



Learn, laugh, live

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The Challenge of Technology

Technology has invaded our lives. Whether paying for public car parking; digital banking; streaming services on television; using the internet to buy goods, pay for insurance or book a holiday or flight, we would now struggle without technology.

The computer was first invented in 1947 but, unlike younger generations to whom technology comes as second nature, most of us have probably been overwhelmed by the speed and the widespread development, of applications. Seemingly, in the blink of an eye we have gone from



to



How many of us now still have a landline?

Main frame computers used by business have evolved to desk top / laptops and various forms of tablets used by individuals. The first camera phone was invented in 2000, the iPhone in 2007 and the Apple Watch in 2015.

With more computing power in a watch than in Apollo 11, Moore's Law, which stated the number of transistors in a microchip will double every two years, has been proved prophetic. The latest innovation has led to the emergence of AI (Chat GPT and others). What will the future bring and can the u3a help to meet this challenge?

Help From The u3a

There are two possible ways the u3a can help:-

1. Locally we can set up an Interest Group, should there be sufficient demand or arrange a series of talks specifically aimed at helping people with queries they have with technology of all kinds. The Members Poll which has been circulated poll can test the level of interest there may be taking this idea forward.
2. Nationally there is help online. At <https://www.u3a.org.uk/members-area/subject-networks> there is 'Let's Talk Tech' has been running since 2021 and is facilitated by six Trust Volunteers with an interest in explaining the practical use of relevant Technology to u3a members. This is done by 90 minute Wednesday lunchtime Zoom Drop-in Sessions, with a different topic every time, on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month starting at 1pm.
3. You can also join on a Breakfast time Zoom to ask any questions about AI. I am there every Wednesday 8.30am. In both cases you will of course need to be able to access Zoom on whatever device you are using. This does not need to be a computer since you should be able to use a mobile phone.

The guide below, taken from the national website, may also give you an indication of the help available for those wishing for a better understanding of AI.

AI for Everyone: Your Guide to the U3A AI Community

Learn & Connect with the Community

Join Monthly "AI News" Events

Attend 90-minute Zoom updates on the latest developments in the world of AI.

Take the Popular "Silver AI Course"

A six-module course covering AI images, chat, ethics, and the rise of robots.

Ask Questions at Weekly "Breakfast Zoms"

An informal Q&A session every Wednesday morning for any AI-related questions.

Explore AI Topics & Tools

Discover AI's Impact Across Society

Events cover diverse topics from healthcare and education to government and geopolitics.

January 23rd
March 20th
June 26th

Get Hands-On with Free AI Tools

Learn to use popular tools like ChatGPT, Google Gemini, and Microsoft Copilot.

AI for Accessibility

Specific resources highlight how AI can transform lives for those with disabilities.

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Technology for Everyone Talk

On the theme of technology Cheadle Hulme u3a have a 'Technology for Everyone' (The Appliance of Science) Group. This is an 'Open Group' and a member of the North East Cheshire Network. Speakers are invited to talk on technical subjects that we all come across in our day-to-day activities.

Wilmslow members are invited to attend any of the meetings on the first Tuesday of the month (February to May and October to December inc.) at 2pm in the Heald Green Village Hall, Outwood Road, Heald Green, SK8 3JL. Admittance fee is £3 including Tea/Coffee and Cake/Biscuits.

The next meeting, on **3rd February 2026**, will be an illustrated talk on Interpreting Scans using AI. This is a real live application of AI in use now by doctors at The Christie Hospital.

To ensure members are covered by the u3a Insurance Scheme you will need your membership card or membership number with you. For further details, please contact Peter Cadman: email: p-mcadman@hotmail.co.uk or Roger Law: roger@lawfamily.com Or Tel: 0161 437 8235 or 0161 485 5744

Science Group Talk - 2.00pm 20th January 2026

Lake's Life in Time, Ecology, pollution, lake sediments analysis for water quality markers over time by Dr John Boyle & Dr Maddy Moyle, University of Liverpool.

A talk about water quality, specifically about a project John and Maddy have been working on involving the Tatton Meres. They both work at the University's Department of Geography and Planning, studying lakes and the landscapes in which they exist.

John trained as a geologist and geochemist and began by researching ancient marine sediments. Maddy trained as an archaeologist and continues to manage digs in eastern Anatolia.

The combination of their diverse experiences and skills has proven to be highly valuable in examining lakes formed by glaciation, which have also undergone significant natural climate changes before the arrival of the first farmers who altered the landscape. A central research interest for both is understanding how this extensive history has influenced how lakes respond to modern industrial and urban impacts.

Monthly Talks 2026

General - 2.30 pm Church Hall Wilmslow Reformed Church

28th January 2026: Factual Information of Kennedys Fateful Time in Dallas

25th February: Soloing the Matterhorn

25th March: AGM

22nd April: Post War Britain

Science Group Meetings - 2pm Wilmslow Library

January 20th: A Lake's Life in Time, Ecology, pollution, lake sediments analysis

February 17th: Electric Flight

March 17th: Air Traffic Control, Manchester Airport

April 21st: Biomarkers in cancer research

May 19th: Errors in clinical publications contributing to the genetic medicine odyssey

June 16th: Mummies, medicine and healing practices

July 21st: Psychedelic assisted therapy: Psychedelics and mental health: hype, hope and healing

For further information and details of the speakers please refer to the website:

www.wilmslowu3a.org.uk

Members Survey

Your committee has taken on the goal of growing the membership of this u3a and we are determined to do everything we can to achieve this in 2026 and beyond.

Attracting new members is essential for any group, otherwise things stagnate and fade. We see this as a particularly important for as, in recent years, we have struggled to fill the committee roles needed to keep going. Increasing our membership will hopefully redress this problem.

As one initiative, we will shortly send out a survey to the existing membership to better understand why they joined, which interest groups and activities they participate in and what it is that they are looking for as u3a members.

I would encourage all of you to complete the questionnaire. The more information we have, the better we will be able to understand how to improve and develop this u3a.

Can I end by asking you all to consider whether you know anyone – a relative, friend or neighbour – who might be a potential new member but who doesn't know much about what goes on in Wilmslow u3a. Mention to them what you enjoy about being a member and point them towards the web site <https://wilmslowu3a.org.uk/>.

Thank you. Peter Highfield, Chairman

Monthly Talk

28th January 2026

Factual Information of Kennedys Fateful Time in Dallas

Pete Mellor has studied 'The Assassination of President Kennedy' over three decades. He attended assassination conferences in Dallas in 2003 & 2013 and delivered a research lecture to 'JFK Lancer's November in Dallas' conference in 2000.

In the previous decade he has been a member of the British research group 'Dealey Plaza U.K.' giving regular presentations at their seminars & writing articles for their journal 'The Dealey Plaza Echo'. He has also contributed text to published books on the topic and in 2026 will have a book published on the Dallas Police personnel of 1963 which he has co-authored.

The presentation is fact based from eye witness statements, sworn testimonies, photographs and film from the 22nd of November 1963 in Fort Worth & Dallas, & will expose U.S. Government agencies guilty of facilitating events in Dealey Plaza.

Joining or Creating a New Interest Group

The following ideas have been forward for new groups:-

Art Appreciation

History

Chess

Backgammon

Mahjong

Singing for Pleasure

Italian for Beginners

Philosophy

There may be others if people are interested. For a Group to be successful it would not only need a core of active participants but also someone willing to lead them. **Please let us know if you are interested in either leading or participating in any of the above.**

In terms of existing Interest Groups those not already full or with a waiting list include:-

Online Book Club

Bridge

Bridge Improvers

Scrabble

Knitters & Stitchers

Tuesday Tea - second group required

Why not challenge yourself in the New Year and try a new activity.

New Members in January

This month the following new members have joined Wilmslow u3a:-

Dr Christine Smith, David Berry, Giuseppe Digno, David Fuller, John Gallagher, and Neil Weston.

Please give them a warm welcome should you meet them.

Interest Groups

New Meeting Venue

The Bulls Head , Handforth, is offering accommodation to any of our interest groups. This might be of particular interest to any new groups looking to meet up. The only condition is for members to order a beverage or snack from them. Contact the General Manager:

Tricia thurbanmyers.GM@greeneking.co.uk.

Bridge

On Friday 9th January 28 members of the Bridge club met together at Oakmere for



their post Christmas Bridge Drive. This included both beginners and better players. We played 8 hands, stopped for a tea of sandwiches, crisps and cakes, then played another 4 hands before handing out prizes. A good time was had by all.

There is plenty of room for anyone with a reasonable knowledge of Bridge to join in on a Friday afternoon. Those who are a bit more unsure can come on a Monday afternoon. This being the u3a we play Social Bridge and you do not need a partner.

Anyone interested should contact Caroline Mangnall on 01625 526010.

Your Help and Views Needed

I. Helping the Community

With over 425 members living in the area the Committee believe we, as an organisation, should be doing more to help the wider community. We would therefore like to sound out members as to whether they would be interested volunteering time to help local charities or initiatives the Wilmslow Council are promoting.

If there is sufficient interest in the principle we will explore specific ideas further and revert back with suggestions.

In addition, we have just been contacted by the **Independent Monitoring Board for Prisons** details of which are on the next page.

2. Wills, Power of Attorney, Deeds of Trust

We are exploring the idea of bringing in a speaker to talk on the above issues which affect us all to a greater or lesser extent. Many of you will have already taken action in this regard but, for those who haven't or perhaps those who would like an update, please let us know if this is something you would like to hear more about.

The objective would be for the speaker to provide detail on the subject without a hard sell of their services.

3. Committee Help

The specific areas where help would be appreciated are:-

- Maintenance of the new website
- Co-ordinator of the Interest Groups
- Monthly Refreshments - Anne Grace has spent many years of sterling service and has earned a well deserved rest
- Minute taker for the bi-monthly Committee Meetings

Become an Independent Monitor

Do you care about what goes on behind locked doors?
Do you believe everyone should be treated fairly and humanely?
If so, this could be the perfect opportunity for you.

The **Independent Monitoring Boards (IMB)** are recruiting volunteers across the UK. IMB members are ordinary people doing an extraordinary role: monitoring the treatment and conditions of people in custody and ensuring standards of fairness and decency.

As an IMB volunteer, you'll have unique access to prisons and immigration detention centres, speaking to those in custody and staff, observing daily life, and reporting on what you find. It's a role that offers insight into a world few people see – and the chance to make a real difference.

What's involved?

- Around 2–3 visits per month
- Talking to people in custody and staff
- Monitoring conditions and treatment
- Working as part of a supportive team

What we're looking for:

- Integrity, honesty, and objectivity
- Good communication skills
- A commitment to fairness, equality, and inclusion
- People who want to use their time to help others

You don't need previous experience – full training and mentoring are provided. We welcome volunteers from all walks of life. You just need to be over 18 and live within 30 miles of the prison or detention centre you'll monitor.

Although this is an unpaid role, we cover travel and subsistence expenses, childcare/carer costs, and, in some cases, contributions towards loss of earnings.

Recruitment is open now until 18 February. Find out more and apply at:

<https://imb.org.uk/prison-volunteer/prison-volunteer-uk/>

Message from CEO of the Third Age Trust

With Xmas and the New Year now behind us and with a relative lack of activities in December, this seems an opportune time to include the following message from Ian Cassidy, CEO of the Third Age Trust, for those that might not have opened the National Newsletter.

“As 2025 comes to an end, it's a fitting time to look back on my first full year as CEO of the Third Age Trust. I've been welcomed by so many of you to summer schools, anniversaries and monthly meetings. I've had lots of conversations about u3a - why it's important now and where it might be going in the future.

So really, I want to say a big thank you for your involvement with u3a, whether that's going to your local u3a interest group or just receiving this newsletter out of interest. It's great to see what u3as get up to all across the movement and to share that with you too. We've included member's 2025 highlights throughout this newsletter and, at the end, you can watch a video showcasing u3a stories from throughout the year. The stories and photos highlight the impact that u3a makes to individual members and communities.

I'm looking forward to 2026 with the new ventures and challenges it will bring. A question for you to end the year - what are you looking forward to doing with u3a in 2026?”

Further information on the opportunities and activities of u3a organisations around the UK can be found on the u3a website under:-

