



The Third Way Newsletter March 2025

News from the Chair – Lesley Sparks

Dear Members,

Spring is coming, the daffodils are in full bloom all through Milton Keynes which can make spirits soar after a very changeable few weeks weatherwise.

Our AGM was held on Wednesday 26th March, where there were 92 members in attendance. Our constitution requires us to hold this every year to present the Annual and Financial Reports, vote to appoint an Independent Examiner who annually scrutinises our accounts, thank those Trustees who are leaving the committee and welcome new members who are joining us. This year we said farewell to Chris Costello and Martin Woodman who have greatly contributed to the running of our association and welcomed Tina Griffiths and Colin Williams who will take over as Current Groups and Communications respectively.

As we said at the AGM in March 2024, we didn't produce paper copies of the documents presented at the meeting, but they were available on the website and all members were advised of this change, which was driven as we strive to be as paper free as we can.

Throughout the year Diana Sears and Shirley Dewar have been offering refresher sessions for current Group Coordinators and in-depth presentations for new Group Coordinators to ensure groups are run successfully following our processes and procedures. These processes have been developed to make everything easy for GCs, from recording attendances, changing vital information on the website, and submitting financial summaries, amongst others. The invitation to attend these sessions are also extended to any other group helpers as

required. Please ask if you are unsure of any area of your group procedures. Problems can occur if there is a change in group personnel, and the procedures are not passed on to the new incumbent. The Trustees are always available to offer help and advice, just contact us. Many thanks to Diana and Shirley for their time and expertise.

Best wishes as always
Lesley

[MKu3a Require Important Information from You](#)

When you applied to become a member of Mku3a you were asked to add Emergency Contact Details to your profile. Most members have done this but there are a few who have not yet given these vital details.

These comments are often voiced.

[Why do you need these details?](#)

Well suppose you experience a fall or become unwell during a group activity, a rare occurrence you might say, but I know these occasions do happen. The Group Coordinator has a list of group members, which include emergency contact details to let a family member, friend or neighbours know the situation if one of the above happens.

[My family live in Scotland \(or abroad.\)](#)

Would you want them to know if you have been admitted to hospital?

[I do not have any close family.](#)

That's fine but you can give a friend or neighbours details. Someone to feed your cat (if you have one!) should the need arise.

We only use these details as appropriate. Group Coordinator report any accidents or illness incidents to the Trustees.

Group Coordinators will shortly be asked to check their lists and may ask you for these details, your assistance to complete these details will be appreciated.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Social Events Team – Deb Hodges

18/03/25 – Board Games & Cards Event with tea/coffee and biscuits.

This was held at the Roman Crown Pub/Café In Bancroft Park, an afternoon where members played a selection of board or card games. This event had a good uptake of members attending with 37 booked on. The Social Events Sub Committee Team would like to thank the Scrabble Group and the Chess Group who offered to loan some of their games, thanks also go to all those who loaned their private board and card games. Everyone enjoyed the afternoon, and we had lots of positive feedback.



The Choir – Vivienne Shaw

'Our new Musical Director and Accompanist are now very firmly established within the Choir, following the 'retirement' at Christmas of our previous long serving 'leaders'.

This year our Summer Concert will be held at the United Reformed Church in Newport Pagnell.

The date is Saturday 14 June; the time is 2.30pm

Tickets will be available at a later date. Please watch this space.

Net proceeds from the Concert will be donated to Willen Hospice.'

[Redway Walkers 10th Anniversary - Richard Barrett](#)
[- redways@mku3a.org](mailto:redways@mku3a.org)

The group started in 2015 under the leadership of Linda Morris, with an inaugural walk on the 5th May from the Caldecotte Arms around the lake. 9 people came on the first walk and 3 of them were called Alan. What are the chances of that? asked Linda, and the Maths for Phun group responded with a detailed analysis of boys' names in the next MKU3A newsletter. Two of the original walkers are still regulars with us today, as are many of the walkers who joined in the first year.



Picture from Linda Morris photographer Alan Gander

The group has walked about 5 miles every Tuesday from 10am to 12am with only a few misses for bad weather, the lowest attendance was 4, the highest 37, with 20 the norm. We shut down for Covid from March

2020 to May 2021 though some members did take their permitted exercise in socially distanced small groups.

The group now has about 70 active members, like gyms we always get an influx of new members in the New Year many of whom sadly soon fade away. In 2024 we ran a Walking Introduction course which attracted a dozen or more active members. In 2025 we now run a second walk during the week on a Friday, being a shorter walk of two and a half miles followed by coffee which has proved popular. Members join us for Tuesday walks or Friday walks or both as they like.

Over the last decade the group has held nearly 500 walks, with 9,000 member attendances, which means we must have walked about 45,000 miles.

On Tuesday 6th May 2025 we would like to invite all current and former members to join us for a walk and a Bring and Share Picnic hosted by the Scot Bowls Club in Bletchley. There will be the regular 5-mile walk starting at 10am and a shorter slower walk starting at 11am followed by a picnic lunch at 12. There are outdoor tables if it is fine and indoor tables if it is not. I am asking for a £2 per head contribution to the bowling club for the use of their facilities.

If former members would like to attend, we will be very pleased to see you even if you cannot manage the walk, please get in touch.

[EWF - Linda Morris](#)

Perhaps you have visited a Hindu temple, but never been in one in MK. If so, please join us when we visit the Broughton Temple in April. And maybe you have never been in the MK Synagogue, which we are visiting in May. In June we are visiting St Guthlac's church, Passenham, and in July we are at St Lawrence's church, Broughton. Both churches have medieval wall paintings. You are welcome to join us at one or all of these visits. Please look at the group page and then make contact via ewf@mku3a.org



The lady in the centre is Betty Course who is 97 this year and a life member of u3a.

I go to see her regularly in the castle Mead court Care home at the end of my lane. I saw her yesterday. Her mind is working really well and she has started zoom Greek lessons online. What an amazing lady! If you are ever in Newport, she is pleased to receive visitors. Delighted in fact! Unfortunately, her body is not working any longer as well as she would like but she was a medical lady and is well aware of the realities. Her daughter Cathy Kelly who is also in u3a has been a great help to her.

[A Message from a member - Stephanie Warren](#)

I am a member of MK U3A. Happy New Year.

My late husband Ron Warren belonged to the Wine Appreciation Group. In that time, he collected many books about wine. He used to give talks for charity. I would like to advertise these books for sale in the Newsletter with the donations going to charity. I would be happy for members to come to my house to look at the books by appointment.

My telephone number is 07596897773 and my landline is 01908 671394.

Items for Quizzers – Pat Hodges

Many thanks to all of you for supporting the quiz nights and concerts held mainly in St Thomas's Church and Simpson Village Hall during 2024. A couple of quiz nights have been out of the area. We have managed to help a variety of charities many of which are local, plus supported the Food Bank and supplied scarves for the Night Shelter. £14,111 has been raised throughout the year. This total includes the money raised at the Christmas Fayre – well done to all of the many people involved in that event.

Please pass on thanks to friends and family that also came along and please continue supporting these events whenever you can.

Saturday 4th May – Quiz & Supper – Proceeds to the Streetlight Trust
Contact missquiz@sky.com

A Collaboration between the OU and Age UK

From 1st May, The Open University and Age UK are launching a free, UK-wide public health campaign: Take Five to Age Well. Taking place during the UN's Decade of Healthy Ageing, the campaign invites you to join a community making small daily changes for better ageing across 5 categories: Eat, Drink, Move, Connect, and Engage and Think. Sign up online and commit to 30 days of healthy ageing habits that will boost their health and wellbeing now and into the future.



All our content is evidence-based and expert-led, helping to bring a lasting positive impact. We have suggestions for daily actions that are proven to boost health and wellbeing and throughout the month, we'll be sending participants regular emails with interesting facts, motivation and top

tips. This is open to everyone – ageing well research suggests “the sooner the better but never too late” to adopt these habits – why don't you sign up today: <https://nquire.org.uk/mission/take-five-to-age-well-25-make-your-pledge/contribute>

If you want to get in touch, look at our website: wels.open.ac.uk/take5 or email us directly: ageing-well-pledge@open.ac.uk

Thank you!

[Electra – The Milton Keynes All Electric Community Boat](#)

Electra is owned by the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Trust, a registered charity. The charity run various cruises on the Grand Union Canal. To find out more, please check their website.

www.bmkwaterway.org/electra

Chair – Lesley Sparks email: chair@mku3a.org

Vice Chair – Wendy Barrett email vicechair@mku3a.org

Secretary – Deb Hodges email: secretary@mku3a.org

Treasurer – Diana Sears email: treasurer@mku3a.org

Groups Team – Tina Griffiths/Hazel Spencer email groups@mku3a.org

Webmaster – Dave Barratt email webmaster@mku3a.org

Membership Secretary – Tim Hadden email membersec@mku3a.org

Communications Coordinator – Colin Williams email comms@mku3a.org

Please refer to the website: www.mku3a.org for statements concerning MKu3a Policies and Guidance, on all aspects of our administration including Data Privacy, Disclaimers and Copyright.

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Registered charity number: 298693