

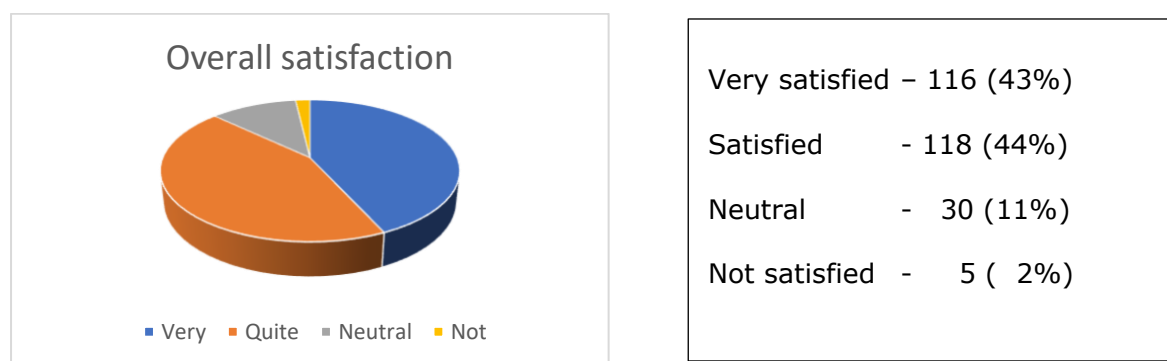
CHAIR'S BULLETIN No. 35 – 8 October 2026

Revisiting the Members' Survey

As promised in my last Bulletin, in this issue I'm going to revisit some of the main results from the Members Survey last year. They were summarised more fully in a Chair's Bulletin issued at the end of September last year if you still have access to that.

When the Survey was run we had 800 members and 278 (35%) of them responded. Overall, the majority of respondents were either very satisfied or satisfied with what was on offer:

How satisfied are you with Witney u3a?



Two sources of dissatisfaction were:

"At times it can feel a little cliquey."

"Communication does not always reach me e.g. no confirmation of fees received."

I would really like to know whether you think things have got better with regards these aspects particularly, of course, if you made or agreed with these comments last time round! You can contact me by email (chair.witneyu3a@gmail.com) or just come up to me after a Speaker Meeting and let me know. I would also be interested to hear from new members whether they are being made to feel welcomed.

Focussing now on just one aspect of our many activities – Special Interest Groups - in my analysis of the Survey, I commented that we had more than 70 themes suggested for new Groups but only three respondents saying that they were prepared to establish and lead Groups!

Indeed, one respondent said:

"Leading an interest group is a pain in the proverbial. The need for accounting for tiny sums and risk assessments is excessive and makes many hesitate."

I hope this isn't the case in general and, to be absolutely frank, that is far from my own experience. Establishing and leading the Welsh Group was both a pleasure and a privilege. There is some work and some responsibility, of course, but I sincerely believe that the plusses outweigh the minuses.

Since the Survey was completed, we have seen the establishment of several new Groups. These include:

- Design and Community;
- A new Wine Appreciation Group;
- Spanish Conversation and
- An online Quiz.

Ironically, none of these was included in the ideas put forward in the Survey responses. To me, the message is simple:

If you have a bright idea for a Group, come forward! Setting it up will take some work (Cathy will assist as she so often does) and the results will be rewarding I can assure you!

One activity which was proposed in the Survey and which I have heard a number of members mention since is line dancing. Now I have only a vague idea what line dancing is (!) but I'm pretty sure it chimes in with something that Dr Tommy Wood said in his admirable talk in May: that dancing is great for maintaining brain function – physical and mental activity are both required simultaneously!

Ask not what Witney u3a can do for you. Ask what you can do for Witney u3a!

The frequency of this Bulletin

I stand in admiration of Susie's success in issuing two Bulletins per month! This was quite a feat in consideration of all the other responsibilities that she had to shoulder.

You can accuse me of being remiss in my duties as Chair if you like but I'm going to reduce the frequency of the Bulletin to monthly from now on. Each issue will appear on the very first day of the month with the list of local events admirably supplied by Wendy Nicholls appertaining to the month to come. The next issue will appear on 1st November.

Important Notices

Mike Collier - our audio-visual maestro, Beacon administrator and member of the Committee with responsibility for membership - has asked me to post the following:

"The next copy of *u3a Matters* will be arriving through most of your letterboxes before the end of the month. The Third Age Trust produce this magazine 5 times each year, and it is a privilege under your Witney u3a membership to receive this free of charge. However, Witney u3a is charged £4.20 for annual postage for each member who indicates on their application form that they wish to receive this magazine in paper form through the post.

"We are about to reach the milestone of 900 members in Witney and - without getting my calculator out - that's a lot of money that we will get billed for by the Third Age Trust later in the year. The last time I researched this, only 58 of you requested **not** to receive the magazine in hard copy despite the fact that it can be accessed free of charge on-line:

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/u3a-matters>

"It is, as I stated earlier, your privilege to receive this magazine, and I know many of you are avid readers. Many more (and I'm ashamed to admit that I'm one) possibly never get around to reading it before it goes in the blue-topped recycling bin. If you're one of those people and wish to cancel your subscription, please email me on:
macollier80@hotmail.com.

"This isn't a sermon on ecology *or* economy, but if we can reduce any unnecessary expenditure by Witney u3a then all well and good!"

Mike: if you're reading this, please cancel my copy. I shall read it on-line in the near future!

Other notices

I've received the following from a member of the Research Team at the Windrush Practice in Witney:

"We would now like to invite you to join a clinical study, which will see if we can protect against symptoms caused by the respiratory winter viruses RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) and HMPV (Human Metapneumovirus)."

If you are interested in participating (and you do not need to be a patient registered with the practice to do so), contact: bobicb-ox.research.windrushmp@nhs.net

Via our virtual office

The Witney Bowls Club has contacted us with a view to "occasional afternoon or evening social bowls nights". Anyone interested should contact: Gary Panons at gpanons@hotmail.com.

Members' Notices

The next of the popular Lunchtime Recitals will take place on Thursday 29th October in the Methodist Centre, beginning at 12:30.

The programme will consist of Jenifer Raven – flautist – playing 'Le Merle Noir' by Olivier Messiaen. This will be complemented by 'songs, poetry and piano about other birds' performed by other talented musicians. Entry is free.

The Adderbury Ensemble will perform the following concerts in Witney Methodist Church both at 7:30 pm:

Friday 23rd October – Mozart Piano Quartet in E flat and Brahms Piano Quartet in G minor no. 1.

Friday 27th November – Haydn String Quartet, op. 76, no. 1 and Mozart Clarinet Quintet.

More details on: www.adderburyensemble.co.uk

For tickets telephone 07711 606996 or available at the door.

Group News

See above for news of Groups recently set up.

Next Outing

The October outing will be to the Bodenham Arboretum in Gloucestershire on Wednesday 21st October 2026. An email about this has recently been sent round by Marian Hannaford.

Witney u3a Next Speaker Meeting

On Thursday 15th October, at 2:00 pm as usual. Alice Foster will talk about 'Paintings That Changed the World'. Her talk will look at images that sit within accepted subject matter: landscape, portraits, the nude and images of war. In each of the images she has chosen there is a radical new vision.

Alice lectures at the Ashmolean Museum and at the Woodstock Museum. She also undertakes tours of Australia, New Zealand and Italy and is a residential tutor on Iona specialising in Scottish Art.

A Selection of upcoming Trust u3a Online Learning Events - NB a full list can be found on www.u3a.org.uk/online learning events

(Free to all members on zoom via: www.u3a.org.uk/events)

U3a National News

The 2026 AGM of the Third Age Trust will be held at 11:00 am on Wednesday 14th October at The Midland Hotel, 16 Peter Street, Manchester. It is billed as a 'hybrid event' i.e. one which can be attended in person or on-line. All u3a members are eligible to attend.

The formal notification of the AGM, its agenda and the means of registering for attendance in person or on-line can be found at:

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/agm-2026>

The results of the national survey 'u3a and me' are now available. The 'Headline findings' (from 10,000 responses) are that members felt the u3a had:

'improved their life in some way'	95%;
provided 'opportunities to keep learning and stay curious'	90%;
'expanded their social connection'	79%;
'improved their sense of well-being'	77%;
'helped them stay physically active'	66% and
'reduced feelings of loneliness or isolation'	45%.

To read a fuller account of these important findings go to:

https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/our-impact/u3a-impact-reports/u3a-and-me?utm_source=mailchimp&utm_medium=email_committee&utm_campaign=u3a_and_me&utm_content=read_report_cta

You may already be aware that the u3a has a project entitled 'u3a Rewind' (<https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/learning/learning-activities/u3a-rewind>) in which you are invited to 'Share your memories, stories and photographs from your younger years'.

Those submitted to far can be viewed on:

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/learning/learning-activities/u3a-rewind/u3a-rewind-stories-archive>

Rhys Williams
8th October 2026

What's on in and around Witney

With grateful thanks, as always, to Wendy for gathering all the information.

EVENTS OCTOBER 2026

Please note screenings at Cineworld Witney are subject to change of date or time. Please check before you book or go!

8th The Arts Society West Oxfordshire. A talk on 18th Century England Through the Eyes of Canaletto at the Corn Exchange, Witney at 7.30pm. Doors open at 6.45pm. Entry charge for visitors £8.

9th Quiz Night at the Corn Exchange, Witney. 8pm. Tickets £6 per head. Teams of up to 6.

9th Witney Music Society presents Quartetto Nous performing works by Haydn, Shostakovich, Boccherini and Beethoven at the High Street Methodist Church at 7.30pm. Tickets £18 available at the venue on the day or in advance from witneymusicsociety.org.uk/shop

10th Oktoberfest, Cogges Style. At Cogges Manor Farm, where the barns will be transformed into a Bavarian Bierkeller. Beer, food, live music. 2pm to 9pm. Tickets £16. For more information see cogges.org.uk

10th 24K Magic Danny Lee Grew. Corn Exchange, Witney. Show starts at 7.30pm. A one man show of jaw dropping magic, illusion and laughs. Tickets £17.50. For more information see cornexchangewitney.org.uk

11th Yarnton Band and Windrush Community Choir will be giving a concert at Witney High Street Methodist Church at 2.30pm. Ticket not required but donations welcome. In aid of Apollos Clothing Charity.

17th Shadowing Hank – A Tribute to Hank Marvin by Justin Daish. Be transported back in time to the golden age of rock 'n' roll and the iconic sound of The Shadows. Corn Exchange, Witney. Doors open 7pm, show starts 7.30pm. Tickets £19.31. For more information see cornexchangewitney.org.uk

18th 1.30pm St Mary's Church. Tour of the ringing room, with a history of bells, bell ringing, peal boards and the opportunity to chime a bell. Organised in conjunction with Witney Museum. Tickets £10. Limited spaces so booking essential. Email admin@witneymuseum.org.uk

18th Combe Mill at Blenheim Palace Sawmills, OX29 8ET, will hold an in steam Woodcrafts and Autumn Market event from 10.30am to 4.30pm (last admission 3.30pm). Adults £9.50, seniors £8.50. Dogs on leads welcome. For more information see combemill.co.uk

18th The Anonymous Players present Quintessence. Vaughan Williams Piano Quintet and Schubert Piano Quintet, The Trout. The Pavilion at The Limes, High Street, Standlake at 3.30pm. Entrance free. Donations can be made to The Exuberant Trust, who support creative young people in Oxfordshire.

20th Cineworld Witney is screening RBO: Macbeth at 6pm

21st Cards, Cake and Conviviality – a charity event at Witney Bridge Club in aid of Helen & Douglas House. 7pm to 10pm at Burwell Hall, Thorney Leys, Witney. Free entry, cake and hot drink. Relaxed, informal bridge game. Donations to Helen & Douglas House invited.

22nd Cineworld Witney is screening *Fallen Angels* by Noel Coward at 7pm. Also screening on 25th at 3pm.

23rd Music Box Events presents Hans Theessink Solo Blues Show. Corn Exchange, Witney at 7.30pm. Tickets £20 and £22 available from musicboxevents.co.uk

23rd Professional musicians, The Adderbury Ensemble, plus Viv McLean, piano, will be performing Mozart Piano Quartet in E Flat, Brahms Piano Quartet in G Minor No.1 at the High Street Methodist Church at 7.30pm. Tickets £18 available at the door. For further information see adderburyensemble.co.uk
27th Cineworld Witney is screening *RBO: Manon* at 7.15pm

28th Spitfire Girl. Jackie Moggridge: The trailblazing pilot who helped deliver victory. Jackie began her flying career at Witney Aeronautical College, where she was the only female trainee. The talk will be given at Witney Museum 6pm to 8pm. Entrance free. Spaces are limited. To book your place please email admin@witneymuseum.org.uk

29th Lunchtime recital at High Street Methodist Church. Blackbird: Jennifer Raven (flute). With songs, poetry and piano about other birds. 12.30 to 1.30. Entry free.

29th, 30th & 31st Witney Dramatic Society presents *The Hound of the Baskervilles* at the Corn Exchange, Witney at 7.30pm. Tickets £15 available from Truck music store, online at ticketsource.co.uk/witney-dramatic-society, or on the door.

31st and November 1st Witney Secrets: A Halloween Tour. 6.30pm to 8.00pm. As night falls over Witney, a spine-tingling journey where history meets the supernatural. Ghostly legends and dark history. Experience Witney's historic streets as never before. Meet at Witney Museum. Limited spaces so booking essential. Email admin@witneymuseum.org.uk

NOVEMBER

3rd Daytime Cinema at the Corn Exchange Witney. *The Great Escaper*, starring Michael Caine as a World War II veteran who sneaks out of his care home to attend the 70th anniversary commemoration of the D-Day landings in Normandy. Screening at 1.30pm. Tickets £5

5th Cineworld Witney is screening *NT Live: Golden boy* at 7pm. Also screening on 8th November at 12 noon.

6th The Jazz Club at Witney presents Greg Abate Quartet at the Corn Exchange, Witney. Doors open 7pm, show starts 7.30pm. Tickets £21.68. For more information see cornexchangewitney.org.uk

7th Break the Rules. A tribute to the music of Status Quo at the Corn Exchange, Witney. With special guest John Coghlan. Doors open 7pm, show starts 7.30pm. Tickets £22.38 For more information see cornexchangewitney.org.uk

8th Oxford Chamber Music Society presents Ravel and Martinu Quartets and Schubert String Quintet performed by the Martinu String Quartet at the Holywell Music Room, Oxford at 3pm. Tickets £28. For more information see oxfordchambermusic.org

ADVANCE NOTICE

December 21st At the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford, the perfect antidote to panto- the timeless classic film The Snowman is shown on the big screen, with the Mozart Symphony Orchestra performing the soundtrack live. The concert will also feature Paddington Bear's First Concert – a piece for narrator and orchestra. Performances at 1.30pm, 3.30pm and 5.30pm. Tickets cost between £12 and £34. For ticket information email boxoffice@oxfordplayhouse.com or phone 01865 305305