Welcome to the Bedford u3a November 2026 Newsletter.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

BE KIND TO YOURSELF : BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER

I am a great fan of the radio broadcaster Fran Godfrey. You may remember that Fran was the newsreader on the Terry Wogan BBC Radio 2 Breakfast Show and then more recently the presenter on the Mellow Magic Breakfast Programme. Fran now hosts the Sunday lunchtime slot on Mellow Magic. I commend her programme to you. She is very cute and funny in a slightly saucy manner.

The phrase she always uses to end her shows is; Be kind to yourself ; be kind to one another .

I have been made aware that over the last few weeks some of our members may have perhaps been a little less than kind to colleagues and may have used words that with the benefit of hindsight they may have not used. We are all sensitive and words can hurt.

So please, a plea from me. Remember Fran's words and yes be kind to yourself but be kind to one another. Sometimes we all (and most certainly me) have to pause and think that sometimes it is not what is said but what is heard.

Thanks everyone and I look forward to seeing you all at our next Open Meeting.

Colin Tucker

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THE DECEMBER 2026 OPEN MEETINGS

The two Open Meetings in December 2026 will be **Free Of Charge!**

Putnoe Heights Tuesday 1 December 2026
Addison Centre Tuesday 15 December 2026

PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO BRING YOUR MUG/CUP FOR YOUR REFRESHMENTS!!

FINAL FEW DIARY DATES FOR 2026.

Group Leaders Meeting - Friday 6 November 2026 - 1pm Priory Church, Newnham Avenue, Bedford.
Sally Petre, our Groups Co-ordinator, would love for all the Bedford u3a Group Leaders to join her for a light lunch. It's a great opportunity to connect and chat with each other group leaders.

Tuesday 10 November 2026 - Coffee Morning in support of the St John's Hospice, Moggerhanger.
In support of a great local charity the Knitting and Crochet Group are holding a coffee morning from **10am - 1pm at the White Horse Pub, Newnham Avenue, Bedford**. Come along and browse the craft stalls showcasing the talents of this busy group. The pub landlord has generously agreed to make a donation to the charity for every beverage purchased that morning.

Elstow Abbey Festival of Christmas Music - Saturday 28 November 2026
For the very first time The Bedford u3a Harmony Choir and the Bedford u3a Recorder Consort will be gracing this local festival with their presence!
The children of the Great Denham Primary School Choir will set the tone with their singing starting at 12pm followed by a delightful afternoon filled with festive tunes. **The Bedford u3a Recorder Consort will be performing at 2pm with the Bedford u3a Choir at 2.30pm.** Other choirs and music groups joining in the fun too! The event is open to everyone, and all donations will go towards the Abbey's fund for a new hall.

Christmas Concert / Seasonal Celebrations
Tuesday 8 December 2026 - Addison Centre, Kempston.
Doors open at 1.30pm. Free entry
Entertainment starts at 2pm until 4pm
Our Christmas Celebration takes a new form this year, in a different venue.
We will be at the Addison, so parking will be much easier.
We have planned an event with music from the choir, guitars and recorders
A Quiz, poetry and reading along with some creative writing. There will be a prize for the table that wins the quiz! Refreshments will include mince pies and Christmas cake. We look forward to a very enjoyable and festive afternoon

PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO BRING YOUR MUG/CUP FOR YOUR REFRESHMENTS!!

Coffee Morning Catch Ups!

Friday 20 November 2026 - meet upstairs in the Albero Lounge.
10am - 12pm ish. Don't forget to order and pay for your drink at the bar. The Albero staff will deliver it to the table.

Friday 4 December 2026 - Frosts Garden Centre, Willington.
10am - 12pm ish. A final opportunity to meet up for a coffee in 2026 in this very very festive garden centre. A chance to unwind and relax ahead of the big day!

Groups News

Canva Group
The second meeting for this group will be on **Monday 16 November 2026** at the Priory Methodist Church at **2pm.**

AI Interactive Group Relaunch
People who start using AI are often amazed at the simplicity of some tasks, which would previously have been complicated. But it can be a bit overwhelming if you have never used it before.

The AI Interactive Group began earlier this year, to meet the demands of members interested in this relatively new subject. It's a small self-help group and is ideal for those who know little or nothing about AI but would like to get started, as well as for those who are more accomplished to share what they've learned.

The group meet at **2pm** on the fourth Wednesday in the month at the **White Horse Pub, in Newham Avenue, Bedford**. The next meeting will be on **25 November 2026.**

We are open to new members, so if you are interested in learning about this interesting subject, please email Dave Neale. The group size is limited, so depending upon demand, you may be put on a waiting list. The aim is to get you started using AI with a variety of the more well known AI systems. Please bring along a laptop or a smartphone, and you should be comfortable using them.

Calling all Classic Car enthusiasts!!
Sally Petre has received a good response to this new group and is looking for dates for a first meeting. Watch this space…….

Travel Group

Travel Group Important Information
- **No bookings are confirmed until full payment is made!**
- If you're keen on joining a trip that is FULL, we do have waitlists for some of them.
- Please let the organiser know if you decide to cancel.

The Travel Group page on the website lists all trips in full detail. However, there is availability on the following……

Friday 27 November 2026 - Springfields Outlet Shopping Centre
Start your Christmas shopping early before the rush or treat yourself to a day of retail therapy and a leisurely lunch. Have the option to visit Bayfield Garden Centre later in the day or stay at Springfields. The choice is yours! **One seat available due to a cancellation.**
Cost: **£22.00**

Organiser: Sheila Newman or phone 07801 550414

Thursday 21 January 2027 - Welbeck Estate
The Welbeck Estate is set within the Dukeries and Sherwood Forest, Notts and has been the seat of the Duke of Portland for many years. We have a choice of tours:-
a. Tour of the galleries or,
b. Tour around the rum distillery or,
c. A tour of both of the above if numbers permit.

Please see the separate information sheet or contact Marjorie for more information.
Coach cost included: **£55/£45**
Organiser: Marjorie Gardner or phone 07485 095307

Thursday 28 January 2027 - Matthew Bourne's Cinderella at Theatre MK
Cost cost now due £12.00
Organiser: Teresa Hills

Friday 5 February 2027 - RAF Museum, Hendon
Cost includes coach and a choice of 4 tours as follows:
A - Bomber Command
B - Cold War
C - Battle of Britain
D - First World War
Please let Linda know your tour option choice and we will go with the majority
Cost: **£40.00**
Organiser: Linda Holder phone 07848 484627 or 01234 870867

Friday 23 April 2027 - A day Trip to Sheffield, South Yorkshire.
We spend the day in South Yorkshire on the edge of the Peak District. Visit the Winter Gardens in the city centre where the plants attached to the Millennium Museum reflect Sheffield's industrial past. We can also visit Meadowhall Shopping Centre or enjoy some of Yorkshire's best cuisine.
Cost: **£30**
Organiser: Sheila Newman or phone 07801 550414

May 2027- A day Trip to Margate and Ramsgate. To Be Confirmed.
Cost **£26.50**
Organiser: Sheila Newman or phone 07801 550414

Thursday 20 May 2027 - Anne Boleyn - The Musical at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich.
This is a ground breaking open air spectacular. Step back into the Tudor era against the Greenwich backdrop and see the stunning costumes, live horses and follow Ann Boleyn's story on an epic scale. **Booking open now for a limited time!**
Cost: **£50**
Coach cost: TBC
Organiser: Sheila Newman or phone 07801 550414

T**hursday 3 June 2027 - 35th Birthday Show, Brick Lane Music Hal**l.
A celebration consisting of comedy, dance and song with Afternoon Tea.
Cost: **£42.50**
Coach cost: TBC
Organiser: Sheila Newman or phone 07801 550414

Wednesday 30 June 2027 - The Royal Norfolk Show. To be confirmed!
The largest two day agricultural show in the UK! Over 700 stalls, 3000 animals, a packed Grand Ring programme. Norfolk's biggest food and drinks fair, craft marquee and hundred of attractions. **Booking not open yet!**
Cost: **TBC**
Organiser: Sheila Newman or phone 07801 550414

Thursday 8 July 2027 - Charlie and the Chocolate Factory at The London Coliseum with Michael Ball - Matinee Performance
Seats are in the dress circle in rows E, F and G.
Theatre Tickets: **£42.50 Payment is now due**
Coach Cost: TBA
Organiser: Teresa Hills

Friday 16 July 2027 - A day trip to Felixstowe for some fun and frolics!!
Cost: **£28.00**
Organiser: Sheila Newman or phone 07801 550414

Open Meeting Speakers in 2026

Tuesday 3 November 2026 - Putnoe Heights - The importance of hearing.
Aekta Patel, Director at Specsavers Bedfordshire shares her experiences as an audiologist for ten years and how valuable home visits can be for the hard of hearing.

Tuesday 17 November 2026 - Addison Centre - Mike Mansfield will tell us how to Optimise our Health and Wellness in Middle age and beyond. How to stay strong and fit and how to manage aches, pains and injuries.

Don't forget! The following two December Open Meetings are free!!

Tuesday 1 December 2026 - Putnoe Heights - Steven Dimmer and the creation of a Christmas Carol.
When Charles Dickens wrote ‘A Christmas Carol in 1843, the season was not the joyous celebration we know today. This talk examines how the classic story was written and how it influenced the Victorians and later generations to embrace Christmas.

Tuesday 15 December 2026 - Addison Centre - Dave Pinion - In the Wake of Shackleton. A photographic journey following Shackleton's disastrous transatlantic expedition of 1914.

Open Meeting Speakers in 2027

Tuesday 5 January 2027 - Putnoe Heights - Lucy Lewis 'Lighting the fuse'. Stories from Britain's first female Bomb disposal expert.

Tuesday 19 January January 2027 - Addison Centre - Jennifer Hepworth. 'Life behind the first class curtain'. Jennifer kept a diary of the nearly 20 years that she was cabin crew for a major airline.

Focus on a Bedford u3a Members

Congratulations go to Sandy Chapman who has won the u3a Essay Competition 2026!
This year's national competition received 140 entries from U3A members across the UK. The judges selected a shortlist of outstanding essays exploring a wide range of journeys. Sandy's essay Operation Genesis was the outright winner!.

Sandy says *"I won a couple of little things at school for creative writing but this is the first serious competition I have entered—so it just shows that anything is possible. Having retired a while ago now, it's also good to know I can still think and research and plan and write—it's given me a real boost.*

I'd read about the competition in the U3A events newsletter and was lying out in our moonlit garden during the heatwaves, seeking a cooling breath of air. I began thinking that this speck of light had travelled to me through space and was making the most well-known and beloved seem unfamiliar and mysterious. Once I started reading I realised just how long and arduous and wondrous that journey was.

I hope folk will read the essay and find it informative and interesting and, with luck, inspire them to learn more. Like Photon KX1492, I was shining a light on our management of natural resources; but I hope it also shows that for moonbeams in this life—those of us who are quieter, resilient, disciplined, even a little longer of tooth—there is still a vibrant and important role to play. I would urge anyone, everyone to have a go".

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At 72 Barrie Hyde of Bedford u3a is using AI to fulfil his musical dream, *"and I'm not apologising for it!"*
Retired financial services professional turns 50 years of songwriting into a second album and a festive single, thanks to artificial intelligence

At a time when artificial intelligence is attracting criticism from across the creative

industries, 72-year-old Barrie Hyde from Bedford is proving that AI can put musical dreams within reach of people who would never previously have set foot inside a recording studio. Read Barrie's the full article on the attached pdf.

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The YCDIT Project calls for Volunteers

Debra Aitken is the coordinator of the project YCDIT@home (YouCanDoIT) that provides IT support to local people who are housebound and unable to attend group sessions. Debra is now looking for volunteers from the Bedford u3a membership to be part of this project. If anyone is interested please email Debra Aitken directly.

GENERAL BEDFORD U3A INFORMATION

Bedford U3A Bank details
A reminder to everyone **all subscriptions** should be paid into the main Bedford u3a Bank which is:

Bank Account name: **Bedford u3a**
Sort Code: 30-90-66
Account No. 01426292

And for any **Travel Group payments** for **theatre trips/ coach days out** should be paid directly into their bank account detailed here:-

Bank Account Name: **Bedford u3a Travel Group**
Sort Code: 30-90-66
Account No. 02737577

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Open Meeting Dates

All Open Meeting are currently held on Tuesdays and start at 10am.
Putnoe Heights Open Meetings are held on the first Tuesday every month
Addison Centre Open Meetings are held on the third Tuesday in every month.
This information and more details can be found on the Bedford u3a website.

Open Meeting dates for the rest of 2026 are …….
Putnoe Heights
3 November 2026
1 December 2026

Addison Centre
17 November 2026
15 December 2026
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Continuing into 2027

Putnoe Heights
5 January 2027
2 February 2027
2 March 2027
Addison Centre
19 January 2027
16 February 2027
16 March 2027
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Are you booking any holidays with Riviera Travel?
Did you know that if you book any holiday or cruise with Riviera Travel and mention your u3a (at
the point of booking) 10% of the basic holiday cost will be donated to the Third Age Trust for the
benefit of Bedford u3a.

Get adventurous with HX Travel
The u3a has partnered with HX, the world's leading expedition cruise company, to offer u3a Friends newsletter members an extra 5% discount on all expedition cruises.
