



## MONTHLY MEETINGS

**The title of the event on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025 was “Chocolate Bingo.”**

Committee members Diane and Beverley were again innovative and devised something different for this monthly meeting. Chocolate was the theme of the event, which was the perfect entertainment for our Easter gathering.

We had two games of traditional bingo, and one game of chocolate bingo. The chocolate bingo entailed using a master card of 50 chocolate types, and everyone being handed a bingo board containing 24 of the chocolate types. A standard game of bingo then followed with chocolate types being called instead of numbers. In addition, a fun “chocolate quiz” of 25 questions followed the two traditional games of bingo.

Prizes were given for a line and a full house for each game, and also for the quiz. It was apparent that everyone present enjoyed themselves, and the committee will give consideration to making it an annual event at Easter.



## Dates for your Diary

**24<sup>th</sup> April 2025** - As part of the City’s Centenary celebrations, Professor Ray Johnson is presenting a series of films from his Staffordshire Film Archive at a number of locations within the City. We are fortunate that Ray has agreed to deliver a presentation/film at our monthly gathering on 24<sup>th</sup> April. His chosen subject will be relevant to Longton, and is titled “The Gladstone Story - 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.”

**22<sup>nd</sup> May 2025** - Rebecca Done has been booked to provide the musical entertainment at the Annual General Meeting.

**Please encourage other members to attend, what is always a good afternoon out.**

## **MEMBERSHIP**

At the branch committee meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> April, it was reported that the number of members for the new subscription year was 306. This included 286 renewals, with the balance of twenty relating to members who had joined since the start of the calendar year. Numbers are traditionally at their lowest at the beginning of a subscription year, but were noted to be consistent with the figure of 302 in April 2024.

Should you know anyone who would like to join us, application forms can be obtained from our website, or from membership officer, Alan Stevenson, Tel. 01782 395760: or by emailing: a.stevenson09@btinternet.com

You can also find us on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/StokeSouthu3a/>

**May we respectfully remind members who have not yet renewed, that the new membership year commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.**

## **COMMITTEE MATTERS**

### **1. Annual General Meeting**

The committee's focus is currently on the AGM, which will be held at Methodist Central Hall, Longton, on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2025. All members will have been advised of these details in a prior circulation, but the committee wish to remind everyone that refreshments will be served at 1.30pm, and the AGM will commence promptly at 2pm. The meeting will include Progress Reports from the Chairman and the Treasurer, together with the election of one honorary officer and seven general committee members. It is vital that we have sufficient committee members to fill all essential roles, therefore if you wish to apply for any of the vacant positions, please submit the appropriate document without delay.

Additionally, the membership is requested to support a proposal to amend Clause 7(iii) of the branch constitution. The aim of which is to protect the future of the branch.

As mentioned above, musical entertainment will follow, which will be provided by Rebecca Done.

## **U3A TRUST MATTERS**

Since the new governance arrangements for the Trust commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> April, there have been no matters of interest to report.

## **FOCUS ON GROUPS**

### **Discussion Group**

The next group meeting is confirmed for **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025**, 10.00am to 11.15am. It will take place in Stoke Library, which is located in the Council Hub close to the Market. Presently, there are vacancies within the group.

**The subject under discussion will be: What Are MP's For?**

The group leader is Bob Jones whose contact number is 01785 817743.

### **Lunch Group**

The group's regular meeting place is the "Man in Space" in Trentham (New Inn Lane). The next planned meeting (2nd Tuesday in the month,) will take place at 12.30pm on **13<sup>th</sup> May 2025**. Further details may be obtained from Christine Whitfield, Mob: 07939 621499. Christine requests that new attendees contact her prior to the meeting, so that table numbers can be booked in advance.

### **Gardening and Nature Lovers**

The group's next meeting will take place on **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025**. The agreed venue is Bluebell Wood, Wedgwood, Barlaston. It is part of Hem Heath Wood, which is one of the largest woodland areas on the edges of Stoke-on-Trent. As you walk along the pathways, you will observe the many singing birds, butterflies, and wild flowers, together with ash, beech, cherry, oak and sycamore trees. In early spring, the area close to the Wedgwood Visitor Centre is covered in a mass of bluebells.

Members are requested to meet outside "NEXT" in Longton between 10.15-10.30am and travel will be arranged for those without transport. Please contact Josie Peirson if you have any concerns. Josie's telephone details are: Mob: 07775 974876 or Landline: 01782 399711.



## **Family History**

The aim of the Family History group is to help members make progress from starting their research, or extending existing trees.

The next meeting will take place on **9<sup>th</sup> May** commencing 2pm, but **Please note that the group now hold their meetings in Longton Library.**

Group leader Les Waller may be contacted on 01782 394431

## **Outdoor Bowls**

The Outdoor Bowls group has re-commenced for the 2025 Summer Season, and will continue until early Autumn. Group meetings are weekly, and are held at Fenton Private Bowling Club, Claude Street, Fenton, ST4 4LL. Since the group is presently over-subscribed, group leader, Dave Darby is maintaining a waiting list. Therefore If you wish to attend, please contact Dave on 01782 317408, to determine if there are vacancies.

## **Yoga Group**

The weekly Yoga group is still proving to be popular. The session time is 10-11am on Tuesday mornings, and is located at Longton Central Hall. If you want to improve your wellbeing, and meet new friends, then consider joining this class which is suitable for the reasonably fit and active.

You may contact group leader Mary Pyatt on 01782 342290.

## **OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST**

### **Garden Waste Service.**

A reminder that residents can now sign up for the 2025/26 garden waste collection season.

The service is a fortnightly collection, starting from Tuesday 1 April 2025 to Tuesday 31 March 2026, with a two-week closure period for Christmas.

The cost for a one-year subscription to the service is £40. You will need to make this payment by credit or debit card. Once you have made your payment you will receive a confirmation e-mail, and a welcome pack and bin sticker will arrive shortly after.



## **Café at Westport Lake**

Westport Lake, created alongside the Trent & Mersey Canal, is Stoke-on-Trent's largest body of water and has two lakes and a nature reserve. The Visitor Centre offers panoramic views of the lake, which is an important site for water birds and other wildlife.

The Visitor Centre has now reopened its doors for 2025, with a new tenant operating the Lake View Café. It is open seven days a week, Monday to Saturday 9am to 5pm, Sunday 9am to 4pm, offering a spot to relax while taking in beautiful views of the lake and its wildlife.



Westport Lake View Café also aims to be a local community hub, with an exciting programme of activities planned to bring visitors and the local community together. The new directors of the Lake View Café have been delighted to see regulars return to the visitor centre, and have so much planned for the rest of the year.

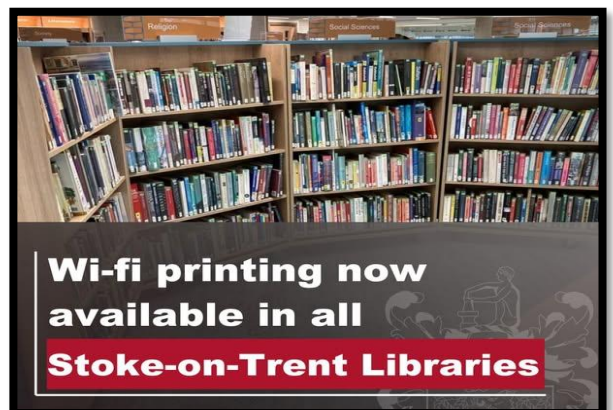
## **Wi-Fi Printing**

Wi-Fi printing is now available in libraries across Stoke-on-Trent, making it easier for residents to access printing facilities.

The city council was awarded £300,000 from the Libraries Improvement Fund, and part of this project has involved improving the printing facilities across the City's six libraries.

By having Wi-Fi printing, users will now be able to print from their own device instead of relying on computers belonging to the Libraries. Documents will be available to collect from any library. This new arrangement is a source of support for people who do not have access to printing at home.

Wi-Fi printing in libraries is available from Tuesday, 1 April 2025, with Library staff being available to support anyone needing assistance.



## **Day Trips**

As explained last month, two external groups containing a number of u3a members are regularly offering vacant seats on their day trips to all branch members. All trips fall outside the responsibility of the u3a. Details of forthcoming trips are:

**(a)** The “Closer to Home” Walking Group’s next trip is to **Chorley Market and Southport** on **Tuesday 10th June**. You may contact Carole Arrowsmith on 07871231767 for further details.

**(b)** “Doreen’s Friendship Group” operates from Longton Central Hall, and their next trip is to **Crich Tramway Museum** on **Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> May**. You may contact Doreen on: Landline 01782 373369 or Mob. 07818 811153.

## **Talking Therapies**

During August, the chairman received an email from a Support Advisor based locally who is part of an NHS team that offer a Talking Therapies Service. The service offers talking therapies for common mental health conditions, such as mild to moderate depression, anxiety, PTSD, OCD and phobias. The committee approved a request to advertise the service in the September 2024 Newsletter, and we again advertise in the current Newsletter.

The service is totally free and confidential. There is no need to go through your GP, you just need to be registered at a GP surgery in Staffordshire or Stoke-on-Trent.

### **Contact details are:**

Call 0300 303 0923 or Visit [staffsandstoketalkingtherapies.nhs.uk](https://staffsandstoketalkingtherapies.nhs.uk)

**This Newsletter is also accessible on our website (via the News Button). Please try to share information with fellow members who do not have access to the internet.**

**Items for publication in the next Newsletter will need to reach Andrew Devin by Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025. Tel: 01782 942352 or email: [a.devin2@gmail.com](mailto:a.devin2@gmail.com)**