u3a Helensburgh & District

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

November 2026

WEBSITE ADDRESS - https://helensburgh.u3asite.uk/

Find us on Facebook - click the logo

The monthly newsletters and u3a Matters online magazines can be accessed via the LINKS page on our website

Our groups are a fantastic way of meeting people with similar interests and to share your skills and knowledge with others. Please look at our posters on the notice boards at meetings and visit the group pages here .

We have 308 active members and growing

Current active groups include

Arts and Crafts

Board Games
Book Groups 1,2 (& 3 planned)
Current Affairs 1,2 & 3
Dining Out
E-Biking
French Conversation
Genealogy
Gentle Cycling
German Conversation
In Our Time
Local History
Mahjong
Nordic Walking
Opera Appreciation
Philosophy
Photography
Poetry Appreciation
Quiz Group
Science Group talks
Social Bridge
Spanish Conversation
Swimming
Theatre Group
U3A Going Out! – Ballet, Opera, Musicals & Cinema.
Wine Appreciation

For more information and to contact the group leads, please use the website by clicking HERE

We are looking for volunteers to join the committee. If you feel that you could help, please contact Gordon Mackie on gmdiving@gmail.com

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Monthly General Meetings

Our Monthly General Meetings are held in Helensburgh Parish Halls at 2pm. (Main Hall)

Coffee & tea are available after the talk and entry is free to members. If you can bring your own reusable cup or mug, it will reduce waste.

Next Monthly Meeting

Nov 2 - Crispin Best - Medicine and surgery in Nelson's navy

"I was a Consultant in Paediatric anaesthesia and Intensive Care at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, until retiring in 2017. Since then, I have been involved with charity work for the Riding for the Disabled Association and Oxfam.

My interest in naval medicine in the 18th Century comes from both my background and my reading. I come from an English West Country family with many naval connections, some of them respectable, and was brought up on the works of people like C S Forrester, Frederick Marryat and latterly Patrick O'Brian. In 1996 I sailed across the Atlantic in HM Bark Endeavour, a replica of the first ship that Captain James Cook took around the world. I then became a watch leader and medical officer for the Sail Training Association, now the Tall Ships Youth Trust, and crewed for many voyages on their two brigs teaching other people how to sail and work on them. I also had my own boat on the Clyde for 10 years."

Future Monthly Meetings

Dec 7 - Christmas Lunch. An invite with price and menu has been sent out by email

Jan 4 2027 - Dougie Wylie - " The refurbishment of the Parish Church Tower and Clock "

Our monthly events continue to be extremely well attended and very popular. If you have a topic that you would like to present at the general or science group events, please get in touch.

Science Group Talks

Next Monthly Talk

U3a Science talk Friday 13th November at 11.00am in Helensburgh Church Halls. (Small Hall)
The meeting is open to all u3a members. Coffee available from 10.40am. There is a charge of £2 towards room hire.

NOTE - SMALL HALL HAS CAPACITY MAX of 70.
ARRIVE EARLY TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT

Nov 13th Title: "The heat beneath our feet" by Dr Iain Neill

Summary:
"Should we extract natural geothermal heat from several kilometres underground? Geothermal sources could reliably supply baseload energy for heating and hot water systems via district networks, easing pressure on intermittent green energy supply and our limited energy storage capacity across the UK. Yet, despite growing popularity overseas, our exploration and development of geothermal energy is surprisingly limited. The nearest functioning deep geothermal system to Helensburgh is in Southampton! We will first discuss how my colleagues and I are ramping up a new generation of geothermal exploration across Scotland's diverse geological settings. Then we'll look at how geothermal systems might be envisaged in different parts of Scotland and how they could tackle problems associated with our gradual transition away from hydrocarbon-based heating. We'll conclude on our own doorstep: what does the geology beneath Helensburgh consist of, and would it be worth exploring our own deep geothermal energy potential?"

Biography:
"Iain Neill is a geologist originally from Dingwall in Easter Ross and he currently lectures at the University of Glasgow. He has lived in Helensburgh since 2015. Despite also working on the geology of locations as diverse as the Caribbean islands and the Caucasus mountains, he is an expert on Scottish geology and particularly the rocks of the Highlands. He is keen to see us explore and use the many geological resources around us to support common good. Alongside colleagues and students in Glasgow he promotes the deep geothermal energy potential of Scotland in partnership with a range of community organisations."

Dec 4th Title: Responsible Artificial Intelligence – does it exist? By Prof Simone Stumpf

Summary: In this talk Prof Stumpf will cover the benefits and harms of AI applications and current efforts to make them more "responsible". She will talk about how you can use them more responsibly and get involved in shaping a better future.

Speaker: Simone Stumpf is Professor of Responsible and Interactive AI at the University of Glasgow. She joined the University of Glasgow in 2021 and her research focuses on user interactions with AI systems. Her work has contributed to Explainable AI (XAI) and Responsible AI (RAI). The prime aim of her work is to empower everyone to use AI systems effectively. She previously gave an excellent talk on AI two years ago and a lot has changed since then!

2027 Dates

Jan 15th

Title: "Sustainable Electronics" by Prof Jeff Kettle

Summary: Professor Kettle's group focuses on improving the sustainability of electronics with a strong emphasis on enabling a circular economy. Therefore this talk will be about how the full life cycle needs to be considered for electronic and ICT (Information and Communications Technology) and how we develop approaches to reduce environmental impact through design for reliability, recyclability and reuse. The talk will cover supply chain resilience and challenges that impact the electronics industry. Finally, the talk will be about some new ideas that includes the development of biodegradable and sustainable materials for substrates, interconnects and integrated circuits, as well as greener strategies for the recovery of critical raw materials from end-of-life devices.

Speaker: Professor Jeff Kettle is Professor of Electronic & Nanoscale Engineering at the University of Glasgow. His first degree at Cardiff University was in Electronic Engineering and his PhD from the University of Wales, Swansea. He joined the James Watt School of Engineering at Glasgow University in 2021, where his research focuses on sustainable and circular electronics, printed electronics, material recovery and photovoltaics. Previously, he worked at several microelectronic companies and Bangor University in North Wales.

Feb 12th Title: Control of human obesity by Prof Naveed Sattar

Mar 12th Title: Ageing in birds by Prof Pat Monaghan

Apr 16th Title: Sherlock Holmes and tropical diseases by Prof Mike Barrett

May 14th Title: Chronic Pain Experience and Impact by Prof Barbara Nicholl

Jun 18th Title: Gut Biome by Prof Simon Milling

Jul 16th Title: Mosquitoes in Scotland by Dr Georgia Kirby

As always, dates and reminders will be sent out nearer the dates.

New u3a Talks Programme on Social Science and Public Policy Topics

Following the success of our u3a Science talks programme (70 talks delivered to date with strong attendance numbers) we decided that in addition to maintaining the Science Talks programme we would introduce a new programme of talks on Social Science and Public Policy topics.

The Social Science and Public Policy talks programme began in January and be held monthly until June as an experiment to judge interest from our members. The talks will be held at 11am in the **Small Hall** on the following dates. There will be a charge of £2 to cover expenses.

NOTE - SMALL HALL HAS CAPACITY MAX of 70.
ARRIVE EARLY TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT

NEXT MEETING

27th November (rescheduled speaker from October due to ill health)

The 2026 US Midterm Elections: Checks, Balances, or Backsliding? By Prof Chris Calman

Summary: Just weeks after Americans return to the polls, this lecture asks what the 2026 midterm election results mean for a Congress that has struggled to function as a co-equal branch of government. It examines whether the new balance of power changes how the legislature checks — or defers to — the executive, and what the campaign and count reveal about the health of American democracy. Above all, were the US midterm elections free and fair, and do they show signs of democratic backsliding?

Speaker: Prof Christopher Carman holds the Stevenson Chair of Citizenship at the University of Glasgow and has been part of the Scottish Election Study team since 2011. He is the author of several books and articles spanning Scottish and US politics, most recently *Dealmakers* (OUP, 2025), which explores public support for political compromise in the United States.

2027 Dates

Jan 22nd : Prof. Jim Conroy - Scottish Education "Why does Scottish education struggle so much'

Feb 19th : Dr. Louise Lawson – Pensions and pensioners "Ageing Well? Inequality and the New Realities of Later Life "

Mar 19th : Prof. Des McNulty - "Scottish Universities- the case for change?"

Apr 23rd : Dr. Paul Reilly - "Impact of Social media of parades, protests and civil unrest"

May 21st : Dr. Alan Brown - "The legal and ethical issues surrounding surrogacy, assisted reproduction, and non-traditional families"

June 25th - Dr Ewan Gibbs - How Britain's energy policy has evolved through responding to crises since 1945"

July & August - no meetings

The slides from Alex Trew's talk on Adam Smith are in the LINKS page on the website
Alex Trew is editor of The Wealth of Nations at 250, a volume of contributions from some of the world's leading economists and economic historians. floow the link for more information. £130.00 hardback and £44 paperback (To be published later this year) Paperback available on Amazon preorder for £41.99

https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/wealth-of-nations-at-250/CD2AD664B28766AC1B448158AF059E25

In The Wealth of Nations, Adam Smith set out a system for understanding why some societies prosper and others do not, and in the process founded the discipline of economics. In the 250 years since its publication, the world has transformed beyond recognition. Smith has also been reduced in the collective imagination to little more than a byword for the free market. The Wealth of Nations at 250 brings together today's most influential economists and economic historians to ask where Smith's system still holds, and where it needs new machinery. The task of rethinking what causes prosperity demands a return to the breadth of Smith's original vision, incorporating the cultural, institutional, and political foundations as well as the economic. Written in the spirit of Smith's own clarity, the book speaks to anyone interested in how and why nations prosper. This title is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

Coffee and a Chat

Next U3A Coffee and a Chat

Coffee and a Chat' events are held on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month in Helensburgh Civic Centre café, 38 East Clyde Street, Helensburgh G84 7PG at 10.30am.

Sometimes a U3A sign will be displayed on a table, but if not, the café staff will usually be able to tell you which is the U3A group.

Go to the counter and order your tea or coffee (which will be brought to your table), then go and join the U3A group, which usually numbers between 6 and 12 (it's not always the same members who attend the event and no booking is required, so numbers and attendees vary).

New members are particularly welcome.

The café is a relatively quiet environment, which makes it easier to converse and hear everyone at the table.

The Coffee and a Chat group details can be found on the website Groups page

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Discover Top Stage & Screen Outings with 'Going Out!'

Have you been wanting to catch a brilliant opera performance, a live ballet, the latest musical, or a great film, but haven't got around to booking? Or perhaps you'd just prefer to go along with good company?

Our 'Going Out!' group has now been running for a full year, enjoying fantastic trips to top-quality shows across both Glasgow and Helensburgh.

We keep things completely informal and easygoing. Here is how it works:

No pressure - We run a simple WhatsApp group where we regularly post upcoming events.
You choose - Pick and choose only the outings that appeal to you - there is never any obligation to sign up for something you'd rather pass on.
Socialise - Depending on the showtime, we often combine our outings with a casual bite to eat, a light supper, or a quick drink beforehand or after.

With the exciting reopening of The Tower Cinema, we are looking forward to planning even more convenient local cinema trips right here on our doorstep, alongside our regular excursions into Glasgow. Our area has an extraordinarily rich cultural scene - joining us is a stress-free way to make the absolute most of it.

Get Involved

Whether you're a lifelong arts lover or just fancy trying something new with a friendly group, we'd love to welcome you.

See **the PDF** to get a flavour of the events on offer – something for all

tastes.

For The Tower listings - click HERE

To join or find out more: Email Liz Wilson at liz.wilson2@icloud.com

For more info, visit our Group page on the website HERE

Look forward to seeing you. Liz, Francine & Chris

Book Group 3

For potential new book group members .

We currently have two well subscribed book groups but have have had waiting list for a possible third group for quite sometime .
We are looking for someone who could get people together to plan where and when regular group meetings could take place.
If you are interested in perhaps leading this or just want to be in a new group , please email
Glenda.Caldwell@gmail.com
Thank you

Current Affairs Group 2

We have vacancies for up to 4 members interested in joining our Group.
Friendly welcome to newcomers.
Thank you
Moira Murning

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u3a Matters Magazine Paper Copy Opt Out

We are aware that some people do not wish to receive the monthly u3a magazine by post and, in the interest of saving waste and postage, would like to opt out. A large number of members have already opted out, following our email requesting preference.

Magazines will be made available at the monthly meetings to borrow or keep and a link to the online magazine will be put on the website LINKS page every month. The February, Spring , Summer , Autumn, Winter 2024 and Feb, Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter 2025 and February, Spring, Summer and Autumn 2026 editions are already there.

I will add a link to the next edition when it is available online.

You can always opt back in again should you so wish.

If you would like to stop receiving the magazine by post, please let us know by clicking HERE.

Note - they do take quite a while to stop sending the paper copies once I have unsubscribed you but we have asked them to look into this.

Kind regards

The Helensburgh and District u3a committee

Social Media

The Helensburgh and District U3A Facebook group has a growing membership currently 83 members and growing. The group can be a useful source for the subjects, dates and times of monthly meetings, Science Group meetings and other information about U3A. It can be used to quickly contact group members and group leaders about current events and meetings. It is also updated regularly with news and interesting information. Please join the group, it is private and restricted to Helensburgh & District U3A members. The more people that join and contribute, the more information we can share.

The Helensburgh and District U3A Members Facebook page can be found using this link

Please note that our website has a MEMBERS page. If you have anything that you would like to share with the members, send me it by email and I can add it to the website and also to the Facebook page.
The page can be found HERE .

SCAM ALERTS

The latest Trading Standards Scam news bulletins can be found
HERE , HERE , HERE & HERE

Beware of ChatGPT shopping scam - see HERE

Beware of addresses using cyrillic characters to fool you - see the article HERE

Be vigilant - Stay Safe

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u3a Mailing

National u3a News

Watch the u3a news video HERE

u3a friends

The latest (October 2026) u3a friends newsletter can be found HERE

To subscribe to the latest U3A friends newsletters - Click HERE

The u3a Scotland newsletters can be found on our website LINKS page. The Autumn 2025 edition is already there.

The online u3a magazine can be found on our website LINKS page.

u3a Scotland

find out more about u3a Scotland online groups HERE

U3a Scotland Autumn Zoom meeting

Dear All
We have now finalised the programme for our Autumn Event which takes place on Zoom, next **Tuesday 3rd November**.
The subject of the seminar is "Scotland's Heritage and Traditions" and we have three great speakers lined up as well as 2 of our own u3a members to share their experiences of volunteering at two of Scotland's great historic buildings
The programme is available through this link to our website links HERE

Kind regards
Gail Donaldson
Chair - u3a in Scotland

Local Events

Helensburgh Bowling Club

Helensburgh Bowling Club have been holding coffee mornings (£3 for tea, coffee and scones) with craft stalls, game and toy stalls, plants, home baking stalls and much, much more to raise funds for the maintenance of the clubhouse. These are well attended, great fun and open to all.The coffee mornings are held 10:00-12:00 at the bowling club on the corner of East Abercromby St & Sinclair St on the **last Friday of the month.**

The Tower Cinema

Please support the Tower Cinema, a fantastic resource saved by volunteers and now in community ownership

Keep an eye on their films and events on their website https://tickets.thevenue.scot/home

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The Board and co-opted committee members agreed at the 2026 AGM are as follows :-

Chair - Gordon Mackie
Vice Chair - **Post Vacant - would you like to join?**
Treasurer - Anne Bernard
Secretary - Ed McGrachan
Minute Secretary - Peter Holmes
Membership Secretary - Archie Westwood
IT Coordinator - Gordon Mackie
Groups Coordinator - Glenda Caldwell
Programmes Coordinator - Geoffrey Holliman
Advertising and Publicity - Norman McNally
Committee Member - Wendy Jones
Committee Member - David Clark
Committee Member - David Cunningham
Committee Member - Debbie Gourlay

Honorary President - Malcolm Brown
All the above can be contacted via the website contacts page HERE

Our mailing address is:
Helensburgh and District U3A
Lower Flat
1 Easterhill Road
Helensburgh, G84 9JE
United Kingdom

Add us to your address book

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.

INTUIT mailchimp