



Chat from the Chair



Welcome back and a Happy 2026 New Year to you all. I hope you all had a good Christmas and New Year.

Those of you who were able to attend the December monthly meeting in the Ocean will have fond memories of the swinging Sixties recalled through the stories of Sheila Parker. Impressive that we all know the lyrics still!

We also mentioned there that we had just heard at short notice that the Ocean is planning to make building changes to the top floor of the building during the early part of 2026. This means that the Ocean Suite will be unavailable to us for at least our January and February meetings and probably longer if the building works exceed their schedule.

It turns out that there are few venues in Exmouth that can accommodate our usual 150-200 person monthly meetings and none that can find space at short notice for our regular second Thursday of each month. We have therefore had to make some compromises. Our January monthly meeting will have to be on Thursday 22nd January in the Pavilion – they have no other Thursday dates available. Furthermore, as they have no space on Thursday mornings at all in February and March, we will have to switch to Wednesday morning meetings for those two months.

We don't yet know what we will be able to book for the April meeting onwards yet as we need to wait and see how fast the buildings works at the Ocean progress but we hope to be able to be back there for our regular Thursday morning slots for the rest of the year.

Looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible then to kick off 2026 with our first monthly meeting of the year in a different but familiar venue – **The Pavilion** is booked for us on **January 22nd** (10am for a 10.30 start).

Regards – Mike Turff, Chairman

Any questions or ideas – please contact me at chairman@exmouthu3a.org.uk

Check the website – <https://exmouth.u3asite.uk/> – for up-to-date info and news. If you login then you will find a lot more content available only for members.

Monthly meetings

CHANGES TO VENUE AND DATES

Owing to the fact that Ocean are having refurbishments we have had to alter our next three meetings venue and dates. They will all be held at the Pavilion.

The start time will remain 10.00am for 10.30am.

We apologise for any inconvenience but hope you will be able to join us as usual.

Date	Presenter	Title	Description
<u>Thursday 22nd January 2026</u>	Peter Boston	Guide Dogs	Peter will be talking about guide dogs he has loved and who have helped him over the years.
<u>Wednesday 18th February 2026</u>	To be Confirmed		Latest updates can be found at: https://exmouth.u3asite.uk/latest-news/
<u>Wednesday 25th March 2026</u>	To be Confirmed		Latest updates can be found at: https://exmouth.u3asite.uk/latest-news/

Local Hub Groups January 2026

Listed below are the local hub groups where you can go for a coffee and chat and meet other local u3a members. Please contact the local organiser for more information or if you wish to attend. If you have never been to a hub, why not give them a go? It may provide a warm welcome break from the Winter.

If you would like to start a new hub group or have any questions re hubs please contact: Steve Gibbs (Groups Coordinator) groups@exmouthu3a.org.uk

Brixington Hub

Meet at The Farmhouse on the 3rd Monday of the month at 2pm. Contact Julie Jefferies
Please contact Julie before you attend

Littlemead Local Tuesday hub (Rivermead Area/Mount Pleasant)

They normally meet on alternate Tuesdays at 10am at Greenfingers garden centre café.
Please contact Glen if you would like to go.

Littlemead Local Wednesday (Rivermead area)

They normally meet on alternate Wednesdays 10am at Greenfingers garden centre cafe,
Please contact Nicola Antoni

Withycombe area Hub

They normally meet on alternate Tuesdays at 2pm at the LED Tennis Club café.
Please contact Rowena Ford

Littleham area Hub

Meetings are always at 10.30 am on various days. Please contact Susan Hall

Salterton Hub

We meet the second Tuesday of every month at The Devoncourt Hotel from 3.30pm to 5pm. Everyone is very welcome to join our friendly monthly gathering. Please contact me if you are interested in joining our group.

The first meetings in 2026 are: Tuesday 13 January, Tuesday 10 February, Tuesday 10 March
Please contact Pippa Gibbs

Woodbury, Woodbury Salterton and East Budleigh hub

Normally meet every 3rd Wednesday in the month at 10.30am at a members home.
Please contact Lin Milsom-Ashby

Budleigh Salterton hub

Normally meet on the second Friday morning of every month at the East Devon Golf club. Please contact Sue Glover

[New members meetings – Pippa Gibbs](#)

There is a monthly meeting for recent new members to meet me to find out more about how the groups and hubs works, as well as to meet other new members. Those who have joined in the last two months will receive an email from me with more information.

The venue is in the bar of The Imperial Hotel with a 10am start.

The next meeting dates are

(No January meeting)

Wednesday 11 February

Monday 9 March

Monday 13 April

Pippa Gibbs, New Members Co-ordinator. Newmembers@exmouthu3a.org.uk

Social Committee



The trip to **Cribbs Causeway** was well-received and the mall was not very busy. The journeys were straightforward and it was a good trip to do a few weeks before Christmas. The highlight of the year was the **Christmas Lunch**. This was our third visit to The Belmont which did not disappoint. As always, the food, service and ambiance were excellent. Here are a couple of photos taken on the day.



Thanks to all those members who have returned their questionnaires regarding trips for 2026. The results will be collated in due course and the trips for the second half of the year will be decided accordingly.

The next trip will be to **Clarks Village, Street and the Fleet Air Arm Museum** (two drop-off points) on **March 18th**. The cost is **£20** for Clarks Village and **£38** for the Fleet Air Arm Museum which includes the entrance fee.

The coach will leave Exmouth at 9:30am, drop off at Clarks Village first and then go onto the Fleet Air Arm Museum. Expected arrival at Street is 11am, 11.30am for the museum. Departure from the museum is at 3:30pm and Street at 4pm, returning to Exmouth about 6pm.

Clarks Village boasts over 90 designer and high street brands at discounted prices. There are several eateries and refreshments places or, if it's a good day, bring your own lunch and enjoy one of the green spaces around the site.

Health & Safety Considerations: All of the shops are at ground level with wide pathways around the village. There is a free Shopmobility service providing free scooters and wheelchairs which can be pre-booked at least 24 hours in advance. There is plenty of walking around the site and as it is not undercover you may need to be equipped with a waterproof and umbrella.

Further information can be found at: www.clarksvillage.co.uk

Fleet Air Arm Museum, Yeovilton, Ilchester – discover the high-flying work of the Fleet Air Arm protecting the Royal Navy on land, at sea and in the air. It has been pioneering naval aviation since 1909. From the early days of fixed wing aircraft to the 'floating cities' that are aircraft carriers – learn what makes the Fleet Air Arm a unique force to be reckoned with. There is a café serving a variety of sandwiches, hot pasties and sausage rolls, delicious cakes and other tasty treats alongside a wide range of hot and cold drinks.

Health & Safety Considerations: the site is a working Naval Air Station and certain areas may present difficulties to visitors who use wheelchairs, with restricted mobility or who are visually impaired. Access to the Museum is either via a large staircase (situated around 40 metres from the car park) or via a pedestrian gate on the ground floor. The Museum is spread out over four large exhibition halls, with a mixture of lifts and stair access linking the ground and first floor areas. It is recommended that you wear sturdy shoes and dress for the outdoors i.e. layers and warm coats.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.nmrn.org.uk/visit-us/fleet-air-arm-museum>

Tickets are available now or at the Monthly Meeting on January 22nd unless sold out beforehand.

Payment Details for the Trip:

1. Send a cheque to Mrs E. Hibell, made out to Exmouth & District u3a. Please send a stamped addressed envelope and supply emergency contact details with your cheque if not done so beforehand. You will then be sent a ticket.
2. Pay via internet banking to:
Name: Exmouth & District u3a

Please email Elaine Hibell, to confirm payment and supply an emergency contact as well. You will then be sent a ticket.

3. Buy your tickets at the Monthly Meeting on **January 22nd** at The Pavilion. Payments can be made by cash, cheque or credit/debit card. If paying by cash it is a great help if you are able to bring the correct money.

Exmouth & District u3a Social Committee
Barbara, Elaine, Janet, June, Lyn & Pam

Monthly meeting report

November 13th 2025

Exmouth's Tiny Forests

A really excellent talk was given by three members of the Exmouth Tiny Forest Group. Here is some background to the project.

The Tiny Forest technique was introduced and developed by Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki and is now being used all over the world. The Exmouth Tiny Forest Group formed in 2022 and created the first Tiny Forest in Exmouth which was planted on St George's Field, Carter Avenue in February 2024. The second Tiny Forest followed a year later, in January 2025 at Brixington Park.

Every Tiny Forest is made up of a dense mix of 600 native trees and shrubs which are planted in a 240sq metre plot. The tree whips are planted 60cm apart which is very close compared to traditional tree planting of 2 metres apart. The resulting fast growth speeds up the process of creating habitat, increasing biodiversity and mitigating climate change. It is of particular value in industrial areas on small pockets of land with no other use, and provides valuable habitat and benefits in places where green spaces are limited.

The Exmouth Tiny Forests are individually planned for the chosen site. The area was marked out and mulched with well rotted compost from the Exmouth Green Bin recycling scheme. Volunteers from the community helped with barrowing the mulch and along with school children from nearby schools did all the planting. A layer of bark chippings are added to cover the surface. The area is then fenced with chestnut palings with a gate for access. At both forests an area of green space is included in the plan to accommodate seating areas for all who use the forest, be it for educational purposes, maintenance or wellbeing.

The ongoing care of the Tiny Forests is undertaken by groups of people known as Tree Keepers, who are local to the sites and are committed to looking after the little trees and nurturing them. Every visit new insects or wonders of nature are observed and if a photographic record is kept, this builds up into proof of the incredible variety of life in our Tiny Forests even though they are still only a few months old.

At St. George's Field we have photographed woolly beech aphid; many different varieties of ladybirds; giant willow aphids; caterpillars of the knot grass moth, the rusty tussock moth, the oak eggar moth and the tiger moth; green stilt bug; sawfly caterpillars and small predatory wasps; spiders and spiderlings; varieties of shield bugs; dock bugs; bumble bees, solitary bees and many other pollinators; wasps; ants; black flies; hover flies; grasshoppers; crane flies; rove beetle; earwigs; wood lice; varieties of slugs; crab spider and a vast number of alder leaf beetles to name but a few! There are insects that are so small they may never be seen such as the wasps in the oak marble galls and ramshorn galls on the oak trees, smooth pea galls and a robins pincushion gall on the wild roses, and hairy pea galls on the grey willow.

Twenty two different varieties of trees and shrubs were planted in the Tiny Forest at St. George's Field. In the summer months their different leaves support insects which thrive on specific food plants. In the autumn they produce rose hips, hazel nuts and crab apples, and berries from the elder, rowan, guelder rose, and spindle. On the ground are different varieties of fungi.

The Forest not only produces a real feast for the wildlife, it is also beneficial to all who visit it. A place of interest, wonder, peace and well being.

How it is now.....



and

How it started.....



Some of the amazing wildlife diversity found in the tiny Forest.



Groups update – January 2026

Ball room dancing – Potential New Group

I have had a number of u3a members enquire about Exmouth u3a offering “Ballroom dancing” as an activity. I have therefore had discussions with a local group that offers instruction and if we can generate enough support, we will have a ballroom dancing offer. The plan is to start with an “introduction to ballroom dancing group” (a beginner’s course). Hopefully, we can offer further classes as we move through the termly cycles and as confidence and skills develop.

The classes will be for up to 15 pairs, if you need a partner to dance with, we will try to match you in the enrolment section.

The classes will be for 1 hour on a Wednesday evening from 7.30pm at the Public Hall in Budleigh Salterton.

Initially tuition will be on 2 ballroom dances (the waltz and quick step) and 2 Latin dances (the cha cha and rumba).

Tuition will be in 6-week blocks of one hour sessions and the discounted price for Exmouth u3a will be £45 per person. All you need to bring will be your twinkling feet.

The aim will be to start the classes in January if possible.

If you are interested and / or have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

If you feel you are more than a beginner, please let me know as well as the aim will be to move on to an improvers class and there are opportunities for your dancing to be assessed to see what class is best for you.

Contact: Steve Gibbs

Email – groups@exmouthu3a.org.uk

Cranford Sports Club – 42 Salterton Rd, Exmouth EX8 2EQ

Cranford are offering U3A members a **special discounted membership rate of £49.45 per month**, reduced from the standard price of £54.95. This membership provides full access to all the club facilities, including the heated pool, modern gym, and a wide range of fitness sessions – helping you stay active, healthy, and socially connected. If you have any questions or would like assistance in joining, please feel free to contact The Club. They look forward to welcoming us to the club!

Exeter u3a – Topsham social

Topsham coffee mornings which have now been going for two years. The Topsham social is open to any u3a member and potential member. It is not just for Topsham people in fact lots of people come from Exeter and beyond. Likewise it would not just be for Topsham Exmouth u3a members, we are happy to see anyone who fancies a trip to Topsham.

Loran (who runs the social group) does a meet n greet (even after all this time we still get people who have never been before) so Exmouth members would be greeted on arrival and not just have to find our group by themselves.

The next meeting is on Friday 2 January at 1030am at The Globe Hotel, 34 Fore St.

Topsham EX3 OHR Garden Room (side entrance). The group meet every month on the first Friday without a break.

Emergency contacts

A timely reminder to members and group organisers it is good practice to have an emergency contact for every group member. This is particularly pertinent if the group activity is sporting or involves travel or just being out and about. A recent survey of a group established that more than half the members had no emergency contact logged.

The Percussion Laboratory

Unfortunately, and for many different reasons, our numbers dropped substantially until it was no longer viable to run the group by the end of last year.

I am hoping to restart it for Spring 2026.

If you have a background in music, percussion, or drumming or even if you are just good at holding a beat, this group could be for you. A new interest for 2026?

We meet monthly, and try lots of different percussion. We play different rhythms, many from widespread parts of the world (you may find a lot of Latin!). Lots of different (untuned) hand percussion is available or bring your own.

This is not a drum circle nor a class to teach percussion (though we can advise), but an opportunity to try out different sounds and patterns as a group, and hone our skills

For more information please contact Pete.



The Joy of Performing

This is a new group that has just started and the first session went really well. The next session will be in March.

Exmouth Books 2 – News

Members of our group met up for a festive lunch in Topsham followed by essential retail therapy at the start of December. We also found time to choose our next book and continue to find that belonging to a book club gives the opportunity to read and discuss a wide range of literature that one might not otherwise choose. Occasionally we don't enjoy the book but we always enjoy the discussion about it!

U3a Caring for the Planet.

We offer discussions and outings on environmental themes. In November we had a visit to Exeter Met Office. Our December meeting was a discussion entitled "Past and Future."

Key points on The Past:

- Four thousand years ago, low global population meant minimal environmental impact from human activities.
- In the past 150 years, the UK population rose from 8 million to nearly 70 million, driven by lower infant mortality and longer life expectancy. The Industrial Revolution improved prosperity and urban employment.
- Trade in cotton and textiles, especially within the British Empire, expanded significantly.

- The combustion engine enabled railway development.
- Plastics and synthetic dyes were introduced without regard for environmental or safety concerns.
- Communication has shifted from postal services to digital data transmission via cloud technologies.

Key points on The Future:

- Achievable climate actions include CO₂ reduction, improved home insulation, renewable energy adoption, and expanded wind and solar infrastructure. These require significant investment but offer long-term benefits.
- The latest UN climate talks (COP 30) failed to secure new fossil fuel commitments, with oil-producing countries resisting change.
- The Pacific is experiencing record warming; Africa faces severe drought and heat; the UK is seeing more frequent climate extremes and rising sea levels.
- UK leadership on climate action has slowed due to economic and housing challenges, despite visible impacts and calls for urgent action.

What can we do next?

While many of us may not see 2050, we are committed to leaving the planet in the best possible condition. We should actively encourage individuals of all ages to pursue solutions, support those experiencing climate-related anxiety or reluctance, and demonstrate that effective responses exist. Ongoing education through visits and discussions is essential.

Additionally, we propose offering a presentation to the main u3a group in the future.

Next meeting – Monday 26 January 2026 at Littleham Hub from 10 – 12

Contact Sue Moseley for further details

Recorder Group



The Exmouth u3a Recorder Group have had a very enjoyable year playing a wide range of music together, from Early Music, Baroque, Classical and Folk Tunes. In November we had a joint playing day with the Sidmouth u3a Recorder Group. We started at 10am and finished at 4pm! We had fun playing our favourite music in four-, five- and six-part harmonies. We did have plenty of cake and coffee stops! This has become an annual event that both groups look forward to.

The Exmouth u3a Recorder Group is performing in a lunch time concert at Glenorchy Church, Exmouth on Wednesday 14th January 2026 at 12.30. We will be playing music arranged for recorder in four parts: soprano, alto, tenor and bass. Including compositions across the centuries from Thomas Tallis, H. Purcell, G. F. Handel, J. S. Bach, and G. Faure together with some well-

known traditional British folk songs. The concert at Glenorchy Church is free with a retiring collection. Coffee is served from 12 noon before the concert.

Wine 2 – Exmouth The first wine group has been so successful, I have been asked to see if there is demand for a second wine group based in Exmouth and following the successful format of Wine 1. Interested? Contact – Steve Gibbs groups@exmouthu3a.org.uk

Our website – some statistics

I have been looking at the number of views that we have had on our website in the 30-day period leading up to Christmas Eve. Here are the top three most popular pages:

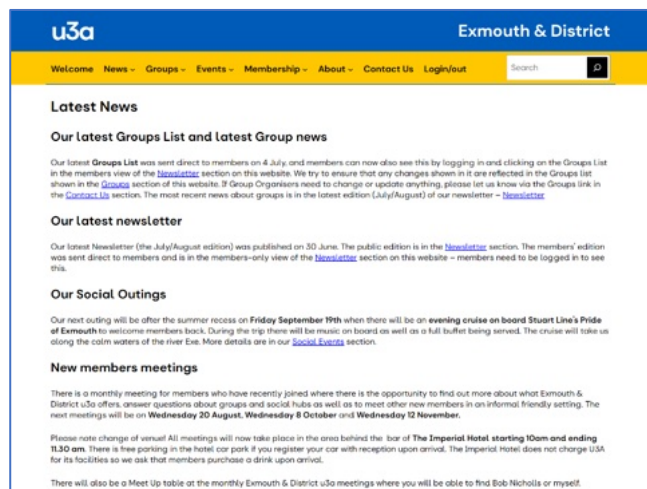
- Home/Welcome page – 313 views (average view duration of 42 seconds)
- Groups page – 305 views (average view duration of 1 minute 5 seconds)
- Latest News page – 57 views (average view duration of 1 minute 34 seconds)

So why are these numbers so low? And why have I had no response to the article I put in the last edition of the newsletter? Perhaps it may be helpful for me to repeat part of my article here in case you did not have the chance to look at this last time. So here it is:

It important to look at our u3a website frequently to make sure that you are aware of our latest news. Here’s a reminder of the two ways to see the Latest News section:

- Go to the home/welcome page of our website. You can do this by clicking or tapping on this link - <https://exmouth.u3asite.uk/>. Or you can get to the home page by searching for ‘Exmouth u3a’ on Google or on any other search engine and clicking or tapping on the link that shows up. Then click or tap on the blue button marked ‘Latest News’ near the top of the home page, and that will take you to it.
- Go to the Latest News section direct by clicking or tapping on this link - <https://exmouth.u3asite.uk/latest-news/>

This shows at a glance information about our latest newsletter, our latest Groups News, details of our next monthly meeting and our next social outing, information for our new members, u3a events elsewhere in Devon, information about free online learning sessions organised nationally – and lots more besides. And it’s all been brought together in one handy place.



Please let me know your thoughts about this or send me any comments you have about our website generally via my email address below.

Thank you very much.

John Hunt,
Website Manager
website@exmouthu3a.org.uk

Our next edition

We hope you have enjoyed reading this newsletter, and thank you to our contributors this month. Please keep items of interest and Groups' news coming in for the next edition which will be at the beginning of March '26. I would particularly welcome any photos you may have which our members would find interesting. Please send original text and photos so that they can be edited to be suitable for inclusion in both newsletter and website.

We hope you have a happy, healthy and fulfilling 2026 – Happy New Year

Rachel Cockell, Editor