



Help needed to reform housing for retirees

u3a members thinking about moving home or with a professional interest in the built environment are needed to help improve housing for older people. Members will be asked to take part in consumer research, while retired professionals such as architects and planners will help inform a new ISO standard for age-friendly housing.

A report *Cultivating Neighbourhoods That Care*, published by the Agile Ageing Alliance with housing association Clarion and ISO (The International Organisation for Standardisation), says developers should focus on building age-friendly housing within multigenerational neighbourhoods to combat loneliness in all age groups.

These neighbourhoods might include large open courtyards with clear pathways, enclosed social spaces with plants and seating areas, large balconies, pharmacies on the ground floor, interactive shading and wayfinding systems for comfort and security.

Speaking at the report launch, u3a Chief Executive Sam Mauger said: "A multigenerational neighbourhood embodies equality of opportunity and

talent. It ensures that older adults are seen as contributors and consumers in the same way that every other working adult or younger person should be.

"Let's imagine a fresh collaborative approach which recognises that older people are not a burden but still have the potential to contribute to their communities."

Ian Spero, founder of the Agile Ageing Alliance, said: "Older people today do not want to be pigeonholed. If they are thinking of scaling down, we know they are looking to move to environments that support their lifestyle, which should include gardens, restaurants and public space for socialising. What's missing is a commonly agreed view of 'what good looks like', making it hard to plan. The sooner we can standardise best practice, the more confidence will increase and the faster the market will grow."

HAVE YOUR SAY

To get involved, please email your details to info@agileageing.org. To learn more about this initiative and to download *Cultivating Neighbourhoods That Care*, visit agileageing.org

DIGITAL NEEDS OF u3as

The pandemic has speeded up the rate with which u3a has embraced technology, with many groups learning how to use Zoom for meetings and members finding ways to learn online.

Now a digital strategy committee is looking at what kinds of digital technology can best meet the movement's needs. Use of online membership management systems, such as the Third Age Trust-supported Beacon, are becoming more popular and the Trust is upgrading the Sitebuilder website to Wordpress, which is more user-friendly.

The committee will consider what are the digital needs of Trust staff and what u3as would like from a digital future. It will also look at what organisations similar to u3a have done in developing their own digital strategies. The results will be published this summer, together with what will happen next.

u3a NETWORKING BOOMS

Hilary Jones will be standing down as chair of Network Link later this year after four years.

Hilary, who was u3a vice-chair from 2018 to 2021, has seen Network Link grow from around 30 groups to more than 80.

Networks are informal groupings of u3as that get together to share ideas and support each other.

"The feedback has been very positive," says Hilary. "Each meeting, we have presentations and break-out rooms on Zoom for further discussion. It's a wonderful way for u3as to communicate with each other and share ideas."

Hilary, who is chair of Flintshire u3a in North East Wales, will be succeeded by Sue Russell of Cotswold Link Network.

● **The next meeting is on 22 June. To book, email u3anetworklinkmeeting@gmail.com**