

SiteWorks Newsletter January 2026

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This newsletter is distributed to SiteWorks Web Managers (WMs) who are registered with us. We can optionally hold a second contact (Assistant WMs).

Do pass this link on to your SiteWorks users and others who contribute content.

To update our records, please use the form launched by clicking the button on our homepage at <https://siteworks.u3a.org.uk>.

Exemplar sites

December's newsletter sought suggestions of exemplar sites others could look at as a source of ideas. A thank you to everyone who proffered their site.

Below, in no particular order, are a selection of sites submitted. Do take a look. As well as discovering approaches you may like, there could also be styles you decide avoid if they don't work for your u3a.

tadcasterandvillages.u3asite.uk
sedgefield.u3asite.uk
bradford.u3asite.uk
oswestry.u3asite.uk

bristol.u3asite.uk
ware.u3asite.uk
bradford.u3asite.uk
derby.u3asite.uk

Review your Users

It is of course necessary security housekeeping to review your login Users periodically in case they have left your u3a or no longer have a role to edit your site. This is especially critical for those with Administrator rights.

When your site was setup it would have been popular practice to make one of the SiteWorks Team an Administrator to get things going. We have noticed that a number of sites still have SiteWorks team members past and present who are Administrators. If they are still active that's fine, but otherwise they should be deleted but do NOT delete the SwDevAdmin user of course.

Note that when you delete a user you need to assign any content (pages etc.) they owned by selecting another user. There is more on this in our User Guide here <https://siteworks.u3a.org.uk/docs/adding-editing-and-deleting-users/>

Image file formats plus avoid PNG

There are various file image formats out there. The most common on the web are JPEGs (extension .jpg or jpeg) and these also come out of most of our cameras and many smartphones (iPhone HEIC format is discussed later). A key attribute is that JPEG supports varying amounts of compression (smaller file size) with imperceivable loss of visual quality. This helps improve website response times.

While the file size of a photograph may not be noticeable on a high-speed home Internet connection, with a mobile connection or a rural home setup load times of uncompressed photographs will be noticeable.

When you upload JPEG photographs to your site WordPress takes care of automatically compressing them. In fact, different sized images will be generated internally so that they look equally good on a full screen home monitor down to a thumbnail image.

PNG files cannot be compressed. If loaded onto SiteWorks then the same image will be displayed for the resolution of a PC monitor as it will for a smartphone. One source of PNGs to be aware of are those generated by AI tools.

Already have PNGs on your site? A plugin called "EWWW Image Optimizer" will convert images in the Media library.

Future PNG uploads? If you have content editors who are likely to upload PNGs there is an option you can set for the Imsanity plugin that comes with your SiteWorks configuration. It can automatically convert PNG images to JPEG images. This is a great approach if you have no handy tools to convert images before uploading them. You will find this setting in the WordPress Dashboard 'Settings > Imsanity'.

PNG images do have their place. As transparent backgrounds are supported by the format a logo or icon can be created to blend into your site whatever background it is placed above. Creating these will be something for your enthusiasts with photoshop type tools.

HEIC format – be aware that more recent iPhones generate HEIC images by default, a format specific to the Apple universe. This can be changed on the phone through "Settings > Camera > Formats" and selecting "Most Compatible".

U3a Groups and contact

u3as adopt various ways to manage how their Groups are contacted. Some Groups will have a leader/convenor who is happy to be contacted directly through a SiteWorks Contact form. Others like queries for all Groups to be sent to one person, usually referred to as the Groups Coordinator. A majority no doubt do both.

SiteWorks seeks to offer flexibility by offering two routes to providing an email contact.

By default, the SiteWorks Group Information form has two contact entries:

CONTACT DETAILS	
Group Coordinator	<input type="text" value="Sample Contact"/> Select or leave blank
Primary group email	<input type="text"/> Email address for group

Note: additional contacts can be made available using the Groups tab under u3a Settings.

We recommend you only fill in **one of these fields** for each Group. If you fill in both then the visitor will see two contact options that will be confusing. For example:

Tiddlywinks	
Status:	Active, open to new members
Coordinator:	Web Manager
Group email:	Tiddlywinks_group

Which option should a visitor click?

If the contact is listed in the 'u3a Contacts' list then use that, and if not consider adding them. The contacts list has the advantage that it can be one maintainable place where all the email addresses can be updated when they change. The downside is the Contact list cannot be updated if the user has the Author role, something many Group leaders/convenors have.

To address this downside the 'Group Coordinator' can be left blank and an email contact specific to the Group added and maintained by the user with the Author role. This may also be preferable for a large u3a that already has a lot of u3a Contacts to maintain.

Note that the term 'Coordinator' can be changed through u3a Settings on the Dashboard menu, typically to 'Leader' or 'Convenor'.

u3a Settings Menu

General Groups Venues Events

Term for Group Coordinator

Your u3a may wish to use a different term for the person who manages a group, such as "leader" You can change the term used here.

Multiple categories for Events coming soon

The next releases of the Core plugin and the Import/Export plugin will include a change to support:

- Multiple categories for Events
- Enhancements to both the u3a group list block and the u3a events list block to allow multiple categories to be selected
- Import/Export support for multiple categories.

Excepting Import/Export, there should be no issues arising from the changes for websites that use just the standard SiteWorks plugins.

Changes to Categories column in CSV export and import files

When exporting, if multiple categories are set for an Event the Categories column will now generate a vertical-bar | separated string. If only a single category is present the Categories column will hold a single string as before.

Example of single Event category: "Outing"

Example of multiple Event categories: "Outing|Social||Indoor Games"

When importing, the plugin will expect the Categories column to use the same format, i.e. a single category is a simple string as before; multiple categories require a vertical-bar separated string.

Web Managers who have **added custom plugins** that work with the u3a_event custom post type will need to review their code to see if there are any changes needed. If you have written custom code that may be affected, or you rely on the import/export plugin, you can request a copy of the updated plugin for testing purposes in advance of deployment to all sites via the update service. To take this up please contact our Helpdesk (button on our home page <https://siteworks.u3a.org.uk>)

Drop-ins update

Our second Drop-in session for January kicked off with a demo given by Bev Southgate on editing menus. We hope to feature demos on a topic regularly so let us know (info@siteworks.u3a.org.uk) if you have a topic suggestion. You can also submit questions in advance.

We hold these at 15:00 on 1st and 3rd Monday of the month. All welcome, especially those new to maintaining sites.

Support Zoom Drop-In for Web Managers Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87930189828?pwd=MNUdMvrBoBadaBHcOuT9rOZHjXDOT.1>

Meeting ID: 879 3018 9828

Passcode: SB5VjO

Written by Graham Tigg

Russ Stephens is away so all typos are down to the me.

The SiteWorks Team

