



## MONTHLY MEETINGS

### Monthly Meeting 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025

Our guest speaker was Denise Hopewell (who likes to be called Denny), and she was assisted by her colleague and trainee vet, Kitty. Denny leads the Newcastle Hedgehog Rescue Service, which she has operated for 17 years, taking in some 900 sick, injured and orphaned hedgehogs every year. After nursing them back to health, she either releases them back into the wild, or securely keeps those that cannot be released.

Denny then progressed from providing general detail, to describing a number of key facts about hedgehogs.

1. **What do they look like?** The hedgehog's back and sides are covered in 1-inch long spines, which are actually modified hairs. These are absent from the face, chest, belly, throat and legs which are covered with a coarse grey-brown fur.

2. **What do they normally eat?** They eat a lot of beetles, along with caterpillars and earthworms. Although many people are aware that hedgehogs are insect eaters, they also feed them with meat-based pet food, which hedgehogs will avidly devour.



Denny and Kitty then conducted an extensive question and answer session, which was still in full flow when the chairman called time. We thank Denny and Kitty for an enjoyable and educational presentation. Many thanks to those members who brought along some kitten biscuits and cat meat, Denny was delighted and grateful with this contribution.

### Dates for your Diary

**31<sup>st</sup> July 2025** - Phillip Evans, a clinical hypnotist, has been booked for a presentation titled "**The power of the unconscious mind.**" Phillip's aim is to provide a better understanding of how hypnosis works, and the ways it can bring about positive lasting change to transform lives. Members should not be hesitant about attending, you won't be tricked into doing cartwheels or handstands on the stage!!

**28<sup>th</sup> August 2025** – Following last year's success, "**Crafternoon Tea**" is going to be repeated. The session will again be directed by a number of committee members, but aided by relevant group members. Come and try your hand at one of a selection of crafts including making a card, a gift basket, a macrame angel, or painting a flower picture.

After the craft session, you can enjoy a cake with coffee or tea.

**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> July 2025, the Membership Secretary reported that the count of members was 384, which comprised 354 renewals and 30 new members. The total membership count at a similar time in 2024 was 381, which indicates a level of consistency year on year, however the committee would of course prefer an upward trend. It is pleasing to note that 354 members have renewed their subscriptions for year 2025/26.

Many thanks to those who have persuaded family and friends to join us, and please encourage new memberships whenever the opportunity arises. Likewise, if you have a Facebook Page, please publicise whenever you are able.

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**

### **Lone Working Policy – Longton Central Hall**

Following a recent issue at Longton Central Hall, the Leadership Team has issued an updated "Lone Workers Policy." The Policy has been made available to the u3a committee to determine where there may be an impact. Accordingly, group leaders are requested to ensure that they (or a nominated group member) sign the book located in the entrance porch both when they enter and leave the building. Additionally, at the conclusion of a meeting, could group leaders please ensure that all group members have left the building, so ensuring that no-one is locked in.

## **u3a TRUST MATTERS**

### **Election of Vice Chair**

Nominations for the role of Vice Chair of the Trust closed on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2025. The branch will have the opportunity to vote when the names of the candidates, together with supporting papers, have been issued.

### **Copyright Licencing Agency**

The Trust has informed all branches that the annual licence of the CLA (Copyright Licensing Agency) is due for renewal. A CLA licence allows u3a groups to copy and re-use extracts from digital and printed books, magazines, and websites for educational and teaching purposes. At the July sitting of the branch committee, the Treasurer was authorised to make the relevant payment.

### **West Midlands Regional Matters**

**(a)** Regional officers have asked branches to make members aware of a scam that the police are warning about in a national campaign. At present criminals are impersonating the Government's Department for Works and Pensions (DWP), sending out texts urging people to apply for their Winter Fuel Payments. The texts aim to trick people into revealing personal or financial information, and encourage recipients to click on malicious links. The DWP advises recipients to be vigilant, and not to click on suspicious links.

**(b)** The two Regional Councillors are hoping to promote their activities by introducing a new Communications Team. If anyone is interested in joining, please contact the chairman whose details are recorded at the end of this Newsletter.

## **FOCUS ON GROUPS**

### **Discussion Group**

The next group meeting is confirmed for **Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2025**, 10.00am to 11.15am. It will take place in Stoke Library, which is located in the Council Hub close to the Market.

The subject under discussion will be: **"Global Unrest."**

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

### **Gardening and Nature Lovers**

No visit to an outside location will take place during the month of August. The regular group members will alternatively meet at the home of a group member on **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> August** to determine the programme of visits for the next six months.

Please contact Josie Peirson if you require further information. Josie's telephone details are: Mob: 07775 974876 or Landline: 01782 399711.

## **Local History**



On Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> July, the Local History group decided to devote their meeting to the subject of **Local Cinemas**. Longstanding group member, Doreen Roberts, enjoyed the meeting so much, she has put her thoughts into writing for publication in this Newsletter. Doreen particularly thanked group leader, Phil Rowley, together with all of those who contributed with interesting photographs / facts, and those who made locally written books and a DVD available.

The presentation sparked off lots of good memories and comment from the group, who do enjoy each other's company. To demonstrate this, members entered into the spirit of the subject and handed out Chocolate, Popcorn, Jelly Babies, and amazingly from committee member Diane, Choc Ice Lollies.

Doreen concluded by thanking everyone for a truly memorable meeting. It was a great success and a good time was had by all.

Attached are photos of two well-known local Cinemas. The Empire in Longton opened in 1896, but was destroyed by fire in 1992. The Broadway at Meir opened in 1936 and closed in 1971.



## **Family History**

No group meetings took place during the month of July, but they will resume on **Friday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2025**. Meetings aim to help members from starting research to building and extending family trees, and commence at 1.30pm in **Longton Library**.

Group leader Les Waller may be contacted on 01782 394431

## **Lunch Group**

The group's regular meeting place is the "Man in Space" in Trentham (New Inn Lane). The next planned meeting will take place at 12.30pm on Tuesday **12<sup>th</sup> August 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.

## **Flower Arranging Group**

The group have decided to take their traditional summer break. The last group meeting was held on 14<sup>th</sup> July, and they will resume on **15<sup>th</sup> September 2025**.

## **Potential New Groups**

We again advertise for interest in two potentially new groups, i.e. Backgammon and Seated Yoga. If any members are interested in attending either or both activities, could you please register your interest with Andrew Devin, whose contact details are on the bottom line of this Newsletter.

## **OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST**

### **Day Trips**

(a) "Doreen's Friendship Group" operates from Longton Central Hall. Friendships are encouraged by arranging day trips and holidays, with vacant seats being offered to the u3a. The next planned Day Trip and Meal is to **Port Sunlight on Wednesday August 20<sup>th</sup> 2025**.

Should anyone be interested, you may contact Doreen for further information. Her contact details are: Landline 01782 373369 or Mob. 07818 811153.

(b) The "Closer to Home" Walking Group's next trip is to **Llandudno on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> August**. You may contact Carole Arrowsmith on 07871231767 for further details.

### **Staffordshire Archives**

Ray Johnson is offering a free presentation at the Mitchell Arts Centre, Hanley, titled "**August Bank Holiday – Wakes and All.**" The screening will take place on **Tuesday 19th August 2025 at 11am**. Just turn up on the day, there is no requirement to pre-book.

The archive films contain sequences of the old days, when August Bank Holiday meant the Wakes, with fairground rides and events in the Town-Centre streets of Hanley. There were Circuses too; the films show a cavalcade of Circuses, Swings and Roundabouts on-screen, with the support of the Philip Astley Centre. All films are from the Ray Johnson Archive.



## **Longton Community Partnership**

Due to a lack of support, the Longton Community Partnership (LCP) is in danger of having to close. The Partnership is therefore appealing for people to come forward to join them and support the work it is doing in the town of Longton through the “BLOOMIN’ LONGTON PROJECT.” The project is a sub-group of the LCP and is responsible for the planters and other floral additions around Longton, and it would of course be very sad if this work were to come to an end.

**On Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> August 2025** the LCP Gazebo will be at the Longton Park Centenary Carnival, to have a promotional presence, talking to visitors about the work of LCP and Bloomin Longton projects. There will also be a book and prize tombola, a ‘Teddy Bears Picnic’ where children can bring along their teddy bears (or favourite cuddly toy), their parents/carers, and a picnic. While they are eating, there may be some story-telling, or have some music and chatter.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Longton Community Partnership and/or Bloomin’ Longton, go along to the event on 10<sup>th</sup> August or email [friendsoflongtonsot23@yahoo.com](mailto:friendsoflongtonsot23@yahoo.com)

## **Keele World Affairs Season 45**

“Keele World Affairs” is a unique forum for bringing many distinguished speakers to discuss international politics and global issues with its members in the Westminster Theatre on Keele Campus. Season 45 starts on Thursday 2 October with a session by Dr Caroline Lucas and Jonathan Porritt CBE. You can find out more about the whole season, the speakers attending and how to become a member.

There are twenty sessions which take place on Thursday evenings between October and March. Famous speakers say there is nothing to compare with Keele World Affairs. It prides itself on being the best forum anywhere, where members can put thoughtful questions on geopolitical issues to the many prominent figures who visit.

“All you need is curiosity about the world we live in, and how we are governed.” If you are interested, contact details are: [geraldine.hughes@kwaku.org.uk](mailto:geraldine.hughes@kwaku.org.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, 18<sup>th</sup> August 2025. Tel: 01782 942352 or email: [a.devin2@gmail.com](mailto:a.devin2@gmail.com)**