At the December 2018 committee meeting, the U3A Chair, Arnie Laing, welcomed Newsletter Editor, John Roome, onto the committee as a co-opted member for the current term ending November 2019.

John said that he was looking forward to working more closely with the committee in the development of the Newsletter.

Thank you - Donations from Members' Meeting on 3rd December

Thank you for your donation of £57.50. Your support will help us continue our fight against pancreatic cancer and demand the best for everyone affected by the disease.

Pancreatic cancer is tough. Tough to research. Tough to diagnose. Tough to treat. And it will be tough to change that, but at Pancreatic Cancer UK we are leading the fight against the disease. In the last few years, we have seen survival rates increase for the first time in decades and contributed towards UK research investment which has now reached £10 million a year.

These are all important achievements, but we're not complacent, there is still so much more we need to do - more influence, more research, more reach, more funds and more support.

Once again, thank you. Together we can take on pancreatic cancer.

Leeann Wilmer
Head of Events, Community
and Individual Giving,
Pancreatic Cancer UK.

Open Shop

Hotel Euromania

(to the tune Hotel California)

On a dark Brexit highway, fake news in my hand
 Warm smell of corruption rising up through the land
 Up ahead in the future, things were not looking bright
 Economists have an agenda and they don't get it right

There he stood in the doorway, nausea came to mind
 He said: "I'm Jean Claude Juncker, and we don't like your kind
 But we know what's best for you" and he pointed me Brussels way
 The light were on but no-one was home, it must be Strasbourg's day

Welcome to the Hotel Euromania
 Such an ugly stain (such an ugly stain)
 It's a gravy train
 28 rooms at the Hotel Euromania
 Just pay your rent: it's already spent

Their minds are subsidy-twisted, they all drive Mercedes Benz
 They got a lot of mafia families that they call friends
 How they laugh in the Commission: "We don't answer to you
 And you can't get rid of us, but we control the EU"

Italian banks are broken, the Greek economy's died
 The Poles will still dig their coal mines, after the planet has fried
 And still those people are coming from far away,
 They arrive the whole year round, to hear Mrs Merkel say:

Welcome to the Hotel Euromania
 Comes as no surprise (comes as no surprise)
 The enormous size
 Plenty of room at the Hotel Euromania
 Though you may find home
 Is on the streets of Rome

Smoke and mirrors around us, it's gone on far too long
 And they know: it was a nice idea, but now it's all gone wrong
 Quantitative easing, papering over the cracks
 He said: "We've got your country now, and you can't have it back"

Last thing I remember, I was running for the door
 I don't remember any of this being what I voted for
 "Relax" said Michel Barnier "We are programmed to deceive
 You can activate article 50, but you can never leave"



Anon

Security



Cheshire Police ALERT



Speeding

58 people have been caught speeding so far this month in the Haslington area. We are messaging today to urge you to think about your speed whilst driving through our villages.

If you stick to the limit, thank you and please continue to drive safely!

If however, you know that you regularly drive over the speed limit, please think of the potential consequences.

There are speed limits for a reason and we will continue to monitor speed and send our data to the Central Ticket Office to deal with.

Our villages are filled with so many people that will be put at risk by people driving over the speed limit.

We hope that you have a great day and drive in accordance to the speed limit in your area.

We're here for you! *Regards, Your Local PCSO's*

Distraction Theft

On Thursday 6th December a male was approached by 3 males, in Sandbach Town Centre, outside McColls. One male asked for directions to the bus stop with a large map whilst the other male brushed against him and took his wallet.

Please be vigilant whilst out for these distraction thefts and keep your belongings secure and close to you at all times. *Regards, Your local PCSO's*

HM Revenue and Customs Alert

What you need to know

Action Fraud has experienced an increase in the reporting of malicious calls, voicemails, text messages or emails to members of the public purporting to be from HMRC.

The fraudsters state that as a result of their non-payment of tax or other duty, the victim is liable to prosecution or other legal proceedings such as repossession of belongings to settle the balance but can avoid this by arranging for payment to be made immediately by method such as bank transfer or by iTunes gift cards.

If the victim is hesitant or refuses to comply, the suspect makes a threat such as immediate arrest, bailiffs or in cases where the victim appears to be of overseas origin; deportation.

Often, the period for which the tax is allegedly due is distant enough to guarantee the victim will have little, if any, paperwork or ability to verify the claims. Once the money is paid the suspects sever all contact.

It is vital that the public exercise caution when receiving messages or telephone calls of this nature.

What you need to do

Always question unsolicited requests for your personal or financial information. Just because someone knows your basic details (such as your name and contact details), it doesn't mean they are genuine.

Instead, contact the company directly using trusted methods such as a known email address or phone number.

Listen to your instincts. If something feels wrong then it is usually right to question it. No genuine organisation will ask you to pay taxes, bills or fees using iTunes Gift Cards, or any other type of voucher. Don't be rushed or pressured into making a decision. Under no circumstances would a genuine bank or some other trusted organisation force you to make a financial transaction on the spot.

Report Phishing attempts. If you receive a call, text or email of this nature and have not lost money, report this as a phishing attempt to *Action Fraud*.

Group Gossip

Creative Writing

The Creative Writing group was tasked with writing a piece that ended with the phrase "..... he thought to himself "I shouldn't have done that". Amongst some very interesting stories this one amused everyone and is very topical!

Jinty Pyke

Whoops by Graham Coyne

He sat on the toilet enjoying his cave time. The smallest room in the house is sanctuary, free of family, TV and the press.

Yes, they can't get him there.

That is where he decided it was time to let the public have their say; and where they, the men, would choose what was right. Wrong. As usual the silent majority, the ladies, had their way.

Well there are more of them he supposed.

If they did what he did we could have saved ourselves the pain of endless Katya Adler, Laura Kuenssberg and Emily Maitlis pontifications. "Don't they have strange names" he mused.

How he wished for a return to the good interrogation free days of Angela Ripon, Sue Lawley and Valerie Singleton. He was a BBC man at heart.

Trust the public, hah! Forget it; he is no longer invited to Davos, Brussels or Strasbourg. Boris and Nigel have been let out of their box and chaos reigns.

He could have asked "should we have red or white wine, Yes or No?" But he asked if they wanted to stay in the EU; big mistake, huge, and he thought to himself "I shouldn't have done that".

New Group: Circus Skills

Peter Duncan is an experienced trainer in **circus skills** and has offered to start a group in Sandbach U3A. He would start with skills such as:

- Juggling - how to play with and juggle scarves, balls, rings, clubs
- Balancing objects - starting with feathers moving on to more challenging objects
- Manipulation - things like cigar boxes, diabolos, flower sticks

If the group wanted to he could move to stilt walking, counterbalance and human pyramid. Contact any committee member to register your interest.

Environment

Waste Collection



Courtesy of
Cheshire East
publication

THE **VoICE**

Towards the end of last year, Cheshire East Council started a consultation on the waste collection service reorganisation. It ran until 7 January 2019.

If approved, the proposal will allow savings of £600,000 and ensure waste is collected more effectively, using fewer vehicles on new optimised routes. The service is operated by Cheshire East Council's wholly-owned company Ansa Environmental Services. Changes to the times and days would also align with the introduction of the council's new food waste recycling service in autumn 2019.

The proposals could see the end of the garden waste collection winter shutdown, as food and garden waste would be collected for recycling all year round. Food waste would be collected with garden waste in the garden waste bin, adding food recycling to our recycling service without the need for an extra outdoor container.

Changes to our waste collection routes will allow garden and food waste to be delivered to the council's new composting plant, to be constructed at Leighton Grange, just outside Crewe. The plant will be able to recycle Cheshire East household food and garden waste into quality compost for use in horticulture, agriculture and landscaping.

Councillor Glen Williams, deputy cabinet member for environment, said: "I commend these proposals that will complete our recycling service and deliver significant efficiencies in the way we collect our waste. I would urge residents to respond to the consultation, so we can establish their views."

Residents

will be advised of new collection times and days for recycling and residual waste. This may mean an earlier or later collection time between 6.30am and 6pm and could possibly include a Saturday collection. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, day and time changes to kerbside waste collections will begin from autumn 2019.



Group Gossip**Making Music at Home**

The U3A guitarists and choir members entertained the residents of Park House Care Home with a medley of carols and Christmas songs with residents dancing to the Christmas beat! A good time was had by all - so much so that we have been invited back next year.

Pam Thomas

U3A visits Bridgewater Hall, 20th October 2018.

A busload of eager U3A members set off from Sandbach to the Bridgewater Hall for the Last Night of the PROMS. What a delight it was, all our favourite music from Revel's Bolero to Elgar's Nimrod. The Conductor included us with his orchestra and we "helped" him with British Sea Songs and we all now sing "will" be slaves not "shall" be slaves in Rule Britannia. Of course, we all joined in with much flag waving and singing of "Land of Hope and Glory" We returned to our bus for the journey home in a happy haze of good company and beautiful music, our artistic side satiated ... for now.

Judy Wilson

Health and Well-being

Winter Benefits – did you know?

Cheshire East Council and its partners are offering a range of advice and support to residents on how to keep warm, well and safe this winter. Thousands of residents could be missing out on extra financial support that they are entitled to.



We have entered that time of the year when temperatures drop, which makes us more reliant on our central heating. For those with older systems and boilers, this can cause problems and worry. However, in some circumstances, the council can access funding for gas safety checks, heating repairs, replacement boilers and first-time central heating systems.

There are several ways you may qualify, a combination of low income and high heating costs or certain health conditions, which are made worse by the cold.

The council's [care and repair service](#) provides support to older, disabled and vulnerable people to improve their homes so they are safe and warm. The service includes accessing affordable warmth grants for heating and help to organise the work.

The Energy Company Obligation scheme gives people receiving certain income-related benefits the opportunity to get help with insulating and heating their home. Funding is provided by the large energy suppliers and there is 'flexible eligibility', which means the scheme can be extended to include people who are at risk of fuel poverty or who are vulnerable to the cold.

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If you are a homeowner or private tenant, ring the council's [housing standards and adaptations team](#) on 0300 123 5017 and select option four to find out if you are eligible. For free and impartial advice about energy saving measures, grants and discounts, contact the save energy advice line on 0800 043 0151. They will be able to signpost you to companies offering help with funding for heating and insulation.

You don't always have to be on a low income to access help – there are many schemes available offering free or discounted insulation.

One in 10 older people cut back on their winter heating to make ends meet but, if you were born on or before 5 November 1953, a tax-free winter fuel payment of between £100 and £300 is available to help you pay your heating bills. Any money you get will not affect your other benefits.

A cold weather payment may also be available to you if you receive certain benefits. Payments are made automatically when your local temperature is either recorded as, or forecast to be, an average of 0C or below, over seven consecutive days. This scheme runs from 1 November 2018 to 31 March 2019.

Residents are urged to help friends and neighbours, who do not have Internet access.

**Courtesy of Cheshire East
Publication**

THE VoICE

Need-To-Know

SWISH – and those Group Waiting Lists

Wouldn't it be good if each of our members could join every group they wanted to, but at the same time all groups had just the right numbers to make them enjoyable and viable? "Yes, but dream on!" you may well say, and of course I would agree. This perfect situation is a eutopia we can only strive towards. Unfortunately, SWISH can't solve all the problems, but it is now helping us move in the right direction. Here are some questions and answers to illustrate:

Which groups have vacancies?

Before SWISH, the task of contacting leaders of the 90 or so groups was almost impossible, certainly arduous, and pointless anyway as the information would probably be out of date before the exercise was complete. But now, thanks to SWISH, we have the latest vacancy details for all to see. The list is constantly being updated by the group leaders or their representatives and can be found by clicking on the "Groups with Vacancies" tab on the groups page. (here, if you are online: [Groups](#))

What about waiting lists?

You can now see on every individual group page whether the group has vacancies or if there is a waiting list.

We have always operated group waiting lists, but for some of the more popular groups the waiting lists were very long and what's the point of having waiting lists so long that some members have no hope of reaching the top and joining the group? So, with SWISH group leaders now estimate how many members to allow on the waiting list so those included can at least expect to join the group within a reasonable time period. No guarantees of course, but this is what we try to do.

What does the "Sorry – Completely Full" message mean on individual group pages?

This simply means that the number on the waiting list has reached the maximum limit set by the leader for that group. There is no point in joining as your wait would be unreasonably long.

So how does this help?

- Members get an up to date view of which groups have vacancies and if they join a waiting list, they have the leader's assurance that there is a realistic chance of them joining the group.
- The committee are now able to easily identify which groups are oversubscribed and in conjunction with the relevant leaders, consider options such as larger premises or additional groups, to alleviate the problems.

How can members help?

If you are on a waiting list and decide that you no longer wish to join the group, please let the leader know as soon as possible so they can free the place for someone else. (Leaders should also periodically contact their waiting list members)

Further Information can be found on the website here:

[How To Login to the System & Update Your Profile Details](#)

[How to Apply to Join a Group](#)

[How To Guide for Group Leaders \(SWISH Instructions\) – Updated 13/10/18](#)

By the way, SWISH stands for Sandbach Web-Integrated Support & Help. This is our own version of a system called *Simple Membership* provided by *Web Integrate*.

Alan Casey, SWISH Team

Letters to the Editor

Potholes seem to be making the news at this time of year. I have personal experience of the frustration and cost of replacing a front tyre following a chance encounter with a pothole the size of Wales.

What rocks your boat at the moment - were you exceptionally well-treated at a local shop or at the medical centre; are traffic volumes and the rapid development of the town putting too much pressure on our local services ... ?

Whatever it is, why not share your concerns with others by dropping me an email at newsfeed@sandbach.org.uk



Environment

What a year it's been for hedgehogs!

Brrr! It's really getting cold outside and most hedgehogs will be tucked up, nice and cosy in their hibernacula or hedgehog houses, waiting out the winter.

With hedgehogs out of sight, they are most definitely not out of mind. So we wanted to look back and reflect on what Hedgehog Street has been up to this year, and what a year we've had! Here are some of the highlights:

- We launched the **State of Britain's Hedgehog report** showing huge declines in hedgehogs across the UK and featuring over 300 media articles nationwide
- **Hedgehog Awareness Week** in May was a huge success with thousands of people spreading awareness of hedgehog decline and the simple ways we can help our spikey friends
- The **Hedgehog Housing Census results** were published, telling us just how to make the best home for hedgehogs (**instructions here**)
 - We worked to raise awareness of hedgehog decline with hundreds of farmers and produced a **free guide** to help make the countryside more hedgehog-friendly
 - We **ranked the number of hedgehog spotters** logging sightings on the BIG Hedgehog Map with Hampshire coming out on top!



Courtesy of www.hedgehogstreet.org.uk

Winter Family Fun Quiz

Welcome to your Winter Quiz. Thanks, once again, to your quiz master, **Keith Pointon**, for the questions - and the answers!

To enhance your quizzing pleasure, the lucky winner will receive a bottle of wine. The winner's name will be drawn from all correct sets of answers received at our email address newsfeed@sandbachu3a.org.uk **before 31st January 2019.**



The winner will be announced, along with the correct set of answers, in the **Diary Update** issued to all members around the middle of next month.

1. The name of which processed meat is used to describe unwanted bulk messages?
2. In golf, how many shots would you have taken if you scored an 'eagle' at a par 3 hole?
3. In which TV series, first broadcast in 1982, did Edith, Rene, Yvette and Michelle appear?
4. The young of which animal is known as a leveret?
5. Who wrote the Discworld novels?
6. Who was the youngest elected president of the United States?
7. What is the minimum age at which anyone can buy cigarettes in the UK?
8. Of which country is Copenhagen the capital city?
9. What comes next – 27, 11, 6, 3, 5, ?
10. What is the chemical symbol for ice?

End of Winter Newsletter 2019