

General Meetings are held on the **second Thursday** of the month at 2.00pm
at Christ Church, 164 New London Road, Chelmsford CM2 0AW

General Meeting Speakers
Thursday 12th February 2026 – AGM
Thursday 12th March 2026 Yvonne Lawrence - The Show Must Go On (Early Theatre and Cinema In Chelmsford)
Thursday 9th April 2026 Easter Social
Thursday 14th May 2026 Martin Oakin - The Story Of The Beatles part 1

See pages 18 and 19 for a list of the Chelmsford u3a Interest Groups, pages 20 and 21 for the Chelmsford u3a February 2026 Calendar and page 22 for details of our “Showcase Event” on February 12th.
To have your say about how to improve buses in Essex for older adults - see page 23

View from the Chair

As I write my final newsletter article as Chair, I’d like to thank you for your support and would like to let you know that it has been an honour and a privilege to lead Chelmsford u3a over the last four and half years.

I’ll be stepping down at our AGM on 12 February, and I must say it has been most rewarding watching Chelmsford u3a flourish during my time as Chair. This month, we celebrate our 33rd anniversary, with membership having grown to 786 and the number of interest groups now standing at 54. What a journey it’s been!

Although I’m stepping down as Chair, the trustees have asked me to remain on the committee as Groups Coordinator for another year, so I’ll be seeking your support for this at the AGM, in line with our constitution. I look forward to seeing you there.

In January we launched two new groups—Fun with Textiles and Rock & Pop Appreciation. I encourage you to check the updated group list at the end of this newsletter, and don’t forget to visit our website’s ‘What’s On’ section for the latest events and activities: <https://chelmsford.u3asite.uk/my-calendar/>.

We are also excited about the new Ashtanga Yoga group in the works, thanks to the enthusiasm of our members.



To reiterate, our Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday, 12 February at Christ Church, starting just after 2:00 pm. Please bring your membership card for sign-in. If you can't join us in person, you can still make your voice heard by submitting a Proxy Voting form online:

<https://chelmsford.u3asite.uk/form-of-proxy/>

After the AGM, please join us for our Showcase Event in the main church hall, where you can meet our Interest Group representatives (see the flyer at the end of this newsletter). If

you know someone who might enjoy being part of u3a, bring them along—we're always delighted to welcome new faces.

During the past four years your committee has worked tirelessly to make Chelmsford u3a fit for the future. We've introduced the Beacon membership system, refreshed our website several times, enabled online reservations for social events, and reduced our reliance on paper. Payments are now easier than ever, with options for bank transfer and PayPal, making life simpler for everyone.

We've also launched a Facebook page to help us connect with those approaching retirement and to promote lifelong learning and social opportunities. Please visit and share our page: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61582093602031>. Group Leaders, your photos and stories are always welcome—let's keep our page lively and up to date!

Finally, we're now registered with Easy Fundraising. By shopping online through <https://join.easyfundraising.org.uk/chelmsford-u3a/ypxzif/ca/aBZKjyiL/share> you can support Chelmsford u3a at no extra cost. Every little bit helps, and together we can make a real difference.

Lesley Wood

Fun with Textiles Group

Group Leader: Christine McFarland



Our new group Fun With Textiles had their first meeting in January where we brought along some of the sort of textiles projects that we enjoyed and we had a chat about what we would like to work on together.

We started by choosing a theme that we would all explore for our next meeting.

Our theme was colour. We all produced very different results using a variety of styles, colours and techniques. We are also introducing a new stitch at each session to broaden our repertoire. So if you enjoy working with textiles give us a try!

Our meetings are on the third Monday of the month from 11.15 until 12.30 in members' houses. We would love to have some more members. And we have cake !

The Rock and Pop Music Appreciation Group

Group Leader: Bruce Knight



The Rock and Pop Music Appreciation Group mainly explores music from the 1960s to the 1980s, but we're open to much more. Our sessions cover everything from "classic rock" (however you define it!) to psychedelia, folk, progressive, electronic, soul, reggae, and plenty in between. Just imagine the variety—from Adam Faith and Art Garfunkel to Led Zeppelin and Frank Zappa!

We get together on the second Wednesday of each month at the Hot Box, right in the heart of town—a brilliant spot to relax and enjoy some great music.

If this sounds like your kind of thing, please feel free to email me. Music connects us with memories and develops our minds.

Sunday Lunch Group 1

Leader: John Tritton



Christmas lunch at Miller & Carter, Chelmer Village

Wonder of Words

Leader: Lindsay Whitehouse

The main objective for our January meeting was to have some fun and to be a bit silly. To that end, our discussion focused on "Our Generation." We decided to highlight things that we find a bit irritating and things that we miss from our younger days. It was nice to be able to have a little rant, and perhaps to be a little politically incorrect but we were safe in the knowledge that no one was going to complain about what we said.

We concluded that often younger generations do and say things that we don't like very much. However, we recognised that the Boomer generation was exceptionally lucky to be born at the time we were, and to have many opportunities available to us which are denied to the younger generation today. We also

recognised that the Boomer generation created technology and society as it is today, so if we don't like it, perhaps we are to blame!

The thing that many of us missed was our High Streets, as they used to be. We did not realise at the time that days where we had bakers, grocers, record shops, clothes boutiques, tailors, shoe shops, cafés, jewellers, cake shops, Woolworths, Hi-Fi stores, department stores, were heady days indeed, where buses ran all day and evening, where we could meet up with our mates and enjoy the atmosphere.

Our writing this month placed us all in the persona of being a "helpful idiot." We drew lots to see to whom we had to write a letter of complaint and also to offer suggestions for service improvement that could be introduced.

All of this content is very much tongue in cheek and not to be taken seriously. Suggestions included dealing with residents who did not move their rubbish bins from the footpath after they had been emptied by placing them in chains and orange jump suits for public ridicule.

Suggestion to improve the offer for u3a groups included introducing lap dancing, pole dancing, and nude photography as pastimes. It was felt that one way of reducing waiting times in A and E was to refuse all medical treatment to old people, because they will die soon anyway and to turn off the heating so that people will be so cold they will go home to get warm. It was nice to be silly for once.

On a more serious note we discussed our project for 2026, to write an audio play based on people of our generation, and work has started. There is room for us to be joined by writers, actors, directors, special effects artists, stage managers, tech experts.

We are still looking for a new venue so that we can accommodate additional members. If you are interested in giving the group a try please contact me via the contact button on the website.

London - The City & its People Group

Leader: Berry Cornell

If you would like to join the London Group please contact the membership secretary Chris Rycroft for further information: Tel no. 01245 473047 email: c.rycroft123@btinternet.com.

The Group **usually** meets up on 4th Monday of the month at 2pm but **dates in bold** are exceptions due to Bank holidays, Christmas and availability. Meetings are held at Christ Church, New London Road, Chelmsford.



Programme for the 2026

- 23rd Feb Talk - London's Underground Railway - speaker Tony Tuckwell.
- 23rd Mar Talk - Kensington & the Great Exhibition of 1851 - speaker Kathy Lancaster.
- 27th Apr Talk - Slavery in the City - speaker David Williams.
- 18th May** Visit - Stephens House & Gardens.
- 22nd Jun Annual walk in the City - Money Tour: coffee shops, Bank, Royal Exchange with City of London Guides
- 27th Jul Visit - Thames Barrier & Greenwich.

Committee: Berry Cornell Convenor 01277 355823, Susie Fowkes, Chris Rycroft, David Marsh, Dave Sayers, Bob Smith Deputy Convenor.

Spanish Conversation Group

Leader: David Gout



Ten of us gathered in Chelmsford Library for our monthly meeting on 21st January 2026. Our number included a gentleman for whom it was his first attendance. He liked what he saw, and he speaks good Spanish, so he will be a welcome addition to our group.

Not surprisingly given the time of year, much of everybody's news centred upon how they had spent Christmas and New Year. One had been to a Christmas market in Edinburgh, another to a seasonal concert at Snape, having first visited Woodbridge and Sutton Hoo to see the Viking longboat. Others described less fortunate occurrences – a relative who broke her ankle in three places, another whose son's house was burgled while he was away visiting his parents. However, on this occasion the Yorkshire constabulary were able to locate the perpetrators and bring them to justice!

After a short break, we completed two Spanish crosswords and tested our knowledge of Spain with an online quiz. Examples were: what is Miguel Indurain famous for? (he won five consecutive Tours de France); what year did Spain join the European Union? (1986); and what do the Spanish say when somebody sneezes? (the answer is Jesus, and it's not blasphemous!).

Our next meeting on 18th February 2026 will be in Chelmsford Library at 10:30 am, but from 18th March 2026 we will be meeting on Room 2 in Christ Church, New London Road.

If you can hold a basic conversation in Spanish and are keen to improve your language skills, we will be happy to include you in our meetings. Please note that we limit the number of members to twelve and there are already eleven of us, so if you are interested, please contact us sooner rather than later!

Local History Group

Leader: Jane Humphreys 01245 259590

January 2026 started with a cold spell outside but we gave a warm welcome to u3a friends Ros and Ian Mercer. They shared their thorough knowledge of their local church, St Mary with St Leonard, Broomfield, and of a former resident of the vicarage – local artist Rosemary Rutherford.



Ian described the main features of the church building. The stone building erected around 1090 had a nave with a chancel at a wonky angle and would probably have been thatched. These walls, and particularly the corners, incorporate Roman brick from the remains of a temple on a nearby hill. Apparently brick wasn't available 50 years later when the tower was added at the west end, so it is distinctively round.

The early Victorians added a north aisle and vestry but it was poorly constructed. Local architect Frederick Chancellor was commissioned in 1867 to carry out repairs and extend the seating capacity for the growing congregation, and in 1870 the church reopened with only the tower and south wall standing from the earlier building. The builders did, though, make good use of the recycled materials. The untouched tower is capped by a

wooden spire, and the holes by woodpeckers are what have led to the most recent need for repairs – they let in moisture which, combined with damp seeping through the walls, were steadily eroding the unique fresco created by Rosemary Rutherford in 1941.

Ros took up the story of Rosemary who was born in 1912 and moved to Broomfield in 1929 when her father became the vicar. She was a talented multidisciplinary artist who, after training in London, returned home to care for her frail mother and niece. Rosemary had an active war career, at first helping children resettle from Tottenham, then as a nursing auxiliary with the navy caring for seriously ill mariners at psychiatric hospitals, and finally serving in Sri Lanka where she was reunited with her brother Alton, a navy padre. She and Alton were on home leave in 1941 when they created the fresco of Christ stilling the storm. This is the only known 20th century British fresco. Conserving it was funded by a Heritage Lottery Grant with work completed in 2023. Rosemary focused on stained glass art after the War. Although she was then based in Suffolk she completed four windows for Broomfield. In the windows, as in the fresco, the head of Christ bears a striking resemblance to her father. When she died aged 59 in 1972 after problems with eye surgery she was buried at Broomfield.



I admit that it was easy to miss the fresco in the tower in the past when visiting Broomfield parish church. Now that, and the Rutherford windows, are a highlight of this historic building.

The next 3 items in our 2026 programme are:

3 rd February	The history of the Moot Hall, Maldon	Mike Fogg
3 rd March	Porridge revisited at Chelmsford Prison	Lindsay Whitehouse
7 th April	VISIT: guided walk around Gosbecks Archaeological Park, Colchester	Richard Bale

Visitors are welcome to meetings, held at Boreham Village Hall starting at 2.15pm, for £3.
Jane Humphreys

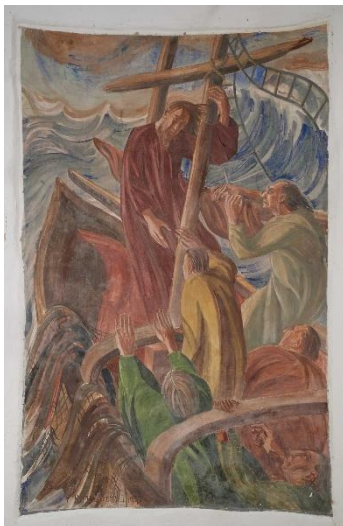
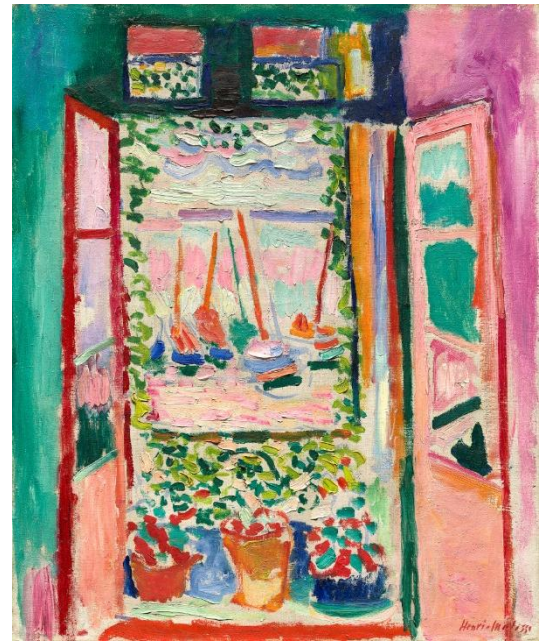
Essex Branch of the Historical Association
Please Sir. Can I have some more? Poor Law Essex Workhouses
By Michael Holland Family History Federation
2.30pm Saturday 7th February at Trinity Methodist Church, Chelmsford CM1 2XB.
Visitors and prospective members warmly welcomed – £5. Booking not required

Art Appreciation Group
 Leader: Brenda Kelly

This month we gathered to talk about 'My Favourite Interior' or 'My Favourite Landscape'. John Constable's paintings 'The Haywain' and 'Salisbury Cathedral' were the favourites of two of our group, together with a Turner landscape. Constable's rendering of the hay cart on the edge of the water and the dogs with the beautiful cloud formation overhead and the terrific view of the cathedral are well-known. Monet's painting of 'The Magpie' perched on a gate amid a snowy landscape was admired, as was his picture of 'The Luncheon' depicting an everyday scene taking place in a garden. A completely different view of life were abstract pictures by Joan Miro, the Spanish Surrealist artist, who painted a 'Catalan

Landscape' and 'The Tilled Field' with its stick bodies and triangular heads.

Van Gogh's interior of 'The Bedroom' with its bright vivid colours: green, orange, blue. lilac is very attractive. One of our members had been to a Pop-Up exhibition at Hyde Park a few years ago and had seen this re-enacted. Van Gogh's brother Theo supported him financially during his life but, even though he was an art dealer, did not manage to sell any of Van Gogh's paintings. However, after Theo's death, his wife Jo held an exhibition which sold very well. Moving from bright colours to sombre ones, Edward Hopper's interior of 'The Night Hawks' shows three people sitting in a bar at night. They all looked rather melancholy, apart from the man who was serving them - a feeling of loneliness and boredom pervades the painting. Another sombre mysterious painter was Wilhelm Hammersoi, a Danish artist, who painted 'Interior with Young Woman Seen from the Back'. She did not seem bored, but what was she thinking of with her back turned towards us? Why did she not look at us? Hammersoi always used rather melancholic sombre colours: greys, mauves.



One of our members managed to combine 'My Favourite Landscape' and 'My Favourite Interior' in one painting - with Matisse's 'Open Window at Collioure'. From the interior of a room you look out through an open window at a harbour painted with bright slashes of vivid colour. When it was first shown, it was called 'Shocking' and 'Not Conventional'.

It was an enjoyable afternoon looking at pictures of a variety of artists.

Next month we travel to Broomfield Church for a talk about the artist, Rosemary Rutherford, whose exhibition is there with the stained glass and the fresco. We are changing the date of our visit in March to the 'Turner/Constable' exhibition at Tate Britain from the 24th to the 10th of the month to avoid clashing with the film about them showing at the Studio Cinema in Chelmsford on the 24th.

Book Group

Leader: Andy Moir

At our January meeting we discussed *The Seventh Son* by Sebastian Faulkes. The novel begins when a young American academic Talissa Adam answers an advert to act as a surrogate mother for a billionaire's IVF project. When Talissa acts as a surrogate for Mary and Alaric, Lukas Parn, a billionaire, uses his London institute to secretly combine Neanderthal DNA with a modern human egg, to create a hybrid child, Seth.

As Seth grows up he is markedly different from a typical human with unique, non-sapiens cognitive functions and heightened intuition. The novel then describes what happens when the truth about the experiment gradually becomes known and Seth attracts unwanted attention and persecution from the outside world.

Whilst we agreed that Sebastian Faulkes writes well, as frequently happens the group was divided in their opinion about the book. Some people enjoyed the book but most of us didn't like it and we all agreed that he has previously written some much better novels.

Our books for the next three meeting are:

Mon Feb 16 th	The Marriage Portrait by Maggie Farrell
Mon Mar 16 th	Brighton Rock by Graham Greene
Mon Apr 20 th	Sense and sensibility by Jane Austen

Lunch Club – Group 4

Leader: Val Norfolk



What better way can you spend a wet and cold Wednesday in January than spend it in the company of four other u3a members for a lunch at a local pub/restaurant. Our choice was The Grange, near Boreham. The restaurant was relatively busy, it had a nice big free carpark and we had already checked that they would give us individual bills. There was a pretty good choice of light bites along with classic pub grub. The great thing about these lunches are the variety of topics we talked about: past work experiences, travel, local interests, u3a and other groups we would recommend (very useful getting experienced tips from someone who has been living in Chelmsford for 40+ years to a couple of members who are relatively new to the area). And it was only at the end of the meal we got onto the dreaded Trump issue!! Impressed that not only did the staff ask about allergies but brought out a separate printed gluten free menu for one of us.

So all in all a nice way to spend that wet Wednesday and looking forward to our catchup next month.

PS one tip if you are going there on a weekday and are signed up with Vodafone, use their free Gourmet Society card to get 25% off your food and drink.

Kevin West

Sunday Lunch 2

Leader: Lesley Wood

It was member Jeannie's turn to arrange the lunch on Sunday 18th January and her chosen venue was the County Hotel. The specials were traditional Sunday Roasts, but we were given the option of choosing from the main menu. The service was a little slow but we didn't mind as we were chatting and catching up with one another's news, so the time passed very quickly. The food was very tasty and I'm reliably informed that the beer was 'in good nick'. This photo was taken by one of the friendly staff.



If you'd like to join the group contact me by email lesleywood54@yahoo.com

Lesley Wood

IT Group

Leader: Lyn Parsons



The IT Group will be meeting on 11th February 10.00-11.30 Christ Church New London Road Chelmsford.

If you would like some support for your device, phone, tablet or laptop come along and speak to our support members. We have a wide range of skills for both Android and Apple

This is a drop-in group, no need to book, you may only need to come to the meetings once or twice to acquire the knowledge you need. There is no charge for joining or attending the sessions as the Chelmsford u3a committee have agreed to pay the room booking to support this valuable group for all members.

Tea/coffee are available, we ask for 50p donation for this to help buy further supplies. You might like to bring your own mug. I hope to see you there.

Bookworms

Leader: Marion Jenkins

This month the group read Tracy Chevalier's *The Glassmaker*. The novel which is set in Venice's glassmaking district of Murano follows the lives of Orsola and her family as they try to perfect their craft.

We first meet Orsola in 1486, when flouting convention she secretly begins to craft glass by making lampworked beads. In the novel, time flows differently in both Venice and on Murano, here decades and centuries on the outside equate to only a few years in the "Murano bubble". So we follow the characters of the book from the late 15th century to the present day. The book is extremely well researched giving the reader an insight into how hard it was for the glassmaking families to survive. Despite the time changes, the lives of all the characters and their interactions flow smoothly. There are some lovely touches that keep the reader engaged, for example, over the centuries Orsola is sent a number of small glass dolphins purportedly from an old lover, which she hides from her family. This was a book that the majority in the group enjoyed, and it was easy to forget the "impossibility" of the differences in time.

Meeting on the first Thursday of the month are next reads are as follows:-

February - *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini

March - *My Book of Treasures* by Joanna Lumley

April - *Moonrise* by Sarah Crossan

Family History Course

Are you curious about your ancestors?

Would you like to explore your family's past with friendly guidance and a supportive group?

Join our new **Family History Course**, designed especially for u3a members. Whether you're just starting out or already have a few branches on your tree, this course will help you build skills, gain confidence, and enjoy the thrill of uncovering your own history.

What the course covers

- Getting started with family history
- Building and organising your family tree
- Using census, parish, military and civil records
- Understanding old handwriting and historical context
- Exploring newspapers, maps and local archives
- Turning research into stories your family will treasure


Format

- 6–8 sessions
- Friendly group discussions
- Practical exercises
- Optional homework for those who enjoy it

To register your interest or find out more, contact:

Lesley Wood

Email: lesleywood54@yahoo.com

 01245 601359

Church Visiting Group

Group Leader: Brian Greatrex, Administrator: Michael Gray



This is Moreton church; we hope that this will be the destination of the Church Visiting Group's first meeting of the season, on March 3. The remaining season will include visits to all corners of the county, plus our London walk in September. We're hoping that our members will be joined by newcomers – the group is open to all; there is no membership fee. If you are interested, please get in touch via the u3a website.

A full briefing will be sent out to members a couple of weeks before the visit, giving details of timings, travel, access and so on.

Birding Group

Leader Alan Alexander 01245 248030 Mobile 07712 818499

On Friday 23rd January eight members of the Birding Group met at Hanningfield Reservoir an Essex Wildlife Trust Reserve on a bleak damp chilly morning. From the carpark we saw Blue Tit and a Crow in the trees before we even entered the Reserve.

We made our way to Lyster Hide and, despite the fact that the reservoir was very low and the birdlife was a long way off we saw Cormorant, Mallard, Widgeon, Teal, Goldeneye, Lapwing, Tufted Duck, Pochard, Pied Wagtail and the quicker sighted of us spotted a Sparrowhawk. For me, the best sighting was two Great Crested Grebe who had paired up for the approach of Spring and were already mimicking each others' movements in a courtship dance. On the way to the next hide we saw a Herring Gull.



At the next hide I was amused to see it was called Rawl Hide. The childish schoolboy in me couldn't resist singing in my head "Keep those doggies rolling". No? Maybe just me then.

We saw Black Headed Gull, Magpie, Goosander, and what we believed to be a leucistic Mallard. This is a genetic condition often found in Blackbirds which causes a lack of pigment.

Our next meeting is due to be on 27th February at Old Hall Marshes. I will email members with full details soon.

New members are very welcome to join us, please feel free to contact me on the numbers above, or by the U3A website email address.

We meet at 10 am on the fourth Friday of the month at the chosen venue and set off about ten minutes later. The walking is not arduous; we usually spend more time standing or sitting in hides enjoying the spectacle of nature. There is no fee to join the group, and **all abilities are more than welcome** whether an experienced birder or total novice.

If members would like to be added to our growing WhatsApp Group, please let me know and give me your mobile number.

As always, if any members have ideas or suggestions for visits, please let me know.

I will send all members an email nearer the time confirming the location and that we can go ahead.

Birding Group Program 2026

27th March: Wallasea Island, Rochford, Essex, SS4 2HD

Explore the magical mixture of habitats at RSPB Wallasea Island: from marshland and lagoons to the sea beyond, you won't get bored. Watch as terns dive and hundreds of waders and wildfowl flock.

24th April: Wat Tyler Country Park SS16 4UM

The RSPB's offices in Wat Tyler Country Park are the hub for the charity's nature conservation works on the South Essex Marshes

22nd May: Fingeringhoe Wick Nature Discovery Park, South Green Road Fingeringhoe Colchester, CO5 7DN
Fingeringhoe Wick was Essex Wildlife Trust's first nature reserve (1961), some years later it was where the Trust opened their first visitor centre. Sixty years on visitors are still coming to see this magical place. Set in a spectacular position overlooking the Colne Estuary the reserve offers a sense of real peace and quiet and a chance to escape from it all.

26th June: Walton -on the Naze Old Hall Lane, Walton on the Naze CO14 8LE

The Naze is a unique coastal landscape of outstanding geological and biological importance. As the most easterly peninsula in Essex it is an important site for migrating birds and boasts a number of different habitats, both terrestrial and marine.

July No Meeting

28th August: Lea Valley Fishers Green is a wildlife watchers haven. With large expanses of reedbeds across Seventy Acres Lake you might be lucky enough to spot the wintering birds such as Bittern or Smew, a secretive Water Rail amongst the reedbeds or Shoveler feeding on the open water.

25th September: Abbots Hall Nature Reserve Maldon Road, Great Wigborough, Colchester, CO5 7RZ
A 700-acre nature reserve and the head office of Essex Wildlife Trust, situated on the Blackwater Estuary. The site demonstrates a successful coastal realignment project and is in the process of being 're-wilded' after a long history of being a working farm.

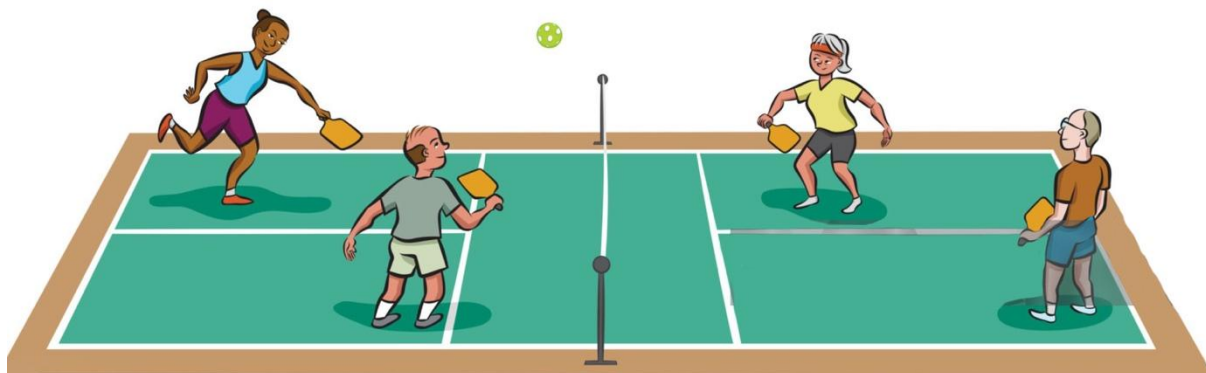
23rd October: Essex Wildlife Trust, Two Tree Island: Belton Leigh on Sea, Essex, SS9 2GB
The land was reclaimed from the sea in the 18th century when a seawall was built around the saltmarsh and originally used for farming. Now managed as a nature reserve and just a stones through away from Leigh-on-Sea, it is a firm favourite walking destination and a fantastic site for birdwatching.

27th November: Blue House Farm, North Fambridge CM3 6GU.
Blue House Farm is a 660 acre farm on the north bank of the river Crouch that is owned and managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust. The farm is notified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and is internationally important for wildlife, particularly overwintering birds but also for coastal plants and insects.

Pickleball Thursdays
Leader: Neil Carroll
Deputy: Caroline Boyd



Pickleball has proved really popular with our U3A members and we now have a Thursday group as well as the Monday and Tuesday groups. Pickleball Thursdays meets at 12 noon at Melbourne Leisure Centre and comprises a small group of members, most of whom had not played before joining in November 2025 when this group started. It is a really friendly group and all abilities are welcome to join.



The game is similar to tennis. The ball is much slower and less bouncy than a tennis ball. The net is slightly lower than in tennis and the court is smaller (the size of a doubles badminton court) – so it's suitable for us third agers! Beginners to the game are welcome to borrow a bat, and balls are available to all when playing anyway. It would be great to welcome more members to our Thursday group, especially as the other two groups are now full and not able to take any more members.

Anyone interested in this group, whether you are a complete beginner or a retiree from squash/tennis/badminton, should contact us via the Pickleball Thursday group page at our website chelmsford.u3asite.uk or email Neil directly at neilcarroll@hotmail.com.

Caroline and I will be attending the showcasing event after the AGM on the 12th February, so you are welcome to come over for a chat if you so wish.

Neil Carroll

Travel Group

Leader: Anne Brereton

Due to circumstances I was unable to write an article for the January newsletter, so I will try and make up for it now. We had 33 members booked for our get-together Christmas meal at Bartella's on the 13th December. Unfortunately due to ill health a couple of members were unable to join us. Members were greeted with a glass of fizz or non-alcoholic drink. The meal was well presented and the staff were friendly and efficient. I had no complaints regarding the meal and I received none from our members. I do hope everyone had a good Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Our travel group meeting was held at Christ Church in room one on the 13th January 2026. 38 members attended, which included three committee members.

Karen, a representative from Kirby Coaches, came to the meeting to give us an insight into what their company had to offer. Karen and her husband Simon are actually the owners of the company which has been handed down through the family since 1957. Karen gave an interesting talk on the range of holidays and day trips that they offer. Although all their day trips start from Rayleigh, they are able to pick up in Chelmsford for their holiday trips. We are now looking at a couple of holidays they may be able to offer us. Many questions were asked and brochures were picked up by the members.

The holiday to Sicily was launched and was well received. The holiday is being organised by Involved Holidays who have done a couple of very good holiday for us. I don't think we will have any problems getting enough members to join us. I have now sent out details of this holiday to all Travel group members via Beacon. I look forward to a great New year for our travel Group holidays, through 2026.

Best Wishes.

Anne

Tenpin Bowling Group

Group Leader: Roger and Ruth Spall



It's that time of year again where I ought to report on the activities of the Ten Pin bowling group, and in particular our Post Christmas lunch at the White Hart in Little Waltham, so here we go.

2025 was yet another successful year for the group at the City Bowl in Chelmsford. We had an average of twenty members turn up every couple of weeks to enjoy the delights of watching their balls hurtle down the lane (or in some cases take a leisurely stroll). And there is always the hope that the ball goes straight and the pins get demolished rather than see it slip into the gutter for its

journey to the pins. But at the end of the day it's only a game and I think it's true to say that for everyone there the competitive nature and expertise at bowling is subsidiary to it being an enjoyable and sociable morning. Generally speaking the lanes have behaved themselves, we can usually find a suitable bowling ball and we all look forward to the 2nd and 4th Fridays each month.



And to finish off our year and start the Christmas festivities, we even had our own Santa in the shape of John Stimson. He may not have had a long white beard and red outfit but he brought his sacks of presents for each of our members. This was very generous of him and as he didn't hand them out we were told to "pick one your'elf".



Then after our own family festivities at home once we'd all had our fill of Turkey with all the trimmings, Christmas pudding, mince pies and more, twenty nine of us started all over again a couple of weeks later at the White Hart. This was our annual Post Christmas Lunch, complete with a very tasty Christmas fare, Christmas crackers and typical terrible jokes (some contributed by me – e.g. how did Mary and Joseph know that the baby Jesus was 7lb 6oz at birth? They had a weigh in the manger! And a very topical and popular one too – Why didn't Andrew Mountbatten Windsor write any Christmas stories? – He had no titles!). But all good things come to an end, and our carriages were there to take us home all too soon. It was a very enjoyable lunch and we all look forward to another good year at City Bowl, and who knows, another great Post-Christmas lunch in 2027.

Roger Spall

Garden Group

Group Leader: Chris Bellamy



Twenty Garden Group members enjoyed a three-course lunch at Little Channels in January .

2026 Garden Group Programme

- 26th Feb **Honey bees** – A talk on how honey bees live and operate, plus what you can do to help pollinators and other insects in general, by Mike Abel. Before retiring, Mike worked for a company called Agralan, who market beneficial insects for pest control to commercial growers and amateur gardeners. Prior to that he was a lecturer at Writtle Agricultural College.
- 26th Mar **Farm, fruit, factory and family** - the story of Wilkin & Sons of Tiptree by Nick Wickenden.
- 23rd Apr **Visit to Hampton Court** [more details to follow

Talks are held at 2pm at Boreham Village Hall, . Main Road, Boreham CM3 TJD.

Science Group

Leader: Chris Bellamy chrisallenbellamy@btinternet.com

Deputy: Paul Chaplin paulchaplin@talktalk.net



Twenty two Members enjoyed a three course lunch at Ivy Hill Hotel, Margareting in January.

2026 Science Group Programme

- 19th Feb **Researching and Installing Heat Pumps in my own house** - an illustrated talk by Paul Chaplin, Deputy Leader of our Science Group.

Science Group talks are held in the Catholic Church Hall in Melbourne Avenue, Chelmsford CM1 2DU. Doors open at 1.30pm and the talks start at 2.15pm. Tea/Coffee before the talk. **Non-members of the Science group are welcome. £2 for non-members.**

Please visit our Science Group stand at “Showcasing the Groups” after the Chelmsford u3a AGM at Christ Church on Thursday 12th February.

Chelmsford Science and Engineering Society

Revealing The Artists' Secrets

by Professor Erma Hermens, Hamilton Kerr Institute for Easel Painting Conservation,
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

18th February 2026, 19:00

Anglia Ruskin University

For more details of their talks see the CES website at <https://ces.org.uk/>

The Friends of Chelmsford Museums present

THE ANNUAL MUSEUM LECTURE

at Cramphorn Theatre (Studio), Civic Centre, Friday 20th March 2026 at 7.30 p.m.



LAYERS OF MEMORY:

THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE OF THE CHELMER VALLEY

Nigel Brown

The landscape of the Chelmer Valley is of great natural, historic and archaeological interest, increasingly recognised as the landscape of one of the greatest nature/landscape writers of 20th Century, J.A. Baker of Chelmsford. The lecture will focus on the historic landscape, the product of 6,000 years of human activity and show how it has been shaped by these 'layers of memory' to quote Baker. It will offer some thoughts on how the understanding of the antiquity of the landscape may be used to enhance our understanding, appreciation and management of the valley. **Nigel Brown** is an archaeologist, specialising in the Neolithic and Bronze Age, who has worked for many decades in Essex, closely involved in field work and research including the Chelmer Valley and Blackwater estuary. He has published many articles and books on various aspects of the archaeology of the County.

Tickets £11.50 available Civic Theatre box office 01245 606505

chelmsfordtheatre.co.uk

Reminder to Group Leaders
Please send copy for the March 2026 Newsletter to the editor, Andy Moir.
All copy must arrive no later than Friday 27th February 2026.

Interest Groups (as of 14th Jan 2026)

Group Leaders may be contacted by phone or by email via the relevant group page in our website

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

Name of Group	Day of Month	Time	Group Leader	Phone
All Day Walks	2 nd Monday		Berry Cornell	01277 355823
Art Appreciation	4 th Tuesday	14.00	Brenda Kelly	01277 840621
Art Club	Mondays	11.15	Peter Anderton	07773 074105
Art for Pleasure	Tuesdays	9.30	Les Cooper	07976 292362
Birding	4 th Friday	10.00	Alan Alexander	07712 818499
Book Group	3 rd Monday	14.30	Andy Moir	01245 440007
Bookworms	1 st Thursday	14.20	Marian Jenkins	07986616748
Bridge (beginners)	Tuesdays	14.00	Alan Cardus	
Bus Pass Group	2 nd Friday	varies	Maurice Austin	
Canasta/Card Games	1 st & 3 rd Monday	1.30	Julie Haggar	07511 629563
Church Visits	1 st Wednesday	10.15	Brian Greatrex	01245 258833
Coach Outings	Various		Malcolm Lonsdale	
Cycling for Fun	2 nd Fri, 4 th Tues	varies	Tony Cox	
Discussion Group	2 nd Tues	13.00	Brian Littlechild	
Family History	4 th Friday	14.00	Lesley Wood	01245 601359
Fishing Group	Wednesdays		Alan Caddy	
French Conversation	2 nd & 4 th Wed	14.00	David Hall	01245 284409
Fun With Textiles	3 rd Monday	11.15	Chris McFarland	01245 263112
Garden Group	4 th Thursday	14.00	Chris Bellamy	01277 353481
IT group	2 nd Wednesday	10.00	Lyn Parsons	
International Dining	3 rd Monday	7.00 pm	Jennie Cappin	01245 358629
Jazz and Blues	3 rd Wednesday	10.30	Heinz Kassier	
Local History	1 st Tuesday	14.15	Jane Humphreys	01245 259590
London City and its People	4 th Monday	14.00	Berry Cornell	01277 355823
Lunch Club 1	Last Friday	12.30	John Heathcote	01245 380766
Lunch Club 2	4 th Tuesday	12.30	Harry Glaser	01245 462760
Lunch Club 3	1 st Thursday	12.30	Laraine Linard & Barbara Childs	01245 475444

Name of Group	Day of Month	Time	Group Leader	Phone
Lunch Club 4	3 rd Wednesday	12.30	Val Norfolk	07500 444518
Mah-Jong	1 st & 3 rd Tuesday	14.00	Chris Paget	01245 474811
Philosophy	Thurs 4-weekly	11.00	Julia McClure	07941 480240
Philosophy & Religion	1 st Monday	10.00	Jim Mackay	
Photos on Face Book	Online		Alan Mayo	07979 540053
Pickleball Monday	Monday weekly	13.45	Alan Mayo	07979 540053
Pickleball Tuesday	Tuesday weekly	15.00	Jayne Hughes	01245 495151
Pickleball Thursday	Thursday weekly	12.00	Neil Carroll	07964 386056
Poetry Appreciation	2 nd Wednesday	14.00	Judith Boniface	01245 266316
Quiz	4 th Thursday	10.00	Laraine Linard	01245 475444
Rock & Pop Appreciation	2 nd Wednesday	15.00	Bruce Knight	07963 592328
Science Group	3 rd Thursday	13.45	Chris Bellamy	01277 353481
Sewing, Knitting & Crochet	3 rd Thursday	a.m.	Jacqui Norfolk	07714 258517
Short Walks	3 rd Friday	10.00	Robert Lloyd	01245 466167
Spanish	3 rd Wednesday	10.30	David Gout	01245 268923
Summer Evening Walks	4 th Wednesday	Apr-Sep	Alan Mayo	07979 540053
Sunday Lunch 1	1 st Sunday	varies	John Tritton	
Sunday Lunch 2	3 rd Sunday	varies	Lesley Wood	01245 601359
Tai Chi	Tuesdays	2.00	Alan Caddy	
Ten Pin Bowling	2 nd & 4 th Fridays	10.30	Roger & Ruth Spall	01245 466486
Theatre Outings	As and when		Lesley Wood	01245 601359
The Wonder of Words	3 rd Wed	14.00	Lindsay Whitehouse	01245 356363
Travel Group	See website		Anne Brereton	
Walking Group	1 st & 3 rd Fridays	10.00	Alan Mayo	07979 540053
WYBIG	As & when		Mark Foster	07531 726417

The Group Leaders can be contacted by email from their group's page on the Chelmsford u3a website.

If your hobbies/interests aren't covered by the above then please contact our Groups Coordinator, Lesley Wood, by emailing chair@chelmsfordu3a.org.uk

Events in February 2026

MON		TUE		WED		THU		FRI		SAT		SUN	
26		27		28		29		30		31		1	
👤 11:15 am: Art Club		👤 9:30 am: Art for Pleasure		👤 2:00 pm: French Conversation		👤 12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday						👤 12:00 pm: Sunday lunch Group 1	
👤 1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday		👤 10:00 am: Cycling for Fun											
👤 2:00 pm: London: the City and its People Group		👤 12:30 pm: Lunch Club 2											
		👤 2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners)											
		👤 2:00 pm: Tai Chi											
		👤 2:30 pm: Art Appreciation											
		👤 3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday											
2		3		4		5		6		7		8	
👤 10:00 am: Philosophy & Religion		👤 9:30 am: Art for Pleasure		👤 7:00 am: Fishing		👤 10:30 am: Philosophy 2		👤 9:45 am: Walking Group					
👤 11:15 am: Art Club		👤 2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners)		👤 10:30 am: Church Visits		👤 12:00 pm: Lunch Club 3							
👤 1:30 pm: Canasta/Card Games		👤 2:00 pm: Local History				👤 12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday							
👤 1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday		👤 2:00 pm: Mah-Jong				👤 2:30 pm: Book Worms							
		👤 2:00 pm: Tai Chi											
		👤 3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday											
9		10		11		12		13		14		15	
👤 All day Walks		👤 9:30 am: Art for Pleasure		👤 10:00 am: IT Group		👤 12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday		👤 Bus Pass Group				👤 12:00 pm: Sunday lunch Group 2	
👤 11:15 am: Art Club		👤 2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners)		👤 2:00 pm: French Conversation		👤 2:00 pm: Monthly Meeting - AGM		👤 10:00 am: Cycling for Fun					
👤 1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday		👤 2:00 pm: Discussion Group		👤 2:00 pm: Poetry				👤 10:30 am: Ten Pin Bowling					
		👤 2:00 pm: Tai Chi											
		👤 3:00 pm: Pickleball											

16	17	18	19	20	21	22
11:15 am: Art Club	Mah-Jong	10:30 am: Jazz and Blues Group	10:00 am: Sewing and Crochet	9:45 am: Walking Group		
1:30 pm: Canasta/Card Games	9:30 am: Art for Pleasure			10:00 am: Short Walks		
1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday	2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners)	10:30 am: Spanish Conversation	12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday			
2:30 pm: Book Group	2:00 pm: Tai Chi	12:30 pm: Lunch Club 4	2:15 pm: Science Group			
3:00 pm: Textiles (Fun with)	3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday	2:00 pm: Wonder of Words	3:09 pm: Rock & Pop Appreciation			
7:00 pm: International Dining						
23	24	25	26	27	28	1
11:15 am: Art Club	9:30 am: Art for Pleasure	2:00 pm: French Conversation	10:00 am: Quiz Group	10:00 am: Birding		12:00 pm: Sunday lunch Group 1
1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday	10:00 am: Cycling for Fun		12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday	10:30 am: Ten Pin Bowling		
2:00 pm: London: the City and its People Group	12:30 pm: Lunch Club 2		2:00 pm: Garden Group	12:30 pm: Luncheon Group 1		
	2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners)			2:00 pm: Family History		
	2:00 pm: Tai Chi					
	2:30 pm: Art Appreciation					
	3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday					

Chelmsford u3a Committee

Position	Name
Chair	Lesley Wood
Vice Chair	Alan Caddy
Secretary	Janet Parsons
Treasurer	Wendy Hubbard
Membership Secretary	Alan Mayo
Speaker Organiser/Deputy Treasurer	Eddie Wood 01245 601359
Newsletter Coordinator	Lynn Regan
Groups Coordinator	Lesley Wood
Assistant Groups Coordinator	Brian Littlechild
Recruitment & Public Relations	Alan Caddy
Committee Member	Ann Bell
Committee Member	Mike Harmer

Chelmsford

u3a

Showcase Event

Come and meet representatives from our many interest groups. Ask questions, explore new activities and sign up on the day.

Non-members welcome!

Date & Time:

Thursday, 12 February, 2026

2.30pm to 4pm

Location:

Christ Church

New London Road, Chelmsford



 Funded by
UK Government

Understanding bus use for older adults and those with disabilities in Essex

Have your say on Essex buses for free
bus pass holders.

ROCKET
SCIENCE



itp
by Haskoning



Have your say about how to improve buses in Essex for older adults and those with disabilities!

Fewer people are using concessionary bus passes (that let people aged 66+ and people with certain disabilities use the bus for free between 9am and midnight on weekdays and all weekend) than before.

Essex County Council want to understand what the reasons are, and what solutions they could consider to get more people using the bus.

Please complete this survey if you are 66+ or have a disability, and share it with friends and relatives across Essex. The more people we hear from, the more evidence we will have to make change. www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/EssexBusSurvey/

You can also opt into a prize draw to be in for a chance to win a £100 voucher or one of give £10 vouchers!