



Chairman's letter

One of the things I like most about Orpington u3a is standing at the door when it's the General Meeting. On the way in members say hello, many stop and tell me a piece of news or make a jokey comment. It takes me back to my teaching days and greeting my primary school class at the beginning of the day, when it was lovely to welcome each person. As they entered, they too scanned the room looking for their friends or saved seats for them. The end of the meeting reminds me of my own school days, with people calling goodbyes to one another, arranging meetings or reminding when they will see them next: "It's the Coffee Morning on Thursday", "See you at Book Club next week".

I suppose we all want a sense of belonging and that is certainly something we have in abundance in our organisation. Whether you attend one of our varied Interest Groups, come along to the General Meeting or pop into our monthly Coffee Mornings, we can assure you that you will feel connected.

So, recapture those long forgotten school days by taking advantage of all that we can offer you and we guarantee you will be part of the in-crowd!

**Please note that the new time for the General Meeting is 3.30.
The previous class ends at 3.05 and then we need time to set out chairs etc.**

Membership Renewal

Thanks to all our members who have renewed their subscription online or in person.

Our membership now stands at 975 so there are a number of members who are deemed lapsed.

Please be aware that if you haven't renewed yet this will be your last newsletter.

In This Issue

- P.1 Chairman's Letter
- P.2 Committee List
General Meetings
Coffee Morning
- P.3 Summer School
- PP.3-6 Group Reports
- P.7 Crossword Puzzle
Sudoku, Riddles
- P.8 Notices

All telephone numbers quoted in the newsletter are as dialled from the Orpington (01689) Exchange

**The last day for receipt of copy for Bulletin No. 11 is Wednesday 16 April 2025
and for Newsletter No. 165 is Wednesday 21 May 2025**

**For contact details of Committee Members and Group Leaders
Please login with your Username and Password**

www.u3aorpington.org.uk



**New committee
members needed!**

Monthly General Meeting - Crofton Hall (3.30-5.30pm)

15 April Ian Bevan – History of Greenwich

Greenwich has been a Viking stronghold, a royal estate, a home for navy veterans, even a smugglers den, as well a the home of the Royal Observatory. Ian will talk about the history of Greenwich from the first Celtic settlement to the present day.



20 May Chris Levett – Apple growing in England

The history of apple growing through the centuries, including how important Henry VIII was in starting a commercial fruit industry, through to the modern orchard of today. Chris will show a video of the world's first fully robotic apple picker.



Monthly u3a Coffee Morning - BR6

NOTE CHANGE! As a consequence of moving the General Meetings to Tuesdays in 2025, the day for the Coffee Mornings will now be the **third Thursday** of the month.

The next meeting is on 17 April at 10.30 am



Solutions to Cryptic Crossword No 98

Across: 1 Palace, 4 Cultists, 10 Tower Bridge, 11 Nod, 12 Beowulf, 14 Rarebit, 15 Conversational, 17 Open air theatre, 21 Up to ten, 22 Melodic, 23 Kin, 24 Pallindromic, 26 Open days, 27 Merges.
Down: 1 Puts back, 2 Law, 3 Carouse, 5 Understatement, 6 Theorbo, 7 Sandblasted, 8 Sedate, 9 Professionally, 13 Omnipotence, 16 Peacocks, 18 Notepad, 19 Enlarge, 20 Cuckoo, 25 Mug.

GROUP REPORTS

Sports Events - New Group

A new open group that will arrange tickets and visits to local and possibly national sporting events including, for example: club rugby lower league and non-league football, county cricket, motor sports, tennis, hockey, horse racing, darts etc.

Events will be proposed by the group leader and members. If you are interested in this prospective new group please contact

Award Winning Books - New Group

A new book group that will meet monthly at members' houses with a view to reading and discussing a wide variety of books that have either won or been shortlisted for a literary award, for example: Booker, Golden Dagger, Pulitzer, Hugo/Nebula, Costa. If you are interested in this group please contact

Painting

The painting group is pleased to announce we have space for new members.

This friendly group meets 1st and 3rd Tuesdays between 1.30 and 3.30pm in Petts Methodist Church Hall.



Attention All Group Leaders: New Interest Grant Scheme

We are running an **Interest Grant Scheme** (IGGS-25) again this year, whereby Group Leaders will be able to bid for grants to buy goods or services. These purchases must help the Group, either by (i) improving the members' experience, (ii) facilitating an increase in the number of u3a members that the Group can accommodate, or (iii) by reducing the cost of running and/or participating in the Group.

If you do not have an email address or do not receive the email, please request details of the scheme by contacting the Treasurer

New Members' Meetings

I will be contacting new members with more details about the next meeting.

I would also like to say thank you to all those members who have joined recently and who I have had the pleasure of meeting. The reasons for you joining are varied but you bring with you your experience, skills and interest which enhances and ensures the continued success of Orpington u3a.

Orpington u3a Website

Please check our website regularly for updates about events and Interest Groups

www.u3aorpington.org.uk

Please share the information with u3a members who don't have online access

South East u3a Forum Summer School University of Chichester

Monday 1 September to Thursday 4 September 2025

Thursday 10 April - Bookings will go 'live' by mid-day. The courses are now finalised. Below is the *list of 13 courses* we are offering in 2025 – please browse through them, so you are ready to choose your favourite in April:

AI - Artificial Intelligence

History - Roman

Italian - Intermediates

Latin for Roman Britain & Beyond

Mah Jong - Intermediates

Mathematics - People & Paradoxes

Memory, Perception & Thinking - *how it normally works well but, can go wrong*

'Operatunity' - Opera Appreciation

Patchwork - Beginners

Philosophy - Introduction

Poetry - Australian poets

Walking - A Coastal Delight

Yoga - Mat, Standing & Seated

The residential prices include accommodation, all meals and refreshments offered at break times and a 'Welcome' drink on the first evening, with a 'Farewell' drink on the last evening, both prior to dinner.

This is primarily a 4-day residential Summer School held at the University of Chichester, although, participants do have the option to be non-residential. Extra details about the choice of accommodation, costings and payment along with other relevant information can be found on the [General Information](#) sheet 2025.

Just click on [General](#) for full details

To help you answer those questions that come to mind, please see [FAQs](#) - 2025, as the answer maybe there. If not, please get in touch.

Just click on [FAQs](#) for full details

Garden Visits - (formerly Hands on Gardening)

2nd Mondays 2.30-4 pm



Hands on Gardening has had a recent refresh and has been renamed Garden Visits to reflect some changes to the original format.

We are an enthusiastic, friendly group looking to combine visits to both members' and public gardens whilst picking up useful tips and techniques from other members.

The only requirement is a love of gardening and gardens though inexperienced gardeners, wishing to increase their knowledge, would be most welcome as we are lucky to have some experienced gardeners in our group. You will also need to be happy to open your garden to group members once every year or two. Where public transport isn't an option for the public garden visits, car shares will be available.

If you are interested in attending a 'taster' meeting to see if we are a suitable group, please email Anne Bateman -

GROUP REPORTS

London Explorers

Friday 25 April - Foundling Museum

Just a reminder to those going on the visit that we will be catching the 9.42 train from Petts Wood to Charing Cross. The guided tour starting at 11.30 will last about an hour.

Thursday 29 May - Royal College of Physicians

We will start with a guided tour of the Royal College of Physicians on the edge of Regents Park. The 1 hour guided tour will include the museum and public spaces of the Grade I listed building. After this we will have a break for refreshments, followed by a guided tour of the RCP's medicinal garden.

We will travel up from Orpington to Charing Cross and take the Bakerloo line to Regents Park, from there it is a 5-10 minute walk.

The cost for this tour will be £17 per person, which includes the tour and refreshments. We can be a maximum number of 25 people.

To book and for further details please contact

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A MISSING PIECE IN YOUR LIFE?!

Can you help us by looking after our jigsaws? Our dear friend John is having to stand down and we are looking for someone to take over bringing jigsaws to our General Meetings and taking those not borrowed home. If you can help, please contact Sue:



We would like to thank John for all his help over the years.

New groups

Royal College of Music - Music Lovers

We are pleased to confirm that this group has now been added to our list of active interest groups appearing on the website. Since the beginning of the year the group has organised visits to two concerts at the Royal College of Music. A third concert is planned for later this month. The group now has more than 20 members signed up.

Canasta - Hand and Foot

Another new group now established on our website involving an interesting variant on Canasta. Friendly tuition will be offered.

Ballroom Dancing

This is a prospective new group. We have been approached by a couple from outside U3A happy to offer instruction and we are seeking to gauge whether there is sufficient interest to proceed further whereupon a meeting will be fixed to discuss a venue and other arrangements.

Boardgames

This group has now reopened and is looking for 2 or 3 new members to expand the existing membership and to join in playing more complex non traditional boardgames

MOTO 1

This is a friendship group for members who, for whatever reason, do not have a partner and are on their own

We organise a variety of events, eg lunches, coffee mornings, trips to the cinema and theatre, as well as tours (the Poppy Factory is our latest one) and days out.

We have a WhatsApp group for members to post events on and one for 'chatting' about a variety of topics. Our membership is currently full but if you would like to join us, please ask to be added to the waiting list by contacting Group Coordinator

Sharing an Interest

There has been a good response from some members interested in sharing an activity with one other member on the following topics:

- Arranging/cataloguing books
- Gardening
- Improving French conversation
- Improving Spanish conversation
- Improving/playing chess
- Improving Italian conversation
- Playing Board games
- Sharing walking/trips out
- Simple Piano duets

If any of the above activities interest you or for further information, please contact the Group Facilitator by phone or email shown below.

Alternatively, If YOU have an activity or hobby YOU would like to share with another member, please contact the Group Facilitator, Linden Toy on:

Creative Writing

Creative writing group has room for more participants. We meet on the first Monday of each month from 2-4pm with a different topic each time.

We mostly write short pieces, mainly fiction during our group session plus a piece each month at home. We discuss and help each other with ideas and feedback.

If you'd like to join us please contact



Gardening Made Easy

Both the A and B groups have enjoyed March Meetings.

The A group was treated to a display of greenery and flowers from Mansi's lovely garden. They all enjoyed her caring hospitality as well.

The B group enjoyed a visit to Lillian's lovely spring garden, shared tips, and enjoyed her hospitality.

Both groups provide an opportunity to share their garden tips and knowledge with the group.



Real Ale

The Real Ale Group (RAG) was started in 2009 and, apart from COVID, we have met every month since then! We meet on the second Thursday and over the years have visited many hundreds of pubs in the local area, in London and in Kent – in fact, anywhere in the South East where we can enjoy Real Ales.

We have already enjoyed two visits to London in 2025. Firstly, we helped to christen the new Wetherspoons outlet in Waterloo Station followed by a visit to The Hole in the Wall round the corner. In February we were in Borough High Street including the world famous George Inn, a 17th Century coaching inn now owned by The National Trust.

We follow CAMRA Guidelines for marking and assessing the beers we drink but their definition of Real Ale has become somewhat confusing over recent years. We are more pragmatic – if the beer is not dispensed by a hand pump or by gravity then it is NOT Real Ale!! No bottles or cans or gassy lagers and “Craft” ales!!

In April, we will be back in London and in May we are planning to visit CAMRA’s Kent pub of the year in Tonbridge.

We are a very friendly (mixed) group and if you would like to join us or just want more information, please contact me on

Free u3a Learning Events

There are a wide range of events on offer and u3a members can join the online talks, workshops and courses for free!

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

Online events are hosted on Zoom
There are '[How to Guides](#)' for using Zoom
if you are unfamiliar with the platform

Don't forget u3a also runs many [projects, initiatives and competitions](#) for members

Industrial Heritage

This year's bicentenary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway is being marked by the 'Railway 200' programme of nationwide events intended to celebrate both the past and the future of our railways.

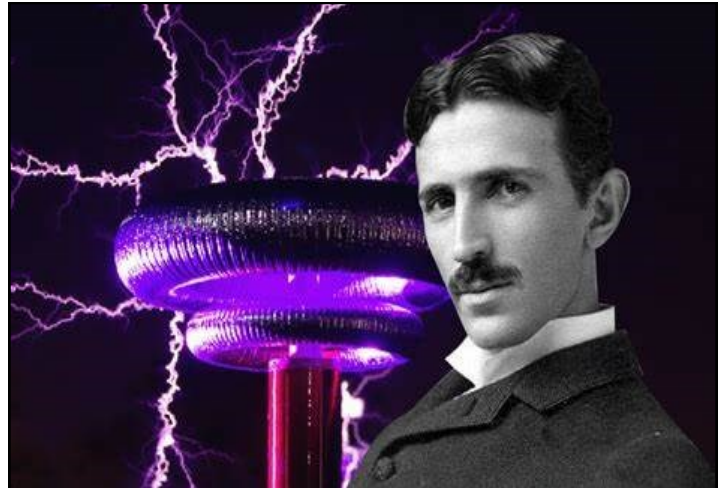
At our next meeting, on the afternoon of Monday 31 March, we will look into the validity of claims - oft-repeated - that the opening of the Stockton & Darlington truly represents the dawn of the 'Railway Age' in Britain.

We'll also spend some time reviewing and discussing ideas for day trips during our forthcoming summer season and, if time permits, we'll look at a few of the more unusual aspects of canal building and operation in Britain.

Topics for future meetings currently in preparation include the East End Rag Trade, pioneering technology in the great houses of Britain, plus the Great Exhibition of 1851 and its legacy.

As an 'open' group we welcome all members of Orpington u3a to participate in our meetings and other activities as much or as little as they like. For regular information about what we are getting up to – including full details of this month's meeting - just ask me to add your email address to our mailing list.

Science and Technology



Nikola Tesla (1856-1943): The Man Who Invented Tomorrow

In March we had a very interesting and comprehensive presentation from John Stephenson, about the pioneering inventor and engineer Nikola Tesla, whose genius was evident in his remarkable contributions to the fields of electricity and magnetism.

Tesla's most notable inventions include the alternating current (AC) power system, the Tesla coil and the induction motor. However, Tesla's career was marked by significant clashes with his contemporaries, particularly Thomas Edison. Tesla initially worked for Edison but had disagreements over AC versus DC power systems. Tesla's AC system eventually proved superior, laying the foundation for modern electrical power distribution.

Another rivalry was with Guglielmo Marconi, who is often credited with inventing the radio. Tesla eventually received recognition for his contributions to radio technology, posthumously, after it was acknowledged that his earlier work on wireless communication had laid the foundation for many of Marconi's achievements.

Despite his eccentricities and reclusive nature, Nikola Tesla's groundbreaking innovations and visionary ideas have left an indelible mark on the world, revolutionising technology and inspiring future generations of scientists and inventors.

Here are links to videos about Tesla's life and works:

[Nikola Tesla: The forgotten genius who invented our future - BBC Reel Tesla \(2016\) | Full Documentary | American Experience](#)

FUTURE MEETINGS

8 April - Air Traffic Control

13 May - Fusion Power

If you are interested in joining the
Science & Technology Group please contact

I do not think there is any thrill that can go through the human heart than that felt by the inventor as he sees some creation of the brain unfolding to success - such emotions make a man forget food, sleep, friends, love, everything

Nikola Tesla

GROUP REPORTS



Walks

Walks are on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, **starting at 10am unless stated otherwise.**

All walkers join the walks at their own risk. New walkers are welcome to join any of the walks - but please telephone us before coming on your first walk.

Please ensure that you wear suitable footwear for the walks. Note that the walk description is only a brief guide, not a complete breakdown of the walk.

PROGRAMME FOR THE COMING MONTHS

Wed 16 April - Bluebells at Andrews Wood

Meet in Andrews Wood car park, off Shacklands Road (Near Polhill garden centre) for a 3 to 4 mile walk. There is a steep hill and it may be muddy. Toilets and refreshments available afterwards at Polhill garden centre or Badgers' Mount Toby Carvery.

Wednesday 21 May - Keston

Meet in the free Car Park in Commonsides, Keston, which is about 100 yards down the hill from the Greyhound Pub BR2 6BP.

The walk is about 3 miles around Keston Common, no great hills, no stiles but might be muddy in places.

There are two cafes and two pubs for refreshments at the end.

London Region of U3As

Walks and Visits Programme May-Mid July

We are delighted to announce that there is a full programme of walks and gallery visits in May, June and Mid July. All events are £10, no refunds.

The entire programme can be found [here](#) so you can peruse and choose at your leisure. The "click here" links will not be live until the respective launch dates.

The launch of the bookings will be in stages:

6th April for the sessions in May

22nd April for the sessions in June

15th May for the sessions in July

Please ensure you check the [events](#) page on the launch date to register. All our walks/gallery visits have proved very popular and been fully booked almost as soon as published. So don't delay book up on launch day. There will of course be a waiting list. The events team cannot register on your behalf.

SAVE THE DATES

Wordsmiths

WOULD-BE WRITERS AND PLAY READERS REQUIRED

Wordsmiths is a writing group which meets monthly. We are looking to extend our membership and include play-reading, as well as writing, in our repertoire.

If you are interested in either writing or play-reading or both please contact me for further details.

Linden Toy

Philosophy

Influence of Greek Philosophy on Christianity

The speaker provided an insightful overview of the development of Christianity and how it was influenced by Greek philosophy. Religion and philosophy both aim to understand the world and our place in it, but through different means - religion through beliefs and practices based on spiritual entities, and philosophy through reasoning, observation, and dialogue.

Religion provides many important needs of individuals and society. It gives comfort in an uncertain world creating belief in something beyond us. It explains things we can't understand and provides a sense of belonging. It comforts us when we feel helpless and afraid. It also creates a sense of community, social rules and moral conduct. However, it needs to remain in harmony with secular understanding developed via philosophy and culture.

Beginning with the Start of Culture and Religion, Duncan also covered: Yahwism; Early Judaism; Zoroastrianism; Key Greek Philosophical Developments; Empire and Education; Development of Christianity; and how Greek Thought Influenced Christianity.

This gave a clear picture of how religion evolved alongside the cultural developments of the time, particularly Greek philosophy which became a substantial part of the worldview of the educated elite in the West. Although Christianity has clear roots and core beliefs based on Judaism, Jesus and the early apostles, it still heavily leveraged Greek philosophy to further understand and develop these beliefs.

This process is ongoing. The value for spirituality to help guide and comfort humanity is probably just as strong as it ever was (regardless of where you stand on God). Therefore, integrating and further developing the Christian message into a modern worldview creates a new and difficult challenge for today's theologians.

The Philosophy Group meets on the first Friday morning of the month. If you are interested in joining please contact

Art for Fun - New Group



Elaine Clarke is hoping to start a new Art for Fun Group. It will meet on a Wednesday, venue, time and frequency to be decided.

Choir

We would like more members.

Come and join us if you like to sing.

We meet in All Saints Church Hall on alternate Thursdays at 11.30. t



POLITE NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

Please ensure that hand written communications are clear and legible. In particular your email address, name and other contact details on membership forms and interest group forms.

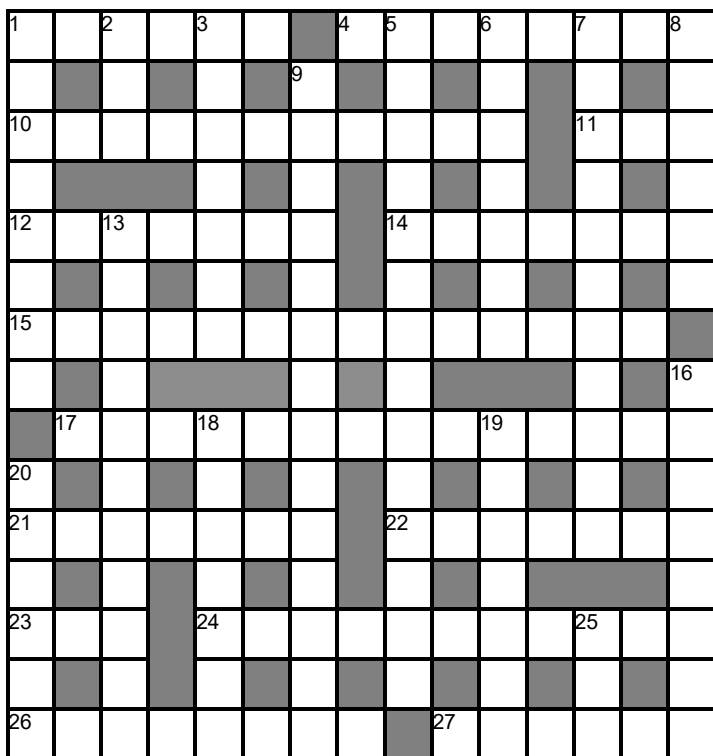
It is of equal importance that you double-check that no errors have been made when filling in forms online.

Thank you, your cooperation is appreciated!

PUZZLES

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD no. 98

Submitted by Cryptic Crosswords 1



Across

1. Unbeatable service after a friend describes a grand house (6)
4. Maybe hacks about torn list of members of unorthodox sect (8)
10. In London, where bells are kept before the game (5,6)
11. Retired teacher gives sign of approval (3)
12. Endless fun below characters in the oldest English epic (7)
14. See food the arbiter arranged? (7)
15. Covenant sailor is reformed in a manner of speaking (14)
17. Where to play outdoors (4,3,7)
21. Single figures – but not yet out! (2,2,3)
22. Catchy old mice (7)
23. Banking with no report for the relations (3)
24. Either way, Madam is so described (11)
26. Times to look around frankly, in the light hours (4,4)
27. Blends in by hiding regularly in a grimmer regression (6)

Down

1. Replaces STUP? (4,4)
2. Ordinance originally, legal and wise! (3)
3. Quaff a large quantity of alcohol in a vehicle by the river (7)
5. Where the signature may be found for a restrained expression (14)
6. The symbol of royal power round an old lute with two necks (7)
7. Small and last in bed cleaned with pressurised grainy jet (11)
8. Serenely deliberate on an assignation in Kent perhaps? (6)
9. Avowal of faith to a friend but not in an amateurish way (14)
13. Cope and mention characters that denote supreme power (11)
16. Cakes cop provided for ostentatious people (8)
18. Took heed of holding the old man for scribbling (7)
19. Blow up General? (7)
20. Screwy bird? (6)
25. Initially men usually get a large cup

SUDOKU

	5			2		6	4	
		7					3	
	3						1	9
			1		5			
				4	3		7	2
4					8			3
	7	8		1				
		5	4	6	2		9	
							6	

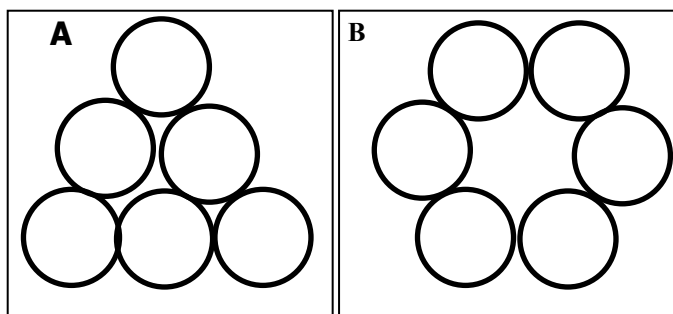
Riddle

**I'm where yesterday follows today
and tomorrow is in the middle.**

What am I?

Solution on page 2

Brain Teaser



Six counters are arranged on a flat surface as shown in Fig A. The problem is to move them into the formation B in the fewest moves. Each moves consist in sliding a counter, without disturbing any of the other counters, to a new position in which it touches two others. The counters must remain flat on the surface.

Riddle - A dictionary

below, move 1 to touch 4 & 5
Move 1 to touch 2&4, move 4 to touch 5&6, move 5 to touch 1 & 2
& 6 on the bottom.
Number the coins in the pyramid; 1 at the top, 2&3 on the next row, 4,5
The following is one solution in 4 moves

CHANGE TO MONTHLY MEETINGS

Due to renovation work at the Walnuts, our previous time slot on Mondays for the General Meeting has been given to one of the MyTime groups.

Our new slot is the **third Tuesday of the month from 3.30 to 5.30pm.**

Parking registration has been lifted for the General Meetings.

Book Sale

At the General Meeting in May there will be a book sale. Paperbacks only please.

GET YOUR HOLIDAY READING HERE.

All proceeds to the library to buy more books for reading groups.



A message from our Committee



Orpington u3a needs a Committee to keep it running
We are looking for members to join our friendly team
Why not come along to one of our Committee Meetings to see what we do and consider helping?
For more information, speak to any member of the Committee or contact Sue:

NOTICE OF RESOLUTION TO AMEND SECTION 6 (FINANCE) OF OUR CONSTITUTION

At the General Meeting to be held on 15 April, the Committee will be bringing forward a Resolution to adopt minor revisions to the Finance section of our Constitution. The proposed amendments are:

- (i) to delete the second paragraph of Clause 6.1, which essentially refers to paying creditors by cheque, and instead to insert a new clause referencing the 'Orpington u3a Financial Policy and Procedures document', and
- (ii) in accordance with a recommendation from the Third Age Trust, to delete redundant Clause 6.4, which refers to employing people.

If you require any further information about these proposed amendments, please email the Treasurer at

Access to Interest Group Information

The current interest group list is included with this issue

There is a full list of existing Interest Groups with group information including times, days, and venues on the website. Group Leader contact details are also available but as these are confidential you will need to Login with your Username and Password to access this information. The list is updated regularly and is sent to all members, at least 3 times a year, with the Newsletter. All members will have been sent the 'Orpington u3a Interest Groups List' (a paper copy for those without email or Internet access)

Please keep the list safe and contact the Group Leaders directly if you have any questions about their group.

This Newsletter contains personal data

Please do not leave a printed copy in a public place and dispose of it responsibly, preferably by shredding all contact details

Thank you