Carmarthen u3a Caerfyrddin

Newsletter – November 2026

Letter from the Chair – Richard Swann

Dear Members,

Welcome to the November Newsletter.

It doesn't seem possible that Christmas is only 9 weeks away which brings me to the u3a Christmas lunch. I would like to explain why this year there will not be one.

The Committee made several requests for people to come forward to form a group to organise it. There were rumours going around that Shirley was going to do it again. I have no idea where they started and they were not true. Eventually Shirley told me that she was reluctant but would do it again although not on her own. Several attempts were made by the Committee to find people to help but when we were unsuccessful, we had to make the decision to say there wouldn't be one this year.

This brings me to the point, as I have often said, that Carmarthen u3a is all of us, not the Committee and other members. The Committee works very hard but cannot do everything and relies on the wider membership to help. We are not here to spoon feed you all. When we ask for help we really mean it and without your help some things might not happen. That is not to say that some do not step up when needed. A case in point is when speakers let Eleanor down and drop out at the last minute and thanks go to Chas for stepping in to give October's talk and to Harold for stepping in for the September meeting. Also many of you help in many ways e.g. Group Leaders and many thanks to them as well.

Looking forward to seeing you at the Monthly meeting.

Best wishes,

Richard

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Newsletter Editor – Ann Kitchen



Breaking News

- Carmarthen u3a has been very busy this month hence the bumper edition of the Newsletter. It's so good to read how active we have been and even better how active we are going to be in November. We are definitely on a roll.
- Please don't forget to sign in at the monthly meetings. Not only is this an opportunity to say hello but we wouldn't want to lose anyone in an emergency.

- Many of you may remember that the Commissioner for Older People gave a talk to our u3a last year. Eleanor has sent us a link for the Commissioner's Newsletter which contains lots of useful information. The committee has agreed to share this information with you monthly which is available **here**. Thank you Eleanor.



- Did you attend our Art Exhibition. Such talent amongst us. Check out the photos.
- Andrew organised a talk by Brother Andy about Skanda Vale. You will find his report under World Faith's section and it's well worth taking the time to read it.
- Many of you have been asking after Spice up your Life. The good news is will be back in action in the new year. That is something to look forward to.
- Lots of extra events to look forward to in November, keep reading and get your diaries out.
- Changes of dates for both the 10-pin bowling and Book Club. Make sure you turn up on the right day.
- Our photographers this month are Judith, Eric, Ann, Juliet, Eleanor and Chas.



As Richard has already said in his Chair's report it is so unfortunate that we are not having a Christmas Lunch this year.

Hopefully next year.

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First Aid Course – Peter

We had a very interesting, informative and practical one-day session on basic first aid run by St Johns Ambulance service at their modern facility on Barn Road. The course was delivered by Sion and Danny, both volunteers, who also have day jobs. In the case of Sion he had just come off night- duty as an ambulance driver with the NHS ambulance service. Such dedication!



We covered all the basics, and much more, from carrying out CPU through burns, strokes and heart attacks. Sion and Danny kept us amused with their lively style and real-life examples of first aid in action.

We had a good day with breaks for coffee and biscuits. Many of us enjoyed our pack lunches in the sunshine at the front of the building (adjacent to the car park - maybe not the best view in the world!)

At the end of the course Richard, our Chair, presented Sion and the Danny with a donation for £100. We will be receiving attendance certificates in due course.

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November Events

Mayor's Visit - Peter

We have arranged a visit to the town hall i.e. St Peters Hall to meet the current mayor, Mr. Russell Sparks. The visit will take place on Monday, the 16th of November at 10:30 to 11:30 am. We have 15 places or so.

The visit will give us a chance to meet the mayor at his 'official residence' and find out about his role, that of the Town Council, the traditions, ceremonials and ceremonies associated with the mayor's office. The mayor holds the office for a year during which time he engages with hundreds of groups and organisations in and around the town, including of course, Carmarthen u3a!

If you are interested in joining visit, please get in touch with Peter@carmarthenu3a.org.uk. Please note places are limited.
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Lindy Hop – Eleanor.

Rosemond and I attend therapeutic Lindy Hop classes. They have agreed to deliver a taster session to u3a members. It's chair-based dance/exercise to music from our younger days and so much fun. We feel sure that many people would enjoy it as much as we do. I hope you agree, and maybe participate?

This is an opportunity to get fitter and have fun at the same time. It will be held at the Bowling Club at 2:00 on the 12th November. For further details contact Eleanor@carmarthenu3a.org.uk. It honestly is pure fun, combined with gentle exercise and great music. Give it a go and see if you agree.

Llanelly House – Ann

Rosemond has sweet talked me into organizing an outing to Llanelly House with lunch on the 19th November. I just couldn't say No!
Full details under the Charabanc section.

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Treasurer/Membership Report – Eric Kitchen

You may recall last year I was able to claim nearly £500 in Gift Aid from HMRC to swell our coffers and as I said last month I was about to make his year's submission. Well…… our account has now benefited from HMRC's 'generosity' to the tune of not nearly £500 but £580. Thanks go to the 80% of our members who could and did agree to Gift Aid.

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In the last few months fourteen members have joined and been offered the opportunity to meet up with a few trustees on 4th November at the Ivy Bush Hotel. The purpose being to give some background to our u3a, how it operates and importantly their take on what we're doing.

If you come across Helen, Kathy, Nat, Sandra and Sue do make them feel welcome.

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Tea rota for the next 3 monthly meetings



October	Park Walkers
November	History
January	Backgammon

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Monthly Meeting Presentations – Eleanor Baird



Many thanks go to our vice chair, Harold Liberty, for stepping in at very short notice to deliver a most interesting talk about the women code breakers at Bletchley Park.

These highly intelligent women came from all walks of life. Some had been serving with the WRNS, many were Oxbridge graduates, and one titled lady was mentioned. Among their number also were stars of stage and screen.

One young woman was thought to make a good match for a certain young naval officer, but he had set his sights on another and went on to marry the future Queen Elizabeth.



Harold talked about the human stories and the relationships which developed from working together in that top secret environment. He really brought these women to life. There was audience participation too in the form of a code breaking exercise.

Thank you, Harold, for a fascinating talk.

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It's happened, yet again.....this month's speaker (October) is no longer in post.



Chas has stepped in at very short notice and has offered to give a talk on his experience of living in Liverpool in the 60s.

Thank you so much Chas.

In November Thomas Lloyd OBE, Wales Herald of Arms Extraordinary, has confirmed that he is looking forward to speaking about the role he has held since 2010.

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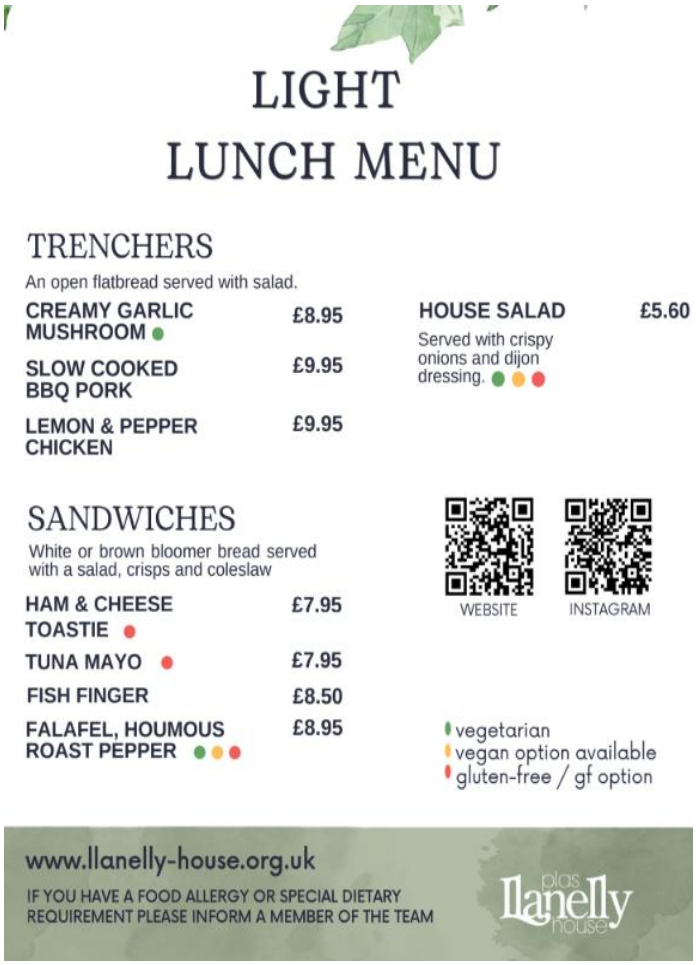
Charabanc – Ann Kitchen 

A visit to Llanelly House has been booked for 11:00 on the 19th November.

This is an opportunity to step into the past of one of Wales's finest Grade I listed Georgian town houses built in 1714 and situated in the heart of the town. The conducted tour will span both the Georgian and Victorian eras. What do you know about the Stepney family?

After the tour we have been offered a private room so we can share in a light lunch together and marvel at what we have learnt and seen.

The cost of the tour is £12 with payment made in advance on line (s/c 30-91-68, account 01231223) or cheque or cash to Eric and unfortunately it's nonrefundable. Please **don't** pay until you have had confirmation from me that your place has been secured.



Lunch will need to be prebooked, so there will be no hanging around on the day, but payment for the light lunch isn't necessary until then.

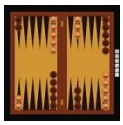
Please let me know if you have any dietary requirements on booking.

Parking is available nearby in the Thomas Street car park and the house is fully accessible. There is no organised transport for this trip. Can you also let me know if you are willing to car share to make this outing available to everyone.

To sum up, initially can you let me know if you are interested so I can book your place as places are limited and we have to move quickly on this one. A lot to organise and not much time to do it.

As a Llanelli girl I know you won't be disappointed!!

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Back gammon – Kate Waldron

Fortunately, we don't get "shushed" in the library any more as there was a lot of laughter when we were playing this month. It was good to see Angela and Colin back again as they are new members, together with some of our regulars. For anyone who hasn't played, if you are passing the library on the second Wednesday of the month, between 10.30 - 12.00, please call in even if only for a few minutes to see how the game is played. We next meet on 11th November.

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Knitting and Nattering – Ann Kitchen 



This month Dr Hilary Lewis contacted us to say her postponed trip to Uganda was going ahead. She was pleased when she received the baby clothes Maud, Jenny and the knitting group had knitted.

In November Dr Hilary has agreed to come to the knitting group to share her experiences.

We are all looking forward so much to meeting her.

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Book Club – Ann Kitchen 

In September we discussed 'The Keeper of Lost Things' by Ruth Hogan as chosen by Lyn. It received a strong 4/5 in our scoring system. An interesting first novel.

The November Book Club will be on our new date, the first Monday of the month. At long last we shall get the chance to discuss the book 'The List of Suspicious Things' by Jennie Godfrey as chosen by Sue.

For the December meeting there is a last minute change to the original chosen book which will now be 'The Eights' by Joanna Miller, chosen by Ann – 'It's Oxford in 1920, the first time the world famous university had admitted female students. The book follows the lives of four young women who are giddy with dreams of equality, education and emancipation.'

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Philosophy Group – Chas Griffin

Floss Group:
We considered whether mankind has actually made progress over the centuries, and whether Karl Marx had a good case for predicting the future path of human progress. ('Er.... maybe... but progress is extremely slow and patchy. Definite cause for optimism, however, if we can get over the current mania for paranoid suspicion of 'the other'. Yes, 'oil' is the current key, along with unbridled narcissism).

We also wondered whether our DNA's vibration might resonate with other people's: hence 'compatibility' or 'dislike'.

The Group will be meeting twice more before concluding. If there's the interest I'll be offering a new group at some point, probably after the mayhem of Christmas.

If you'd like to attend, come along on 10th and 24th November in CAVS 2:00 pm. Mind-stretching fun for all!

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Short Mat Bowls – Eric Kitchen 

In my absence I was once again grateful to Richard for leading the group this month and providing this report.

It went very well, enjoyed by Colin, Angela, Gareth, Huw, Georgia, Pat and Sheila.

We played a match, split into 2 teams with each player having 2 woods, great fun and competitive. Next time Bob [club rep] suggests to get the score boards out!

Gareth and Bob said there has been a great improvement in skills and said we have some very good players and we should give consideration to the group playing more often.

If you would like to join us let me know (eric@carmarthenu3a.org.uk).

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Bridge Group – Rosemond Halls

Both the Monday and Wednesday evening groups are doing well. There is now a waiting list to set up a third group. If you are interested, please contact rosemond@carmarthenu3a.org.uk.

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Coffee Morning – Chris Driver

Come and meet and chat with existing and new u3a members. This is a warm, welcoming group. Attendance averages 16-20. The Ivy Bush is always welcoming, the only requirement is to buy a drink and enjoy the company.

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Sunday Lunch Group – Chris Woodward.

Diary dates

November Sunday Lunch

Our November Sunday Lunch had been provisionally booked for the Falcon in Lammas Street however this has now been moved to a Sunday Lunch Club favourite:

The Hollybrook Country Inn in Bronwydd, Carmarthen SA33 6BE for 1:00 pm on Sunday 8th November.

If you would like to attend, please contact Chris Woodward by Monday 2nd November by email: chrisw@carmarthenu3a.org.uk.

December Sunday Lunch

Our December Sunday Lunch has been booked for Sunday 6th December at The Quinns Rugby Club, Morfa Lane, Carmarthen, SA31 3AX.

If you would like to attend the December lunch please contact Chris Woodward by Monday 30th November by email: chrisw@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Unfortunately, this is limited to 26.

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Digital Group – Margaret Nolan

The November digital meeting is at 2:00 pm on Monday 16th at the Learning Centre. Any u3a member (or potential member) who has any computer problems or queries is welcome. It is a drop-in session but there will be a discussion on computer related topic(s).

Don't forget to bring your phone, iPad, laptop etc. You can also suggest any future topics.

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Exploring World Faiths – Andrew Padfield

Skanda Vale

After the u3a visit to Skanda vale in May, several members expressed a desire to hear about Skanda Vale and its origins. Therefore the October meeting was a talk by Brother Andy, one of the monks at the Skanda Vale Ashram/Community. "Skanda" is a Hindu word meaning a leaper or attacker. Another name for Skanda is Murugan who apparently was the son of a major Hindu deity. The largest temple on the site is dedicated to Murugan and it is where we attended a service during our May visit. The Skanda Vale Hospice is connected to the Ashram as it was largely due to the Guru that it was established.

The community came about as a result of a vision of Guru Sri Subramanium. he was born in Sri Lanka in 1929. His father was the Chief Medical Officer of Health and his mother was a well-known seer/mystic who embraced all religions. At the age of 7 the Guru changed his name to Subramanium, the Hindu god of war, wisdom and victory. At the age of 18 he left Sri Lanka and travelled widely in Europe, attending the Nuremberg trials and also having an audience with the Pope. He eventually settled in London running a florist`s shop by day while at night teaching meditation, yoga and chanting. in 1962 during a pilgrimage to Sri Lanka he had a vision calling on him to establish a multi-faith community where the emphasis would be on a personal experience of God free from religious dogma or orthodoxy. This can be summed up in his teaching that there are many religions but only one God. Several people were attracted by that idea and later they formed a small temple in London. This became known as the Community of the Many Names of God, which is still the official name of Skanda Vale.

As a result of his vision of a community devoted to the worship of God regardless of creed, Subramanium decided he would like to establish a permanent community in a remote spot away from commercialisation. After 1 year of searching he came across a derelict farm near Llanpumsaint which seemed the ideal location. With the aid of donations, the farm was bought in 1973, largely as a result of donations, and the Guru and his followers rebuilt the farmhouse using their own labour and unwanted and recycled building materials.

In 1976 the community at Skanda Vale became a monastic order. The Guru greatly admired St Francis and his insistence on poverty, chastity and obedience. As a result the Community monks wear Franciscan robes and a 108 -bead necklace which represents the Hindu religion. Although the emphasis is very much on a multi-faith devotion to God, the main focus of the Community is Hinduism. Even so, the major festivals of other world religions are celebrated, e.g. Christmas Day, and there is in fact a Sunday evening Christian service. In 1980 it became a charity. The Guru died in 2007.

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Discussion Group – Peter Loughran

It will be 'business as usual' in November - we can discuss the subject of AI and all its manifestations! More on that nearer the time!

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Art Group – Chris Driver

We continue to enjoy our fortnightly meetings and have welcomed several new members over the past months. Currently there is an even balance betweem Cartref Cynnes residence and u3a memnbers. Currently I have a healthy informal waiting list. Several members have fine art credentials, even so we also welcome all abilities.



Many of us visited the Art Group's exhibition. What talent we have in this group. A huge thank you to Chris and her team for this exhibition. Unfortunately it was a sunny day when I visited and the photos don't do the work justice.













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Garden Group – Kathie Wareham (Coordinator)

September garden lead – Juliet



On 25th September the Garden Group visited the Dinefwr Orchard in Home Farm Llandeilo, which is part of the Dinefwr estate. Philip James was our extremely knowledgeable host for the afternoon, along with Richard and Paul. There were 33 in our group in total. We had an hours tour of the orchard where Philip gave an informative talk about the various apples and many felt they had learnt a great deal from his talk. We had a taste of a russet apple and learnt about pruning and how heritage apples are grown with a view to preserving those trees which would otherwise be lost. Following the tour we sat outside the granary where people were able to taste several apple juices and cider including a juice straight from the press. Tea and apple cake were had by all and many purchased bottles of juice/cider produced by the orchardeers totaling around £100. Many expressed how much they had enjoyed the afternoon and how much they had learnt along the way. The apple cake went down well.








A garden group lead this month with a difference. Thank you Juliet for organising and for the cake. The feedback has been enjoyable on both accounts.

October Garden event

The Garden Group were invited to join a Q&A garden session at Parc yr Esgob. (Bishop's Park) A thoroughly enjoyable evening that was very interesting and informative in a relaxed atmosphere- Kathie

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Walking Group – Eric Kitchen (Coordinator)

Due to members' holidays, appointments various excuses we cancelled this month's walk. Next month Peter will be leading us around Laugharne. Details to follow.

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Music Appreciation Group – Richard Swann 

At our September meeting the choices of music were varied and led to interesting discussions. Eric chose Motel Blues by Alvin Lee about the loneliness of being on tour even though surrounded by lots of people, and a lot of the time was longing to be home.

Colin played Whitsun Dance, a folk song, on this recording by Shirley and Dolly Collins, about the impact of World War 1 on British women who were preserving traditions whilst the men were away fighting.

Rosemond talked about Tim Rhys-Evans, founder of Only Men Aloud and subsequently forming Only Boys Aloud and that she had heard them singing. The track chosen was the Simon and Garfunkel song Bridge over Troubled Waters sing by Only Men Aloud.

Sheila was remembering the cruise she and Richard had taken up the Norwegian coast and across to Svalbard to see the midnight sun. Each evening there was a presentation on the events of the day and music from the area we had visited. She chose Vaken med Solen (Awake with the Sun) by Nina Gaarden from the Lofoten Islands.

Richard chose Craig Armstrong 's Balcony scene from Romeo and Juliet and the Intermezzo from Caverleria Rusticana by Mescagni inviting a discussion about the similarities between the two pieces and the emotions they evoked.

If music, of any Genre, plays a part in your life please come along and join us on October 28th at 2:30 at the CAVS building, the Mount, Queen Street. If you just want to come for a taster session to see if it might be for you, please feel free to do so.

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Coffi a Chlonc – Peter Loughran

As I suspected we were a small group of four of us meeting in the Ivy Bush. However we had a really good discussion. Our conversation ranged across continents (from Swaziland across the Mediterranean), medical matters and the complexities of trying to see a doctor and getting through triage, walking the new Teifi Valley trail which some of have done and others would aspire to, publication of diaries and memoirs, the latest developments on the Tywi Valley cycle route and the implication for traffic flows in Abergwili (of all places), the upcoming history talk

on Welsh place names (most relevant for our Welsh group) and some thoughts on the extent to which u3a was leaning into Welshess or Englishness and much more.
Why not come and join us for another wide ranging discussion on current and not so current affairs. We are a broad church and our ramblings range widely. We next assemble on Tuesday 17th November at 2pm in the Ivy Bush - a nice comfortable and quiet environment!
Croeso cynnes i bawb

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10 Pin Bowling - Ann Kitchen



Did this lead to a marital dispute…….?!!

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Peter has acquired Welsh lanyards for Welsh Learners. If you are interested in acquiring one please ask at the registration desk at the next meeting. Diolch.

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History Group – Judith Holland 

In October Dr James January-McCann, Place Names Officer at the Royal Commission, will be talking about the history and development of the 'List of Welsh Place Names' project, and discuss the various sources from which it draws material, with a strong focus on local place names.

Sadly, I am going to miss his talk, but the History group team will be there as usual: Rosemond, Juliet, Ann, Frances, Peter and Ann T. As always, a big thankyou to them for their support in my absence and throughout the year. - Judith

The November speaker booked is Ann Dorsett. She will be talking about David Morley. Further information to follow.

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Just returned from this month's history talk. You can tell when a talk is so interesting you can hear a pin drop and no one wants to leave. Absolutely fascinating looking at Welsh house, place and field names and how they have changed over the centuries. These names were often passed down from generation to generation and reflect the geographic landmarks in the area. In more recent years names have been Anglicised which is always a bone of contention. How do Welsh names get to be changed from Faerdre Fach to Happy Donkey Hill or Bwlch Einion to Mountain Sea View to, often to promote the tourist industry? How do other countries manage to keep their heritage?

We also learnt there have been 69 different names for Carmarthen dating back to the Middle Ages and none related to Merlin.

Dr January-McCann explained how his research requires examining Tithe maps, Parish maps and recently talking to people who still remember the old names before it's too late. All this data is then mapped out on to the web page for historic place names. Definitely a labour of love but well worth the effort preserving our heritage for future generations. - Ann

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Who's who on the committee.

Richard Swann	Chair	chair@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Harold Liberty	Vice-chair	vicechair@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Susan Edwards	Secretary	secretary@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Eric Kitchen	Treasurer	treasurer@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Eric Kitchen	Membership	membership@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Ann Kitchen	Group Coordinator	ann@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Ann Kitchen	Newsletter Editor	editor@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Ann Kitchen	Network Representative	ann@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Peter Loughran	Web Editor	peter@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Peter Loughran	Facebook Editor	peter@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Judith Holland	Committee Member	judith@carmarthenu3a.org.uk

Committee Assistants

Anne Priest	Minute Secretary	
Eleanor Baird	Speaker Secretary	speaker@carmarthenu3a.org.uk

Useful Websites

Carmarthen u3a website is: www.carmarthenu3a.org.uk

The West Wales Network website is: West Wales Network - Home - Wales Region

The national u3a website is: u3a - Welcome to the u3a

November 2026 Group Activities

2nd	10:30	Monday	Coffee Morning	Ivy Bush	chris@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
2nd	11:00	Monday	10 pin bowling	Excel Bowling Club	ann@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
2nd	14:00	Monday	World Faiths	The Mount (CAVS)	andrew@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
2nd	14:00	Monday	Book Club	Ivy Bush	ann@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
3rd	10:00	Tuesday	The Park Walkers	Velodrome	pat@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
5th	13:45	Thursday	Short Mat Bowls	Bancyfelin Hall	eric@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
5th	14:00	Thursday	Literature	Ivy Bush	pthacker@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
6th	14:00	Friday	Scrabble	Library	angela@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
8th	13;00	Sunday	Sunday Lunch	Hollybrook	chrisw@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
9th	14:00	Monday	Knitting & Nattering	Ivy Bush	ann@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
10th	10:00	Tuesday	The Park Walkers	Velodrome	pat@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
10th	14:00	Tuesday	Poetry	The Mount (CAVS)	pat@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
10th	14:00	Tuesday	Philosophy	The Mount (CAVS)	chas@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
11th	09:30	Wednesday	Art	Cartref Cynnes	chris@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
11th	10:30	Wednesday	Backgammon	Library	kate@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
11th	14:00	Wednesday	Discussion	The Mount (CAVS)	peter@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
12th	14:00	Thursday	Lindy Hop	Bowling Club	eleanor@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
16th	10:30	Monday	Mayoral Visit	St Peter's Town Hall	peter@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
16th	14:00	Monday	Digital	Learning Centre	margaret@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
17th	10:00	Tuesday	The Park Walkers	Velodrome	pat@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
17th	14:30	Tuesday	Coffi a Chlonc	Ivy Bush	peter@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
18th	14:00	Wednesday	History	Bowling Club	judith@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
19th	11:00	Thursday	Llanelly House	Llanelli	ann@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
20th	10:30	Friday	Walking	Laugharne	peter@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
23rd	10:00	Monday	Committee	CAVS	secretary@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
24th	10:00	Tuesday	The Park Walkers	Velodrome	pat@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
24th	14:00	Tuesday	Philosophy	The Mount (CAVS)	chas@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
25th	09:30	Wednesday	Art	Cartref Cynnes	chris@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
25th	14:30	Wednesday	Listening to Music	The Mount (CAVS)	richard@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
26th	14:00	Thursday	Monthly Meeting	Bowling Club	richard@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Weekly		Monday	Bridge	Various	rosemond@carmarthenu3a.org.uk
Weekly		Wednesday	Bridge	Various	rosemond@carmarthenu3a.org.uk

Times and venues as provided by Group Leaders, if in doubt please check with them.