

### U3a Open Day

On September 20th we held our annual '**u3a open Day**' in the Methodist Church Hall.



This is where we show to new and prospective members just what we are about and what we do. Many Group Leaders came along with displays showing what their group offered, and the hall was full of really interesting, and interactive activities.

One new member came along, got involved in a game of Scrabble in French, and promptly joined the group! Actually, we had an international battle because, at the next table, we had a game of scrabble in English underway.



To be able to see what we do, laid out in front of them; to be able to talk to the people involved in that activity, is a real eye-opener. There was a warm and welcoming atmosphere, and this encouraged new members to join us, so well done everyone.

Many thanks to the people behind the scenes who put in the effort to make it a success, those who put up tables, made tea, laid out displays and who sat and talked to the public, encouraging them to join us.



## Estate Planning

Another event we held, this time in October, was an 'Estate Planning' talk, offered by the Co-op. A lovely lady called Julie came and explained, in simple understandable terms, many things that we need to know when considering how to leave our assets when we die. We learned some surprising things – did you know that if you and your husband made a will leaving your assets to your children and then you lost your partner and remarried that that will, would be completely invalid and your assets would now go to the new partner, unless you made a new will? This kind of thing is important to know. Julie was open to questions and also offered a free follow up consultation in your home, to deal with particular circumstances; an offer that was taken up by most of the people present. Having had my own follow up session I am happy to report that Julie's advice was impartial, useful and well worth two cups of tea!

If there is interest from members we would run this session again next year as there was limited take up but great enthusiasm from those who were there.



## Group Leader's Tea

Groups are one of our backbones and in October we thanked our hard-working Group Leaders with a tea kindly hosted by Jenny Peters. This gave leaders a chance to exchange experiences with their peers, fill in the 'much loved' risk assessment forms for their groups and also contribute to a document that will be circulated to members soon about the 'perfect group participant'!

We need to remember that these people work hard organising group sessions, often hosting them in their homes, and deserve our thanks and also

committed members who fully participate in line with the u3a ethos - for the members, by the members.

## SE u3a Forum Summer School, University of Chichester, 1-4 September 2025

Six members of Midhurst u3a attended the Summer School this year - four doing Mah Jong, and two Philosophy. Lasting for 3 days spread over 4, it's an opportunity to get more immersed in a subject, meet people from other u3as, pretend to be a student, and generally take some time out. As well as Mah Jong and Philosophy, there was a choice of 11 other topics including AI, Roman history, yoga, patchwork, and Italian.

Those of us living locally could choose whether to be residential or attend each day. As someone whose working life was at a university in the West Country, it was good to be back on a campus, and the on-campus catering was significantly better than any I remembered!

We were a little apprehensive about what studying philosophy would be like but our tutor achieved a great balance between the academic (Plato and Socrates!) and group work discussing our core values, religion, and what we would spend the government's money on! Our tutor was a former science teacher who had developed an obsession with philosophy and established a very safe atmosphere for us to discuss quite personal things. In all an excellent few days - and we concluded by walking round the, for once, sunny campus to find the artwork on display and discuss aesthetics. I'll definitely be looking out for the programme for next year's Summer School.



## **Group Roundup**

We can happily report that we now have forty-three groups up and running with another at the development stage. The great majority of these are active and open to new members and where there is a full group we endeavour to offer an alternative.

Thus, we had a book group that was full and so we appealed to members to think about starting another and now we have three more, so no members need feel excluded. Also, the discussion group was at at capacity and so one member kindly offered to split the group and start another group (the Current Affairs Group).

This willingness to adapt and change is important if we are to keep up to date with our offer to the public. Thirty-one years ago we offered groups in embroidery, soft tailoring and spiritual exercises, now we have Science and Technology, I.T. and Life Story writing. We need to keep the good things that we have but also keep being innovative - there has been talk of Metal Detecting and also Cocktail making – watch this space!



### History 1

Having fun in the History Group discussing topics like 'What Happened in 1950', 'Richard Cobden', 'Coram Foundling Hospital`.

All members take it in turns once in the year to present a subject which is then followed by coffee and lively discussion.

The group is currently full but has a waiting list, co-run by Denise Barre and Alison Higton.

## Jean Farguson



Many of you will recognise Jean who is, quite frankly, an inspiration! She runs our Computers, Tablets and Phones group and is up to date with technological advances, although she has stated that she doesn't want to get involved with AI as she has 'other things I want to do with my life'.

If anyone doesn't know Jean is ninety-nine years young and always present at u3a events, like here at our Open Day. Speaking to her a few years ago she told me that she attends ballet and musical theatre classes, and I had assumed that they were what kept her so amazingly fit and young – but no! At open day she told me that she had started these in her eighties when she was having some balance issues and she thought they would help.

Let's all take Jean as an example and wish her a happy and healthy one hundredth year.



**In the meantime the Committee wish you a Merry Christmas and let's look forward to what 2026 brings us.**

Keep up to date with what is happening in Midhurst u3a by checking the new web site at <https://midhurst.u3asite.uk/>