

Inverness and Black Isle u3a Newsletter

January 2026

Welcome



To the January Newsletter

A word from our Convener

General Meetings

Members will have noticed that we are currently experimenting with holding our meetings at different times, on different days and exploring a range of different venues. This resulted from the questionnaire circulated to all members in September 2024. We already knew that the majority of our members did not attend our general meetings; but this was the very first time we had actually asked them why. The reasons given included not wishing to drive in the dusk or the dark in the winter months, not being able or willing to attend meetings on Mondays and being unable to easily reach the venues, particularly true for those who relied on public transport, or needed easily accessible parking or did not wish to drive more than very short distances.

As a u3a we cover a very large area not well served by public transport. Many of our members volunteer with a variety of other organisations and some still work part time, indeed we are encouraged to emphasize that we are for those no longer in full time employment rather than those who are retired. So it is likely to be impossible to find a day or time that would suit everyone for our meetings.

As our number of interest group continues to grow, clashes are increasingly likely. Yet I firmly believe that we should ensure that we try and cater for our total membership and that no one group or locality is any more 'entitled' than any other. It is important that we cater for everyone that we don't cater just for the majority; but also protect the rights of minorities as well. This almost certainly means that we will need to continue to offer meetings on a variety of days and at different times and in a variety of venues to try and give ALL of our members a chance to attend at least some of our meetings. We do, I think, need to show that we respond to all of our members as far as that is possible and to the best of our ability.

Meeters and Greeters

At each of our general meetings it would be good if we could have a couple of members who would welcome any new members and also be on hand to chat with any members who have not been to a meeting before. Please let me know if you could help with this.

lbiconvener@gmail.com

New Members

We could and should do much more to welcome our new members and so I am looking for a member or members who could help with this. Maybe helping write a 'welcome leaflet' and also organising occasional coffee mornings. If you could help with this do please e mail me to arrange an informal chat. lbiconvener@gmail.com

Monday 24th August – Wednesday 26th August 2026
at Stirling Court Hotel, University of Stirling



Stirling Court Hotel



Wallace Monument at Stirling

Choose one of these six topics:

AI: Artificial Intelligence

BSL: British Sign Language

Craft: Japanese Sashiko Embroidery

History: The Celts

Photography: Enhancing Your Photography

Social Scirnce: Positive Psychology



Strolling to Admire nature at the Summer School in 2024

Full board residential and day delegate rates are available
in hotel or university guest accommodation.

More information to follow

Enquiries to summerschoolu3aScotland@gmail.com

Do you want to learn how to write for Wikipedia?



Is Wikipedia one of the first places you go to find out about something? Would you like to learn how to contribute?

The Workers' Educational Association (WEA) Highland Association has arranged for Sara Thomas, a trainer from Wikipedia, to come to Inverness. There will be three sessions in Inverness Library:

☐ Wednesday 25th February, 1pm-4pm

☐ Wednesday 4th March 10am-4pm

☐ Wednesday 11th March 10am-4pm

Bookings please to wikihighlands@gmail.com

What's involved in the course?

☐ The sessions will be three consecutive weeks in Inverness Library. We ask people to commit to all three.

☐ Basic computer literacy is strongly recommended. If your computer skills are not great, but you want to help draft content, we'll try to pair you with someone who has computer skills but isn't sure what topics they want to edit.

☐ Wikipedia is an encyclopedia, which means that all statements need to have reputable sources cited. So you need to have a good idea about footnoting. Check out some Wikipedia entries if you are unsure what this means, and we will discuss this further during the course.

☐ By the end of our third session you'll be boldly editing existing content and maybe even contributing something new!

☐ And the course is free!

There's scope for people with various interests. They may relate to the topic or could be the presentation. Perhaps you want to make sure apostrophes are correct. Perhaps you want to ensure that records have summary boxes to make them easier to read. Perhaps you want to update a number of records with a newly published important source.

People who edit on Wikipedia are also a community, and there's an opportunity to become part of this, either online, in person or both.

This project is thanks to a legacy from Ann MacInnes, former WEA Scotland Board member and supporter, with additional support from High Life Highland. We know she would have loved to have participated!

WEA Scotland: Adult education transforms lives. Working with partners helps WEA Scotland bring life-changing adult education to over 28000 people every single year.



Inverness and Black Isle U3a

U3a Mindful Based Living Course

We would be pleased to see you as a member of the next group of people on a U3a Mindfulness course which will start in late January or February 2026.

The practice of Mindfulness is found in many spiritual traditions and most in the West, including this one, are derived from Buddhism. Our u3a course is based on the well-researched evidence-based Mindfulness Based Living Course (MBLC).

Our course offers a practical guide to the development of a mindful approach to living in the modern world. The user-friendly workbook that comes with the course offers useful and practical tools for living in this somewhat frantic world.

The course is not a therapy group, it is secular and open to everyone. Each group is kept small and can be run weekly or fortnightly. The course can be face to face or online on Zoom depending on the wishes of group members.

If you would like to have a chat on the phone or send me an email to find out more about the course it would be lovely to talk with you at:

kml.boyd@hotmail.com or

Mobile 07554 375363

Home 01463 238972

Small music playing groups

Years ago BI&Inv u3a had a small music group playing recorders - plus one cello in lieu of a bass recorder. Now we want to try to stimulate small music playing groups again.

If you play an instrument and would like to play with others these groups could interest you.

We will put out a short questionnaire early in 2026 to find out what interests, instruments and skills musicians in our u3a have. If there is enough interest we may be able to have several groups, or a larger group. We just want to get things started as soon as possible.

Our u3a faces quite severe challenges with a diverse group of members spanning a wide area. Some members are based in Inverness, others on the Black Isle around Fortrose, and some at the extreme boundaries of Inverness.

The questionnaire may help us to overcome some of the logistic issues of organising such playing groups.

We will have a Kick Off meeting on 13th January at the North Kessock Community Hub, from 2pm to 4pm, at which interests can be expressed.

If you are interested please contact the Convener at lbiconvener@gmail.com to be updated about the questionnaire, or just come along to the North Kessock Community Hub Kick Off.

Cycle Group



The Cycle Group got off to a good start this year on Tuesday 29th April when four members took part in a circular ride of 24 miles from the UHI Campus via Tornagrain and Croy. We continued with a further eleven outings over the summer and autumn covering a total distance of 343 miles. The number of members involved ranged from three to seven on any one outing.

The other areas we visited were:-
Daviot with a tour around the lochs to the south of Inverness - 6 members did 28 miles.
Kilmorack circuit via Cannich - 4 members did 32 miles.
Inverfarigaig with a ride to Loch Killin and back - 3 members did 26 miles.
Fortrose circuit via Cromarty - 4 members did 26 miles.
Blackfold to Kiltarlity - 7 members did 36 miles.
North Kessock circuit via Culbokie - 7 members did 28 miles.
Littlemill to Cawdor via the Clava Cairns - 6 members did 32 miles.
Nairn circuit via Drynachan - 4 members did 32 miles.
Dingwall circuit via Strathpeffer - 3 members did 24 miles.
Nairn circuit via kintessock and Conicavel - 4 members did 32 miles.
UHI Campus via Croy, Kilvrock and Dalcross castle - 6 members did 23 miles.

The Cycling Group has now stopped for the winter. Hopefully, subject to the weather, we should start again towards the end of April 2026.

Thanks to everyone that took part.

Short Walks Group

Our Short Walks Group has continued to flourish over the Autumn and into the Winter with a good turnout on all walks. Our record turnout was of 24 members on Derek's walk on the 3rd of December

The walks have been varied. Mary Findlay lead a most enjoyable walk starting in Dores and going into Torr Wood. We then took a high farm track with great views over Loch Ness before descending back to the village of Dores. Alan Cruden guided us from Boat of Garten through the woods to the scenic Loch Vaa. Dee took us on the coastal walk from Fortrose. Audrey was our guide when we walked from Drumnadrochit into Craigmonie Woods. We had splendid views over another part of Loch Ness and we sadly witnessed the damage to trees caused by the latest winter storm.

Our second walk in October led by Rosemary and Pat was a circuit taking in the South Sutor. Sandra lead an interesting walk which started in Reelig Glen car park. Having completed the signposted trail, Sandra lead us higher towards the gorge. Unfortunately, due to fallen trees, we could not reach our objective. However, Sandra has promised to redo the walk in the future.

Our next walk from Arpafeelie to Killearnan had to be cancelled due to snow. Eileen will lead this walk in 2026. Derek's walk, with the record turnout of 24 members started at the Vue Cinema in Eastfield. We crossed the Golden Bridge, visited Raigmore Ring Cairn, King Duncan's grave and well, passed by Maggie's Centre and lunched in the UHI Campus café. We returned to the start via the new Inverness prison building site. Derek had plenty of information about each.



Our pre-Christmas walk, with the other walking groups, was to Hill 99 in Culbin Forest followed by lunch at Brodie Countryfare. We had a turnout of 21 walkers and 4 more from the walking group joined us for lunch.

Many thanks to all those who have taken part in the walks. It's your company that makes our walks worthwhile. A special thanks to all leaders. You are the people who make our group function.

Pickleball Group



Members of our u3a Pickleball Group joined 16 players from other local groups to take part in the 2025 Loch Ness Tournament at Craigmonie Centre Loch Ness last month. Four u3a players entered the 60+ Switch Doubles competition and congratulations go to u3a's Gordon Kaylor who won the gold medal. The photo's show all the players, and the medallist and volunteer 'officials'.

The u3a Pickleball Group has been going for just over a year now, playing in both Inverness Leisure and the Black Isle



We are back on court in January, as follows:

- Thursday 8th January – Coaching 13:30 to 14:30 – Game Play 14:30 to 15:30 – Inverness Leisure Centre
- Friday 16th January – Coaching with Game Play 14:30 to 16:00 – Black Isle Leisure Centre
- Thursday 22nd January – Game Play 13:30 to 15:30 – Inverness Leisure Centre

Follow 'Inverness & Black Isle u3a' on Facebook for information on a possible 'Gentle Pickleball' session for new players and those who want to more gentle games and longer breaks towards the end of January.

.....and finally

Thank you for all your contributions this month. There were an awful lot so my apologies if I've missed anything off. Please can I have everything for the February newsletter by 24th January.



Have a happy
and healthy
and fabulous
New year

