

Dates for your Diary

2024 Events

- 17th April** Open Morning, From 11.00
The Harlington, Fleet.
- 28th August** Group Enrolment for 2024-25
Church on the Heath,
Elvetham, Fleet
- 11th October** Coffee Morning 10.30 - 12.00
at Church on The Heath

Monthly Meetings 2023 /24 - The Harlington, Fleet, talk 11.00 to 12.15, coffee from 10.00

- 15th May** The Bobby Scheme: Cyber
Crime,
Speaker Phil Atkinson
- 19th June** A Beginning, a Muddle and
an End : where do novelists
get their ideas?
Speaker Bobbie Derbyshire

Visits

- 16th May** Hever Castle WAITING LIST
- 21st August** Chevenage House, Beverston
Near Tetbury, Gloucester.

Dates for Group Leaders

- 5th July** Group Leaders Lunch.
12.00 to 14.00 at Victoria Hall
Hartley Wintney
- 20th Sept.** Group Leaders Meeting 10.30 -
12.00 at the Memorial Hall,
Sandy Lane

Your Beacon System

Just to clarify what it does

Beacon is our Fleet and District U3A Membership system. Every U3A member has membership details recorded in this system including: postal address, phone number(s) and email address - if provided. We also recommend that members provide an 'In Case of Emergency' (ICE) contact details so this information can be included in the Beacon Membership system. Alan Jones

Chat from the Chair

By the time this edition of the newsletter goes to press we will be close to our annual Open Morning, starting at 11:00 on April 17th. Taking the place of our ever-popular Monthly Meeting at The Harlington, it is an opportunity for those of us within Fleet & District U3A to share something of what the U3A means to us.

Over the years we have been quite successful in persuading 'friends and family' – our current audience - to drop in to review the range of our activities. Less successful, however, has been our aim to share this range with people in Fleet who have yet to join (or in many cases, hear of) Fleet U3A.

Dear reader, would you please try to persuade a 'newbie' to come and see what we have to offer? There is much in the media about the impact of the raising of the State Pension Age, not least on women. I would suggest that U3A recruitment has also been impacted by later retirement: to my mind there is something of a 'lost generation' of people who would in former years have retired earlier, looking for ways of focusing their energy and following their interests in retirement.

As the pension age has increased it seems to me that there has been a consequential reduction in the pool of potential members. I hope I'm wrong, but to me this notion does go some way to explain a lower membership take up.

'I hope I'm wrong':

sadly attentive – and better informed – readers of this 'chat', will have spotted to their dismay that I have frequently been wrong when I have referred to the upcoming anniversary which **Fleet U3A** – not the national body – will celebrate this autumn. Despite my assertions to the contrary, being founded in 1994 means we will celebrate 30 years this year, 2024.

To quote the late Ron Ziegler: *'This is the operative statement. The others are inoperative.'*

John Gawthorpe

To All Fleet Members

Will all members please read and action the important guidance given on page two. Beacon is important to our operational needs and we really do need your co-operation. Thank you. Your Committee

Getting ready for membership renewal – register now.

To save our members time and money filling in forms, cheques and postage we would like as many members as possible to renew online this year. Online renewal also saves our Membership Secretary Fiona a lot of work.

To renew online, when the time comes, you need to have already registered on our Beacon Membership system. If you have not already registered your email address and password, then please follow the **simple step by step instructions below:**

Type or cut and paste the following into your web browser (Chrome/Edge/Safari/Firefox/Internet Explorer) <http://tinyurl.com/FleetBeacon> and click 'Enter'

On the Membership system login page please **ignore the email and password fields** and click on the blue '**Sign in with membership details**'.

Enter the information requested:

- Membership Number** - 4 digits
- Forename** - (with leading Capital)
- Surname** - (with leading Capital)
- Postcode** - (must be all upper case with only one space between sections)
- E-mail** - (must be all lower case)

(If working on an iPad or iPhone they may automatically give you a capital first letter so correct that in the email field if necessary.

After entering the required 5 pieces of data above and pressing '**Confirm Identify**' you will be asked to create a password of between 10 and 72 characters long, including at least one upper case, one lower case and one numeric character.

Enter and confirm your password, then press '**Update Account**'.

You will very shortly receive a confirmation email at the email address you entered, this is to check that you have entered a valid email address. You **must respond within one hour** to this email by clicking on the link in that email. If the email doesn't arrive in a few minutes check your spam folder.

Clicking the link in the confirmation email will take you back to the sign-in screen where there will be a message to say that your email address has been verified.

Enter your email address & password and press '**Confirm Identity**'

You are now logged into the Membership system and can check and amend your membership details if you wish then logout.

You are now ready to complete the Membership Renewal online. Renewals are due from June 1st.

As noted above it is stressed that the confirmation email will expire after one hour, clicking on '**Forgotten Password**' can be used to request a new confirmation email, if you don't manage to respond within one hour. You can also click on '**Forgotten Password**' if ever you forget your password.

If you want to see a video showing someone doing all of the above and registering for the membership system, then please type or copy and paste <https://tinyurl.com/u3avideo> into your web browser and click 'Enter'

If you have any questions on the above please contact Alan Jones email: beacon@fleetu3a.org.uk

Fleet Jive Team

The Fleet U3A Jive team had a fantastic time Dancing to los Pacaminos at the Harlington in February. The group is now pushing on with its 2nd year and having fun jiving on Friday afternoons at the Church on the Heath. I love it when group members inform me of other places that they have jived at. e.g. on holiday or at a family do. Dancing is just so good for you. All the best and have fun.

Kevin



Creative Writing

A recent theme for a story was 'The Great Escape'. As always the group produced a diverse range of excellent stories and when we came to choose our favourite for the March newsletter Jill Low's story about the three billy goats was declared the winner. However, Wolfgang Hamann's World War II story, based on the actual experience of relatives, was a close runner-up and deserves to be read by a wider audience.

Margaret Garrod

The Great Escape by Wolfgang Hamann

It was late 1943. Life in Hamburg became increasingly dangerous, because of consistent bombing of the city. Mr and Mrs Meyer decided that a move to Dresden where her parents lived, would enable them to escape from the air raids. Mr Meyer had to stay behind. He had to run his business. Temporarily, he was excused from military service. Mrs Meyer with two children made off to a safer part of the country. Life there was relatively peaceful until late 1944. At this point in time, the town became overcrowded with refugees. The Russian army was approaching. Urban fighting became a distinct possibility. Now, life in Hamburg appeared almost preferable.

Mrs Meyer managed to arrange passage back to Hamburg on a tugboat down the river Elbe. The day of departure was February 12th 1945. On February 13th the boat moored in Magdeburg, a downstream city on the banks of the river. During the evening and night there was most unusual air traffic passing Magdeburg. The planes were part of the 800 bombers fleet heading for Dresden. Many of them did not reach target and dropped their load elsewhere, some of them on Magdeburg. It was fortunate that the tugboat had stopped near a flour mill where everybody went for shelter. Several bombs got stuck in the flour and did not explode. The rest of the journey continued without any incidents.

Returning to Hamburg, the situation was even more hazardous than before the move to Dresden. Hamburg became the most bombed city in Germany. The mood in the air raid shelter was a mixture of gloom and hostility towards the enemy. A renewed escape would clearly be a sensible course of action. Mrs Meyer contacted farming relatives in Flensburg, north of Hamburg, where the family found safety and shelter. The journey there took place in a goods train. Rolling stock for passenger trains was in short supply. The door of the car was left slightly open to allow some light in. On crossing the Kiel canal, there was the amazing spectacle of half the length of the canal to be seen from the railway bridge high up.

Everyday life in Flensburg was almost idyllic. The only reminder that the war was still on, were frequent overflights by British reconnaissance planes looking for any military activity. The point of particular interest was admiral Doenitz, Hitler's deputy, who was stationed at the nearby naval academy. For good measure, civilians were still taught how to run for cover.

The very nearly final episode of the great escape took place after the second return to Hamburg. The British army started to occupy Hamburg. They were looking for accommodation. Once they had decided on taking a house or a flat, every resident had to leave within 48 hours. In this context, two army officers visited the Meyer's flat which was over occupied by bombed-out Hamburg citizens as well as refugees. Everybody had to assemble in one room, and Mr Meyer, who had narrowly escaped becoming a Russian prisoner of war, showed them around the property. Fortunately, the officers decided against requisitioning the flat. However, they took with them an ornamental naval dagger, which they declared an offensive weapon. © Wolfgang Hamann

International Folk Dance Group

I am a member of the U3A [International Folk Dance Group](#) in Church Crookham. We are a happy lot of ladies (occasionally a guy) who meet at the Memorial Hall every other Friday. Betty Hall is our teacher who works very hard at preparing our dances for us at each session. Every now and then we have professional people come in to teach us some new dances, last week a lovely couple called Brenda and Philip came to join us. Our next meeting is on 19th April.

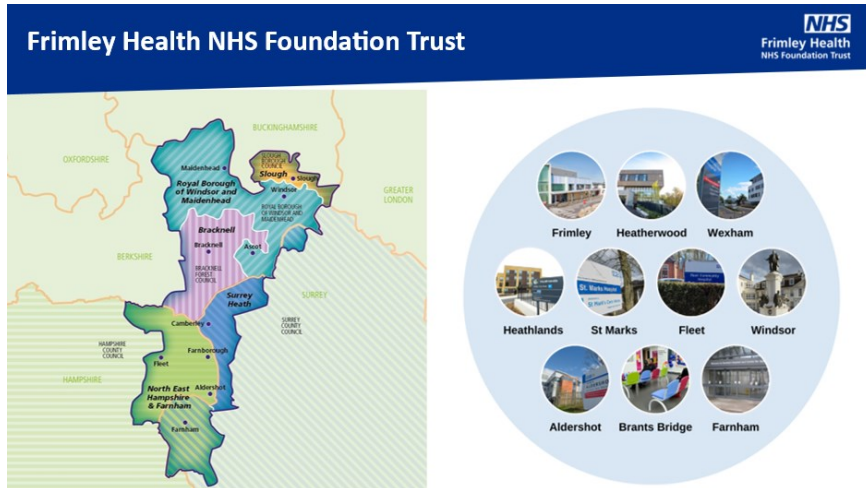
I hope you enjoyed hearing about our dance class. **Pam Selwood**



Health and Wellbeing

Redevelopment of Frimley Park Hospital

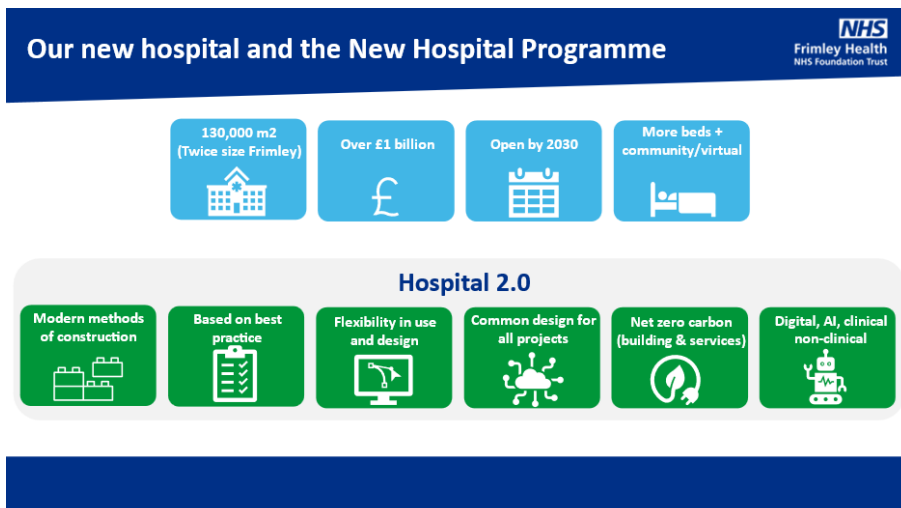
We welcomed Nigel Foster who is the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) from Frimley Park Health NHS trust who discussed FPH past, present and future and updated us on the new hospital development. The new hospital is being built due to the high incidence of RAAC plank affected areas which with the annual ongoing maintenance of the site is costing over £6 million and is unviable. This pertains to the older buildings, and these will be demolished but new build will be retained to complement the new hospital. The trust covers a wide area.



And a typical day sees these levels of activity.



The location of the new site has yet to be announced but suffice to say that it will be twice the size of the old hospital and will be within a radius of six miles of FPH and completed by 2030.



Stuart Williams

Making Cards A and B

We are two friendly, enthusiastic card making groups who share a love of creating with our demonstrator Christine's guidance. Christine provides us with a kit to make three or four cards each session from a chosen theme. She provides all the materials and equipment. She chooses a different technique for each session. One member videos a session so if you miss it or want to check how to make the cards again you can. We currently have vacancies especially for the afternoon session 1.30 - 4.00 p.m.



cards are placed on Pinterest and you can add yours too.

Liz Holness

Tai Chi

World Tai Chi and Qigong Day, an annual global event, takes place this year on Saturday 27 April. At 10 am local time, people in more than 80 countries and over 100 cities will be holding events such as exhibitions, free classes, seminars and mass Tai Chi displays, to help foster a greater understanding of these arts, as well as the health benefits that they bring. If you want to find out about the difference between the two disciplines and their benefits, we practise both in our classes, do come along and chat to us. We will be at the Open Morning on the 17th.

Ken Molyneux-Carter



Music Appreciation Group: 'Expect the unexpected?'

In this age of mindfulness, I suggest that there's not much that can beat sitting in comfort for an afternoon, listening to a range of music, selected and presented by an enthusiastic group member.

Such is the range of interests and enthusiasms within the group that you could be listening to an authoritative account of how introducing valves really did 'Change the winds' on one occasion, and hearing a programme – 'Warmer from the South' - which contained Mozart and Massenet as well as George Formby and Phil Everley a week or two later.

Although most of the music played could be classed as classical, it is by no means exclusively so.

For example, in a programme on 'anniversaries in 2024,' a recent presenter chose to include Sandy Wilson's 'I could be happy with you', in place of something by Puccini.

In response to 'some audience disappointment' his next selection more than made up for the omission, as we heard the end of Act 1 of Turandot.

In the term just starting, Alan Grace, doyen of broadcasters and presenters, will take us 'Back to Cobweb Corner', Malcolm Hitchcock will share his appreciation of David Munrow and I will introduce the work of Haydn, maybe entitled 'Haydn Seek'.

SS Philip and James Church has a very good audio setup, with the facility to show images – from YouTube to PowerPoint – and better still, ample seating.

MAG is not one of the groups which has to turn would be members away: we can accommodate pretty much anyone who has 2-4pm free on alternate Thursday afternoons. We look forward to you joining us.

John Gawthorpe

Visits - My Day Out with Farnham Coaches

I received an invite for Saturday 16th March to attend the 100th anniversary of 'Safeguard Coaches'. Fleet U3A have used Farnham Coaches when I started as group leader for Visits some fourteen years ago. What a day they arranged, from 12-4pm it was a family day and from 4 -7.00pm it was the formal event. Parking was free at the park and ride in Onslow village where Safeguard had its beginnings. Vintage buses and coaches transporting us to Guildford Cathedral for the celebration. The cathedral grounds were filled with the most nostalgic vintage buses and coaches from private collections from around the country.



The brass band played while you munched your burger and watched the children on the miniature steam train running around the grounds, the queue was enormous for this. Earlier on 'The Rock Choir' had entertained us.

Inside the cathedral there were stall holders selling bus /coach memorabilia. The children were well looked after with art activities including decorating a cardboard 'Safeguard' coach. There was a talk in the nave on the history of Safeguard coaches.

At 4.00 o'clock the area inside the cathedral had a rapid transformation as the formal celebrations were prepared, round tables with linen cloths and sit where you like was the order of the day, in preparation for the wonderful buffet later. After a welcome from Dave Guest, who hosted the event, and a congratulations from the Guildford Lord Mayor, various directors explained the beginnings of Safeguard coaches. Later a comedian entertained us, an amusing item arose when the group was divided into two, one singing the 'wheels on the bus go round and round' while the other half sang happy birthday at the same time. Happy birthday was also sung to Ali, a Farnham coach driver whose birthday it was. For those U3A members who came to the Drifters and Sonning Mill she was our driver.



The celebratory cake was cut by Jane Newman, Director who was based at the Fleet yard, she still lives on site but has now retired. I have referred to Safeguard coaches throughout, but regular U3A members on our visits will know them as Farnham coaches bought out in 1988 from Wrecclesham. Safeguard have a long history with Guildford and now runs buses around the town and surrounding area, including the Royal Surrey hospital and St. Luke s cancer centre.

After the 1st World War many ex -servicemen took advantage of surplus military vehicles running them as buses and coaches. In 1920 the main local, bus operator was Aldershot and District, later taken over by London Transport.

Arthur Newman an ex -officer in the royal flying corps, started a coal delivery and haulage business with his wife Annie keeping the books, and brothers driving and maintaining the vehicles. In 1924 he fitted a 28-seater char-a-banc body to an ancient, damaged coal lorry offering excursions as Safeguard, who ran these right up to 2009 when Farnham coaches took over the excursions. This was the beginning of the 100-year journey, still a family-owned business in the name of Newman.



All proceeds of the day went to the Fountain Centre in St Lukes cancer centre, at Guildford hospital, The donation was in memory of Brett Lambley who had been with the company 25 years and passed away from cancer, at the age of 49, in 2023.

The Fountain centre offers help and support for the patient and family members, I know, as I have used this marvellous service how supportive they are. I felt very privileged to be asked to be part of this celebration and represent Fleet U3A.



Carole Matthews

Jazz Appreciation Group (JAG)

Every so often the JAG invites a professional jazz musician to come along and talk to us about their life and career in jazz. Our most recent guest was tenor saxophonist Simon Spillett. Rather than talking about himself, on this visit he stood up to make a presentation about one of the great British jazzmen, Tubby Hayes. Simon had been a fan of Tubby from his earliest days as a jazz lover; Tubby had in fact



died just a year or so before Simon was born. He was so obsessed with Tubby that he ended up writing a wonderful biography of his idol, called 'The Long Shadow of the Little Giant'. It was clear how much Simon knows about and admires Tubby.

Our next jazz guest on June 20 will be the wonderful guitarist, Colin Oxley. Guests usually attract more members than JAG's usual sessions, which un-

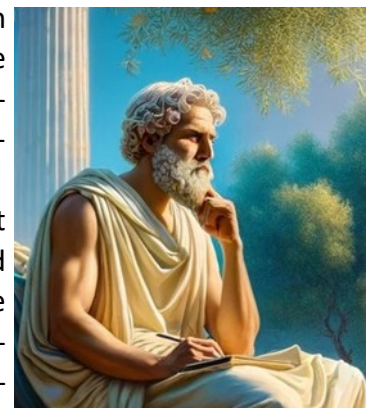
fortunately seem to be rather less popular than we have been used to. Please consider coming along to our Thursday morning sessions in the P&J church on King's Road.

Mike Rance

New Philosophy Group: A Space for Thoughtful Exploration

A second Philosophy Group was formed in September 2023 due to the high demand for the existing philosophy group, which was fully subscribed. Like the original group, this new group offers members a chance to engage with fundamental questions about life, society, and the individual's place within it. However, the location of our meetings is not as enticing as ancient Greece!

Philosophy, for us, means "seeking to understand fundamental truths about people, the world in which they live, and their relationships to the world and to each other." Our meetings are not debates but explorations. We encourage members to consider different viewpoints on a topic to gain a broader understanding, rather than convincing others of a particular perspective. This approach aligns with the Aristotle principle: "It is a mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it."



The group proved popular, immediately reaching its 12-member limit (we feel 12 is the maximum to ensure everyone can actively participate). Our members come from various backgrounds and reflect a wide range of political views, which enriches our discussions.

Our objective is to engage in philosophical discussions that interest all group members. Often, someone volunteers to research a philosopher or subject to prepare for our conversations. Topics we've tackled include the nature of "truth," free speech, assisted dying, human rights, and the purpose of money. Despite the potentially political nature of these discussions, we've established ground rules to keep our exchanges respectful and ensure we remain on good terms with each other!

Michael Butcher

Shorter Walking Group

Our March walk around Castle Bottom Nature Reserve was led by Ivan and Jackie Cresswell. Being close to Blackbushe Airport, there was plenty of aircraft and helicopter activity, but most of us had our eyes on the ground in order to avoid the puddles. It was a mild day and we were fortunate the rain held off until we were on our way home.

Margaret Garrod



Family History Workshop

We are a thriving, lively, friendly group of family historians. Some have been researching their ancestors for many years and have gained much experience using the many web sites, which are always improving, visiting record offices and archives, visiting towns, villages and even other countries in their quest to find out more about their ancestors' lives.

Some of the group members are only just beginning their research and we all help each other with any problems, queries and give lots of encouragement.

We meet the first Monday of the month and our meetings are very varied. Some months a member will give a PowerPoint presentation on a topic of their choice or if a particular theme has been chosen then a few members will give a short PowerPoint presentation or just a short talk with pictures to pass round. A very popular theme is 'A Black Sheep in the Family' or 'The History of a House' a member has lived in.

Some meetings are for members who have 'hit a brick wall', to ask questions and get help with their research.

Another popular theme for a meeting is to bring along a family 'heirloom' to show and talk about – the items are so varied, so many amazing stories.

We all have many interesting stories to tell about our ancestors, we work hard to learn about them but it is so satisfying when a query is solved!

Margaret Rose

Calligraphy

The group was very busy last year preparing an entry for the Christmas tree Festival at St Phillips and St James Church in December. Everyone did a great job and our entry named "Poetree" was decorated in Christmas poems. Our entry was voted fourth in our category, so well done to the group. Projects since have included "Trees and plants as National emblems" and we are currently working on "Favourite monuments" and "Poem".

Lynda Gibbons



Monthly Meeting

Nearly 200 members and guests arrived on March 20th to listen to David Hunt tell us about the National Trust. David gave us a wealth of information about the history and aims of the charity illustrated with numerous photographs all taken by David himself. David also gave us a few insights into NT properties that are within striking distance of Fleet. In the foyer, the local branch of the NT had set up an information stand. I did not know there was such a thing but I have subsequently joined. They organise trips to NT properties, talks in Hook and quite a lot of cream teas! If you are interested in joining the North Hants National Trust Centre please contact Chris Harris, Membership Secretary, email: chrish.nhnt@gmail.com or Tel: 07720805633.

David is a member of his local U3A so we were unable to pay him a speaker's fee but he was very pleased with the £62 donation to the NT from the audience.

The complimentary teas and coffees are proving very popular with 97 people turning up from 10 o'clock in the small hall to have a drink, a biscuit and a chat with friends. I was pleased to meet several new members and members attending a Monthly Meeting for the first time.

Next month on April 17th it will be Fleet U3A Open Morning so please come along to see what our hard-working GLs and their groups get up to and bring anyone you like with you; the more the merrier. Anyone is welcome to join Fleet U3A as long as they are available to meet in the day time and are able and willing to learn.

Our next Monthly Meeting will be on May 15th in the Harlington. Our speaker will be Phil Atkinson from The Bobby Scheme. Phil will be talking about Cyber Crime and how we can avoid being the victims of fraud.

Our wonderful MM team will set up the small hall for 10 o'clock for you to meet your friends and welcome new members over a drink and a biscuit and the talk will start at 11.00, in the main hall, as usual. Talks are scheduled to finish by 12.15 so please do allow enough time on your car parking ticket.

See you in April for Open Morning,

Paddy Powell

[New Backgammon Group](#)

We have a volunteer to run this new group but we now need to discover if there are any members who would like to play or learn to play this game.

If you would like to join the Group then please contact Michael Lysaght, Group Leader, on michael.lysaght@virginmedia.com

You too could become an Omar Sharif... Ed.

[Pilates 4A class.](#)

There was a good response to the last advert and I did fill the class, but today someone has withdrawn, so I am one short, unless any more drop out. Therefore, there is still at least one vacancy, so if anyone would like to join or go on the waiting list, please contact me.

pilates@fleetu3a.org.uk

The class is held every week on a Wednesday, between 10.15 and 11.15 am at the Guide Hall. The first session, of next term, is on 24th April.

Chris Porter

[Fleet U3A Website](#)

Keep up to date with all our activities,
News, Events, Visits Monthly
Meetings on our website
www.fleetu3a.org.uk

[Find us on Facebook](#)

Find us on Facebook - Fleet U3A has its own Facebook Members' Group, our Facebook page can be found by entering "Fleet U3A" in the search box at the top of any Facebook page. You can then request to join our private Members only group, you will be asked for your Name and Membership number.

[Group Leaders - Important](#)

In the event that you have to cancel a session will you please let Barbara, the Venues Secretary, know a.s.a.p. as she may then be able to avoid us paying for the venue on that occasion.

[Financial Affairs Group](#)

There are a few vacancies if you would like to join a friendly group, on a Monday morning on the First & Third of the month, at the United Reform Church in Kings Road.

Our average attendance is 30 members. We cover many varied topical financial items. Members are invited to share questions or an experience or they can just listen. It is not a high brow investment meeting but one to hopefully help you with everyday financial issues.

We have lively fun meetings with coffee/tea break and biscuits during our 2 hour meetings; which allows for chat or more information to be shared with each other.

You would be most welcome to join us. Please contact me Moira Jones 01252 622937 (full details of dates are in the U3A Programme).

Moira Jones

[COMMITTEE](#) [EMAILS](#)



Chair	John Gawthorpe	chairman@fleetu3a.org.uk
Secretary & Beacon	Alan Jones	secretary@fleetu3a.org.uk
Treasurer	Neil Morley	treasurer@fleetu3a.org.uk
Membership Sec & Programme	Fiona Godfrey	memsec@fleetu3a.org.uk programme@fleetu3a.org.uk
Group Leaders' Liaison Sec	Mike K Brown	groups@fleetu3a.org.uk
Events Sec	Pam Openshaw	events@fleetu3a.org.uk
Webmaster	Stephen Grosvenor	webmaster@fleetu3a.org.uk
Monthly Meetings Sec & Vice Chair	Paddy Powell	meetings@fleetu3a.org.uk
Newsletter	Sandy Redman	news@fleetu3a.org.uk
Enquiries	Jenny Teagle	enquiries@fleetu3a.org.uk
Minutes Sec	Barbara Jones	minsec@fleetu3a.org.uk
Venues Sec	Barbara Jones	venues@fleetu3a.org.uk
Outreach Sec	Jenny Teagle	outreach@fleetu3a.org.uk
Publicity Sec	Adrian Van Klaveren	publicity@fleetu3a.org.uk

**PLEASE AVOID TELEPHONING MEMBERS
BEFORE 9 a.m. OR AFTER 5 p.m.**