

Fife u3a Newsletter June 2026

From the Chair

Firstly I would like to congratulate our booking secretary, Fiona Brooking-Thomas, for organising our superb monthly meeting speakers. In recent months, we have learned more about neurology, the climate crisis, ways to improve life for visually impaired members, the Wemyss caves and Islam. This really does reflect our strapline to live, learn and laugh.

Our May monthly meeting was preceded by our AGM, where we elected new Committee members and thanked those who had previously served on the Committee but reached the end of their terms. We also approved our annual report and accounts which are on our website AGM 2026 - Fife. Following the Monthly Meeting we held the first meeting of the new Committee and members took the following roles after some discussion.

Chair: Fiona McOwan

Vice Chair: Susan Kirkwood

Treasurer: Caroline Evans

Secretary: to be filled by co-option

Membership Secretary: Doreen Somerville

Groups Coordinator: Nanette McCulloch

Bookings Secretary: Fiona Brooking-Thomas

Health & Safety: John Barr

Committee member: Derrick Brown

Our June monthly meeting will be on Thursday 11th June as our Fife u3a Members Showcase – open afternoon. It will be held in St. Bryce Kirk. Once again, this features in the Langtoun Fest and friends are welcome along with Fife u3a members. Groups can set up from 13.00 and the Showcase will open to all at 14.00.

Fiona McOwan

Have you heard about Boccia? Try it out on Monday 22nd June

Boccia is a ball game that's a blend of bowls and pétanque and is played in teams of three or four.

The aim of the game is to throw the leather balls as close as you can to the jack. It was originally set up as a game for people with a disability and is now part of the Paralympics. The game is played seated so is suitable for all abilities.

Some of us recently went to a taster session organised by Chris Mcloughlin from Active Fife. We had great fun but quickly realised that it was a game that, as well as being a laugh, could also be really skilled. We didn't do the skilled bit. Some more practice was needed!

Chris has offered to come along and run a session for Fife u3a. I've booked the small hall at St Bryce Centre for Monday 22nd June at 11 am and Chris will bring along the sets of

balls we need and also explain the rules to us. He has offered to give a bocchia set to us if we want to set up a new group.

If you would like to come along and give it a try could you let me know so I can give Chris an idea of how many to expect.

Kind Regards
Marion Lackie - torbain@gmail.com

There are thieves about!

Recent reports from the Third Age Trust highlight two active scams targeting our community:

- **Fake Fundraising:** The site **GoodHub.com** has created unauthorized donation pages for u3as. We are **not** fundraising online. If you see a fundraising page for Fife u3a on any website, alert **treasurer.fifeu3a@gmail.com** immediately.
- **Bank Fraud:** Scammers are using Charity Commission data (not yet the Scottish charity regulator OSCR) to contact committee members, claiming there is a bank account "issue" to trick them into moving money.

Remember: Police and banks will **never** ask you to move money. For advice, visit



stopthinkfraud.gov.uk or Stop Scams UK. Stay alert!

Out and About Group

The Out and About Group can really be anything and suggestions are always welcome. Here are some of the outings recently undertaken.

Afternoon Tea, The Academy, Fife College.
Food is prepared and served by students. As well as enjoying food, it was great for everyone to be sitting down together having a good catchup.



Scottish Parliament.

We travelled by bus and had a coffee in Parliament cafe before meeting our guide Tom. Whole tour is free of charge. Tom gave us very informative tour of building, taking any questions. 3 languages are spoken in Parliament - English, Gaelic and British Sign Language.



Next trip was on a barge on Union Canal leaving from Polworth Parish Church, Edinburgh. This trip is run by volunteers and was free but we made a donation. Weather was extremely kind and we were able to enjoy our picnic lunch on deck

Future trips are to Royal Yacht Britannia and Catwalk Exhibition at Victoria and Albert, Dundee.

Garden Visits Group

Our first visit was to see the snowdrops on the Dovecot Estate at Aberdour. It was a sunny day and the snowdrops were as fresh and pretty as ever. After stopping for coffee in the High Street, we made our way to Aberdour Castle to the "Gardens Around Scotland" exhibition, which consisted of large photographs of the many beautiful and well known gardens across the country.

At the end of the month, there was a visit to 1 Alburne Park in Glenrothes to see the hellebores. Several Scotland's Garden Scheme gardens featured hellebores this spring as did Millfield House in Falkland, our next planned visit. Unfortunately, the day was spoiled by persistent heavy rain.

On a Friday in April we saw the newly opened Sensory Garden at Dunnikier Park. There are level pathways and wheelchair accessible planters filled with plants to stimulate the senses. Also a plaque in braille on the 'Take Some Breathing Space' bench and the sound of tall grasses and wind chimes contribute to the peaceful and relaxing atmosphere.

In early May we were invited to Tom and Rosemary Hogg's lovely garden in Glenrothes. The colourful azaleas, the fresh green of the trees in the neighbouring Riverside Park and the interesting pond area (originally a swimming pool) were a delight to walk round, and the tea and homemade baking which followed were much appreciated.



The following Saturday saw a joint visit with the Out and About group to Falkland Palace and Gardens. That too gave us a very pleasant day.

Future visits include Pittenweem on 13th June and, in July, Silverburn, near Leven. In August we will go to Canongate Gardens in Edinburgh and in September we go to the Royal Botanic Garden.

Walkers Group

The walk in March was along the River Devon at Rumbling Bridge. The river was fast flowing, the waterfalls were lovely and the rumble of the water lived up to its name. The circular walk was 4.5 miles long and although it was a windy day we were sheltered for most of the way.



The April walk at Crawford Priory in Springfield near Cupar was a special treat as thousands of daffodils were in bloom in the Estate. There were many different varieties and they appeared at every corner we turned. Wordsworth's "A host of golden daffodils" could well have been written there.

Despite its name Crawford Priory was not a Priory but a large country estate house. The original house was enlarged in a "gothic ecclesiastical" style by Lady Mary Lindsay Crawford in the early 19th century and was abandoned in 1968 after becoming too difficult to maintain.

The most recent walk in May was at Portmoak Moss at Scotlandwell. We had a magnificent view of Loch Leven at the start and we then walked into the forest and along the raised peat bog. This is a well maintained area with good walkways and small bridges, all very picturesque. The highlight of the day was spotting a red squirrel. The Woodland Trust have plans to restore the bog to its original state but this has led to huge complaints as it would mean losing a lot of the wildlife, possibly our red squirrels too.



Our next 2 walks are at Dr Neil's Garden, Duddingston and a daunder around Balcarres Estate near Colinsburgh. New walkers are always welcome and details can be found on the website.

Film and Theatre Group

Pascale Gray has volunteered to re-activate this group and to add concerts to the programme of films and theatre performances.

To gauge the interest for such a group across Fife u3a, can you please contact Pascale directly and let her know what you would be interested in. Her email is pascale.cuxac@gmail.com

Once she knows what members are looking for, she will pull together information about films, plays, concerts available from July-August onwards. She also intends to set up a WhatsApp group so that bookings and travel can be co-ordinated.

Wemyss Ware Cats

Four of the wonderfully characterful sculptures from the Wemyss Ware Cat Trail were spotted and quite a few people have since asked what they're actually made from and it turns out they're constructed from fibreglass which explains why they cope so well with the weather, while still looking so bright and fresh. There's also a lovely bit of local history behind them. The trail takes its inspiration from the original Wemyss Ware pottery cats first produced in Fife in the late 1800s and now very much collectors' pieces. The modern trail gives that tradition a contemporary twist, with different artists re-imagining the classic cat in their own style — which is why each sculpture looks so distinct and full of personality.

