

# SiteWorks Newsletter June 2026

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This newsletter is distributed to SiteWorks Web Managers (WMs) who are registered with us.

Please pass on to your SiteWorks users

We can optionally register a second contact (Assistant WM). To update our records, please use the Contacts form launched by clicking the button on our homepage at [siteworks.u3a.org.uk](https://siteworks.u3a.org.uk).

## How we contact you

In addition to responding to Help Desk queries you initiate, there are two ways the SiteWorks volunteers contact you:

**System Administration alerts.** These originate from [no-reply@u3asite.uk](mailto:no-reply@u3asite.uk) to the Administrators of individual sites. They communicate operational matters that are specific to a site and invariably relate to plugins, For example, plugins that have not been updated for a protracted period, have known security issues, or just to make you aware a plugin you installed collects and stores personal data on your site.

**General communications to all sites.** These originate from [noreply@u3abeacon.org.uk](mailto:noreply@u3abeacon.org.uk) and are typically reminders of our drop-in sessions (see below) or the latest newsletter.

We use a Beacon system site as it does a great job at bulk emailing. However, it has the limitation that we can only record one or two contacts per site we call "Web Manager" and "Assistant Web Manager". These will invariably be WordPress Administrators of your site but don't have to be. You can update our records using the form on <https://sitework.u3a.org.uk>

In the case when a "Web Manager" is not a site Administrator then you will understand we may need to take steps to authenticate some update requests.

## Text in images – not good

The SiteWorks team have observed a growing number of sites that have images with text as part of the image. Having a short few words in a logo, such as the u3a logo, is fine – make sure the Alternate Text is explanatory.

There are SiteWorks sites with as much text in an image as a busy PowerPoint slide. Reasons why this isn't good practice include:

- Accessibility – screen readers cannot 'see' the text in images to read it out. Website accessibility is important to the Trust's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy <https://www.u3a.org.uk/members-area/support/diversity-and-inclusion/readability>
- Accessibility – the text size changes with the image at different zoom levels
- Accessibility – wide images with text cannot be stacked on a smartphone
- The site will be unreadable or at best hard to read if the browser has images turned off – common when not on WiFi or to protect privacy. Even if the Alternate text is used this can only be brief and is formatted differently to the main content.
- Search engines cannot see and hence index the text.

If you need any help with this just raise a support ticket from our homepage <https://siteworks.u3a.org.uk>

## 3rd Party plugins and updates – new advice

Heads up – consider enabling auto-updates for your 3<sup>rd</sup> party plugins.

The SiteWorks supported plugins have auto-updating disabled. This can be verified by listing all plugins **Plugins > Installed Plugins** and looking at the rightmost column headed **Automatic Updates**. The blue text should read [Enable auto-updates](#) indicating auto-updated are NOT enabled. SiteWorks supported plugins update automatically once the team have made checks and done testing.

For unsupported 3<sup>rd</sup> party plugins the Web Manager has always been responsible for verifying the suitability and implications of updating a plugin. Hence the guidance was to leave auto updates disabled when the plugin is installed.

Two factors have emerged since SiteWorks was rolled out two years ago. Firstly, 3<sup>rd</sup> party plugin updates have become more frequent because of the need for quick security updates – a general Internet trend. Secondly, a significant number of sites are not updating (or removing) unsupported plugins on a regular basis. The Sysadmin team send out advisory emails and have even updated plugins in cases where security is a concern. This is becoming an administrative overhead.

For these reasons the advice is now to enable auto-updates for 3<sup>rd</sup> party plugins. Plugins that are tested and managed by SiteWorks should continue to be left disabled, they are those starting 'u3a', Gutenslider, Independent Analytics, Imsanity, Lightbox for Gallery & Image Block, Loginizer, Meta Box, Meta Field Block and MainWP Child.

## Site visit statistics and PDFs

SiteWorks sites have the Independent Analytics (free version) pre-installed. While it provides statistics on access to your pages and posts, it doesn't report on the Media Library. An implication of this is that downloads of PDFs, such as Newsletters like this, are not included.

There is a plugin available that provides a report on PDF downloads. Further details and installation instructions are available on the u3a WordPress development forum (your need to register) here:

<https://u3awpdev.org.uk/viewtopic.php?t=740&hilit=pdf>

## Calendar and Events update

As reported in the May Newsletter, a SiteWorks update deployed in April made u3a Events available in iCalendar format - an industry standard that can be loaded onto your smartphone for example. Every SiteWorks site now has a URL that yields calendar entries for all u3a Events on the site. By using a 3<sup>rd</sup> party calendar plugin (try out on Local WP first) calendars of events can be presented.

Introduced at the end of May is a new facility to generate repeat events based on a single event. So, for example, if Archaeology meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month, then events associated with the group for future months can be cloned in seconds. Beacon users will be familiar with this capability.

The User Guide explains how to generate repeat u3a Events here:

<https://siteworks.u3a.org.uk/docs/event-pages/#6-toc-title>

Over time, u3a Events become historic. This 'How-tos' article explains how up to 20 older u3a Events can be identified and then Binned at a time

<https://siteworks.u3a.org.uk/bulk-delete-u3a-events/>

## Drop-ins schedule reminder

We hold two drop-in Zoom sessions per calendar month. The 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday. The schedule is now:

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 15:00

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> July 15:00

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> August 15:00

Meetings usually start with a demonstration on a topic followed by an open Q&A. We'll announce the topic in a reminder email the weekend before each session.

For July we are planning embedding (videos, calendars) and managing u3a Venues.

Support Zoom Drop-In for Web Managers Zoom link:-

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87930189828?pwd=MNUdMvrBoBadaBHcOuD9rOZHhJXDOT.1>

Meeting ID: 879 3018 9828

Passcode: SB5VjO

Written by Graham Tigg

**The SiteWorks Team**

