

Nottinghamshire Network of u3as

JUNE 2025

Successful Interest Group Workshop Brings Together u3a Members Across Nottinghamshire

On Monday 23 June, the Notts Network hosted a vibrant and successful workshop at Newstead Community Centre, bringing together 63 u3a members from across Nottinghamshire. The focus of the day was on interest groups – the lifeblood of the u3a movement – and on sharing ideas, strengthening practices, and building connections.

Margot and Sue gave everyone a warm welcome as they arrived and signed in, setting a friendly tone for the day.

Chris Niven, Network Chair, formally opened the workshop, extending her welcome to all attendees before the morning began with a presentation entitled:

“Interest Group Matters”.

The session was delivered by Jean Hogg and Rosie Allen, both members of the Network committee and also Trust Volunteers and Trainers. Their presentation reminded everyone of the u3a’s three Guiding Principles:

- The Third Age Principle
- The Self-Help Learning Principle
- The Mutual Aid Principle

But this was far from a one-way presentation. Participants were soon actively engaged in table discussions, identifying and exploring the key responsibilities of Group Leaders and Convenors – a lively and thought-provoking exercise.

Following a welcome refreshment break – with hot drinks and delicious cakes and pastries – members had time to network informally and continue conversations.

The second part of the morning featured themed breakout sessions for more focused exploration. Jean facilitated the largest group, for Group Coordinators.

Other breakout groups included:

- Science & Technology – led by Trevor Smith
- Music – led by William Ruff and Len Hand
- Walking – led by Arnold Cade
- General Discussion – led by Chris Niven

The workshop concluded with a plenary session, where Rosie summarised the key points and insights shared throughout the day.

Throughout the event, Andy Bebbington captured the energy and engagement of the day with his camera — ensuring plenty of great photos to commemorate the occasion.

The workshop was widely considered a great success, offering valuable opportunities for reflection, peer learning, and renewed enthusiasm for the interest groups that lie at the heart of the u3a.

Very many thanks to Chris, Rosie, Jean, Sue, and Margot for planning and organising the event; to Trevor, William, Len and Arnold for their contributions to the break out groups; and to Andy for photographing the day so beautifully.

Maria Gabrielczyk
Vice Chair Notts Network



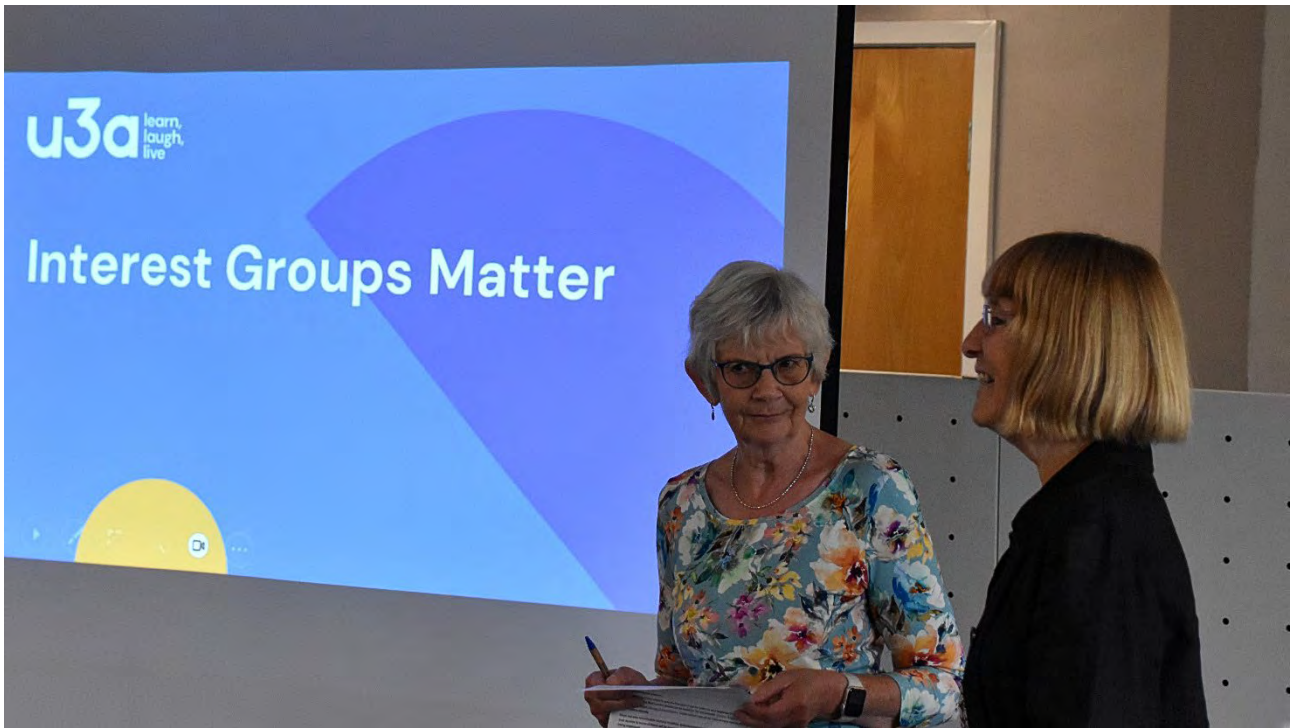
Margot and Sue welcoming members with smiles and sign-in sheets – setting the tone for a great day!



Chris Niven, Network Chair, opens the workshop and welcomes 63 members from across Nottinghamshire



Chris Niven



Jean Hogg and Rosie Allen start their presentation "Interest Groups Matter"



Members get stuck into the first activity



“What essential tasks do Group Leaders/Convenors need to ensure are done?”





Learning from each other to make interest groups even better





Peer learning in action – members inspiring one another





Listening to big ideas





Enthusiasm for interest groups





Dynamic discussions





Laughter, learning, and lots of list-making





Pens poised!





Every great idea starts with a scribble





Jean and Rosie bring it all together – one post-it note at a time



Member's ideas come together





Arnold Cade leads the walking enthusiasts



Rosie brings the successful day to a close, warmly thanking all members for their attendance and participation.

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