



MONTHLY MEETINGS

25th June 2026 – Monthly Meeting Review



A presentation titled “Beautiful Britain” was provided by Phil Colclough and his assistant Colin. The weather on the day was both dry and sunny which usually results in a good attendance. The temperature though was extremely high, with the whole country experiencing an intense heatwave. As a consequence, the total attendance, including the committee, was a lowly sixteen members. The committee accept that the safest action for many members was to stay at home and avoid the strong sunshine.

Phil showed numerous photographs accompanied with music. The photographs included the following categories: Sculptures; Flowers in macro; Buildings and natural landscapes; and a set of pictures titled “Funny Peculiar.” The chairman’s favourite picture was that of a Fingerpost he saw regularly when he worked in the Kent Coalfield, i.e. Ham/Sandwich (two towns in Kent).



We thank Phil for sharing his beautiful photographs, and also Diane for supplying desperately needed cold drinks to everyone.

Dates for your Diary

30th July 2026 – Jon Heal has been booked to present a talk titled “Fresh Air for the Potteries -The photographs of William Blake of Longton.” Blake ran a shop in Longton for nearly 50 years, as a stationer and bookseller, but his real passion was taking photographs.

27th August 2026 - Following prior year successes, “**Crafternoon Tea**” is going to be repeated. The session will again be provided in-house, and managed by Diane and Beverley. Crafts on offer will be: Card Making; Glass Painting; Flower Arrangements.

Also, and new for 2026 we challenge you to find your inner Picasso. The Art Group will provide materials for you to experiment with, e.g. pastels, coloured pencils, water colours, acrylics, etc. There is of course no pressure to produce “Fine Art”, just come along and discover how you can use different media, and perhaps find a new hobby.

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 16th July 2026, the Membership Secretary reported that the count of members was 380, which comprised 346 renewals and 34 new members. The total membership count at a similar time in 2025 was 384, which indicates a level of consistency year on year, but the committee would of course prefer an upward trend.

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 branch Secretary, 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 2026.

U3a TRUST MATTERS

1. A vacancy has opened up on the Third Age Trust Board. The aim of the new opportunity is to drive strategic change. Nominations for the role opened on Thursday 2nd July.

2. The Chief Executive has published the Trust Strategy for 2026-2029. This may be divided into the Trust Vision and Mission. The Strategy will provide a framework for the Trust’s role in supporting u3as and promoting and raising awareness of the u3a movement.

3. This year's u3a essay competition is still open. Entry is free and open to all u3a members. Writers must take the reader on a remarkable real-life journey, of discovery, adventure or transformation in fewer than 1000 words. Entry is free and open to all u3a members. The Deadline is 31st July 2026.

4. This year's AGM will again be a hybrid meeting, and will be held at The Midland Hotel, 16 Peter St, Manchester M60 2DS, on Wednesday 14th October 2026. The AGM is a great way to find out more about the work of the Trust and its future plans and strategy.

The Trust has received a resolution submission from Haxby and Wiggington u3a which has been properly seconded. The summary of the resolution is that the Trust are asked to consult member u3as before moving into further campaigning and social policy activity outside the shared purpose of the Trust and u3a movement. The Trust Executive has immediately railed against the proposal.

COMMITTEE MATTERS

1. Branch AGM Minutes

Following committee acceptance of the accuracy of the minutes of the AGM, held on 21st May 2026, a draft copy of these minutes has been placed onto the branch website within the Committee Section.

2. Committee Vacancies

A gentle reminder that a number vacancies remain within the committee. Should any member have a change of heart, please contact the chairman whose details are recorded at the bottom of this Newsletter. The committee may co-opt up to two members during the year, and they will still attract full voting rights.

FOCUS ON GROUPS

Discussion Group

The next group meeting is confirmed for **Tuesday 11th August 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 will be: The expectations of the New Government?

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 **11th August 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.

Indoor Kurling

We are still encouraging more members to join this small group. Although the group recently changed its meeting room and meeting day, i.e. to alternate Fridays in the main hall, there has been little impact on attendance. The enjoyment of the group very much relies on there being a good number of participants. We are sure that you will enjoy the friendly competition.

The next meeting, in the main hall at Longton Central Hall, takes place from 10am to 12 noon on **Friday 31st July 2026 - why not give it a try?**

If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Trish Rowley on 07939 209054.

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 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.

Mexican Train Dominoes

Despite a number of appeals to the membership for a restart of this longstanding activity, there has sadly been no response. The situation though will remain pending for a little while longer. Games are good fun with simple rules, but you can learn and implement a variety of strategies. The group has regularly met on alternate Wednesday mornings at Longton Central Hall. If anyone is interested, please converse with the Chairman whose details are at the bottom of this document.

Family History

One last call for a new group leader to the Family History group. Les Waller's wife, Hilary, has donated to the branch all of Lesley's reference books, these will be passed on to any potential group leader.

The activity location will remain at Longton Library, where use of the computers and software is still permitted. Should anyone be interested in attending / re-starting this group as its leader, please converse with the Chairman whose details are at the bottom of this document.

Flower Arranging Group

The group has decided to take their traditional summer break, their last summer meeting has now taken place, and they will resume on **14th September 2026**.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Day Trip – Walking Group

The Stoke South Walking Group's next trip is to Lincoln on **Thursday 10th September 2026**. Pick-up is in Longton at 9.15am, and return is 5pm.

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

North Staffs Pensioners Convention – Day Trip

In October 2025, the branch enjoyed an excellent presentation from a longstanding volunteer at the National Memorial Arboretum. The Arboretum is a site of national remembrance located in Alrewas, Staffordshire. Its objective is to honour the fallen, and to recognise service and sacrifice.

The Pensioners Convention still have spare seats for a planned excursion on **Wednesday 16th September**. The price for non-members of the group is £25. If you are interested, please call the Convention Office on 01782 201724, or Satnam on 07849 015675.

Doreen's Friendship Group

The Friendship group is based at Longton Central Hall. Doreen is offering a day trip to Morecambe on **12th August**, and a Senior Citizen Coach Holiday to "The Suncliff Hotel" Bournemouth - Half Board with Excursions – **Monday 5th to 9th October**.

If anyone finds these trips of interest, please telephone Doreen on: **01782373369 or 07818811153**.

Potteries Men Sing



Potteries Men Sing is launching in September 2026, and is supporting "Dementia Stoke." Forty men are wanted to perform on stage in six major venues within Stoke-on-Trent. The 10-week project will give volunteers a chance to learn to sing and have experience of singing in a male voice choir. Support and professional direction will be provided. Practice sessions will be held at Methodist Central Hall in Longton.

For more information, please contact Shauneay Connor on 07562 670430;
Or visit www.potteriesmensing.co.uk

Participate in a Research Study on “Concern about falling in older adults.”

A request has been received from Dr. Matt Hill who is based at the University of Leicester. He has asked the branch to advertise research in the above subject.

The study explores whether seeing or hearing about people falling influence an individual's own worries or concerns about falling. It is hoped that the findings will contribute to future falls prevention.

Participation is entirely anonymous and confidential. The survey can be completed online and takes about 15 minutes.

If you are interested in taking part, the survey link is:

<https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/leicester/how-seeing-or-hearing-others-falling-affects-older-adults-worri>

Staffordshire Film Archive

Ray Johnson is offering a free presentation at the Mitchell Arts Centre, Hanley, titled “**Hanley – Arnold Bennett’s “Paris of the Potteries.”** The screening will take place on Tuesday 18th August at 11am.

A stroll through Hanbridge, Arnold Bennett’s fictional name for Hanley, in the company of tour-guide Mervyn Edwards.

The walk visits a dozen or so key locations on a route through the lower streets of Hanley. At each stop you can see clues to important aspects of both Hanley's past and events in Bennett's novels and short stories.

Just turn up on the day, there is no requirement to pre-book.



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, 17th August 2026. Tel: 07359 388836 or email: a.devin2@gmail.com