



## South Solihull u3a Website Style Guide

(incomplete release)

Recent Changes:

25/10/2024:

- General guidance collected into one section.
- More details of page layouts and block attributes added.
- Various corrections and clarifications.

3/10/2024:

- Note re. Target audience added.
- More details of page layouts and block attributes added.
- Separate sections for Events and Posts added.

29/09/2024:

- re-written for SiteWorks website. **NOTE:** This document has been re-written to reflect the change of website development platform from Weebly to SiteWorks. As our experience with SiteWorks immature it is highly likely that this document is incomplete, and frequent revisions will be necessary before a stable version is available. Revision notes relating to the Weebly site have been removed.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

South Solihull u3a (ssu3a) maintain a website for the following purposes:

- To attract new members
- To informing members of forthcoming events and activities.
- To disseminating newsletters and other documents from ssu3a and its parent organisations.

ssu3a recognise that their website is their 'shop window', and often provides potential new members with the first impression of the organisation, so attractive and welcoming presentation is important.

It is important to distinguish between the medium and the message; whilst we want our website to be welcoming and attractive, its design must not distract from the message it contains or its ease of use.

The contents of this document have been approved by the ssu3a committee, who expect all website developers to abide by these standards.

## 1.1 Prior Knowledge

This document assumes that the reader is familiar with the process of developing web pages using the SiteWorks system, and understands the various technical terms used. It is not intended as an educational document, so although it specifies what the various blocks and other elements should look like, it does not tell the reader how to achieve the final result.

## 1.2 Website Desirable Characteristics

For the website to be affective its visitors need to be able easily to navigate the websites structure and to be presented with appropriate material depending on why they are accessing it. In particular, it is desirable that:

- All pages conform to a common 'look-and-feel'.
- The visual style (fonts, colours etc.) promote easy reading.
- The home page is familiar and up-to-date.
- Navigation from page-to-page is intuitive.
- It is accessible on devices with a wide range of screen sizes (PC, tablet and 'phone).
- The speed of accessing pages is maximised by minimising downloaded data, especially graphics.
- Downloaded documents are readable on any operating system, without needing paid-for software.
- Visually impaired visitors are not disadvantaged.
- The website is always available, being protected from hacking and accidental alteration or deletion.

## 2 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This contents of this document are intended to achieve the above aims.

### 2.1 Standard vs. Guidelines

The SiteWorks development platform imposes certain standards on such things as font, colour, layout, menus and so on. These standards are built in to the software and cannot, or should not, be over-ridden.

However, within the standards imposed by the software, there are many choices that the developer can make. To allow free rein to any developer's whim risks creating a jumbled and chaotic looking site. Therefore this document provides guidelines which, if followed, will ensure a consistent look and feel to the website.

It is intended that this guide should apply as strictly and widely as possible to all pages of our website. However, it is recognised that there may be unusual circumstances where the guidelines are either not defined, or not applicable. If a contributor encounters a situation where the guide seem to be inappropriate, they should apply to the ssu3a committee for guidance, with a potential revision of this document.

### 2.2 Audience

This document is intended to be particularly useful to Authors, as they will be the major contributors of material to the site. Therefore, only the pages accessible to Authors are considered in detail. Pages that are only accessible to Administrators already have their layout and format determined, and are unlikely to change.

### 2.3 Sources of Content

The information in this document has been assembled from various sources, in the following order of priority:

- The technical capability of the SiteWorks development platform.
- GDPR Legislation.
- 2022 Accessibility Act concerning Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
- The typography used in the u3a magazine.
- The design of the national and other regional u3a SiteWorks websites.
- Preferences expressed by the ssu3a committee and Interest Group leaders.
- The existing design of the old (Weebly) website.
- General information available on the internet concerning good design practice.
- The author's own experience.

### 2.4 Currency of Examples

This document contains illustrative screen-shots taken from the live ssu3a website at the time this document was written, or updated. The website is under constant development so the samples presented here may differ from the actual website.

### 2.5 Scope

This document is primarily concerned with the 'look and feel' of the website:

- 'Look' refers to the graphical aspects of each web page, including placement of objects on the screen and the colours and fonts used.
- 'Feel' refers to the way the visitor interacts with the web pages, particularly being able to identify which objects are 'clickable' (i.e. buttons and hyperlinks), and to be able to predict what will happen when an object is clicked.

### 2.6 Two Views

The reader should be aware that there are two different views of our websites discussed in this document:

- User: This is the view of the website that the general visitor sees, i.e. the finished product. Screen-shots of the user's view are shown here with blue borders.

- Author: This is the view of the web pages that the Author sees while editing pages or other content. Screen-shots of the editor's view are shown here with black borders.

It should be clear from the context and wording which view is being referred to.

## 2.7 Keyboard Shortcuts and Character Codes

The DM Sans font used by SiteWorks has some characters that don't appear as you might wish. It also has some characters that can't be accessed using a normal keyboard. However, there are ways to get round these difficulties using certain keyboard shortcuts and character code combinations, which are referred to in this document.

In this document keyboard shortcuts are shown in angled brackets, for example: <ctrl><shift>+X. This means hold down the Control and Shift buttons together, then type "X".

To enter a character code hold down the <Alt> key and enter the 4 digits on your numeric keypad. This method won't work on the number keys at the top of your keyboard.

The above should work for most readers, but due to the wide variety of combinations of hardware and software that you might be using it is not guaranteed that they will all work on your particular set-up. If you have difficulty please use the internet to find the key combinations you should be using.

### **3 THEME**

A SiteWorks website is based on a fixed template known as a 'theme'. The theme for our website has been created by u3a head office to be consistent with other u3a who also use SiteWorks.

**THE THEME SETTINGS SHOULD NOT BE CHANGED.**

The theme determines default colour, font and other settings for the website.

## 4 NATIONAL u3a BRANDING

This section deals with aspects of the u3a identity that are distinctive and recognisable as the national u3a brand.

### 4.1 Style of Name

The style of national name is 'u3a', i.e. with lower-case letters. It is never capitalized, even when appearing at the start of a sentence.

The plural is u3as. The possessive case is u3a's.

### 4.2 National u3a Logo

The principle brand identity for the national u3a is the national logo, of which there are several variations, such as:



The National u3a website has a library branding images that can be downloaded.

## **5 SOUTH SOLIHULL u3a BRANDING**

South Solihull u3a has its own branding, derived from the national branding, as follows.

### **5.1 Style of South Solihull u3a Name**

The style of the name shall be 'ssu3a' i.e. with lower-case letters. It is never capitalized, even when appearing at the start of a sentence.

### **5.2 South Solihull u3a Logo**

The ssu3a has a modified version of the national logo.



It is permissible also to use the national variations where appropriate.

## 6 GENERAL GUIDELINES

There are some general rules that apply to any type of Block, as follows:

### 6.1 Fonts

The default font is DM Sans, and this should never be changed, with one exception: Where the language of the text requires non-latin script (e.g. Hebrew, Cyrillic, Greek, Korean, etc.) that can't be typed using the Theme font, an alternative font should be chosen to be as visually compatible as practical with the Theme font. Authors may find it simpler to create the text as a graphic and insert it as an image, rather than trying to find a suitable font.

### 6.2 Colours

The colour, or choice of colours, for most blocks and their content is defined by the Theme.

Where there is a choice of colour, pale colours should be selected for backgrounds and deep colours for text.

### 6.3 Sentence Spacing

Text looks better, and is easier to read, with a double-space between sentences. Unfortunately, the underlying software removes extra spaces when it finds them. There is a work-around thus: Between sentences, use a 'non-breaking space' and a standard space. The non-breaking space is created by using the shortcut <Ctrl><Shift>+<Space> (character code <alt>+0160). It looks the same as a standard space but doesn't disappear on the website.

Always make the non-breaking space the first one, to avoid indentation if the sentence-break comes at the end of a line.

### 6.4 Non-breaking hyphen

Similar to the above, if you want to insert a hyphen that does not break if it happens to be at the end of a line, you can use the 'non-breaking hyphen' character, which can be inserted using <Shift><Ctrl>+minus.

### 6.5 Accented Characters

[section to be inserted]

### 6.6 Title Capitalisation

Tiles, sub-titles etc. shall have their words capitalised according to the accepted rules of 'APA Title Case Capitalisation', which can be found on this website:

<https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/capitalization/title-case>

and many other sources on the internet.

### 6.7 Names of Works

Names of works, such as book title, plays etc. should be enclosed in single-quotes. e.g.'Hamlet' (Character codes <alt>+0145 and <alt>+0146).

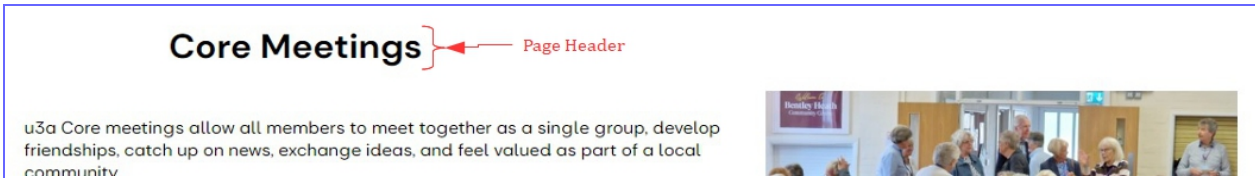
### 6.8 Quotations

Direct quotes should be in double quotation marks, e.g. "To be or not to be" (Character codes <alt>+0147 and <alt>+0148).

## 7 BLOCKS

The theme settings determine most of the look-and-feel of each block, but certain adjustments can be made by the developer, as described below.

### 7.1 Page Headings

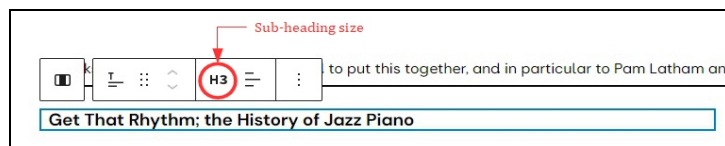


Every page has a heading block. The font and size are set by the Theme. No further adjustments should be made.

### 7.2 Sub-headings



Sub headings may be inserted as required.



The size should be set to H3.

### 7.3 Paragraph

(section to be inserted)

### 7.4 Image

(section to be inserted)

### 7.5 Table

(section to be inserted)

### 7.6 Columns

(section to be inserted)

### 7.7 Gallery

(section to be inserted)

## 8 PAGES


### 8.1 Administrator Pages

Certain pages are only accessible by system administrators. The layout of these pages cannot be changed by Authors, and so are not detailed in this document.

### 8.2 Interest Group Pages

Each interest group will have its own page, which will have a section formatted thus:

#### Armchair Theatre Play Reading



**Status:** Active, open to new members  
**Coordinator:** [Helen W](#)  
**When:** Monthly on Thursdays  
1st Thursday of the month  
**Venue:** [Member's house](#)

We are a friendly group who read an eclectic mix of plays. Serious, thought-provoking, funny and murder mystery scripts have entertained us and improved our play reading skills. Members choose, and are in charge of, the casting of their plays. We take turns to host in our own homes if that is practicable. We always leave feeling we have had an afternoon well spent. An interlude provides us with tea or coffee and a chat, which is usually about the play.

We have lost a few members over the past year and would welcome new readers. If you are interested please e-mail the coordinator.

*The idea is that we enjoy being thespians without having to act on stage!!*

#### Forthcoming plays

Thursday 3rd October 2024  
14:00 - 17:30  
Meeting

['The Crucible' by Arthur Miller](#)  
'The Crucible' by Arthur Miller. A drama based on the events of the Salem Witch Trials.

Group Name block (required by Theme)

Media and Text block containing Group Details place-holder


Paragraph blocks with further details of Group activities.

Cover block with standard content

Events List block, filtered by Group

Most Interest Group will also have a section showing their past activities, which will be constructed thus:

#### Past plays



['The Crucible' by Arthur Miller](#) 3rd October 2024

This exciting drama about the Puritan purge of witchcraft in old Salem was both a gripping historical play and a timely parable of our contemporary society. The story tells how [...]

['Spring and Port Wine' by Bill Naughton.](#) 5th September 2024

This drama is set in Bolton and concerns the Crompton family, especially Rafe, the father, and his attempts to assert his authority in the household as his children grow up. [...]

Cover block with standard content

QueryLoop block containing details of past Enevents

For Groups that do not keep a history of their meeting this section will be omitted.

## 9 u3a EVENTS

Details of forthcoming Events shall be laid out thus:

**'Spring and Port Wine' by Bill Naughton** } ← Event header

This placeholder shows where the event information will be shown.



We will be reading *Spring and Port Wine* by Bill Naughton. The Crompton family is ruled over by patriarch Rafe, feared by his children, who have to line up and give him a chunk of their wages every week for the locked cashbox he keeps in his desk (which looks more like a sideboard), and his wife, Daisy, who fiddles the figures in the household accounts book he makes her keep to make it balance. Daisy's accounting isn't helped when nosy neighbour Betsy-Jane borrows £5 from her so her TV isn't repossessed and tells her what the neighbours think of her and her domineering husband.

Things come to a head when daughter Hilda decides she doesn't want the herring they traditionally have every Friday teatime, and Rafe puts his foot down, evoking the pre-war hunger marches, telling his wife that she must serve this same herring to Hilda every mealtime until she eats it. But just as stubborn father and daughter are both about to relent, the herring goes missing leading to consequences none of them anticipates.

Venue: t.b.a


← Blocks describing the event

Authors may use any suitable block to describe the Event.

## 10 POSTS

**Shropshire** } ← Post header

We visited gardens in Shropshire, including Wollerton Old Hall and Gardens



(Images courtesy of Pam Hunter)

← Blocks describing the post

The image shows a sample post layout. At the top is the title 'Shropshire' followed by a right-facing curly bracket and a red arrow pointing to the text 'Post header'. Below the title is a line of text: 'We visited gardens in Shropshire, including Wollerton Old Hall and Gardens'. Underneath this text are three square images: a garden with many colorful flowers, a half-timbered house with a dark roof, and a garden path leading through a trellis structure. Below the images is the text '(Images courtesy of Pam Hunter)'. To the right of the images, a red curly bracket points to the text 'Blocks describing the post'.

Posts are similar to Events, but they do not have the Information place-holder block. All the same formatting rules apply

## 11 UPLOADED FILES

For uploaded files, both images and documents, special characters, such as '#', '\_' etc., must not be used as they may not be compatible with some operating systems. An exception is dash used in dates (see below).

Do not assume that names are case-sensitive, e.g. "myfile.txt" is considered to be the same as "MYFILE.TXT".

Any uploaded files (document or image) should have a unique name. To ensure this, names should conform to the following format:

<date><group><title><number>.<type>

The elements are described below:

### 11.1.1 <date>

All uploaded file names will start with a date. As the usual separator for dates (the slash '/' character) is not valid for file names on Windows we will use the dash instead, thus the format should be: yyyy-mm-dd, e.g. '2022-05-28'. Using this format ensures that different versions of files can be identified. The date should be relevant to the content, for example, the date a photograph was taken, or for minutes of meetings, the date of the meeting. Where the file is not associated with a specific event, it can be any suitable date, such as the date the file is acquired or uploaded.

### 11.1.2 <group>

This is a short form of the Interest Group name (or "core" etc.) to facilitate identification.

### 11.1.3 <title>

This is a short description of the image.

### 11.1.4 <number>

This is a sequential number to make the name unique.

### 11.1.5 <type>

This is the file type. Files should always have the file type extension.

## 11.2 Example

For the 5<sup>th</sup> photograph of the Walking Group, on the Malvern Hills, taken on 12 July 2022, in jpg format, a suitable name would be:

"2022-07-12 walk malvern 05.jpg"

## 11.3 Metadata

(section to be inserted)