



Falkirk and District u3a Newsletter



January 2026

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FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members,

I do hope that you all had a happy and enjoyable Christmas and New Year. On behalf of the trustees of the Falkirk and District u3a, we would like to wish you and your families a happy, healthy and safe New Year.

I hope those who attended the Open Meeting on 6th January found my talk on 'how we got the vote' interesting and informative. There are many quotes about democratic systems from famous people, but I think my favourite is the one by Winston Churchill which says 'No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.' How true this saying is.

I have decided not to make any New Year resolutions this year after my abject failure to keep the one I made last year: namely, to play the online game Wordle every day to improve my Scrabble skills. In spite of my failure to keep this resolution I do think my Scrabble skills have improved a little, thanks mainly to the help I have received from some of my fellow Scrabble players. If you have made a New Year's resolution this year, may I wish you every success in keeping the resolution.

The trustees had a meeting with some of our new members on 29th December 2025 at the Klondyke Garden Centre. It was very good to meet so many new members and to answer their questions on such matters as publicity and marketing, Open Meetings including how speakers are selected, parking, interest groups including groups that use Zoom which may benefit those members who have difficulties traveling.

At the meeting with the new members one new member remarked that the Falkirk and District u3a website had a login on the home page. Toni Smillie explained to the new members that this login was for site administrative purposes only and would not inhibit access to all parts of the website. Talking of logins, or more accurately the lack of logins, the Membership Area of the main u3a website no longer has a login. Members can now gain access to an area where 'you can access support and advice, guidance for new trustees, information about the Trust, and details of subject advisers and subject networks.' The great news is that this is one less password to have to remember.

May I wish you all a good and peaceful January and February.

Peter Kahan

A mindfulness thought

"No matter how difficult the past, you can always begin again today."

Jack Kornfield

Interest Group Section

New Groups for Session 2025-26

(By Dorothy Ferrie)

Cinema Group

Our Secretary, Ruth Morris, has set up this group for members who wish to enjoy visits to the cinema in the company of others, and it has proved to be very popular.

Construction and the Built Environment

The Organiser, Colin McNeil, is looking for 1 or 2 more people to join before this group gets going.

Craft Group

Our Web Master and Membership Secretary, Toni Smillie, has set up a craft group, offering a variety of crafts on a first come, first served basis. Watch out for notifications.

Scottish Country Dancing

Organiser, Sandie Mathers, has already introduced a few of our members to learning these skills.

Ten-Pin Bowling Group

This group, set up by Jan Livingstone, already has about 12 members and had its first outing this month (see article below). Details of the group will be going on the website shortly.

Groups Looking an Organiser

(By Dorothy Ferrie)

Family History Group

Louise Westall has organised this group for many years and is now looking for someone else to take over. Louise will be happy to talk to you about the role, if you are interested.

Litter-Picking Group

An organiser is required on a temporary basis while Donald MacAulay recovers from a hip operation.

Local History Group

Jennifer Kightley is looking for someone to take over the organising of the group. Group activities are already in place up until April and Jennifer will be happy to discuss the group with you if you are interested in becoming the organiser.

Theatre Group 2

The website says what the group does and where it meets, but it doesn't have an organiser and as far as I know isn't operating. Let me know if there is any change or update.

New Groups?

Talk to me or send me an email at groups@falkirk3a.uk if you fancy starting a group or have an idea for a group. It can be anything you are interested in and think others might be interested in too. We're open to all suggestions and would simply advertise the group to other members and see what response we get.

Photography Group Outing to Edinburgh Christmas Markets

(By Jack Egdell)

On December 18th the group went through to Edinburgh to check out the Christmas Lights and Markets. We were not disappointed and got some great photos and we also managed to avoid the rain which began later when we were having our coffee and biscuits. January's visit will be to Bridge of Allan.



Scrabble Club

(By Peter Kahan)

Did you have a chance to explore the meaning of the new words that are likely to appear in English language dictionaries in 2026? Do not worry if you did not have time as their meanings are shown below according to Collins English Dictionary:

Broligarchy – ‘a small clique of very wealthy men who exert political influence.’

Delulu – ‘If you describe someone as delulu, you mean that they believe things that are not true or real.’

Inspo – ‘Inspo is someone or something that gives people ideas and makes them feel enthusiastic. Inspo is short for 'inspiration'.’

Tradwife – ‘A tradwife is a married woman who believes that her most important job is to take care of her husband, family, and home.’

Skibidi – ‘evil’ Collins Dictionary indicates that ‘This word is being monitored for evidence of usage.’

Here are a couple of Word quiz questions for you try this month.

If all the numbers from one to hundred are written out in words alphabetically, which word would come first?

Presbyterians is not just a religious denomination; it's also an anagram of the name of a singer of ‘Toxic’ and ‘Gimme More?’ What is the name of the singer?

Answers in next month’s Newsletter.

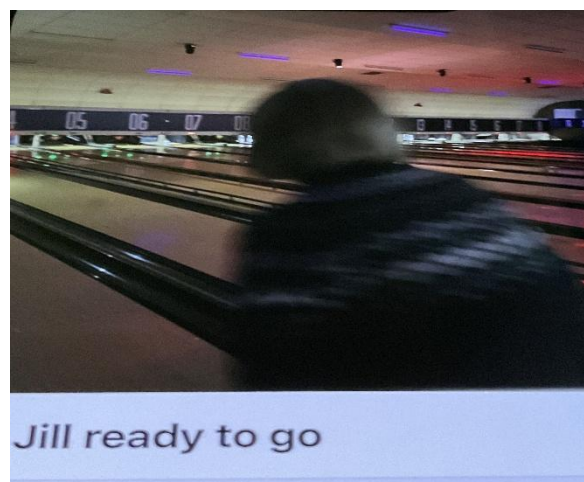
Ten-Pin Bowling Group

(By Jan Livingstone)

Our 1st outing took place Monday 12th January. Everyone enjoyed the time spent in good company with laughter at bowling skills and a good feeling of friendly competition. There were even 3 strikes recorded and it will be nice to see how we all improve game by game. It was agreed that we will play fortnightly on a Monday.

All are welcome and anyone wishing to give it a go contact me by email jmlqurt@gmail.com

A couple of the photos taken of the day.



Maths Teasers

(By Peter Kahan)

Did you have an opportunity to try the two Maths Teasers in the December 2025 Newsletter? If you did attempt the questions, I hope you were able to solve them, but don't worry if you could not solve them as the two questions are restated below along with their solutions.

Question 1

Here is a mental arithmetic test for you to try (calculators are not allowed).

Divide 64 by $\frac{1}{3}$, subtract 36 and divide the result by 4 to give the final answer.

Solution

You should have noted that 64 is divided by $\frac{1}{3}$, that is $64 \div \frac{1}{3} = \frac{64}{1} \div \frac{1}{3} = \frac{64}{1} \times \frac{3}{1} = 192$

Now take 36 away from 192, that is $192 - 36 = 156$

Finally divide 156 by 4 = $156 \div 4 = \mathbf{39}$

Question 2

This question is taken from the SQA 2025 NQ5 Applications of Mathematics Paper 1 (Non-calculator).

A farm has 3 different types of animals. It has sheep, pigs and cows in the ratio 9:7:4 respectively. There are 180 more sheep than there are cows.

Calculate the total number of animals on the farm.

Solution

This question is a bit trickier than it looks. You need to note that the difference in the share of sheep to cows is $9 - 4 = 5$ which corresponds to 180.

Thus, 5 shares = 180 or 1 share = $180 \div 5 = 36$

Thus, the number of sheep = $9 \times 36 = 324$, the number of pigs $7 \times 36 = 252$ and the number of cows $4 \times 36 = 144$

Thus, the total number of animals = $324 + 252 + 144 = \mathbf{720 \text{ animals}}$

You can also solve the problem as follows: $(9 + 7 + 4) \times 36 = 20 \times 36 = \mathbf{720 \text{ animals}}$

January Math Teaser

Here are another two new maths teasers for you to try in January/February.

Question 1

Find the value of x in the following equation.

$$\frac{x + x + x}{\sqrt{9}} = \sqrt{9}$$

Question 2

The following question has been taken from the SQA 2025 NQ5 Mathematics Paper 2 (Calculator Paper).

Change the subject of the formula to k .

$$B = \frac{1}{4} kc^2 - 3c$$