



TAW THIRD AGE GROUP *Newsletter 406*

1st January 2026

Website: <https://taw.u3asite.uk/>



Welcome to our January 2026 Newsletter

COFFEE MORNINGS

The Coffee Morning on **Monday 5th January** will be hosted by the **Dancersize Group**. There will be a talk by **Verna Green of The Samaritans**.

The host group for the Coffee Morning on **Monday 2nd February** will be the **Short Tennis Group**. There will also be a talk by **Community Police Officer Karen Grant**.

Doors will be open at 10:00am for a prompt 10:30am start in the **Roundswell Community Hall**. Admission £1 to include coffee/tea, biscuits and a raffle ticket.

Please Welcome our New Members

Mrs Valerie Gilbert
Miss Ruth Lennon
Mr Martin Long
Mr John Rumble



Chair Report - January 2026

By the time you read this newsletter, Christmas and New Year celebrations would have come and gone. I do hope you enjoyed the time and set up all those New Year resolutions, and if you are like me half of them have already gone astray!

Once again, I would like to show my gratitude to Wollens Solicitors at Roundswell for printing our hard copy newsletters. Their continued support is much appreciated.

We did something different for our December Coffee Morning. It was very much in the Christmas theme hosted by the Trustees; Christmas Carols sung by the Jubilee Choir, plenty of mince pies, and oh yes, our quiz presented by Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer.

In my last newsletter report I informed you we were looking into 'Online Membership Renewals' and had set up a small team of Trustees to look into the pros and cons of setting up an online membership renewal and payment process in line with National U3A using Beacon and PayPal. To assist this review, I also sent out to all members a survey requesting feedback on 3 questions in conjunction with the online process, results as follows:

Response/feedback from members; 41.5%. Thank you to all those that responded:

1. Do you have a PayPal Account; Yes 30.5%, No 69.5%
2. Would you use an Online Process via PayPal; Yes 54.5%, No 45.5%
3. Would you use the current Process; Yes 95%, No 5%

Overview of the report presented to the Trustee meeting, National U3A are offering/pushing the online process using Beacon with payment via PayPal account. The good points in using this process would be an easier renewal process for members using a PayPal account or credit card. The issues for us are the added costs we have to pay PayPal along with having to maintain a minimum level of money in a PayPal account. Also, the interaction between PayPal and our current financial accounts. There was also an indication that National were going to be reviewing the online process because of members not liking PayPal, with the possibility of Stripe and BACS payments being set up as a preferred alternative process.

Outcome of the review, with all the uncertainties as to which online payment process National are going to be offering, we don't want to align ourselves with PayPal if it may not end up as the preferred payment process so we have decided to watch and wait, so please bear with us on this.

A date for your diary next year, we are planning on doing a Celebration Afternoon Cream Tea at the **Barnstaple Hotel** for **Wednesday 6th May at 2:00pm**. Watch the newsletter for further information. I do hope you will be able to join us.

See you all at the next Coffee Morning.

~Martin, Chair

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2026

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It is with great sadness that we learn of the passing of Mr John Hirst and Mrs Julie Wood

Our Groups

Members are encouraged to contact the Group Leaders of groups they are interested in joining and have their names added to any waiting lists.

ALLOTMENT 21 - Patrick Byrne. No report this month.
~Patrick

AMBLERS - Trish Lilley. We will meet at **St John's Garden Centre, Barnstaple** at **11:00am on Tuesday 13th January** for a walk in the surrounding area with the opportunity for a coffee at the conclusion of the walk which will be led by Chris.
~Trish

ART - Derek Seymour. The Art Group meets on the **1st and 3rd Thursday** each month from **9:30am to 12:00 noon** at the **Rhododendron Methodist Church Hall**.
~Derek

BADMINTON - Carol Griffiths, Margaret Strange. **Tarka Leisure Centre 9:30am to 10:30am on Tuesday** and **2:00pm to 3:00pm on Thursday**. Badminton resumes on the **6th January** after the Christmas break. We are actively seeking new members to boost our friendly group and invite you to get in touch if you are interested in playing. You are welcome to come along for a free session on either day, to meet and play with the members, enjoy some social time and gentle exercise.
~Carol & Margaret

BOOK CLUB - Barbara Vercoe. We now meet on the **4th Monday of each month** at **10:30am** at the **Bike Shed in Barnstaple**. At present this group is fully subscribed.
~Barbara

BOOKWORMS - Linda Tyrrell. We meet at the **Library** on the **last Tuesday of each month** at **10:00am**. The group is now fully subscribed, but if anyone is interested in joining us, do please feel free to contact me.
~Linda

BREAKFAST CLUB - Wendy Walmsley. This group is held on the **1st Wednesday of the month** at **9:15am**. The **January 7th** breakfast is at **Tea by the Tow**. If you are UNABLE to attend please let Wendy know. If you would like to join this friendly group for a chat over breakfast, please contact me.
~Wendy

CANASTA - Linda Lee, Yvonne Geary. The first 2026 meeting of the Canasta group will be on the **19th January 2:00pm** in the **Beechfield Centre in Fremington**. We have room for a couple more players so if you are interested in joining us do get in touch.
~Linda & Yvonne

CHATTERBOX - Sheila Jennings. We meet on the **3rd Monday of each month** at **11:00am to 1:00pm** in the **Barnstaple Museum**. Please come and join us.
~Sheila

COFFEE MUGS AND TEAPOTS - Jackie Ward. We meet every **3rd Wednesday of the month**. Come along and join us, this happy group will welcome you. We meet **10:30am to 12:00 noon** in **Arti's Too Café, 20 Cross Street, Barnstaple**. We look forward to meeting you. Contact Jackie.
~Jackie

CREATIVE CRAFT - Valerie Fama. We meet the **1st Tuesday of the month** at the **Fremington Methodist Church Hall**,

Old School Lane, from **10:00am to 12:00 noon** £3 per session payable in 3-monthly instalments. Free car parking on site. Our next meeting is **Tuesday 6th January**. There will **not be a meeting in February**. The **March** meeting will be on **Tuesday 3rd**.
~Valerie

CREATIVE WRITING - Sue Boyd. No report this month.
~Bob

CRIBBAGE - Richard Taylor. We usually meet at the **New Inn, Fremington** **twice a month**, from **3:00pm 'til 5:00pm**. The aim is to enjoy playing crib. Help is available for those wishing to learn how to play. Free parking on site. Please let me know if you are interested in joining us.
~Richard

CURRENT AFFAIRS DISCUSSION 1 - Alison Clayton. Happy New Year! to all my group members. There **won't be a meeting in January** but we will return to the library on **5th February** at our usual time of **10:15am**. We discuss interesting topics that are currently in the news over a cup of tea or coffee. At present the group is full but if you are interested in joining us we can place you on our reserve list by contacting the group leader, Alison Clayton.
~Alison

CURRENT AFFAIRS DISCUSSION 2 - Chris Daly. The next meeting will be on **22nd January** and every **4th Thursday** from then on.
~Chris

DANCERSIZE - Hilary Newing, Marilyn White. Start again after Christmas on **6th January**. We do have vacancies, so if you'd like to shed some extra pounds after the festive break, please contact us.
~Hilary & Marilyn

DAY TRIPS BY COACH - Wendy Walmsley, Jean Newcombe. Details of the **January 15th** Christmas lunch will be emailed to members.
~Wendy & Jean

DESIGN & MAKE I & II - Jim Pinn. No report this month.
~Jim

DEVON HISTORY - Paul Bate, Janice Hurdle. We meet on the **1st Thursday of the month** at **2:30pm** in the **Castle Centre**, except when there is a Bank Holiday. This group is now full. To be added to the waiting list please contact Janice, and regarding speakers please contact Paul. **No meeting in January**. The speaker on **5th February** is Richard Bass speaking on The Americans in Devon and D-Day.
~Paul & Janice

DINING EXPERIENCE - Lynden Davies. Lynden will be taking you all for a Christmas Lunch in **January**.
~Lynden

GARDEN DAYS - Graham and Roxanne King. **GROUP DISCONTINUED**.
~Graham & Roxanne

HOLIDAYS - Kim Conibear. The next holiday will be the **11th to 15th of May 2026**. We are going to **Northumberland**. I will advise re cost when I have the details. I will also be taking bookings then.
~Kim

KNITTING - Sheila Jennings. We usually meet on the **4th Friday of every month at 10:30am**. Any newcomers would be welcome to join. I have needles, wool and patterns if you are a learner. We have ladies who are excellent knitters who are always delighted to pass on their expertise. ~*Sheila*

PRACTICAL GARDENING - Diana Betham, Veronica McLaughlin. Hello all. I hope you all had a happy festive season and not put on too many pounds. I hope you are all looking forward to our post Christmas meal at **the Williams Arms, Braunton, EX33 2EL on Thursday 8th January at 12:30pm**. There will be no plant sales this day or magazine library (which we have just commenced). I look forward to seeing you all. There is a waiting list for this group. ~*Diana*

PSYCHOLOGY (Reinstated) - Annie Goodyear, Jane Belworthy. We meet on the **4th Thursday of the month in the small meeting room at Roundswell Community Hall at 1:30pm to 3:00pm**. The group leader will introduce a topic from the psychological perspective and then the participants consider the pros and cons. January will be our inaugural meeting. ~*Annie & Jane*

RAMBLING - Pauline Newbound, Barbara Hewis. **Monday January 12th**. The walk will start at **10:30am** from the **big Muddlebridge layby near Fremington, GR SS 520324**. The walk will take in Fremington, Horsacott, Leat Meadow, the Tarka Trail and Fremington Quay. Distance about 6 miles, will depend a little bit on the weather! BYOFAD. Leader Maggi Rogers. ~*Pauline & Barbara*

READING SHAKESPEARE ALLOWED - Bob Godfrey. An ALERT! If you are reading this and are interested please don't hesitate to contact me any time. Reading together is a most rewarding and supportive activity. No special knowledge of Shakespeare is necessary. All necessary reading material is fully provided. We meet on the **3rd Wednesday of the month 2:00pm to 3:30pm at Fremington Methodist Church, Old School Lane, Fremington**. ~*Bob*

ROAMERS - Sue Taylor. **Monday 26th January**, please meet at the **National Trust car park in Croyde, EX33 1PA at 10:30am**. Free to NT members or pay and display. The walk is around 4.5 miles on footpaths. This will be led by Sue and Richard. New members always welcome. ~*Sue*

RUMMIKUB - Paul Boden. The Rummikub group is still at its maximum quota. If you are interested in playing, please let me know, and I will place you on our waiting list. Please note the **New Inn will be shut on the 16th January**. The session will be hosted by the **Instow Yacht club**. Meeting at **12:00 noon**, play commencing at 12:15pm. Busses are available to the Yacht club. Parking may also be available at the Yacht club. Just press the buzzer at the gate and inform them you are there to play Rummikub. **The 3rd Friday of each month from February** will resume as normal at **the New Inn**. ~*Paul*

SHORT MAT BOWLING - Richard Taylor. We meet at **Christ Church hall in Braunton once or twice a month, on Tuesdays from 10:00am to 12:00 midday**. All the bowling equipment, tea, coffee and biscuits are provided. Parking

is free on site. The cost will be £3 or £4 per person, depending on numbers. Please let me know if you are interested in joining us for some bowling and a chat. We have space for some new members, so come and give it a try. ~*Richard*

SHORT TENNIS - Marjorie Sargent, Sue Morley. We play on **Wednesday mornings** at the **Tarka Tennis Centre from 11:00am until 12:00 noon**. We will start again after Christmas on **7th January**. We have a couple of vacancies, so please get in touch if you have had any experience of tennis and would be interested in coming along to see how we play short tennis. ~*Marge & Sue*

SKITTLES - Doug Saunders, Patrick Kift. We play Skittles **once a month on a Friday evening** at the **Agricultural Inn, Braunton (7:00pm start)**. The next scheduled event is on **Friday 16th January**. Unfortunately, the November event had to be cancelled at short notice due to some urgent structural repairs at the Agricultural Inn. Although we are nearing the maximum number of members for this group, there are usually new member places available for each event due to the unavailability of existing members. Please contact Doug Saunders or Patrick Kift if you would like to participate. ~*Doug & Patrick*

STROLLERS - Kim Conibear. We will meet at **10:00am on Tuesday 6th January** at the **Queen Anne cafe on the Strand**. We will meet for a chat and coffee and hopefully to sort out next year's walks. Can I also wish all Strollers a Merry Christmas. ~*Kim*

SUNDAY LUNCH - Carol Smith. The Sunday Lunch Group meets on the **2nd Sunday in the month** for lunch and a chat at various venues in and around Barnstaple. If interested in joining please contact Carol. ~*Carol*

TABLE TENNIS - Janice and Bob Godfrey. We meet **every Thursday morning, 9:30am to 12:00 noon** at the **Tarka Centre**. We now have a couple of places available. If there's anyone out there wishing to join the group you would be very welcome. Do please contact us first. Some experience of playing (however long ago!) is desirable. ~*Janice & Bob*

TEN PIN BOWLING - Brian Tilbury, Jan Hartshorne. Hope you had a great Christmas and New Year. 2025 ended very well for Doug 'the late developer' Saunders, who in the last few weeks achieved the highest score again, 319, which was also a new PB. Not only did he get a 'Turkey' twice but also achieved a 'Badger' which is 4 strikes on the trot. Congratulations also go to Paul 'I just got lucky' Holland who got a 'Turkey' as well. We will meet again at **1:15pm inside Let's Go Bowling on the Braunton Road, on Wednesday 7th January**. Why not join us, 'just for fun'. It's a bit of exercise too! ~*Brian & Jan*

TUESDAY LUNCHEON GROUP - Trish Lilley. Our next lunch at **The Williams Arms** will be on **20th January**. Bookings can be made either by telephone or email by **18th January**. New members are welcome. ~*Trish*

WANDERERS - Wendy Walmsley, Sue Taylor. On **Tuesday 13th January** we are meeting at **The Williams Arms** for Christmas lunch. A list will be circulated at the lunch for volunteers to lead future walks in 2026. Please let me know if you will be there if you haven't already done so. New members always welcome.
~Wendy & Sue

WINE APPRECIATION - David Rowe. The Wine Appreciation Group continues to meet on the **1st Friday of each month**, in **Room 3B** of the **Barnstaple Library**.
~David

WOODCARVING - Fred Barrow. **Weekly, Wednesday mornings 10:00am to 12:00 noon**.
~Fred

CALENDAR - January/February 2026

Coffee Mornings:

Monday 5th January (Dancersize Group) - 10:30am - Roundswell Community Hall
Monday 2nd February (Short Tennis Group) - 10:30am - Roundswell Community Hall

February Newsletter Deadline: Deadline for entry of events occurring **after Sunday 1st February - THURSDAY 15th January**.

Group	Day	Date		Time	Venue/Information
		January	February (Subject to Change)		
Allotment 21	Monday	TBN	TBN	10:30am	Barnstaple Coffee Shop
Amblers	Tuesday	13		11:00am	St John's Garden Centre, Barnstaple Rock Park
			10		
Art	Thursday	15	5; 19	9:30am	Methodist Church Hall, Rhododendron Avenue
Badminton	Tuesday	6; 13; 20; 27	3; 10; 24	9:30am	Tarka Leisure Centre
	Thursday	8; 15; 22; 29	5; 12; 26	2:00pm	
Book Club	Monday	26	23	10:30am	The Bike Shed, Barnstaple
Bookworms	Tuesday	27	24	10:00am	Barnstaple Library
Breakfast Club	Wednesday	7		9:15am	Tea By The Taw TBN
			4		
Canasta	Monday	19	16	2:00pm	Beechfield Centre, Fremington
Chatterbox	Monday	19	16	11:00am	Museum Tea Rooms
Coffee Mugs and Teapots	Wednesday	21	18	10:30am	Arti's Too! Cafe, 20 Cross Street
Creative Craft	Tuesday	6	No Meeting	10:00am	Fremington Methodist Church Hall, Old School Lane
Creative Writing	Thursday	8	12	10:30am	TBN
Cribbage	Friday	9; 23	TBN	3:00pm	The New Inn, Fremington
Current Affairs Discussion 1	Thursday	No Meeting	5	10:15am	Barnstaple Library
Current Affairs Discussion 2	Thursday	22	26	10:00am	Roundswell Community Centre
Dancersize	Tuesday	6	TBN	10:00am	Church Hall, Fremington
Day Trips By Coach	Thursday	15	TBN	TBN	TBN
Design & Make I - Ladies	Friday	30	27	9:30am	Group members know venue
Design & Make II - Gents				2:00pm	
Devon History	Thursday	No Meeting	5	2:30pm	Castle Centre, Barnstaple
Dining Experience	TBN	TBN	TBN	TBN	TBN
Holidays	SEE NOTICES IN FUTURE NEWSLETTERS				
Knitting	Friday	23	27	10:30am	The Museum, The Square, Barnstaple
Practical Gardening	Thursday	8		12:30pm	The Williams Arms, Braunton
			12	10:00am	Beechfield Centre, Fremington
Psychology (Reinstated)	Thursday	22	26	1:30pm	Small meeting room, Roundswell Community Hall
Rambling	Monday	12		10:30am	Muddlebridge layby, Fremington. GR SS 520324
			9	TBN	TBN
Reading Shakespeare Allowed	Wednesday	21	18	2:00pm	Fremington Methodist Church, Old School Lane
Roamers	Monday	26		10:30am	NT car park, Croyde, EX33 1PA
			23	TBN	TBN

CALENDAR - January/February 2026 (Continued)

Group	Day	Date		Time	Venue/Information
		January	February (Subject to Change)		
Rummikub	Friday	16	20	12:00nn	Yacht Club, Instow New Inn, Fremington
Short Mat Bowling	Tuesday	20	TBN	10:00am	Christ Church Hall, Braunton, EX33 2EA
Short Tennis	Wednesday	7; 14; 21; 28	4; 11; 25	11:00am	Tarka Leisure Centre
Skittles	Friday	16	20	7:00pm	The Agricultural Inn, Braunton
Strollers	Tuesday	6	3	10:00am	Queen Anne Cafe, The Strand
				TBN	TBN
Sunday Lunch	Sunday	11	8	TBN	TBN
Table Tennis	Thursday	8; 15; 22; 29	5; 12; 19; 26	9:30am	Tarka Centre, Barnstaple
Ten Pin Bowling	Wednesday	7; 14; 21; 28	4; 11; 25	1:15pm	Bowling Alley, Braunton Road, Barnstaple
Tuesday Luncheon	Tuesday	20	17	12:00nn	The Williams Arms, Wrafton
Wanderers	Tuesday	13	10	TBN	The Williams Arms
				TBN	TBN
Wine Appreciation	Friday	2	6	2:00pm	Room 3B, Barnstaple Library
Woodcarving	Wednesday	7; 14; 21; 28	4; 11; 18; 25	10:00am	Woodville, Sticklepath, Barnstaple

REMINDER: If you **move house** or your **email** or **telephone number changes** *please* let **Veronica McLaughlin**, the **Membership Secretary**, know so that we can continue to keep in contact. It will also ensure you continue to receive the Newsletter by email.

ILLNESSES and BEREAVEMENTS: **Annabelle Marriott** is responsible for keeping in touch with members who become ill or are taken into hospital. If you become aware of any such cases please contact her. **See Contacts List for her contact details.** Would Group Leaders please take responsibility for informing Annabelle of illnesses of their group members. Would the family, Group Leader or any other member please inform Annabelle of the details of names and dates of deaths. **A single line announcement will be included in the Newsletter unless the family do not want any acknowledgment. It is for the Group Leader to notify Annabelle who will notify the Newsletter Editor.**



YORKSHIRE ROAD SIGNS



When your teenager is late for school and you have to send in a note explaining why.....

To Whom It May Concern:

Cara is tardy this morning as a result of a condition known as teenage-ism. Adolescents nationwide are afflicted and there is no known cure. Symptoms are multitudinous, but this particular morning she suffered from an inability to remove herself from her bed, and also felt the need to talk back to her birth-giver. She seems to be recovering her senses after watching her mobile phone fly out of the car window.

Please call me if there is another flare up. Thank you.

VAMPIRE BAT

A vampire bat arrives back at the roost with his face, mouth and teeth covered in blood. All the other bats get excited and ask where he got it all from.

"Follow me" he says, and off they flew, over the hills, over the river, and into the dark forest. "See that tree over there?"

"Yes, yes, yes" they reply.

"Well.....I didn't."