

CHAIRMAN'S NOTE

Spring is gloriously here. On the Shoreham Circular Walk, wild cherry trees are in full blossom and bluebells form a magical carpet in the woods. It is a time of renewal and change. For the past 3 years I have been privileged to lead Sevenoaks u3a, which enables over 800 people in their later years, together to "learn, laugh, and live". Initially hesitant, I have been strongly supported by the other Executive Committee (EC) members, four of whom continue in post for the next year, and by others outside the EC. I have forged many new friendships through working together to shape and run the organisation. It has at times been challenging, but always fulfilling and rewarding. Please consider carefully the information set out below by Helen Wood, and decide whether you might take this opportunity to submit a nomination form for one of the vacant posts she describes. To ensure that Sevenoaks u3a can continue, it is vital that in addition to the chair, we also fill the other three vacant posts – a second Vice-Chair, Group Coordinator, and Communications Trustee. Please contact me if you would like more information about any of these vacancies.

Dr. Ken Brown



chairman@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

NOTICE OF 2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

The **Thirtieth AGM of Sevenoaks U3A** will be held at **2.00 pm on Wednesday 26th June 2024**. Further details, including the agenda and papers, will be provided with the June Newsletter.

Executive Committee Elections

There are four Executive Committee (EC) posts up for election at the 2024 AGM within the current agreed structure. These are Chair, Vice Chair (Internal Affairs), Communications (Trustee) and Group Development Trustee. Our constitution already allows for the appointment of a second Vice Chair. We have attached Role descriptions for the four posts. Please note we cannot accept nominations for anyone already a Trustee of another u3a.

Time for volunteers....

As you will be aware our Chairman is stepping down at the AGM after three years in the role. We cannot operate for any length of time without a Chair so are urgently seeking someone willing to take this on after June 26th 2024. Role sharing is not a realistic option in this case.

With continued interest in Sevenoaks u3a and its activities we urgently need more people to join the EC and other supporting teams. Last year we proposed some changes to the structure of the EC to make it more appropriate for today's society. We wanted to recruit at least two more members to be Trustees for Sevenoaks u3a, one more focussed on internal administration potentially as a second Vice Chair and one more focussed on communication to members.

Unfortunately no one put themselves forward so this workload has been shared by other trustees over the last twelve months. We can be very flexible in shaping these roles to fit people's skills and interests, including role sharing.

The Group Development Trustee is also stepping down after carrying out a lot of work in establishing a support team to cover many of the tasks involved in helping members set up new groups and new members join groups. This should make the role easier in the future.

Can you commit?

EC meetings take place six times a year currently on a Thursday morning. Whilst becoming a Trustee is a commitment it also brings the benefits of meeting lovely people, using one's existing skills and widening one's horizons. In addition, Trustees spend about 20 hours a month fulfilling their roles. If you are interested in putting your skills to use in a new way by joining the EC or indeed one of the supporting teams, please contact the Chair Ken Brown or any of the other Trustees as soon as possible.

Nominations

Nominations are invited for the posts of Chair, Vice Chair (Internal Affairs), Communications (Trustee), and Groups Coordinator (Trustee), for which further information is available on request to the Secretary. Nominations must be submitted on nomination forms as attached or obtained from the Secretary and lodged with the Secretary by 14th May 2024.

We also ask for a statement from each nominee explaining why they consider themselves suitable for the role. This will be published with the voting papers in the June newsletter along with proposers and seconders.

Please contact **Helen Wood** by email on secretary@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

to request forms or further information.

Other motions

Any motion that a member may wish to submit to the Annual General Meeting must also be lodged with the Secretary by 14th May 2024, and be duly proposed and seconded.

Postal Votes

For those unable to attend the AGM in person postal voting by email or paper copy will be available in advance. Postal votes are important as they not only enable more individuals to have their say but also count towards the quorum for the meeting.

MAY MONTHLY MEETING

**Wednesday 22nd May 2024 at 2pm at
The Bat and Ball Centre, Sevenoaks**

Our speaker this month is **Philip Oostenbrink**, Head Gardener at Walmer Castle and Gardens (English Heritage) and, above all, a plant collector. He will be giving us a talk about **Plant Hunters**. Philip's collecting bug started when he was 4 years old and his uncle gave him some Sempervivum (houseleek). Currently Philip has five National Plant Collections.

In this talk Philip will be discussing how plant hunters influenced today's gardening. He will also talk about plant crazes and show how current National Plant Collections can be started, including images of his own National Collections.



We look forward to welcoming you to the Bat & Ball Centre, with tea and biscuits being served afterwards. I do hope you will join us.

Barbara Coleyshaw speakers@sevenoaksu3a.org

SCIENCE OPEN MEETING

Our next Science Open meeting will be on **Monday 13th May** at **Otford Village Memorial Hall**, starting at **14:00hrs**. A door charge of £2.50 is made to cover hire costs.

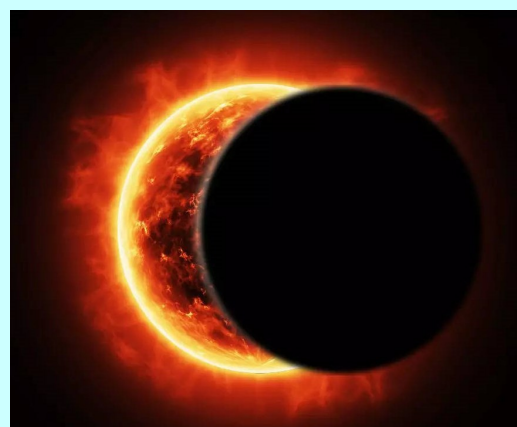
The talk will be – **'Solar eclipses - nature's most incredible sight'** by **Sheridan Williams**

A solar eclipse occurs when the Moon passes between Earth and the Sun, thereby obscuring the view of the Sun from a small part of Earth, totally or partially. We have seen in the media the interest in the recent total eclipse seen across much of the USA.

Our speaker will give us a more scientific insight into the phenomena, people's experiences, and details of how and where to watch these eclipses.

Bob Ruffles for the Science Committee

science@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk



CPR AND DEFIBRILLATOR TRAINING

Did you know that each year over 30,000 people in the UK have an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest and over 90% do not survive. Giving CPR and using a defibrillator can more than double the chance of survival, so prompt action by someone nearby could offer the victim their only chance. Would you know what to do? My wife and I organise the Sevenoaks u3a Bridge for Pleasure group, so, every few years, we refresh our CPR and defibrillator (defib for short!) training. CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and defib training is readily available for anyone – there are no age limits and public access defibrillators are becoming more widely available locally, including Otford Village Memorial Hall, where bridge (and other U3a groups) meet, so knowing what to do is becoming ever more relevant.

The British Heart Foundation offers a 15-minute online course, but for those with a bit more time and who prefer face to face learning, Kent Fire & Rescue Service (KFRS) runs a one-hour session on the first Wednesday of the month at Sevenoaks Fire Station, from 7-8pm.

There were twelve of us in the group, with a range of ages. We each had a dummy for practising CPR. The trainer had two helpers from the fire crew, so plenty of help to get our technique right. They demonstrated using a defibrillator and there were enough training sets for us to practise using the defibrillator in pairs – on the dummy, not on each other!

James, the trainer, made the session entertaining, as well as very informative. He covered CPR for children and babies too.

We now feel much more confident that we would react correctly if faced with someone in cardiac arrest. It could be a u3a member, another friend or a family member. We also hope that if one of us were the victim, someone would be able to help. We know our family could, but could you?

How about getting yourself trained? An hour of your life for such a useful and wonderful life skill !

John and Sue Christy



BRIDGE FOR PLEASURE

Next sessions 24th April, 8th May and 22nd May 2024

The Group plays at Otford Village Memorial Hall on the **2nd and 4th Wednesday mornings** of each month from October to the end of July, from **9.45 a.m. until 12 noon**.

The last two sessions we have had 17 and 20 players, which is encouraging but we do still have room for more of you ! The winners were Denise Record on 27th March and Mike Cutter on 10th April. Congratulations to both of them.

New members are always welcome. We are an “open” group so new players can just come along on the day. We play ACOL in a ‘Chicago’ format so you do not need a partner or to come every time. We change partners every 4 hands so you experience playing with 4 or 5 different people during the morning.

For more information, please ring **John and Sue Christy** on [redacted] email

bridge@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

MAY MONTHLY MEETINGS

May 8th	Bridge For Pleasure	May 13th	Science Open Group	No Meeting	Phones, Tablets & Computers Group
May 22nd	Monthly Meeting	May 22nd	Bridge For Pleasure		

If you would like to include an article in the June newsletter, please send it to

news@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk by the 15th of May.

THE DECORATIVE FAIR

On the **8 May** I shall be visiting the **Decorative Fair in Battersea Park**. This event has been held for many years and is a wonderful opportunity to view furniture, lighting, textiles, garden ornaments, collectibles, paintings and jewellery dating from the 1700s to now. You can truly shop until you drop.

Tickets can be bought on-line or at the door. Or you can purchase the latest edition of *The World of Interiors* which includes a ticket.

We would take the train from Sevenoaks, then a bus from Waterloo to Sloane Square where a courtesy bus takes us over Chelsea Bridge (wonderful view of Battersea Power Station) to the venue in the park.

A courtesy bus will then take you back to Sloane Square and maybe a cuppa at Peter Jones.

If you are interested, please contact **Amanda Birch** on [REDACTED] for further details

PHONE, TABLET & COMPUTER GROUP

As a result of lack of hall availability and the fact that we lose two Mondays in May because of bank holidays, we will not be able to have a meeting of the Phone, Tablet and Computer group this month. Therefore the next meeting of the group will be after the summer recess on October 28th in the Otford Methodist Church Hall, as usual at 2pm.

The committee feels that the new title of the group, "Phones, Tablets and Computers", will better reflect the desire to help members in utilising their devices to maximum effect.

The disguised email for the group is still computing@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk and this is available to any member who needs assistance.

Mike Davies

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

The u3a Art Group will be holding an **Art Exhibition** in **Seal Village Hall** on the last weekend of **June, Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th**.

More details will be given in the June newsletter.

Executive Committee Vacancies - Outline job descriptions

Chairman (20 hours per month + EC meetings and occasional surges)

- Responsible as a Trustee and Officer for upholding the principles and objectives of the Third Age Trust and leading the Sevenoaks u3a group.
- Ensure that Sevenoaks u3a complies with Charities Commission regulations.
- Chair Executive Committee Meetings held every other month 10.00-12.00 on Thursday mornings, preparing a short report in advance, contributing to discussions and decisions made and carrying out agreed actions after the meeting.
- Ensure Minutes of EC Meetings and actions are properly recorded and progressed.
- In conjunction with the rest of the Trustees set policy and strategy for the future direction of Sevenoaks u3a.
- Support fellow Trustees in the fulfilment of their roles.
- Produce Annual Trustee Report to members, the Charity Commission and TAT as required.
- As a member of the Kent Network of u3as, attend area meetings and represent Sevenoaks u3a interests.
- Attend TAT events and represent Sevenoaks u3a at national events such as the AGM as required.

Vice Chair Internal Affairs (20 hours per month + EC meetings) (Proposed new role)

- Responsible as a Trustee for upholding the principles and objectives of the Third Age Trust and leading Sevenoaks u3a.
- As a Trustee also ensuring that Sevenoaks u3a complies with Charities Commission regulations.
- Attend Executive Committee Meetings held every other month 10.00-12.00 on Thursday mornings, preparing a short report in advance, contributing to discussions and decisions made and carrying out agreed actions after the meeting.
- including online and paper, posters and flyers etc.

- Deputise for the Chairman, when necessary.
- Promote interests of members within EC.
- Maintain oversight of all members activities within the u3a.
- Encourage new members to integrate in Sevenoaks u3a activities.
- Support Group Development and New Members Teams and Trustees where necessary or required.

Groups Co-ordinator (20 hours per month + EC meetings and occasional surges)

- Responsible as a Trustee for upholding the principles and objectives of the Third Age Trust and leading Sevenoaks u3a.
- As a Trustee also ensuring that Sevenoaks u3a complies with Charities Commission regulations.
- Attend Executive Committee Meetings held every other month 10.00-12.00 on Thursday mornings, preparing a short report in advance, contributing to discussions and decisions made and carrying out agreed actions after the meeting.
- Chair the Group Support Team and organise regular meetings approximately 1.5 hours, 6x a year.

The Groups Support Team

Acts as a 'clearing house' for enquiries and information about groups, from members and Group Organisers.

Provides support and encouragement to Group Organisers and promotes the development of group activity, including supporting members to set up new groups.

Organises the annual Open Afternoon (or equivalent), with the support of Group Organisers and EC members (usually last Wednesday afternoon in September).

Oversees the update of the annual Members Handbook, by an ad-hoc person or team

Owens the content of the website Interest Group pages

Updates the Group Organisers' Guide, with the assistance of members of the EC and others (every 3-5 years).

Communications Trustee (20 hours a month + EC meetings)

- Responsible as a Trustee for upholding the principles and objectives of the Third Age Trust and leading Sevenoaks u3a.
- As a Trustee also ensure that Sevenoaks u3a complies with Charities Commission regulations.
- Attend Executive Committee Meetings held every other month 10.00-12.00 on Thursday mornings, preparing a short report in advance, contributing to discussions and decisions made and carrying out agreed actions after the meeting.
- As appropriate set up, manage, oversee and/or support teams delivering the various communications functions within Sevenoaks u3a. Chair the monthly Communications Team meetings.
- Provide strategic direction supported by the ViceChair External Affairs in the adoption of new technology whilst maintaining inclusivity.

The Communications Functions include:

Beacon (u3a National Database System) – National liaison, Day to Day administration and Training Sevenoaks users.

Website – Management of Sevenoaks u3a website and other social media agreed with EC.

Newsletter – Setting out and arranging for printing and distribution of the Newsletter in collaboration with the Chair and wider EC.

Publicity – External media communications including online and paper, posters and flyers etc.



CHAIRMAN’S NOMINATION FORM

I agree to nomination as Chair on the Executive Committee of Sevenoaks U3A, which will be for two years.

Name:

Signature:Date:

Proposer:Position:

Seconder:Position:



NOMINATION FORM—OTHER POSITIONS

I agree to nomination as *Vice Chair (Internal Affairs) / Communications Trustee/ Groups Coordinator Trustee on the Executive Committee of Sevenoaks U3A, which will be for two years. (*Please delete as appropriate)

Name:.....

Signature:Date:

Proposer:Position:

Seconder:Position: