

# u3a

Paisley and District Newsletter  
February/March 2026

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## Chair's Update

We've had a good start to 2026 with our u3a's January Social and quiz in Gabriels. Over sixty members took part and enjoyed a range of tunes performed by our own Music Makers group. A light lunch was followed by a musical quiz (originally set by the late Douglas O'Donnell) and compered by Alex Dymock. The winners, aptly named the A-team, took home the prizes. This event was supported in part by a grant from Age Scotland, which also assisted our Dunkeld day trip last year.

In this edition we have created a short list of tasks for volunteers. Why not take a look at these different vacancies and consider if you have a spare hour or two to help your u3a?

Our Annual General Meeting takes place on **5 March** and we are now looking for someone who enjoys figures and finance to become our next Treasurer. (There will be a handover period/training.) If you might be interested in this position, please contact me and we can have an informal chat about what's involved.



On the subject of grants, Paisley and District u3a has been successfully awarded one by Renfrewshire Council. We are planning to hold a Jamboree/Fayre in 2026. We want our members to get involved and contribute their ideas and energy to this exciting project. It will be a public event which showcases our various activities and interest groups, plus a few new ones which may start if enough people are on board.

As we move towards spring and summer, the executive committee has already started to think about running a couple of away day trips. If you have any ideas about an interesting venue to visit, or perhaps you might be able help us with organising a trip, please do get in touch.

You know the saying, many hands make light work! Our u3a continues to grow and we hope to have our 200<sup>th</sup> member join us this year. I appreciate each and every individual who generously gives their time and expertise to this u3a. It's a thriving organisation thanks to you, and a very warm welcome is waiting for anyone else who feels ready to support the work we are doing in 2026.

Kathy O'Donnell, (Chair of Paisley and District u3a)

## FUN AT THE GABRIELS' QUIZ & SOCIAL



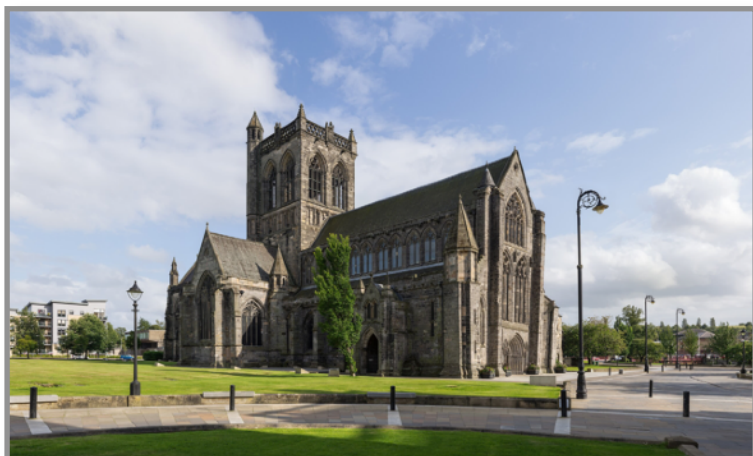
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# INTEREST GROUP NEWS

Information about all of our interest groups and how to join is available on our website, using the following link ... <https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/groups/>. You will be contacted as soon as possible by the relevant group leader. Alternatively, you can send enquiries to our Membership Secretary, Andy Fairley at: <https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/contacts/>.

## Architecture

**Duncan Macintosh (Usually monthly on Thursdays at 10:30am)**



The next Architecture Appreciation group visit will be to Paisley Abbey on **Thursday 12 February**. We will meet at the town hall entrance at **11:00 am**. This was the second building we visited when the group originally started in 2018. I think there are many new members who have joined u3a and this group since then, so it will be worth a re-visit. We will consider its history as first a Roman Catholic abbey, then its nave as a Presbyterian church, and now as a church-cum-cultural asset.

No group visit is planned yet for March but members are welcome to suggest venues. If

you would like to come and join us, please get in touch with me, Duncan MacIntosh at: [https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/architecture/](https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/architecture/).

## Art Appreciation

**Rod Ferrier (Monthly, Tuesdays)**

The year started with a visit to the Hunterian Gallery, attached to Glasgow University, just next to The University Library. They have an amazing collection and differ in the way that they present artworks and artists, compared to most galleries.

The group still has to decide our **24 February** and **24 March** visits – both are on Tuesdays. There are so many potential venues to go to in 2026, including the Lillie Gallery in Milngavie, Glasgow's Holmwood House and Eastwood Theatre's new documentary on two artists' intertwined lives entitled *Exhibition On Screen: Turner & Constable*. Then there's Paisley Art Institute's 150 years celebratory exhibition at Glasgow Art Club. There's also the City Art gallery in Edinburgh right next to Waverley station, plus The Smith Gallery in Stirling, and who knows, even Paisley Museum may open its doors to us this year after its magical transformation.



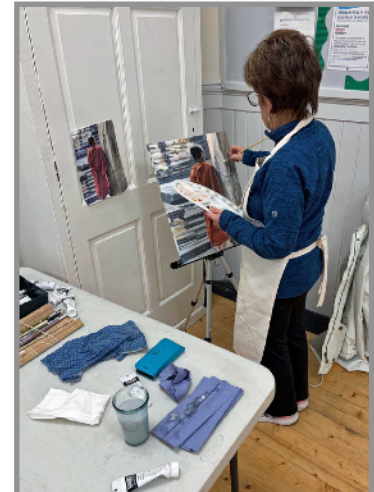
**Paisley Museum**

If you are interested in art and fancy visiting a gallery each month, then please come and join us. Contact me if you need more information and check out our Group page at: [https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/art-appreciation/](https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/art-appreciation/).

## Art and Painting

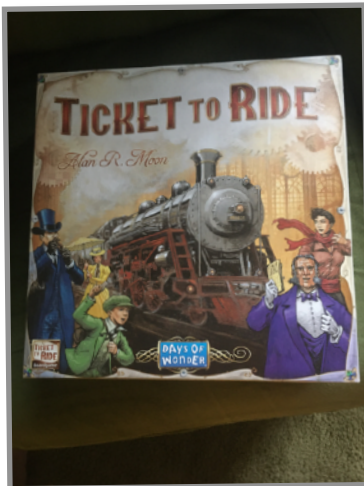
Chris Dykes (Monthly, 3rd Tuesday, St. George's Halls, Causeyside St, 1:00pm-3:00pm)

We are a small group of aspiring painters who have been enjoying the peace and quiet working on our individual projects. Some of us paint with watercolours and some with acrylics. One member even brings her oil paints. There is a small charge of £4 a session which includes coffee, tea and biscuits. There is no tuition but we benefit from exchanging ideas with each other. If you would like to join us, you are very welcome. Please contact Chris at: [https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/art-painting/](https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/art-painting/)



## Board Games

Rod Ferrier (Kilbarchan Library, 1st Tuesday monthly 2:00pm-4:00pm)



Our group meets on the first Tuesday of each month in Kilbarchan Old Library. We like established board games but are game to play new ones too. Members bring their favourites along, and often people have new ones to try after Christmas.

We take a break in our two hours of fun and enjoy a tea or a coffee and biscuits. (There is a £3 cost each for the room hire and refreshments.) This is a good way to keep your brain active while you enjoy some not very competitive company usually!

If you want more details, or you'd like to come and have a go, please message me, Rod Ferrier, at:

[https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/board-games/](https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/board-games/).

### ***TRIVIA QUESTION***

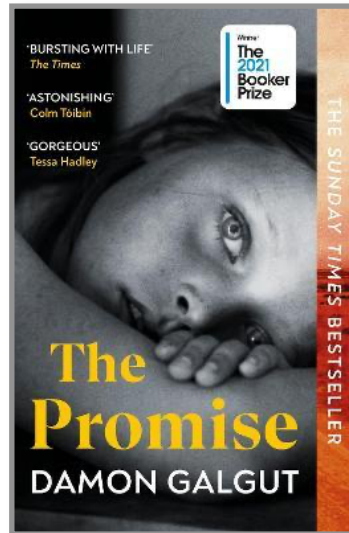
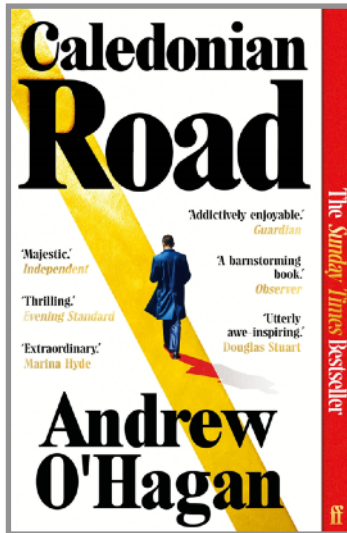
***a) In which country does the Winter Olympics begin on February 6th 2026?***

***b) A bonus point if you know the town!***

## Book Group

Dee Barnfield (Paisley Library, 11:00am-12:00pm, 1st Thursday of each month)

As anticipated, our final meeting in December discussing Madeline Miller's *The Song of Achilles*, was really fascinating. It's relatively rare in any Book Group to analyse the book for the whole meeting – this was definitely an exception. So many great discussion points. This was followed by a very convivial Christmas Lunch at Weavers a few days later – a great way to finish off 2025.



At this point, I'm hoping everyone is at least part way through our current book, *Caledonian Road* by Andrew O'Hagan as it's certainly not a short book! I have an inkling that it may make it onto the screen at some point, but don't hold your breath as it will take a great deal of adaptation.

Talking of which, a book I don't think we've yet read in Book Group, has just been released in the cinemas and has also won a clutch of Golden Globes last week. It is, of course, Maggie O'Farrell's magnificent *Hamnet*. Well worth seeing, reading or both!

March's book will be *The Promise* by Damon Galgut, which won The Booker Prize in 2021. Future choices will, hopefully, be confirmed on, or just after, our February meeting.

For any queries about the Book Group or if you'd like to come and join us, please use the contact link on the group page at: [https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/book-club/](https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/book-club/).

## Bridge Buddies

Chris Dykes (Member's home, Paisley. Every Wednesday, 1:30pm-3:30pm)

The Bridge Buddies is a beginners' and intermediate social bridge group but all levels of ability are welcome. We play in an informal setting where we can chat and discuss strategy over tea and cake. We have recently welcomed two new members so we can now offer two tables for play.

If you are interested in learning more about the group contact Chris Dykes at:

[https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/bridge-buddies/](https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/bridge-buddies/).



To save on washing up  
**PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR OWN CUP**  
to our monthly meetings. Free refills!

## Chair Yoga

Candy Millard (Wednesdays 2:30pm-3:15pm. St George's Church Halls)



The Chair Yoga group is up and running after our December break. We started the New Year gently, but Margaret, our tutor, will be encouraging us to stretch further and twist more over the coming weeks. Hopefully our posture and flexibility will show lots of improvement as a result.

We also benefit from breathing exercises and try, not very successfully, to practice some mindfulness. Everyone enjoys working with Margaret who has over 40 years' experience as a fitness tutor. We certainly learn, live and laugh as we go. Chair Yoga is held in blocks of 6 sessions at a cost of £14 per block. Our current Wednesday afternoon block is full as the group has proved very popular. Due to the size of the hall, the group limit is set at 25 members. When everyone attends this is quite a challenge, as we need a good distance between chairs for our stretches.

However, if other u3a members would like to try this modified version of yoga for themselves, there is a possibility of some taster sessions on a Monday lunchtime at St George's Hall. Depending on the level of interest we will consider starting a second group in the spring. Members have found chair yoga to be a very accessible and inclusive activity and Margaret will adjust any exercise to accommodate individual mobility limitations. If you are interested in the taster sessions or joining a Monday Chair Yoga group, please contact Candy at: [https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/chair-yoga/](https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/chair-yoga/).

## Cinema and Theatre

Carole Delaney & May McFadden (Variable)

On 11 December, 12 members attended the pantomime *Snow White* performed by PACE Theatre Company at the Paisley Arts Centre. It was a clever production with a lively and energetic chorus of talented young people. All the expected pantomime 'cliches' were included, to the delight of the audience. The members attending gave a positive response to the performance and the venue.

Our first outing for 2026 was the film *Hamnet*. It dramatises the family life of William Shakespeare and his wife Agnes Hathaway as they cope with the death of their 11 year-old son, Hamnet which inspired the creation of Shakespeare's timeless masterpiece, *Hamlet*. The film won Best Motion Picture and Best Actress (Jessie Buckley) at the 83rd Golden Globe Awards. However, although the group acknowledged that the acting was superb, the feedback was quite mixed.



On Sunday 25 January, the Showcase Cinema was screening the National Theatre Live production of *Hamlet* at 1:45pm and some members went to see that. Looking a bit further ahead, we are planning a return visit to the Citizens Theatre on **Thursday 9 April** to see the play, *I Daniel Blake*, adapted from the film directed by Ken Loach.

If you are interested in joining the group or would like to know more, please contact May or Carole at: [https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/cinema-theatre/](https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/cinema-theatre/). We look forward to seeing you at future events.

## Conversational Spanish

### May Diver (Mondays 2:00pm-3:30pm: Kilbarchan Old Library)

We are getting back into chatting in Spanish. Given the wintry weather, many members enjoy having a hot drink and a quick catch up together in English before we start the session. (It costs £3 per person for the venue hire and refreshments.) This month we have used Christmas cards and postcards to work in pairs and describe in Spanish what we see on them. It's a quick fire exercise where we try and use complete sentences. Although we are not exactly beginners, it's amazing how quickly we forget basic vocabulary. so this playful practice gets our brains in gear.



To keep things topical, the group has also been translating part of a Spanish book about the life of Robert Burns whose Day is celebrated in Scotland and Spain on 25 January. The photo on the left shows May Diver with the Robert Burns "Antologia Poetica" book in Spanish which has a mouse on the cover.

Often we browse short online news stories in Spanish and then read them aloud to improve our pronunciation. Each week we end up learning something new! If you would like to join us in speaking this popular language, please do come along. Hasta luego!

For more information, please contact May at:

[https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/conversational-spanish/](https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/conversational-spanish/).

## Crochet

### Wilma McPherson (Tuesdays 11:00am, weekly)



The Crochet group continues to meet weekly and create lovely items. It's a chance to learn about crocheting techniques, rectify our mistakes, as well as have time for a friendly catch up.

Currently, there is a waiting list as all the places on the Crochet group are full. If you want to put your name on the list, or start another Crochet group, please get in touch with Chris our Group coordinator at:

<https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/groups/>.

## ANSWER TO TRIVIA QUESTION

a)Italy b)Cortina d'Ampezzo

## Garden Gang

Valerie Reilly (Generally 2nd Wednesday of each month)



As always, the Garden Gang has retreated indoors for the coldest months. Our winter meetings are held in the Museum of Johnstone History Society. This is inside the Johnstone Morrisons supermarket – a handy venue for a coffee afterwards – or even a bit of shopping!

Our December topic was wartime Christmases, and how people celebrated them, finding ways of extending rations to have some sort of Christmas meal. It was an interesting reminder of how Christmas doesn't have to be about excessive consumption.

In January, I reworked the talk I did at the Scottish u3a Jamboree last August into a review of everything the Garden Gang has done since we formed in November 2019. This was a chance for long-standing members to remind themselves of past outings and for newer members to realise how many fascinating, beautiful and different gardens we have visited in the last few years.



We have one more indoor meeting which will take place on **Tuesday 10 February**, when the subject will be *Indigo – a Blue to Dye For*, and I also hope to present a draft programme of outings for the coming year. On **11 March** we will once more escape to the great outdoors!

If you wish to join us, just contact me, Valerie at: [https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/the-garden-gang/](https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/the-garden-gang/).

## Lunch Group

Alex Smith (Dates vary each month)



We meet up once a month, often in Paisley or Glasgow, and enjoy a meal and a few laughs together. Lunch usually starts at 12:30pm and includes the cost of your chosen dish(es), plus a tip for restaurant staff.

For our next lunch group outing, we are returning to one of our earliest restaurants, the Pendulum in Gauze Street Paisley on **Tuesday 10 February** at **12:30pm**. The standard cost for a 2 course lunch is £16.95 and I suggest an additional tip of £2. If you would like to join us please let me know by **Tuesday 3 February**, in order

that the restaurant can put us together.

If you'd like to go out for lunch sometime with good food and good company, please get in touch with the group organiser, Alex for details of future outings at: [https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/lunch-club/](https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/lunch-club/).

## Music Appreciation

Don Page (Monthly on the last Friday, 2:00pm in Paisley Library)



This is a friendly group which meets to discuss different aspects of music. We choose two albums to listen to at home then meet up to discuss them track by track. It is a great way to get to know new music. In January we listened to *Kind of Blue* by Miles Davis and *Caravanserai* by Santana. We also compared three versions of the same song *Summertime*, sung by Janis Joplin, Ella Fitzgerald, and a duet with Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong.

We agree at the end of each meeting which two albums we wish to hear and discuss the following month. You can find which albums we chose for February on the website, or if you would like more details about coming along to the group, please contact Don at: [https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/music-appreciation/](https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/music-appreciation/).

## Music Makers

Ellen Bailie (Monthly, 2:00pm – 4:00pm, day varies)

The Music Makers group were very pleased to have the opportunity to entertain at the January Social in Gabriels. We played *The Northern Lights of Old Aberdeen*, *Killiecrankie* and a favourite, *The Dark Island*. There were also lyrical odes from Roland. We would like to thank the members at the social for singing along with Betty and Bob. At the end of the social the group played *The Lewis Bridal Song*.

The group are now starting a new set of music with *Scarborough Fair*, *MacPherson's Rant*, *Jambalaya* and *The Green Glens of Antrim*. In addition to group playing, members also bring their own contributions for the group to listen to.



The group comprises of flute, guitars, ukulele, vocals, harmonica and keyboard players. The emphasis is on learning, having fun and making music together. The group is currently full but if you are interested, please get in touch with the Group Leader, Ellen at: [https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/music-makers/](https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/music-makers/)

## Opera Appreciation

Kathy O'Donnell & Jane Fraser (Variable, depending on performance schedules)



A number of possible performances during February and March this year are currently being considered by group members. We mainly go to Glasgow or Renfrewshire to see Scottish Opera productions, or those by the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Our group also enjoys watching live cinema screenings of productions from both Covent Garden and the Metropolitan in New York.

Full details of future operatic performances will shortly be posted on the u3a website or you can contact the organiser, Jane for more details at: [https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/opera-appreciation/](https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/opera-appreciation/).

## Outdoor Sketching

Kate Colyer (Tuesdays Monthly)

We meet on the second Tuesday of the month, so **10 February** is our next outing. It's at 10:30am and we will be over at The Burrell Collection in Glasgow to sketch. We have still to decide on the venue for March but details will be made available on the website. If you would like information about this group, please do get in touch with me, Kate at: [https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/outdoor-sketching/](https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/outdoor-sketching/).



## Pickleball

Irene Keith (Monday 1:00pm-2:00pm, ON-X Linwood)

Pickleball is becoming a very popular pastime and our u3a group meets on Mondays for exercise and fun. The hire of the courts costs £3 per person for 1 hour, £4.50 for 2 hours. Bats and balls are provided if you don't have your own. Sometimes, we have informal competitions to keep us all on our toes! The middle photo below shows Maria Frate and Eddie Ferns receiving their award for coming in first place in our end of year competition.

The photos below show the group having fun at our Christmas social. Batting the balloon races was especially intense. Fortunately, no legs were broken!

If you'd like more information or you wish to try a game of pickleball, please contact me, Irene, at: [https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/pickleball/](https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/pickleball/).



## Science and Technology

**Don Page (2:00pm, 4th Thursday of the month, Café Bianco E Nero)**

This is a small, friendly group where we watch science videos at home, then discuss them in a café over coffee and cakes. Some of the concepts are difficult but there is enough expertise in the group to help us understand. In January 2026 we watched on iPlayer the *Human* series, part 1 - *The first of us*. Stranger and more dramatic than we had ever imagined - these are our untold origins. With stunning visuals and cutting-edge science, evolutionary biologist and television presenter, Ella Al-Shamahi revealed the story of our species.

In **February 2026** we will watch on iPlayer the *Human* series, part 2 - *Into the Unknown*. It follows early Homo sapiens's ancestors as they step out of Africa and venture into the wider world, heading into areas inhabited by other human species. Please come and join us in this conversation, or you can get the latest group details at: [https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/science-and-technology/](https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/science-and-technology/).

## Singing Group

**Alex Smith (Weekly/Thursdays, 11:00am, Holy Trinity & St. Barnabas Church, Paisley)**

The singing group performed Christmas songs and carols at Silverburn Shopping Centre on 11 December to raise funds for the Glasgow Children's Hospice. It was the first time the group had performed outside a u3a environment but we hope there will be other opportunities to showcase our progress as a group. Feedback from the event was very positive.



We resumed our block of four sessions on Thursday 15 January and we were delighted to be joined by a number of members who were unable to be with us for much of the previous sessions.

It costs £40 each per block for room hire and a tutor. We meet every Thursday in the Holy Trinity and St Barnabas Church Hall from 11:00am till 12:30pm and we welcome anyone who likes to sing. The group is coached by voice leader and educator, Stephanie Strachan who makes each session fun. So if you like to sing why not come and join us? The more the merrier. Please contact me, Alex if you would like any more information at: [https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/singing/](https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/singing/).

## Table Tennis

**Irene Keith, (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday monthly, noon – 1:00pm, Renfrew Leisure Centre)**

A new u3a table tennis group is starting on **Sunday 8 February**.

Wearing appropriate footwear for a game is required but no previous playing experience is necessary. Bats and balls will be provided. There is a small charge for the hire of the venue at Renfrew Leisure Centre (PA4 8JL) which is payable on the day.

If you are interested in taking part please contact me, Irene at: [https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/table-tennis/](https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/table-tennis/).



# CAN YOU HELP?

If interested, please contact our deputy chair or general enquiries at:  
<https://paisleydistrict.u3asite.uk/contacts/>

Can you help your u3a?	We need people to ...	Give us a hand with ...	Tell others about our u3a...
<p>Do you have any admin skills?</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take minutes</li> <li>• Make calls, lists</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning events</li> <li>• arranging visits</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publicity:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• newsletters</li> <li>• leaflets, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> 
<p>Would you like to start a group?</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check out venues</li> <li>• Help run activities</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offering lifts to               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meetings,</li> <li>• activities</li> </ul> </li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serve on a committee</li> <li>• Help with finance, grants</li> </ul> 
<p>Could you help at monthly meetings?</p>			
 <p>Meet and Greet?</p>	<p>Lay out/clear away chairs?</p> 	 <p>Give a talk?</p>	 <p>Make tea/coffee?</p>
 <p>Help with IT/AV Issues?</p>	 <p>Serve as one of our Fire Wardens?</p>		

