

## **INFORMATION FOR NEW MEMBERS ON INTEREST GROUPS**

Welcome to Hale and District U3A. Most people join U3A because they would like to join one or more of our Interest Groups. This is your guide to getting the most out of your membership by giving you the information you need to take part in the current and proposed Interest Groups. Once you have joined Hale and District U3A (see instructions for this on our Welcome page) you may join any of our current or proposed groups by emailing [groupscoordinator@haleu3a.co.uk](mailto:groupscoordinator@haleu3a.co.uk) OR by attending our Monthly Meetings which are held at 2.00 pm on the first Thursday of each month, at the Bowdon Rooms, The Firs, Bowdon, Altrincham, WA14 2TQ

### **What is our approach to learning?**

As indicated on the Welcome page, the Interest Groups draw on the knowledge, experience and skills of the members of the group. This means that learning is often self-directed within the group and members are free to decide for themselves what the group wants to learn and how it will do so. In many cases, there is no expert or teacher within the group. However, some groups are formed because we have a member who has a great deal of knowledge/expertise/skill about a subject and is happy to share that within a group. Some of the groups are run as discrete courses for a finite period of time and one, or more, of our members lead such courses. For example, Egyptology, Mindfulness, Computer Skills and iPad courses. Part of the U3A movement's ethos is not to use professional teachers but to encourage participation by all members of the Group. Similarly, other than the cost of room hire, attendance at all our groups is free.

### **Where do our groups meet?**

Our groups meet in a variety of venues, including member's own homes for smaller groups of usually less than 8 members and in this case group members often take it in turns to host meetings. Because such groups are necessarily small, we often have more than one group on a subject in order to meet demand. Other groups meet in public spaces, (e.g., community centres, leisure centres, church halls). The latter are sometimes free but on other occasions there may be a charge for the hire of a room and in these cases, members split the cost between them.

## **Who decides what groups will run?**

The short answer to this is that, providing Groups have an educational element, our members decide. All our groups exist because members have suggested a subject that interests them and, providing sufficient other members express an interest in the subject, (usually more than 4), then we will start up a new group. This means that new groups are constantly being created. We currently have 82 functioning groups and more in the process of being started. Some of our current groups are closed to new members. However, this should not deter you from asking to join it. Asking to join a group that is currently full, will result in a waiting list being started for another group on that subject.

When sufficient members are on the waiting list for a particular group, the Groups Coordinator calls a start-up meeting to which everyone who has expressed an interest in joining that group, is invited. At that meeting the members decide on the focus of the group, when and where the group will meet, at what time and how often. One or two members will volunteer to become the Group Contact(s) and have prime responsibility for the administration of the group. The group then becomes a new group and is generally open for other members to join.

## **Our Interest Groups**

Our Interest Groups range from Antiques and Collectables to Yoga. The groups are listed on the website and can be accessed by clicking on the Groups tab in the green band at the top of each webpage. Current groups are listed first in alphabetical order, and the following details are provided for each group:

- the name of the Group Contact
- how often the group meets
- what day of the week it meets
- at what time it meets
- whether the group is open or closed to new members

At the end of the alphabetical list you will find a section on *Proposed New Groups and Groups Waiting for Sufficient Members to Start*. These groups are

all at the planning stage and recruiting people who are interested in joining. Some of these groups are about completely new subjects to Hale and District U3A whilst others are to meet demand for places in groups that are currently full.

At the end of the Proposed New Groups list, you will also find a summary group list detailing when each group meets followed by a timetable of which groups meet each day.

If you still can't find a group that interests you, then please feel free to suggest a new group which interests you and we will see if we have any other members with the same interest and so start a new group.

### **Hale and District U3A Social Activities**

Apart from our interest groups we also run a variety of social activities which include Days Out, Theatre Trips and Social Events. All members of Hale and District U3A can attend these events although there is a charge for each event. These activities are advertised via the quarterly newsletter - Newsflash, via the Monthly Bulletin which is emailed to members and at our Monthly meetings where organisers are available for bookings. For further information on future events click on **Events** tab in the green band at the top of each webpage.