2026.11 November

The Buntingford Banner

Registered Charity No. 1185575

www.u3asites.org.uk/buntingford/home

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



I would just like to say hello, as the newly elected Chair of the Buntingford branch of u3a.

A very short background: I've lived in Buntingford for 5 years now, retired for just over 2 years, & have been a member of Buntingford u3a for nearly 12 months.

I took on the position of secretary back in May, ratified by the members in October's AGM, & accepted the chair position during the committee meeting following the AGM.

New committee positions are as follows: Shirley Madin has taken the position as secretary, Tim Marks is now Groups Co-ordinator & Martin Gray has agreed to remain on the committee & has accepted the position as Vice-Chair; other committee members remain in their original positions.

I would like to thank the committee for their trust in me to fulfil the role I have accepted & will, no doubt, be calling on Martin for his advice & guidance to ensure that I can make a success in the position as Chair.

Chris Candler

The Norman Oliver Award 2026



Martin Gray & Gill Alderton



Kev Moore, Sylvia Lowe, Martin & Gill, Tim George, Jacqui Plummer

"If the mountain won't come to Muhammad, then Muhammad must go to the mountain"

And so it was that I visited the Badminton group when Martin Gray, our outgoing Chairman, presented this year's 'Norman Oliver Award For Exceptional Service To Our u3a' to Gill Alderton

For several years Gill was a very active Group Leaders' Co-ordinator and actively started the Pickle Ball Groups (we now have 3!), Line Dancing and the Pottery Group which has now morphed into the "Creative Group," - Gill's pottery creations are truly stunning! Gill is also a member of the Badminton and Guitar Groups. As the Group Leaders' Co-ordinator, Gill organised the very successful 'thank you evenings' for all our Group Leaders, who are the backbone of our u3a. Many congratulations Gill on your well-deserved award.

WARD FREMAN COMMUNITY SWIMMING POOL GROUP



Mayor Duncan Wallace
cuts the red ribbon
helped by Joanne Willett
Chairman of the Trustees



Ward Freman Community Pool Group Pool Group CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) acquired the Ward Freman Swimming Pool on 21st May 2026 and is now managing the pool as a not for profit business. The charity has eight trustees and a manager is employed to run the pool on their behalf.

So they've done it! Joanne Willett and her band of volunteers, have achieved the near impossible – transforming a much loved and much used old school swimming pool, which had been neglected and become dangerous, into a truly unbelievable Community Swimming Pool that we can all be very proud of.

I taught my two children (b.26.3.1970 and 31.12.1971) to swim and then enrolled them in the Buntingford Swimming Club. I was then worried that they were getting better than me, so I joined the Adult Section to improve. I later joined the committee and became the Membership Secretary, taking the register at the weekly club nights, and looking after the girls' team at Swimming Galas. I then went on to gain my Bronze and Silver Personal Survival awards and I even managed to get my 2mile award. Our lovely Coach was Alan Bowell from Puckeridge.

So I have watched and supported this new generation from the beginning - we sold their hessian bags at our monthly u3a meetings - and I met Joanne and Hazel just three days before the pool was officially opened by Mayor Cllr Duncan Wallace, a Buntingford u3a member.

It is truly magnificent and one thing that it has now that it didn't have before is an all-day Café in the reception area, open to all. So here's another venue, albeit a little different from the norm, where we can enjoy the company of friends over a cuppa and continue to help and support the WFCSPG (Ward Freman Community Swimming Pool Group).

Swimming is a Life Skill and it's wonderful having this facility back in Buntingford for future generations of children – and adults – from Buntingford and the surrounding villages - plus the schools - to use and enjoy.

As this is a community pool, volunteers are still needed and age is not a barrier. If you can answer a phone, sweep a floor, make a cup of tea, serve an ice cream and give change for a fiver (obviously not all at the same time), you're the type of person they're looking for!

Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, learn a new skill or fill in some time whilst contributing to the success of the pool. If you could spare 1 hour or several hours they would love to hear from you just contact them on volunteers@wardfremanpool.org

We owe a great debt of gratitude to Joanne for her vision and commitment and to everyone who, in any way, supported her over the three years. A huge thank you to them all.

I wonder if there is anyone who fancies running a u3a Swimming Group?.....



It took 163 hours and 35 minutes to fill the pool (6 days 19 hours and 35mins),

Then another week to slowly heat it to 29ºC.

Joanne Willett (Chair of Trustees)
Hazel Sleight (Manager)

(photo taken in the ladies' changing room as the carpet in reception was being cleaned)



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GROUP NEWS

POTTERY NOW 'THE CREATIVE GROUP'



Clockwise:
Lynn Knightley, Paul Fox,
Jean Hunter, Gill Alderton,
Lesley Stevens, Lyn McLennan,
Paul Tyler, Judy Coward

Photo: Lyn Wrexford

The Pottery Group has now morphed into The Creative Group and has relocated to the Seth Ward Community Centre, still on Thursdays but at the later time of 1pm-3pm. The group is full – Group Leader is still Gill Alderton gillalderton@yahoo.com

BRIDGE

Eleven members of our Bridge Group attended the Annual Charity Bridge Drive and Afternoon Tea, at East Herts Golf Club organised by their Ladies Section. There were 23 tables.

Both Captains (Club Captain, Steve Sealy and Lady Captain, Kate Hinch) chose as their Charity of the year "Abbie's Army."

This is a charity close to Steve's heart and it supports research into DIPG - Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma – an aggressive type of brain cancer which primarily affects children between 4 and 7 years old.

Tragically, it is 100% fatal. The afternoon raised in excess of £1,500.



EHGC Lady Captain 2026
Kate Hinch

To help raise even more funds Kate Decided to do a Wing Walk on 24th August at Duxford with the "Ethel Dares" and forty people went along to cheer her on.

It raised over £10,000



LINE DANCING



Our Line Dancing group joined forces with Ware u3a group for an afternoon of Line Dancing plus an Afternoon Tea at Cottered Village Hall. This was the idea of Helen Nichols, their teacher who is friends with Belinda, Ware's teacher (Photo - Belinda). Buntingford Group Leader, Gill Alderton said it was a great afternoon enjoyed by everyone so much so that another Sunday session is planned for 24th January.

SCRABBLE





Photo:Alan Neal

Jenny Gottfried, Ruth Hastler, Audrey Coulson, Tina Skinner, Rita Eastman, Sue Neal, Jane Farish.

Our Scrabble ladies are seen holding their Thank You Certificate from Air Ambulance for their donation of £123.50. The ladies donate £1 each time they play and this included a donation.

OUR u3a COMMITTEE 2026



Standing:
Chris Candler,
Caroline Nash,
Martin Gray,
Shirley Madin,
Tim Marks,
Michael Murfitt

Seated:
Lesley Stevens,
Susan Peters,
Sue Batchelor

See end of Newsletter for their jobs.

FORTHCOMING MONTHLY MEETINGS

NOVEMBER - Monday 9th November – please note change of speaker:

Dave Pinion, "My Journey to Antarctica" - an inspiring 33-day journey through the incredible scenery, wildlife and history of Antarctica, sharing the experience with 80 fellow travellers and a group of experts.

DECEMBER - Monday December 14th - Michael Buck – 'Merry Santa'. A one-man show entertainer who brings us all things Christmas

We meet at the Seth Ward Community Centre on the

Second Monday of the month - doors open 1.30pm.

Speaker - 2pm

OUR GROUPS

Buntingford u3a Interest Groups			
***SWCC** – Seth Ward Community Centre ** **BBC** – Buntingford Bowls Club **~ URCH** United Reformed Church Hall (opposite the Post Office)			
If you wish to join a group please contact the Group Leader			
Group Co-ordinator			
GROUP	**VENUE**	**DAY & TIME**	**GROUP LEADER**
Badminton	*SWCC	Fridays 11-12 noon	Gill Alderton 07984 039 016 gillalderton@yahoo.com
Bookworms **FULL**	Fairfield	Last Wed 2.30 – 4.30	Anne Austin 01763 272 066 anne.austin555@btinternet.com
Bridge	The Bury	Tuesdays 10-12	Phil Anderson 07484 122 847 philpoppy@btinternet.com
Carpet Bowls **FULL**	**BBC (Late Sep-Mar)	Thursdays 10-12	Gill & Martin Gray 07717 220 431 gill.gray@mail.uk.
Church Crawlers	Various Churches	1st Tuesday 10am	Keith Bradfield 01763 448 914 - 07704 945 209 u3abuntchurchcrawlers@gmail.com
Clay Pigeon Shooting	Contact Bill Hooper (Group Leader)	Monthly	Bill Hooper 01763 273 123 bunthoop12@outlook.com
Computer Group	On-line	Email	Martin Gray buntingfordu3a@proton.me
Crafty Chat	Various	1st Monday 2-4pm	Kate Farquhar 01763 287 393 farquharkate@yahoo.co.uk
The Creative Group **FULL**	SWCC	Thursdays 1pm-3pm	Gill Alderton 07984 039 016 gillalderton@yahoo.com
Current Affairs	Black Bull Pub	1st Thursday 7.30 - 8.30	Susan Peters 07723 343 282 suemary1958@hotmail.com
Guitar for Beginners	Crown Pub	Alternate Mons 2-4	Bill Hooper 01763 273 123 bunthoop12@outlook.com
Keep Fit 1 Keep Fit 2	*SWCC	Mondays 9.30-10.30 10.30-11.30	c/o Ron Brighten 01763 273 175 ron.bofcw2026@outlook.com
Keep Fit Seated Exercise 1 Seated Exercise 2 strictly no casual drop-ins	~URCH Opp Post Office	Thursdays 1pm – 1.45 2pm – 2.45	c/o Ron Brighten 01763 273 175 ron.bofcw2026@outlook.com
Leisure Afternoons Come along for company, chat and learn some new board games.	*SWCC Bunter Suite	3rd Monday 2pm-4pm with some adjustments for bank holidays	Maggie Bell 01763 274 259 07485 360 012 a.bell100@btinternet.com
LETs (London, Elsewhere & Theatres)	Various	Various	Cindy Greaves cindykgreaves@me.com
Line Dancing	*SWCC	Tuesdays 4.15-5.15	Gill Alderton 07984 039 016 gillalderton@yahoo.com
London Walks			

See Walks			
Mah Jong	The Bury	Tuesdays 2-4pm	Liz Cooper 01763 271 027 lizandmikecooper1@gmail.com
Musicians United The A Train Jazz Band	Cheshunt u3a	Mondays 10-12	Cheshunt u3a Colin Meehan 07768 278 064 Steve Deeks 07392 298 788
Pétanque	The Crown	Fridays 1pm–3pm Summer	Dave Austin 01763 272 066 daustin2020@btinternet.com
Photography	Tann Bar	3rd Tuesday 10am	David Dixon interestingplace@hotmail.com
Pickleball **FULL**	Cottered Village Hall	Mondays 11-1pm	Gill Alderton 07984 039 016 gillalderton@yahoo.com
Pickleball 2	Cottered Village Hall	Fridays 10-12	Ditto
Pickleball 3	Cottered Village Hall	Wednesdays 10-12	David Baxter 07745 501 965 coverupholstery@aol.com
Pilates **FULL** New day and time w.e.f. Thurs 15 Jan 2026	*SWCC	Thursdays 3.30-4.30	Jacqui Plummer plummerkj11@aol.com
Pottery See The Creative Group	-	-	Gill Alderton 07984 039 016 gillalderton@yahoo.com
Quiz Nights	Various	Occasional	Tim Marks timbo2256@yahoo.co.uk
Scrabble **FULL**	Vicarage Road	Thursday afternoons Fortnightly	Sue Neal 07862 220 787 sueneal2957@yahoo.co.uk
Seated Exercise - See Keep Fit	-	-	c/o Ron Brighten 01763 273 175 ron.bofcw2026@outlook.com
Sunday Lunches for Solos 1 **FULL**	Various	2nd Sunday	Lyn Kendal-Archer 01763 271 972 lkendalarcher@outlook.com
Sunday Lunches for Solos 2 **FULL –** reserve list	Various	4th Sunday	Fran Feek 07775 857 335 fran.feek@hotmail.com
Table Tennis	*SWCC	Wednesdays 1.30-3.30	Dave Austin 01763 272 066 daustin2020@btinternet.com
The Thursday Group Go along and try your hand at darts, crib, dominoes, snooker, pool or just for a chat.	Social Club	Thursdays from 2.15	Ian Round 01763 272 276 ianround@yahoo.com
They Matter Making activity mats for people with dementia. Donations of buttons, ribbons, fabric, zips, etc., always appreciated	*SWCC Bunters Suite	Last Monday 2-4	June Fairbrother 01763 271 600 fairjune1181@gmail.com
Walks – 3 Mile Walk	Various	Last Wednesday 11am	Norman Jones 07766 367 983 normanbjones1@gmail.com
Walks	Various	Wednesdays am	Carol McKimmie 01763 271 054 carolmckimmie@yahoo.com
Walks	Various	Thursdays am	Barbara & Roger Henderson 01763 272 035 barbarahenderson87@outlook.com
Walks in London	London	Monthly Wed or Thurs	Mike Murfitt 07803 708 181 mikemurfitt@sky.com
Wine Appreciation **FULL**	*SWCC Bunters Suite	Last Thursday 7.30pm	Ron & Maureen Brighten 01763 273 175 ron.bofcw2026@outlook.com

Committee Contact Details

Chairman	Chris Candler		
Vice Chairman & Webmaster	Martin Gray	07588 708 257	
Treasurer	Michael Murfitt	07803 708 181	buntingfordtreasureru3a@gmail.com
Asst Treasurer	Sue Batchelor	01763 271 884	sue.clark2007@googlemail.com
Secretary	Shirley Madin	07846 250 697	buntingfordu3asec@gmail.com
Membership Secretary	Lesley Stevens	07767 152 259	buntingfordu3a@gmail.com
Group Co-ordinator	Tim Marks	07754 583 599	Groupcoordinatorbuntingfordu3a@proton.me
Speaker Secretary	Susan Peters	07723 343 282	speakersecu3abunt@gmail.com
Welfare Officer	Caroline Nash	07746 068 275	carolandynash@aol.com
Monthly Meeting Chairs Rota	Mike Murfitt	07803 708 181	mikemurfitt@sky.com
Non-committee: Greeters	Val Reedman	01763 272 135	valbuntu3a@gmail.com
Non-committee: Tea Rota	Sue Batchelor	01763 271 884	sue.clark2007@googlemail.com
Non-committee: Raffle	Evelyn Smith		
Non-committee: Library	Maureen & Dennis Robertson		
Non-committee	Newsletter Editor & Bunt Journal	Jean Cook	Jean.M.Cook88@gmail.com w.e.f. October 2026
Our Website	https://buntingford.u3asite.uk/		
Our Facebook page	https://www.facebook.com/groups/143301880900601/?locale=en_GB		