

# BRAINTREE AREA U3A

## NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2026

**u3a** learn  
laugh  
live

### Introduction

**Hello Everyone,**

I hope you've all enjoyed a wonderful summer despite the heat. As we move into autumn, we look forward to sharing more experiences together through our many u3a groups. This season also brings an exciting change — from October, our General Meetings will take place at St Michael's Church House.

### A Fresh New Chapter for Braintree Area u3a

As many of you know, the Institute's move to auditorium-style seating would mean losing our friendly table groups. Combined with rising hall costs, it's time for a positive change.

We're thrilled to announce that from **21 October 2026**, our monthly meetings will take place at **Church House, St Michael's Lane, Braintree, CM7 1EY**. It's bright, welcoming, easier for serving refreshments, and fully accessible for wheelchair users. Parking and bus links are just as convenient as the Institute — with several even closer. A route map will be available on our website and at the September General Meeting, which will be our final meeting at the Institute.

Thanks to the much lower hire fee, we can pass real savings on to you. **From January 2027, subscriptions will drop to £15 per individual and £25 per couple, with the associate fee remaining at £10. Subscriptions for 2027 can be paid from 1 November 2026.**

**We hope you're as enthusiastic as we are about this bright new chapter in Braintree Area u3a's journey.**

If you have any questions, please speak to any committee member — we're here to reassure you and share the excitement.



## General Meetings September – November 2026

**September General Meeting – ‘Apron to Mortar Board’** We welcome back Sharon Gould for her humorous talk *Apron to Mortar Board*, sharing highlights from her 55 years of varied employment. Sharon’s previous talks, *Who is H* and *The East End to Essex*, were greatly enjoyed by our members, and this session promises to be just as entertaining.

**Wednesday 16 September 2026 at 2:00pm The Institute, Bocking End, Braintree CM7 9AE – Doors open 1:30pm • Admission £2**



**October General Meeting – ‘Healthwatch Essex’** – We welcome Dr Glover, who will give an overview of the wide-ranging work of Healthwatch Essex, the independent charity that uses the public’s voice to improve health and social care across the county. Dr Glover will explain how their work makes a real difference to local people.

**Wednesday 21 October 2026 at 2:00pm St Michaels Church House, St Michaels Lane, Braintree CM7 1EY – Doors open 1:30pm • Admission £2**



**November General Meeting – ‘Poplar Nurseries’** We’re delighted to welcome Martin Cowan, who will share the story of Poplar Nurseries, a much-loved family business that has been part of our community for over 80 years. Martin will give a behind-the-scenes look at its growth, challenges and success across generations.



**Wednesday 18 November 2026 at 2:00pm St Michaels Church House, St Michaels Lane, Braintree CM7 1EY – Doors open 1:30pm • Admission £2**

**Please note that our u3a is only covered by public liability insurance.**

## **Braintree Area u3a – Christmas Meeting**

Come and join us for a cheerful afternoon of festive fun at our December meeting on: –

**Wednesday 9 December at 2:00 pm**

**St Michael's Church House, St Michael's Lane, Braintree CM7 1EY.**

Doors open 1:30 pm • Admission £2.00.

- Our guests Steve Scrutton and Ian Wyatt will be hosting a lively quiz.
- There will be a prize for the 'Best Christmas Outfit' – So come dressed to impress!
- Enjoy a seasonal platter with a cup of tea or coffee.
- Each person will be given the opportunity to take part in our festive flower draw for a chance to win one of the beautiful arrangements made by our u3a Flower Arranging group.

### **Meet the Committee –**

#### **Janis Ann Collis – Our Speaker Co-ordinator**

I am a Baby Boomer born in Colchester into a loving family during what I am told was a bitterly cold winter and being a puny baby was kept in a laundry basket by the coal fire.

I enjoyed an idyllic childhood as we lived at the bottom of Castle Park in Colchester with time spent climbing trees and enjoying the outdoors.

In 1960 my father was promoted from Colchester Co-op to Braintree Co-op and we moved to Braintree. My teenage years were spent enjoying dances at the Institute and socialising in the many coffee bars in the town.

I started work as an office junior in Braintree, progressing from there to various office positions ending up working as a Secretary in Bond Street, London. After I had our daughters, I only worked part time in different jobs for many years, my final position was as a doctors Dragon!

In 1966 whilst on holiday with a friend in Devon I met my husband to be, Daniel. He lived in north London and after a somewhat long-distance romance we were married in 1967.

We have two daughters, a granddaughter and a grandson who all live locally. We really value all their love and care. Family is very important to me.

I spent over 35 years as a volunteer Leader for Girlguiding in Northeast Essex. This gave me wonderful opportunities to be part of teams to lead groups of

## Janis Ann Collis – Our Speaker Co-ordinator – Continued

young women and girls on adventures abroad. Outdoor activities have always been important to me so I also took part in many camps in this country.

For many years I was a member of the committee of Braintree and Bocking Townswomen's Guild, this unfortunately closed earlier this year. I have since joined Rayne Women's Institute and have become involved with the committee of Braintree Area u3a. I am a people person and enjoy the company of like-minded people. I hope to continue to do so for many years to come.

### Expanding Horizons

#### Try something new this September!

U3a week takes place from 19 - 27 September 2026. This year u3a week is all about trying something new under an initiative called '**Expanding Horizons**'.

We invite you to try out a Braintree Area u3a group that you've not been to before during September 2026. We hope that by going to a different group you will be able to learn something new and it will provide you with an opportunity to make new friends.

Please visit the Groups page of our website to view all of our available groups. Each Group listed has a contact form, which will enable you converse with the group leader. The group leaders should respond to you within a few days. The link to the Groups page on our website are at the end of this newsletter.



#### Did you know?

The National u3a are now offering holidays to u3a members. Please follow the link for more information. <https://www.u3a.org.uk/about/our-partners/u3a-getaways>

## Group News

### U3a ukes Braintree

In June, the ukulele group, led by Dan Collis, was invited to perform at the Shalford Fete for the third year running. Despite the rain and wind, there was a good turnout, and 14 members entertained the audience with a lively selection of their best numbers.



The Ukulele Group meet at the Rayne Village Hall on Fridays twice a month. If you would like more information about this group, please contact us via the web or by telephone. Details are at the end of this newsletter.

### The Sunday Lunch Group



Sunday Lunch Group enjoyed a meal on the 12 July 2026 at the Running Mare in Chelmsford. Ego at Running Mare offers a diverse Mediterranean menu with a la carte, set menus and childrens meals. The restaurant also offers afternoon teas, brunch and a buffet menu.

The Sunday Luncheon group meet on an ad-hoc basis. If you would like more information on this group, please contact us via the web or by telephone. Details are below.

### Wheels for All

Barbara Taylor, who is one of our members, signed up for the 'Wheels for All' scheme after our u3a had advertised it. Barbara thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Wheels for all takes place at the Braintree Health Club/ Tabor academy, Panfield Lane, Braintree, CM7 1FF on Mondays at 4:00pm and 4:45pm. There are monthly Saturday sessions at 10:00am and 11:00am. For further information call 07450 561599.



## Committee Members

|                                             |                  |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Chair                                       | Julia Aves       |
| Vice Chair & Speaker Co-ordinator           | Janis Collis     |
| Secretary                                   | Philip Heady     |
| Treasurer                                   | Michael Horlock  |
| Membership Secretary                        | Philip Deal      |
| Groups Co-ordinator                         | Danielle Gibbons |
| Admin and Beacon Advisor and Website Editor | Elaine Orpe      |
| Publicity                                   | Christine Deal   |
| Committee Member                            | Linda Hellewell  |
|                                             |                  |

## Non Committee Members

|                           |                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sound Technician          | Dan Collis                                                                                                               |
| General Meeting Hostess   | Mary Chapman                                                                                                             |
|                           |                                                                                                                          |
| Mobile Telephone          | 07938 982183                                                                                                             |
| Website – Groups Contacts | <a href="https://braintree.u3asite.uk/groups/">https://braintree.u3asite.uk/groups/</a>                                  |
| Website – Group Contacts  |  <div> Please scan<br/>QR Code </div> |
| Website – Committee       | <a href="https://braintree.u3asite.uk/committee/">https://braintree.u3asite.uk/committee/</a>                            |
| Website – Committee       |  <div> Please scan<br/>QR Code </div> |

## And Finally,

If you would like to advertise your group and/or share photographs of your group activity with all of the Braintree Area u3a members in a future newsletter, please send them to me via email at [christinedeal57@outlook.com](mailto:christinedeal57@outlook.com).

Our u3a has a Facebook group page for its members. If you are a Facebook user please navigate the page to post some photographs of your group together with a few words about the photographs. [Our Facebook page link.](#)

Best wishes Christine Deal – Publicity Officer.