

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Dear Friends,

I am sure you are all enjoying this wonderful spring weather, at long last, as Patrick and I are. It is such a privilege to serve as Chair of this lively and ever-growing U3A and to acknowledge the time and effort so many of you put in to enable things to run so smoothly. When I became Chairman I remember that "communication" for me was the most important aspect of it and our newsletter is an essential part of that. I am therefore delighted to welcome Jerry Gunnell, who has kindly offered to take on the editorial role of the newsletter, which will complement the good work that David (Taylor) continues to do as the publisher of it.

Warmest wishes,
Doreen

Doreen Pascall, Chairman chairman@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

U3A MONTHLY MEETING

Wednesday, 27th May, 2026
at 2pm at the Bat and Ball Centre, Sevenoaks

Our Speaker this month is **Gilly Halcrow**. Gilly has been to us before to talk about the Special Operations Executive, this time she will be presenting a talk entitled **The Shetland Bus WWII**.

This is the story of the brave Norwegian sailors who, in their fishing boats, kept links open between occupied Norway and Britain during WWII, taking agents in with supplies for the resistance and escaping refugees out.



Not only did they have to face sub-Arctic storms in the North Sea but also the might of the Nazi war machine out searching for them.

This is a moving account of what affectionately became known as "The Shetland Bus"; helping Norway to bring back its peace and its pride.

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

Barbara Coleyshaw meetings@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING JUNE 24TH, 2026

Details of the 2026 AGM appear at the end of the newsletter, including details of various posts and also nomination forms, should you wish to put your name forward for a particular post.

If you would like to include any items in the June newsletter, please send them to
news@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk by May 20th.

AROUND THE GROUPS

PICKLEBALL

This new group is now meeting weekly on a **Monday morning** at the **Weald Church Hall**, and would welcome some more players. The cost is £7 per session.

If you're interested in playing, contact **Tim Carter**, the Group Organiser, at pickleball@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk.

BEGINNER'S GERMAN

This new group is still looking for a few more members so that it can get underway.

Contact **David Gardner**, the Group Organiser, on german3@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk for details of what's planned.

LONDON, HERE WE COME !

The new London Studies 3 group met for the first time in early April and outings have been planned for the next few months. Forthcoming visits include the Postal Museum in May, the Hindu Temple in Neasden in June, and Highgate Cemetery in July. Our wonderful capital city boasts a wealth of amazing historic sights, including many that are not so well known.



Mail Rail at the Postal Museum

If you'd like to be part of this new group, email londonstudies3@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk or go to https://sevenoaks.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/london-studies-3/ to find out more.

THEATRE VISITS

Our last visit was to see **'MJ The Musical'**. I wasn't quite sure what to expect but it was quite spectacular - the energy, the sets, the iconic costumes and the choreography were impressive. Jamaal Fields-Green was excellent as Michael Jackson; he really captured the mannerisms, the voice and certainly the dance steps. The show avoided the issues of child abuse and Jackson's increasingly erratic behaviour by ending in 1992 but as a story of his early struggles and his development into a phenomenal showman, it was a very lively and enjoyable show. Thanks to Avril Moss for organising the outing. Our next visit is to the Bridge Theatre to see **'Into the Woods'** which has just won the 'best musical revival' award at the Oliviers. Thanks to Pat and Henry Stanley for organising this one.



We currently have 30 members - if you are interested in joining us, please get in touch with **Pat Lowe** at theatrevisits@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

WALKING GROUP 2

The U3A Walking Group 2, which meets on the **second Friday of the month**, would be pleased to welcome more members. We usually walk between 4-6 miles in the morning, followed by lunch in a pub, and we all take it in turns to lead the walks and arrange the lunch.

If you would like any further information, please contact **Jenny Webb** at walking2@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk.

PHONE, TABLET AND COMPUTER GROUP

We have had several visits to Sevenoaks School who have been very generous with the help given by the pupils to our members. We have two more visits planned, on May 14th and June 18th before the school closes for the summer. Any member who wishes to join one or both of these should contact the group via the email computing@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

The programme of talks is complete until next autumn and will be resumed in October provided we have the resources to do so.

The PTC team will be contactable during the summer via the email above to answer any queries you have and we offer the following which we hope will be of help.

It is absolutely vital to ensure your device is backed up. Photos take up a lot of space so consider paying for extra storage to avoid losing irreplaceable data and choose from say Google Drive £1.59 /month for 100GB, One Drive may be free for Microsoft 365 subscribers, Apple iCloud, Dropbox, and BT Cloud free for some BT broadband customers

Internet Security Software is often set to renew automatically without the user's intervention and the renewal price may be 3 or 4 times higher than the original purchase price. It is possible for the user to alter the auto-renewal option although it is not always very easy to find.

SCIENCE GROUP

Our next Science Meeting will be on **Monday 11th May** at **Otford Village Memorial Hall**, starting at **14:00hrs**. Could I ask that attendees turn up in good time for a prompt 14:00 start as latecomers do disrupt proceedings and it is distracting for the speaker.

Our talk will be – **"Fire Science, Cause and Prevention"** by **Lawrence Pater**

The Kent Fire Investigation Team undertake visits and provide education about fire safety, its causes and prevention. Lawrence will describe how fires start and spread in the domestic setting and the precautions that should be undertaken to prevent fires starting in the first place. He will also advise on how the Kent Fire and Rescue Service can assist in improving safety in the home.

Bob Ruffles science@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

SEVENOAKS U3A SCIENCE SEMINAR

4th June 2026. – please book by **15th May** at the latest.

Booking for our Science Seminar **"AI in Action Today"** can now be made.

This can be done via our website or through the following link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sevenoaks-u3a-science-group-seminar-2026-ai-in-action-today-tickets-1322536766069>

SINGING FOR FUN

The Group, which meets on Mondays twice per month, has proven popular over a long time and continues to have a short waiting list. With the passage of time there has been an increase in the number of altos within the Group and a slight reduction in the number of sopranos and male singers. The Group would like to try and improve the balance of singers and will therefore temporarily be giving preference to sopranos and male singers once the present (very) short waiting list is met.

If you are interested in singing for fun please contact the Group Co-ordinator **Ray Leathers** at singing@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

BRIDGE FOR PLEASURE

Bridge for Pleasure

Next sessions:- 13th and 27th May

The Group plays at **Oxford 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** (please arrive by 09.40).

Our last two sessions have both had 16 players so numbers have been down a bit on previous weeks, perhaps due to better weather enticing people to go out for the day?

Our recent winners have been two of our longest standing members, Colin Butson and Stephen Hale – well done guys. Colin had a very good score of nearly 3600 from only 4 sets of 4 hands, very much helped when partnering Jane Donaldson who bravely raised Colin to 7 clubs when vulnerable which Colin coolly proceeded to make scoring 2140 on one hand! This is the first grand slam we have had bid and made for a very long time – it's not an easy thing to do when playing with a non-regular partner. So very well done Jane and Colin.

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 to come with a partner or to come every time. We change partners every 4 hands so you experience playing with 4 or occasionally 5 different people during the morning. We like people to be of at least an intermediate standard and to know the standard Acol bids and responses. We can supply an Acol basic bidding crib sheet to anyone who thinks they might be a bit rusty..

For more information, please email **John and Sue Christy** on bridge@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

Science at Sevenoaks u3a: A Lively Programme for Curious Minds

Science activities at Sevenoaks u3a continue to flourish, offering members an engaging mix of talks, visits, and hands-on exploration. The Science Group meets regularly to delve into topics ranging from climate change and medical imaging to the physics of flight and the chemistry of everyday life. Sessions are led by a mix of retired professionals, academics, and enthusiastic amateurs, all committed to making science accessible and enjoyable .

Visits are a highlight of the programme. Recent outings have taken members behind the scenes at research laboratories, industrial sites, and museums. Popular destinations have included the Kew Steam & Music Museums, Kirkaldy Testing works and CERN in Geneva, giving participants the chance to see science in action and meet experts working in cutting-edge fields.

Collaboration with other u3a groups in our Annual Science Seminar — topics such as Forensic Science, Future Energy technology and Artificial Intelligence broadens the scope even further.

What truly sets the group apart is its sense of community. Members bring a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, creating a welcoming environment where questions, curiosity, and shared learning thrive.

For anyone interested in understanding more about the world around us, the science activities at Sevenoaks u3a offer an inspiring and enjoyable way to stay informed and connected. Attend our monthly meetings or contact the Group Organisers on our website for further information on specific groups.

https://sevenoaks.u3asite.uk/groups/?sort=cat#list_button_anchor

DIARY

13th May, 09.45	Bridge For Pleasure	11th May, 14.00	Science Open Group
27th May, 09.45	Bridge For Pleasure	27th May, 14.00	Monthly Meeting
4th June all day	U3A Science Seminar	24th June, 14.00	2026 Annual General Meeting

NOTICE OF 2026 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

The Thirty-second **AGM of Sevenoaks U3A** will be held at **2.00 pm on Wednesday 24th June 2026**. Further details, including the agenda and papers, will be provided with the June Newsletter.

Executive Committee Elections

There are five Executive Committee (EC) posts up for election at the 2026 AGM. Two of these are officers, the Chairman and Vice Chair roles. We are also looking to fill three further Trustee posts, a Communications Publicity and Marketing Trustee, an IT, Technical and Data Privacy Trustee and an Events Trustee (formally Chairman of the Social Committee).

Our Chairman Doreen Pascall is standing for re-election after two years in the role with our other trustees remaining in post for another year.

We have attached a general description of the roles and responsibilities of the various posts we are looking to fill. Further information on each post is available from the Secretary or you are welcome to ask any member of the EC. However, we can offer some flexibility within these roles and encourage you to contact our **Chairman Doreen Pascall** on chairman@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk if you are interested in helping out as a Trustee or in a supporting team. Please note we cannot accept nominations for anyone already a Trustee of another u3a.

Nominations

Nominations are invited for the posts of

- Chairman,
- Vice Chair,
- Communications Publicity and Marketing Trustee,
- IT, Technical and Data Privacy Trustee and
- Events Trustee.

Further information is available on request to the Secretary. Nominations should be submitted on nomination forms as attached or obtained from the Secretary and lodged with the Secretary **by 13th May 2026**.

We may 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 or by telephone on 01959 524543 to request forms or further information.

Revision of Constitution

The Trustees are progressing an application with the Charity Commission to update our constitution in line with the current u3a Model Constitution as recommended by the Third Age Trust. We may be in a position to put forward a motion to this effect.

Other motions

Any motion that a member may wish to submit to the Annual General Meeting must also be lodged with the Secretary **by 13th May 2026**, 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.

Executive Committee Vacancies June 2026 - Outline role descriptions

All Trustees

- 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.
- Attend Executive Committee Meetings held every other month currently on Thursday afternoons, preparing a short report in advance, contributing to discussions and decisions made and carrying out agreed actions after the meeting.

Chairman

- Lead Sevenoaks u3a with a positive, welcoming and flexible approach on behalf of the Trustees.
- Chair Sevenoaks u3a AGM and other members' meetings as appropriate.
- Lead executive committee meetings and ensure the minutes 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.
- Work with and support fellow Trustees in the fulfilment of their roles.
- Work collaboratively with supporting teams and group organisers.
- 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.
- Responsible for resolution of any internal issues with/amongst members where these require EC/Trustee intervention.

Vice Chair

- Deputise for the Chairman, when necessary, including chairing EC meetings and other members' meetings with a positive, welcoming and flexible approach.
- Promote the interests of members within EC.
- Encourage new members to integrate in Sevenoaks u3a activities.
- Help maintain communications across the supporting teams on behalf of the EC to ensure coherent presentation of information to the membership.
- Engage with supporting teams where required to provide advice for both day-to-day operational matters and longer-term strategy.
- Represent the Chairman at events where required.
- Attend meetings of the South East Forum and the Kent Network of U3As and represent Sevenoaks u3a interests as required.
- Maintain communication with the Third Age Trust (ie, u3a National Office) and represent Sevenoaks U3A at national events as required.
- As appropriate set up, manage, oversee and/or support teams delivering the following various communications functions within Sevenoaks u3a:
 - the Website and other social media agreed with EC.
 - the Newsletter which is published ten times a year particularly with regard to content in collaboration with the Chair and wider EC
 - Publicity – External media communications including online and paper, posters and flyers etc.
- Chair the monthly Communications Team meetings.

Executive Committee Vacancies June 2026 - Outline role descriptions (continued)

IT, Technical and Data Privacy Trustee (new role)

- Manage Beacon (u3a National Database System) on behalf of Sevenoaks u3a – National liaison, Day to Day administration and Training Sevenoaks users.
- Ensure Sevenoaks u3a fulfils its obligations under the GDPR legislation supported by the EC.
- Provide strategic direction, oversee internal u3a implementation of, and ensure support is provided to members in the adoption of new technology whilst maintaining inclusivity.
- Support the Technical Support Team.

Events Secretary

- Encourage a small team of volunteers to join a Social Events Committee to meet regularly as agreed.
- Lead Social Events Committee in both organising events and outings for members and also seeking out and informing members of other events of interest arranged by u3as or other organisations. Events include the Sevenoaks u3a Annual Lunch. Outings may include trips to places of interest, such as notable houses and gardens, museums, towns, villages and river trips.
- Gather or prepare and distribute advertising in advance via the newsletter or website or at Sevenoaks u3a monthly meetings.
- Support Group Organisers and other members in organising outings.
- Actively encourage suggestions from members for outings/events and attend New Members Meetings and Open Meetings.



OFFICER NOMINATION FORM

I agree to nomination as Vice Chair / Treasurer / Secretary* of the Executive Committee of Sevenoaks U3A, which will be for two years. *Delete as appropriate

Name:.....

Signature:.....

Date:

Proposer:.....

Position:.....

Seconder:.....

Position:.....



TRUSTEE NOMINATION FORM

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

Name:.....

Signature:.....

Date:

Proposer:.....

Position:.....

Seconder:.....

Position:.....