

East of England Region u3a

June 2026 Monthly Bulletin and News Issue 6/26 Page 1



Distributed by u3a Eastern Regional Team to all u3as **Deadline for the July 2026 issue is by Friday 26th June 2026** laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

Ashingdon & Rochford u3a Ladder Golf Group

A couple of years ago our u3a came up with a selection of fun games and events that we could run over the summer for a period of 6 weeks. Of these events the Ladder Golf game was so popular that the six weeks were extended, and eventually a formal Ladder Golf Group was added to the portfolio of permanent groups, and it is still going strong.

The game involves a Ladder Golf Frame (which looks very much like a clothes airer), and some Bolas, which are two golf balls attached to each other by a sturdy cord. The game is played by two players, or two teams of two players on each team. The object of the game is to take turns to toss the Bolas at the Frame with the hope that they wind themselves around one of the three horizontal bars, which will attract either 3, 2, or 1 point. The first player, or team, to reach exactly 21 points wins.

There is no skill at all required to play the game, so a novice could, and often does, beat an experienced player. Trying to distract the player who is about to throw is actively encouraged, by coughing, sneezing or shouting provided there is no physical contact with the thrower. About halfway through our fortnightly games, in St Andrews Church Hall in Ashingdon, we adjourn for refreshments.

Ladder Golf is becoming more popular, being found at Warners Holiday sites and even on cruise ships. We have recently constructed more durable Ladder Golf Frames as throwing golf balls for a few years at the original frames eventually took its toll and they fell to pieces. I hope you can find room in a future eastern regional newsletter for this article. I've no doubt that our members will be thrilled skinny to see themselves in print!

Thank you to Rae Hill of Ashingdon and Rochford u3a



Why not tell us about your u3a group? Include a photograph (make sure subjects give consent) and a brief write up. Send to: laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

Dereham & Swaffham u3a Kurling



As part of an initiative at Swaffham & District u3a to work in co-operation with other u3as, we are very pleased that Dereham u3a has joined with us and now runs a very successful Kurling group. Here are a few words from Group Leader, Val:

"It's been a bit of a slog but New Age Kurling is firmly up and running. The new venue at Watton Sports Centre has provided a good purpose-built arena for us to play and the tastefully furnished

bar providing hot and cold drinks has been the cherry on the top.

There are currently 15 members, but we can cater for more so if you are thinking of having a go, come on down and for £3 you get two games and a medal winning competition at the end. It's easy, it's fun and (for some players) it's rather competitive. If you haven't played before, we'll teach you and it won't take long until you are playing like a pro and are in with a real chance of winning the much coveted championship medal!

Enquire via the u3a website. [New Age Kurling - Swaffham and District](#)

Thank you Val Ackerman, Group Leader Kurling of Dereham u3a

Do you share groups with another u3a? Tell us about it!

Send to: laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

Outward Looking Facebook Advice



On May 13th Sheila Crawley of Ashbourne u3a, also the new Vice Chair of the u3a, gave a talk to members of the Eastern Region u3a about Outward Facing Facebook.

This means a Facebook posting that is designed to inform potential members and the wider public about the activities of your u3a.

It is a **major** recruiting tool and completely free.

The results speak for themselves: Ashbourne more than doubled its membership in three to four years using the techniques discussed.

- Sheila set out the processes involved.
- Explained why such a tool generated public interest.
- Suggested what pictures and words get the best results.
- And what not to do.

Sheila also provided those who attended with a copy of her presentation slides.

PR and Media Adviser Ray Hardisty, who organised the session, has the PDF and with no embargo can offer them to those who may have missed the talk but are interested in the concept.

His email contact is: rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com Sheila is happy to answer questions, but please address them through Ray Hardisty.

Our Course on Canva is Bigger and Better

MEMBERS signed up for the special free East of England Canva course are about to enjoy an extended treat. It now follows the nine weeks of Thursday morning sessions for the whole of June and July.

Our instructor Roger Carter has prepared a weekly offering that shows most of the range of creative products available on the software. And, if sessions have to be missed for whatever reason, he has opened his resources to allow participants to catch up on what has been missed.



Sessions are being held over Zoom from 10am to 11.30am.

The programme is:

June

4 ... Introduction to Canva

11 ... Templates

18 ... Images and Sharing

25 ... Apps and magic

July

2 ... Managing Your Projects

9 ... Presentations and Animation

16 ... Videos

23 ... Websites

30 ... Documents and Whiteboards

Space is available if others want to link in for any of the particular sessions. Links available from Ray Hardisty our PR and Media Adviser. His email address is rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the next Digital Tool!



Curious about Artificial Intelligence and why everyone's talking about it? Join our online event to dive into the world of AI in a fun, easy-to-understand way. We'll cover the basics, cool applications, and what the future might hold. Perfect for beginners and those just wanting to get the buzz!

This online session will explain: What AI is and is not. Why it is suddenly everywhere. How it can help you in everyday life. How to use it safely.

**The East of England Region - AI Event,
Wednesday 22nd June 2026, 10am - 12pm**

[AI - What's All the Fuss About? Tickets, Monday 22 June • 10 AM - 12 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite](#)



From Ian Mathews, our u3a Regional Council Representative

Ruth and I would like to thank those nominated u3as in our region for promoting the recent survey, 'Inside u3a'. Once the results are published these will be forwarded to all u3as.

Following on from the success of April's AI presentation entitled AI - What's all the Fuss About? Another Zoom session has been organised for the 22nd June. Details of this event are published on page 3. Registration is now open. Finally, Ruth and I are here to assist with any issues arising with u3as in the region. If the need arises our contact details are below. We are both also available for u3a visits. So, if any u3a would like us to attend any network(cluster), committee or AGM meetings please let us know.

Best Regards

Ian Mathews, East of England Council Representative

Ian.mathews@u3a.org.uk Mobile :- 07471 211347



Ruth Freedman

From Ruth Freedman, our u3a Regional Council Representative

As I am not yet getting out and about, I, like Ian contacted all the u3a's listed in the random survey, and 5 reported back. They have sent the questionnaire out to all online members and some have also completed the survey themselves.

I attended the Essex network meeting on behalf of Ian and will be attending the Fenland Cluster meeting next week. So, after a slow start I am hoping to get to work with more of our u3a's. I can only thank Ian for 'carrying' me for the first 2 months in role.

Kind regards,

Ruth Freedman

East of England Council Representative ruth.freedman@u3a.org.uk

Could You Join Your u3a East of England Regional Team?

Why not join us? For a role description of this East of England u3a Regional Team volunteer role, contact Ray Hardisty:

Contact Ray Hardisty, Team Leader:

rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com

For Groups News and Special Events,

Contact Laurene Henderson

laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

For contact details of the complete team:

<https://eastofengland.u3asite.uk/>





Council member Ruth Freedman pictured the event layout with members enthusiastically tackling the topics supported by the digital equipment.

Hot topics on the hottest of days for Essex Network

MEMBERS from u3as across Essex met on the hottest day in the county this year to discuss how to improve recruitment and retention. With issues about both being aired in earlier Essex Network meetings, the steering group had organised the event to share best practice.

The morning opened with a reminder of the existing resource buried deep inside the national website ... and how to find it!

Compiled by a workshop to unlock best practice from all our u3as, it covers all aspects from publicity to boosting interest group offerings and even ways to generate group leaders.

Regional PR and Media Adviser Ray Hardisty took those present through a guide to what is available and gave tips on interrogating the resource. Then Lesley Wood made sure members with ideas and policies that had worked were spread evenly between the various discussion tables.

Before, in three 20-minute segments, everyone discussed routes to success in three topic areas:

- Retaining current members
- Recruiting and Welcoming new members
- Improving interest group offers

Hot topics on the hottest of days for Essex Network

Top tips were noted on each table and shared in a feedback session led by Linda Anderson before volunteers agreed to type them up and provide them to the Network for circulation. In addition, feedback sheets had been circulated for those attending to take back and discuss actions with their u3as.

The steering group was thanked for a positive morning in generating ideas from those who had led the way in both recruiting and retaining. As Regional Council Member Ruth Freedman summed up: "It was a delight to be present in a hall with so many people suggesting steps that can be taken to improve their own and other u3as. Not only was it well organised but all those attending were really and willing to take part."

The morning ended with thanks to all those who had made the event possible for a Network which does not have funds.

- Maldon u3a for supplying the venue and organising refreshments.
- Stanway u3a for digital and audio support
- Council member Ian Mathews for funding refreshments

And, of course, the attendees for both setting up the hall and clearing away at the end.



Pix 1 to 4 Members sought the best ideas through discussion tables with all involved including Essex Network's Lesley Wood (pic 1) and Janet Whitehouse (pic 4) along with council member Ruth Freedman (pic 2). Pictures by Linda Anderson,

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2026	Event	Link
Monday June 1 st 10am-12.00pm	<p>u3a Yoga Network: summer yoga practice Are you leading or are involved in a Yoga Group in your u3a? Join Patricia for a flowing and relaxing summer practice. Suitable for all as seated options are available in the yoga practice . There will be the</p>	<p>u3a Yoga Network: summer yoga practice Tickets, Monday, June 1 • 10 AM - 12 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite</p>
Tuesday June 2 nd 10am-12.00pm	<p>Flight Inspirations Aviation Group: June The advent of the heavy bomber: inception to the late 1930. Starting with the first attempted bombing raid and the lack of development of the bomber prior to The Great War, this talk will look at the development of the bomber both during the war and through to the outbreak of the Second World War.</p>	<p>Flight Inspirations Aviation Group: June Tickets, Tuesday, June 2 • 10 AM - 12 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite</p>
Wednesday, June 3 1 PM - 2:30 PM	<p>FoodTech: the technology involved in food processing and food service John Butler from the u3a Let's Talk Tech team explores the modern technologies taking our food from farm to table.</p>	<p>FoodTech: the technology involved in food processing and food service Tickets, Wednesday, June 3 • 1 PM - 2:30 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite</p>
Tuesday June 9 th 2-3.30pm	<p>Making the Most of Artificial Intelligence A quick overview of how we've got to where we are How AI is changing how we search An introduction to the most common tools we can use for free Delving deeper into the models</p>	<p>Making the most of artificial intelligence (AI) Tickets, Tuesday, June 9 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite</p>
Wednesday June 10 10-11.15am	<p>Learn Bridge online Bridge is one of the most popular and stimulating activities across u3a — combining mental challenge, strategy, and social connection. In this lively session, Steve Carter, the u3a Bridge adviser and the team will share their passion for the game and explore how you can learn Bridge.</p>	<p>Learn bridge online with u3a Tickets, Wednesday, June 10 • 10 AM - 11:15 AM GMT+1 Eventbrite</p>
Thursday June 11 2-4.00pm	<p>An ABC of Victorian Painting Simon Evers explores three Victorian painters—from famous to forgotten—and a surprising discovery that transformed oil painting forever This engaging talk explores the work and legacy of three contrasting Victorian painters whose careers illuminate the richness and diversity of 19th-century British art.</p>	<p>An ABC of Victorian painting Tickets, Thursday, June 11 • 2 PM - 4 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite</p>

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2026	Event	Link
Thursday June 11 2 PM - 3 PM	<p>Achieving lasting happiness and joy in today's busy world Discover how happiness and "joyspan" can help us age well, thrive, and lead more fulfilled, connected lives with Dr. Jonathan Doherty</p>	<p>Achieving lasting happiness and joy in today's busy world Tickets, Thursday 11 June • 2 PM - 3 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite</p>
Friday June 12 10 AM - 11 AM	<p>Lost and Found: Recent discoveries by Film is Fabulous! Professor Justin Smith talks about the work of Film is Fabulous! An initiative to preserve vulnerable film treasures for future generations.</p>	<p>Lost and Found: Recent discoveries by Film is Fabulous! Tickets, Friday, June 12 • 10 AM - 11 AM GMT+1 Eventbrite</p>
Tuesday June 16 11 AM - 12:15 PM	<p>Of Mice and Men: how experience shapes the ageing brain Professor Sarah King tours us through her research into how experience influences brain development and ways of keeping our brains healthy.</p>	<p>Of Mice and Men: how experience shapes the ageing brain Tickets, Tuesday, June 16 • 11 AM - 12:15 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite</p>
Wednesday June 17 1 PM - 2:30 PM	<p>Making images from echoes David Martin from the u3a Let's Talk Tech team traces the history of echolocation systems and explains how medical ultrasound is used today.</p>	<p>Making images from echoes Tickets, Wednesday, June 17 • 1 PM - 2:30 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite</p>
Thursday June 18 10-11.30am	<p>Mindfulness and Meditation - June These sessions are led by John, Mike and Ruth, and provide an opportunity for everyone who has taken our series on Mindfulness and Meditation to continue practicing together</p>	<p>Mindfulness and meditation continuation session: June Tickets, Thursday, June 18 • 10 AM - 11:30 AM GMT+1 Eventbrite</p>
Friday June 19 10 AM - 11 AM	<p>A history of Britain's roads: why we should feel proud Discover the surprising stories behind Britain's roads, from radical legislation to quirky inventors, with Diana Laffin.</p>	<p>Making images from echoes Tickets, Wednesday, June 17 • 1 PM - 2:30 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite</p>
Friday June 19 2 PM - 3 pm	<p>One small triangle to a man, one giant leap for mankind Explore the phenomenon known as Pascal's Triangle and follow the number trail contained in it to look at Art, Music, Botany and brackets.</p>	<p>One small triangle to a man, one giant leap for mankind Tickets, Friday, June 19 • 2 PM - 3 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite</p>
Monday June 22 2-4pm	<p>Secrets of the Human Brain- Bob Pullen Talk 1: A Guided Tour Of The Human Brain. Step inside the most fascinating organ in the human body with this engaging talk on the human brain. Beginning with a clear and simple explanation of how nerves communicate, the</p>	<p>Mindfulness and meditation continuation session: June Tickets, Thursday, June 18 • 10 AM - 11:30 AM GMT+1 Eventbrite</p>

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2026	Event	Link
Wednesday June 24 10 AM - 11 AM	Bollywood Laughter Yoga Dance: June Judith Walker and Merrie Maggie offer a session of Bollywood Laughter Yoga Dance. Here's a clip from YouTube to show what it's like: Bollywood Laughter Yoga Dance	Bollywood Laughter Yoga Dance: June Tickets, Wednesday, June 24 • 10 AM - 11 AM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Thursday June 25 2 PM - 3:30 PM	Wessex versus the Vikings A deeper dive into England's history - with Charles Boundy. Charles returns with a dramatic new chapter in England's early story	Wessex versus the Vikings Tickets, Thursday, June 25 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Friday June 26 2 PM - 3 PM	Islands of the Venetian Lagoon This engaging talk with pictures will guide you around twelve islands that can each be reached by public transport (vaporetto, or water bus)	Islands of the Venetian Lagoon Tickets, Friday, June 26 • 2 PM - 3 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Tuesday June 30 11 AM - 12:15 PM	The role of wind energy in the UK's electricity system Join Chris Vogel to discuss the UK's wind resource and the engineering involved as wind energy's growing importance to UK's electricity mix.	The role of wind energy in the UK's electricity system Tickets, Tuesday, June 30 • 11 AM - 12:15 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Tuesday June 30 3:30 - 4:30 PM	Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie: June Bring more joy and laughter to your life with Laughter Yoga - an aerobic exercise with playful exercises combined with deep yogic breathing.	Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie: June Tickets, Tuesday, June 30 • 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Wednesday July 1 11:30 AM - 1 PM	The technology built into modern cars and trucks John Butler from the u3a Let's Talk Tech team explores the technologies of modern vehicles, live from the u3a Festival in York.	The technology built into modern cars and trucks Tickets, Wednesday, July 1 • 11:30 AM - 1 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Thursday July 2 2 PM - 3:30 PM	Mrs. Charles Dickens tells her story A powerful reimaging of Catherine Dickens' silenced voice, revealing love, betrayal, and truth behind Charles Dickens' marriage.	Mrs. Charles Dickens tells her story Tickets, Thursday, July 2 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite