



HASLEMERE MEMBERS NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2026

Dear Members,

As our membership renewal season begins, we are inviting members to renew their subscription for the coming year. The annual membership fee remains at £10, continuing to offer excellent value for the wide range of activities and opportunities available through Haslemere u3a.

As we plan for the year ahead, I'd really value your thoughts on one simple question: **What is the one thing we could do to make your experience of Haslemere u3a even better?** Please contact me using the link below, or alternatively, via the Contact page of our website and share your thoughts. chairman@haslemereu3a.org.uk Whether it's a new idea, an improvement to an existing activity, or something we've never considered before, we'd love to hear from you!

Looking ahead, our Open Day (formerly known as Enrolment Day) will take place on **Tuesday 18 August, from 10.30am to 12.30pm, at Haslemere Hall.** Whether you're renewing your membership, thinking about joining another group, or simply curious about what's available, I hope you'll come along. You'll have the chance to meet Group Leaders and Organisers, explore the wide range of groups on offer, discover something new, and catch up with fellow members.

Our recent Thank-You Party provided an opportunity to celebrate the tremendous contribution of our Group Leaders, Organisers and volunteers. It also marked another significant milestone for Haslemere u3a, with membership having grown from **783 to 925** since last Summer. My thanks also go to those who helped organise such an enjoyable evening: Vanessa and Anthony Johnson, Andy Ranson, Ken and Claire Braysher, Gina O'Neil, Alex Anderson, Claire Coxwell and Members of the Committee.

I hope to see many of you at our Open Day and wish you an enjoyable year ahead with Haslemere u3a.

Warmest regards, Roger Abayasekera (Chairman)

NEW MEMBERS! *A huge u3a welcome to: Gill Cozens, Karen Deeney, Janet Wickens, Pat McGrath*

IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

Your current Haslemere u3a membership expires on 31st August 2026 and details will have already been sent to you on how to renew online. If you could kindly renew from today, 1st August, this will help reduce the queues of Members wishing to renew their membership in person at our **Open Day on Tuesday 18th August, 10.30am-12.30pm!** If you have any queries please contact our Membership Secretary, Judith Forde, via the Haslemere u3a website. The Membership fee for 2026/2027 remains at £10.00.

CELEBRATING AN INCREDIBLE YEAR!



Around 90 Group Leaders, Organisers and Volunteers came together at Haslemere's Hunter Centre on Friday 17 July for Haslemere u3a's annual Thank-You Party, celebrating the Group Leaders and volunteers whose enthusiasm and commitment have helped make the organisation such a success.

Chairman, Roger Abayasekera, thanked the Group Leaders and volunteers for the enormous contribution they make to the running of more than 70 interest and activity Groups across Haslemere u3a and highlighted the organisation's amazing ongoing Membership growth. Addressing the guests, Roger said, "People join Haslemere u3a because of you and the wonderful activities you

provide. Every new member represents someone whose life has been enriched by our u3a. This growth is a direct tribute to your hard work, commitment and enthusiasm."

The lively and highly enjoyable evening also recognised the outstanding contribution of Clare Fripp, who recently stepped down as Beacon Administrator after more than a decade of dedicated service to Haslemere u3a. Clare was presented with a lovely bouquet of flowers in recognition of her many years of quiet dedication and support.

"The event provided an opportunity for volunteers to meet socially, welcome new Group Leaders and celebrate another successful year for Haslemere u3a," said Roger. "A huge thank you once again to all our Group Leaders, Organisers and Volunteers – you truly are the heart of Haslemere u3a."

EXCURSION TO PETWORTH HOUSE

Following the hugely successful U3A talk about the artwork at Petworth House, our Speaker, Ian Yonge – who is also a long-time guide at Petworth - has kindly offered to take a group of Haslemere u3a Members to see the wonderful art exhibited on show at Petworth House. He can manage a group of 20. Interested? Contact David Lee, our Excursions Secretary, if you would like to join the group @ David.leefrcs@gmail.com The date and costs are yet to be determined depending on numbers applying. Access to the house is free for National Trust members.

AUGUST MEMBERS COFFEE MORNING & "TEA & TECH" HELP SESSION



Do come and join us at our next Members Coffee Morning on **Friday, 7th August from 11.00-12.00am** at the lovely Hasleway Café opposite Tesco's.

The monthly Coffee Mornings also now feature our friendly **"Tea & Tech"** help sessions. This relaxed support is specially tailored for anyone who feels a bit stuck or overwhelmed by technology. Bring your smartphone, tablet or laptop and receive patient, hands-on help with the basics. **The Tech team will also be on hand to help Members renew their membership online.**

Find out how to get onto our website and access newsletters, groups, events etc and meet up with other Members and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and a chat! Hasleway have also got a delicious lunch menu too!

HELPING OUT AT IMPORTANT U3A EVENTS

Our Open Day on the morning of **Tuesday 18th August at Haslemere Hall**, is our biggest and most important event of the Haslemere u3a year. **THANK YOU SO MUCH** to those who have already told us that you are able to help with the organisation on the day. This is a great way to support your local u3a without a long-term commitment. We need people to:

- Meet and greet visitors
- Serve refreshments
- Help with the administration process for signing up new members
- Carry extra tables from a trailer into the Hall and then help setting them up and/or taking them down afterwards. *NB: Only do this if you are fit enough to do so please!*
- Put up signs and hang up bunting

To sign up and volunteer, please contact our Groups Co-ordinators via the u3a website.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR THE BEACON HILL FETE

Our next fete will be at **Beacon Hill** on **Saturday 5th September**. If any Group Leaders would like to attend and bring along something to advertise your Group, you would be very welcome. Or, if you fancy a fun day out in the sun, chatting to the public and introducing them to the Haslemere u3a, or maybe helping us erect and dismantling the gazebo, please get in touch with Membership Secretary, Judith Forde - 07507 643411 – thank you!

NEWS OF GROUPS

To contact a Haslemere u3a Group or find out more information, please go to the Groups page of the u3a website – just control/click on www.haslemere.u3asite.uk and you'll go straight there! For enquiries about starting a Group or anything else related to Groups, please contact Claire Coxwell or Richard Mason, our Group Co-ordinators, via the Contacts page on the website – www.haslemere.u3asite.uk

Would you like to contribute more to the u3a? Why not join our **VOLUNTEERING GROUP** and we will contact you as and when opportunities come up – such as help at a Summer Fete, organising refreshments, designing posters etc. Rest assured you will only volunteer when you want to! For more information, contact this group via the Groups page on our website.

ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE



“Views on the causes of climate change may differ, but after the recent intense heat it must be clear to all of us that this is here to stay,” said Cycling for Fun Group Leader, Allen Chubb. “We can’t hide indoors all the time during the increasingly frequent heatwaves. For example, we need to get some exercise and to socialise, not least for the sake of our physical and mental health.”

“The Cycling for Fun Group has given some thought to this and advice has been received that during heatwaves people should avoid exercise between 11.00 am and 3.00pm. We know that in hotter countries, there is sometimes a siesta lasting several hours after lunchtime, with businesses closing then and reopening afterwards. In parts of Africa, teaching in schools starts at 07.30am and finishes at noon. These countries have adapted and we should learn from them. Our twice-monthly rides normally start at 10.00 am, but it has become increasingly obvious that during a heatwave this is much too late. We have therefore tried starting at 7.30am with a “Beat the Heat” ride. In the middle of which we relax in a cafe with an enjoyable continental breakfast, which means that most of us get home before 11.00 am. This is likely to be repeated when required by the weather. This issue of course does not just affect our Cycling Group or indeed the many Haslemere u3a groups. Time for thought?”

DISCOVER THE ENJOYMENT OF BRIDGE

Friendly, sociable, stimulating... and a great way to keep your mind active.

Bridge is one of the world's most popular card games, combining strategy, memory, teamwork and problem-solving with the enjoyment of playing in a friendly social setting.

Haslemere u3a currently has five Bridge groups, catering for members with a range of experience, from those taking up the game again after a break to more experienced players. One of our members, Rob Margetts, says: "I have much enjoyed playing Bridge again after a gap of over 40 years. I particularly enjoy the friendly atmosphere and the mental stimulation." Bridge is also

excellent exercise for the brain. Every hand presents a new challenge, encouraging concentration, planning, memory and logical thinking – all while enjoying good company.

Whether you're an experienced player or taking up Bridge again after a gap, we'd be delighted to hear from you. Please visit the Groups page on the Haslemere u3a website to find the Bridge group that best suits your experience and contact the relevant Group Leader.

Interested in learning from scratch? If you've never played Bridge before but would like to learn, we'd love to hear from you. If there is sufficient interest, we will explore establishing a Beginners' Bridge Group within Haslemere u3a.

To register your interest, please contact our Groups Coordinators via the Contact page on the Haslemere u3a website.



LOCAL HISTORY GROUP VISIT **WAVERLEY ABBEY**

For their final trip of the year, the Local History group went to Waverley Abbey in Farnham. This English Heritage site features the ruins of the first Cistercian Abbey in Britain, built in 1126.

From this mother house, the more famous abbeys like Riveaulx, Fountains and Tintern Abbeys, all sprang up in later years.

Its glorious location, nestling in a banked bend of the River Wey, means it does flood regularly; it even had to be substantially rebuilt in 1201.

The Abbey was suppressed in 1536 as part of the dissolution of the monasteries and many of the stones carted off for use in other important buildings in the area. Details of the Cistercian Order of monks and the original buildings were given to the 20-strong group by Chris Harrison, chairman of the Haslemere Society. This took place in the dining room of the adjoining Waverley College, who supplied tea, coffee and pastries.

Once outside in the meadows, and in the shade of an enormous yew tree, Chris explained where the features of the Abbey would have been. As a measure of its significance, 7500 people attended the consecration of the abbey. The immense scale of the abbey can still be appreciated with a little imagination and the Yew, growing right into the stone walls and thought to be nearly 500 years old, was awarded the title of UK Tree of the Year in 2022.

GARDENING EXCHANGE GROUP Our new Gardening Group will be starting in September on the 4th Thursday of the month at 2pm. The Group will meet initially in a private venue, sharing tips about gardening and learning from each other's "green fingered" experiences. For more information, please take a look at their entry on the website to find out more.

We have been asked to think about starting an **EVENING BOOK CLUB GROUP** as all our present, popular Book Club groups are either in the morning or afternoon weekdays. If this might interest you, please contact one of our Group Co-ordinators via the website.



KEEEEP DANCING!

Why not come and join the Haslemere u3a Line Dancing Group – it's a low impact form of exercise and a great way to improve fitness, memory and musicality and Sally from the Milford Line Dancing Group will talk you through the steps, making it a relaxing and fun afternoon! The new term starts on Thursday 3rd September and meets every Thursday from 3-4pm at Fernhurst Village Hall. New members and beginners are very welcome.

NEW AI GROUP HAS BEEN SET UP! Following the very popular and well received presentation by Alan Freeland in May, *Making Sense of AI*, Alan has recently put up a YouTube video: **First Steps in AI**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJ6cr9vecFM>

"If this sparks your interest in AI and you would like to learn more, please let me know and I can add you to the AI Group I have recently set up," said u3a Vice Chairman, Christine Howard.

"Going forwards, we would like to formalise the group and agree a strategy for how to run an AI group. I will be discussing this with the AI Group members, so do get back to me if you would like to be a part of this new fascinating Group via the Contacts Page on the Haslemere u3a website - your input and ideas would be very welcome."

NEW! “EXPLORING LOCAL BUILDINGS OF INTEREST” GROUP

We have so many members who are interested in the history of our area as shown by the popularity of our Local History group, Local Artists of the late 1800s group and The Literature of our Local Area group..... so, we are considering setting up a new group to explore local buildings – and in particular local religious buildings.

This is something that many other u3as run successfully in other areas. Members will take it in turns either individually or in pairs to organise a visit to one or more local buildings. They will arrange for interesting information to be available during the visit. Refreshments may be arranged nearby. If you would be interested in attending a meeting to help us set this new group up in the Autumn, please get in touch with our Group Co-ordinators via the Contacts page of the website.

20TH CENTURY RUSSIAN POETRY – A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY!

The Group meet monthly on the first Thursday of the month from 2.00-4.30pm at a private house in Haslemere to learn more about Russian poetry – in English translation of course! It is such a fascinating subject, encompassing as it does the history of Russia within Russian literature from the birth of Russian poetry via Pushkin and Lermontov to the silver age of Akhmatova and Mandelshtam, the post revolution input of Pasternak and Mayakovsky and the modern legacy of Brodsky and others. Interested in joining this Group? Contact Group Leader, Jeannette Hatcher via the Groups page on the u3a website. Watch out for more information in the September Newsletter.

Our thriving **CINEMA CLUB** will still be operating during August. There will be a number of family films showing and Cinema Club Members are welcome to bring their grandchildren if they wish. Haslemere Hall is air-conditioned and this has been much appreciated by the audiences in this recent hot weather. Interested? Sign up for more information via the Groups page on the u3a website.

THE U3A HAS A HUGE RANGE OF INTERESTING ONLINE TALKS

These are listed for u3a Members on the main U3A website. Here is the latest coming up: Flight Aviation Inspirations Group – **8th August**. You can also discover National Online Learning Opportunities – a huge range of online talks, workshops and classes. Find out more by clicking <https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/educational-events#ONLINE-EVENTS>