



MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monthly Meeting 31st July 2025



Our guest speaker was Phillip Evans, who is a clinical hypnotist based locally at Blythe Bridge. Phillip's presentation was titled "**The power of the unconscious mind.**"

It was good to see a large audience, no doubt inquisitive but a little wary about the subject.

Phillip commenced by explaining that hypnosis is a procedure that helps

individuals achieve a state of focused attention, deep relaxation, and heightened suggestibility. He added that although hypnosis is often associated with the entertainment business where performances are exaggerated, it is also a recognized clinical tool that can help people to overcome issues such as anxiety, phobias, poor sleep, stopping smoking and weight management.

Phillip provided some insights into how hypnosis rewires the brain via a process called induction. Once in this relaxed and focused state, the individual becomes more receptive to suggestions that can help them achieve their therapeutic goals. Not everyone, however, can be hypnotized, and you remain in control during hypnosis, choosing whether or not to follow suggestions.

Live demonstrations were performed, and we thank the five willing participants. We also thank Phillip for his presentation which was well received, providing the audience with a better understanding of how hypnosis works, and its positive benefits.

Dates for your Diary

28th 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 macramé angel, or painting a flower picture. After the craft session, you can enjoy a cake with coffee or tea.

25th September 2025 – Caroline Spiers has been booked to talk about the Air Transport Auxilliary. Caroline is the daughter of Rita Baines, the only female pilot from Staffordshire who delivered planes to the RAF during the Second World War. The theme of her talk will be her mother's experiences during that period. The talk will be followed by a 20 minutes film for which she wrote the script.

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

MEMBERSHIP

At the branch committee meeting held on 14th August 2025, the Membership Secretary reported that the count of members was 394, which comprised 356 renewals and 38 new members. The total membership count at a similar time in 2024 was 383, which indicates a modest improvement year on year, and is therefore considered to be satisfactory. The committee is pleased to note that 356 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 1st April 2025.

COMMITTEE MATTERS

Potential new groups

The June Newsletter contained a general request for members to express their interest in two potential new groups, viz. Backgammon and Seated Yoga. The committee were informed that ten members had expressed an interest in Seated Yoga, but only two members had showed an interest in Backgammon. The committee agreed that Backgammon would not be progressed. Similarly, a proposal for a Knit and Natter group was rejected because the two subjects were considered to be too similar to what is offered at the Friday Craft Club. Since there were no offers from anyone to lead a new Seated Yoga group, the committee agreed that the Groups' Co-ordinator should converse with the activity leader of the current Yoga class. This conversation is ongoing at the time of writing. The outcome will be reported in the next Newsletter.

High attendances – Gentle Exercise class

High attendances at this class have been brought to the attention of the committee. There were 39 members in attendance on 6th August, even though a number of regular attendees were absent on the day. Adequate space for individuals to safely exercise needs therefore to be considered.

At the request of the committee, the Groups' Co-ordinator has discussed the matter with the group leader. No finite number of attendees was agreed, but a decision was taken not to accept any newcomers. A "Waiting List" would, however, be commenced and maintained by the leader. New members should therefore determine if there are any vacancies before initial attendance.

u3a TRUST MATTERS

Scrutiny Committee Members required

The Trust is again appealing for members to step forward and join two important committees that support the Third Age Trust, viz. the Finance and Governance Committees. Finance skills and knowledge of corporate governance/risk management are however requisites.

Election of Vice Chair

Voting is now open for the role of Vice Chair of the Third Age Trust. The submissions of the two candidates were discussed at the August committee meeting and the chairman has accordingly voted on behalf of the branch for the chosen candidate. Voting is open nationally until 5pm on 11th September 2025.

Awareness of a scam

Trust officers have asked branches to again 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.

Eric Midwinter

The Trust's Chief Executive (Iain Cassidy) has informed all officers nationally of the sad news of the death of Eric Midwinter, one of the visionary co-founders of the u3a movement in the UK. Eric, alongside Peter Laslett and Michael Young, established the u3a in 1982 with the belief that later life should be a time of continued learning, connection, and contribution.

FOCUS ON GROUPS

Discussion Group

The next group meeting is confirmed for **Tuesday 9th September 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: **"Immigration"**

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

Family History

Unfortunately, due to group leader Les Waller suffering a bout of ill health, he is unable to attend meetings for the foreseeable future. Group members have discussed the situation and decided to suspend the activity until Les is well enough to return. Group member, Joe Beeston, has spoken to staff at Longton Library and confirmed that members can continue to use the Library computers and software. Library staff have also promised to keep the alternate Friday booking open until Les returns.

Gardening and Nature Lovers

The group's next meeting is to visit Hilltop Allotments at Fenpark on **Friday 12th September**. The Allotments were developed from a derelict landfill site and in 2024, due to the efforts of plot-holders, they were named **"Best Kept Site in the City"** under a council awards scheme. Over the last 15 years the project has flourished through the work of the Fenpark Community Group. The 22 plots were designed to foster a friendly and considerate community. The address of the allotments is: Fenpark Road, Fenton, ST4 2NP.

After the visit, the group will convene at Café Fenton, which is located in Fenton Town Hall. The address is 1, Albert Square, Fenton, ST4 3FA.

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 queries. Josie's telephone details are: Mob: 07775 974876 or Landline: 01782 399711.

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 9th September 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.

Mexican Train Dominoes



We again encourage members to join this very small group because attendances are once more very low. The enjoyment of the attendees very much relies on there being a good number of participants. Games are good fun with simple rules, but you can learn and implement a variety of strategies. The group meets on alternate Wednesday mornings at Longton Central Hall, and is led by Pauline Murray (Tel: 01782 392817). The next two meeting dates are **27th August 2025** and **10th September**.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Heritage Open Days

Phil Rowley, the group leader of our Local History activity, has again been involved in the planning of, and will also present some of the open day events. Accordingly, he has provided the following detail to encourage the attendance of members, and hopes everyone has a good time.



Every year the 10-day Heritage Open Day festival takes place in September. This year the dates are from **Friday 12th to Sunday 21st September** (inclusive). All HOD events are free of charge, and they take place in locations to which the public don't normally have access, or which normally charge for admission. This year, as part of the celebrations of Stoke-on-Trent being awarded city status, there are going to be more HODs than normal.

Most HODs don't have any restrictions, but free booking may be required at some locations where there is only limited space, and walks normally have restricted numbers for safety reasons. The local HOD list can be found on the Potteries Heritage Society site at:

<https://potteries.org.uk/hodevents>

Day Trips

(a) "Doreen's Friendship Group" - The next planned Day Trip is to **Worcester** (Boat Trip and Cream Tea) on **Wednesday 17th September 2025** (From Longton Central Hall).

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 **Liverpool** on **Thursday 2nd October**. You may contact Carole Arrowsmith on 07871231767 for further details.

A Festival of Music for All

The City of Stoke-on-Trent Male Voice Choir present their Autumn Gala Concert on **Saturday 27th September 2025** at Longton Central Hall. Their special guests are: The Inn Ringers; and Soprano Caitlin Day (age 17).



Doors open at 6.45pm for a 7.30pm start. Refreshments will be available, and a Programme costs £1. Tickets cost £10 and you may pay at the door.

Blurton Family Hub

The Blurton Family Hub opens on Thursday 28 August, and will form part of Stoke-on-Trent's growing network of Family Hubs. It will be part of a shared community space bringing together the Health Centre, the Hive, and other local services in one welcoming place. It will also act as a one-stop-shop for information and guidance for families with children.

By working together with other sites and organisations in the area, the new hub aims to make it easier for families to get the help they need, when they need it.



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, 15th September 2025. Tel: 01782 942352 or email: a.devin2@gmail.com