



## MONTHLY MEETINGS

**The title of the event on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026 was “Springtime Bingo and Quiz.”**



Following the success of last Easter’s “Chocolate Bingo”, committee members Diane and Beverley planned the meeting to comprise games of Bingo and a Springtime quiz.

We had two games of traditional bingo, with prizes for both a Line and Full-House for each game. Members were required to use plenty of brain power for the quiz, which contained a mix of cryptic questions and a number of anagrams. Two groups were winners with equal marks, so both were given prizes.

The prizes were a variety of Hampers and chocolates. Again, all present acknowledged that they had enjoyed themselves, and agreed that the event should be held again next year at Easter.

### Dates for your Diary

**30<sup>th</sup> April 2026** - Lauren Simmonds will provide a presentation titled “**Pets as Therapy.**” The work of the Charity is all about creating everyday moments of magic. It partners with schools, hospitals, care homes and community groups to bring the comfort, companionship and joy of a “therapy pet visit” to those who need it most. Lauren intends to bring along her dog “Boston.”

**21<sup>st</sup> May 2026** - Popular local professional singer Holly Reynolds has been booked for the **AGM on 21<sup>st</sup> May**. Holly was very well received when invited a few years ago. Holly will provide her presentation from the stage.

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

## **MEMBERSHIP**

At the branch committee meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> April, the Membership Officer reported that almost all renewal invitations had been issued to current members. Due to the high cost of postage, only a small number of envelopes have been posted, the vast majority have been hand delivered at activity meetings and at the March Monthly meeting.

The Membership Officer was also pleased to announce that payment for over 200 renewals had been received. Additionally, five new members had joined the branch. It is accepted that membership numbers are traditionally at their lowest at the beginning of a subscription year.

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 2026.**

## **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 21<sup>st</sup> May 2026. 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 four honorary officers and four general committee members. It is imperative that the branch operates with the four honorary officers in order to remain a registered charity (which is a requirement of being affiliated to the u3a Trust). At the date of writing, only one application has been received. therefore if you wish to apply for any of the vacant positions, please submit the appropriate document without delay.

As mentioned above, musical entertainment will follow, which will be provided by Holly Reynolds.

## **U3A TRUST MATTERS**

1. All branch chairmen have been requested to complete a ten-minute questionnaire to share information about the branch's digital set-up, and how this could be improved. The chairman is of the opinion that other than the branch website, only Microsoft Word and Excel are used by other officers. Both pieces of software are considered to provide the necessary administrative support to the branch.

2. Although the West Midlands Region does not have a representative on the new u3a Council, the region's interests will be looked after by the Council Chair and the Trust Chair. Fortunately, both Officers live within the region.

3. The tenure of Regional Councillor, Jean Jackson, has now ceased due to the commencement of the u3a Council. She expressed thanks to everyone who had helped her during her years in office.

## **FOCUS ON GROUPS**

### **Discussion Group**

The next group meeting is confirmed for **Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2026**, 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: "The consequences of the Iran War."**

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 **12<sup>th</sup> May 2026**. 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 is to visit Hilltop Allotments at Fenpark on **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May**. 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 address of the allotments is: Fenpark Road, Fenton, ST4 2NP.



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.

## **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.

## **A Message From Doreen Roberts**

Doreen is a longstanding attendee at the Local History group and at monthly meetings. She has penned her thoughts about both of the Easter gatherings as follows. Doreen and fellow attendees of the Local History group would like to thank those members who provided the delicious Easter cakes and treats. She observed a lack of Easter bonnets but did notice a couple of “bunny ears”! The Easter Quiz was enjoyed by all, even though the questions set by group leader, Andrew, were found to be challenging. The winning team received a lovely chocolate prize, but to satisfy a prior request, the team that came last were presented with a booby prize (a beautifully wrapped bag of carrots!). A good laugh was had by all.

Doreen also wishes to thank the committee members who organised and assisted with the equally entertaining Springtime bingo and quiz at the March monthly meeting.

## **Update On Potential New Groups**

**1. Board Games group** – Very little interest was forthcoming, therefore the committee has discussed the matter with potential group leader, Derek Wardle, and decided that it was not viable for a new group to commence. Derek was of course disappointed, but fully understood the decision. We thank Derek for his enthusiasm and commitment to the branch.

**2. Beginners Ukulele group** – A similar situation has prevailed regarding this group. Having informed group leader, Barbara Cooke, that the committee had authorised a three months trial period for some five attendees, Barbara subsequently informed the committee that two members were no longer interested. Accordingly, Barbara decided that a new group was no longer viable. Again, we thank Barbara for her commitment to the branch.

## **OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST**

### **Covid-19 Vaccinations**

Over the spring season, there are lots of local walk-in clinics that provide Covid-19 vaccines across Stoke-on-Trent. If you are over 75 or have a health condition that means you have a weakened immune system, you can pop in and get protected – no appointment is needed.

The nearest clinic for Stoke-on-Trent South is **Longton Community Fire Station**, and it will be held on **Tuesday 5 May 9am-1pm**.

## **Garden Waste Service**



A reminder that residents can now sign up for the 2026/27 garden waste collection season.

The service is a fortnightly collection, starting from Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 to Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027, with a two-week closure period for Christmas.

The cost for a one-year subscription to the service is £42. You will need to make this payment by credit or debit card. After payment you will receive a welcome pack and a bin sticker will arrive shortly after.

## **Day Trips**

The Stoke South Walking Group's next trip is to Chorley Market on **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2026**.

Pick-up is in Longton at 9.15am, and return is 5pm.

You may contact Brian King on 07929 939519 for further details.

## **Gladstone's Blooming Marvellous!**



Ceramic pieces created in the latest series of The Great Pottery Throw Down are now on display at Gladstone Pottery Museum. The display features work where the potters were challenged to create floral posies and vases.

On the programme, judge Rich Miller told the potters: "We'd like your posies to consist of at least four different flowers. Your flowers should be realistic and celebrate the traditional ceramic posies that were made for hundreds of years right here in Stoke-on-Trent."

Ceramic flower making is a highly skilled and labour-intensive craft that peaked in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, with workers hand-forming intricate bone china petals to create detailed floral arrangements.

The exhibition will be available to visitors as part of standard admission until 5 July 2026.



## **Staffordshire Archives**

Ray Johnson is offering a free presentation at the Mitchell Arts Centre, Hanley, titled “**Centenary: The General Strike of 1926.**” The screening will take place on **Tuesday 19th May 2026 at 11am.** Just turn up on the day, there is no requirement to pre-book.

The strike originated as an industrial dispute between the miners and the mine owners, over reduced pay for more hours work. When the Trades Union Congress (TUC) declared their support for the strike, other industrial workers including those in road transport, rail, docks, electricity and gas, printers, and iron and steel all walked out and it became the first General Strike in Britain.

The strikers wanted to force the government to intervene and stop the mine owners from increasing their daily hours from 7 to 8 hours whilst reducing wages by 13%. The first few days of the strike saw the transport network grind to a halt, and without bus and train drivers, food deliveries were delayed. Nine days after it began, the TUC called off the strike, leaving the miners without any winning concessions for their cause.

**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, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026. Tel: 07486 376483 or email: sa.devin2@gmail.com**