

*(Registered Charity Number 1179094)*

## **MEMBERS' LEAFLET**

### **Welcome**

You have joined an exciting, dynamic and worthwhile movement which was formed more than 40 years ago. There are now more than 1,035 u3a organisations across the UK, with thousands of interest groups between them and more than 430,000 members nationally – plus we're growing every day. We hope you enjoy your membership of Washington Village u3a and enjoy the activities we offer, as well as those available through our affiliation to the u3a national body (The Third Age Trust). The aim of this leaflet is to help you get the most from being a member of u3a.

Washington Village u3a (WVu3a) began in May 2014. It is a lively and friendly organisation which is keen to offer a wide range of learning, creative and leisure activities, particularly for the retired and semi-retired. It's a great way to meet people and make new friends.

Each u3a is run by its own members and provides many varied opportunities:

- shared learning experiences in a wide range of interest groups
- learning for fun rather than for qualifications
- socialising with a wide range of people at many different types of events.

### **Our Purpose**

We are a charitable organisation and our objective is to offer opportunities for lifelong learning. By offering a wide range of dynamic interests, we hope to make learning, through the experience of u3a, a reality, particularly for all third-agers.

### **Monthly Meetings**

Currently, our monthly meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month, from 11.00am – 1.00pm at The Stella, Albany Village in Washington. At most meetings, the running order is as follows:

#### **Signing In**

Someone will be just inside the main door to greet you as you arrive then, as you move into the main room, your name and membership number will be taken. Refreshments are available so please help yourself to tea or coffee. Details of all the group activities will be displayed and you can sign up for any groups that interest you. There is a special table for new members but feel free to sit at any table and introduce yourself. If you are nervous about meeting new people, please ask any member who will either introduce you to the Membership Secretary or invite you to share a table so you can start chatting to other members.

**Chair's welcome**

The Chair will call the meeting to order, make any important announcements then introduce the speaker.

**Guest Speaker**

The presentation from the speaker will usually last about 45 minutes, followed by questions from the floor and a vote of thanks from one of our members. The speaker and the title of the talk can be found in the 'Events' tab of our website.

**Information about the u3a**

The Chair will give other general information to members.

**Group activities**

The Groups Co-ordinator will let you know of activities planned for the following month.

**Free time and chat**

The meeting then ends so there is time to chat and look around the group activity information again and make a note of anything that interests you. Please note some groups may need to charge in advance for activities, e.g. day trips.

The room is then tidied up.

**Interest Groups and Regional Information**

We have a large number of interest groups covering a wide range of subjects from quizzes to photography, bridge to ukulele, table tennis to family history and you can find these on our website (on the Groups page) or look for information at our monthly meetings. Speak to a Group Leader before or after the monthly meeting or get in touch with them via the Groups Coordinator or send a message via the website.

The decision about what to do is made by the members for the members so any member can volunteer to run a group. If you're interested in a subject that isn't currently one of our groups, please feel free to suggest a new group to our Groups Co-ordinator as there are usually other members who would also be interested in the same thing.

There are also many regional activities and events that may interest you. Listen out for information at the monthly meetings, contact the member at Washington Village u3a who acts as regional contact. You can also or check out

<https://u3asites.org.uk/northumbria/home>, the regional website for Northumbria Region.

**Network**

We have a reciprocal arrangement with Washington u3a, Wessington u3a, Cestria u3a and Houghton-le-Spring u3a. This means our members can access groups run by these u3as without having to join them. You can join in with their events by checking their individual websites then contacting the relevant group leader to see if there are any spaces. The Network also arranges joint events and offers places on trips when available.

More information can be found on the Group and Network pages of our website.

### **The Committee**

Washington Village u3a is guided by a Committee consisting of:

- Chair\* and Vice Chair\*
- Business Secretary\*
- Treasurer\*/Beacon Admin and Assistant Treasurer
- Membership Secretary
- Group Coordinator
- Speaker Secretary
- Members Liaison
- Public Relations Adviser
- Up to two other members.

\* indicates an officer of the committee.

The Committee is elected at the AGM in May.

The Committee meets monthly. Remember that Washington Village u3a is run by the members for the members so anyone can volunteer to be a Committee member. We are always keen to encourage members to get more involved in the running of our u3a. Please contact the Chair if you wish to attend a committee meeting as a non-voting member.

### **Your Annual Membership Fee**

You have paid an annual membership fee. Our year runs from 1 April to 31 March, and we normally hold our Annual General Meeting (AGM) in May. Your fee covers a number of expenses that we have to meet during each year. These include:

- Room hire and refreshments for our monthly meetings
- Subscription to Zoom when necessary
- National affiliation fee to the *Third Age Trust* (currently £4 for each member)
- Regional affiliation fee based on our total membership
- Subscription of £1 per member to the Beacon membership database management system which enables the Committee and Group Leaders to administer the u3a securely and efficiently
- Speakers' fees at monthly meetings
- Funding the attendance of one or two members at the national AGM
- Administrative fees to cover stationery, printing and postage, etc.
- The purchase of equipment
- Distribution costs of the magazine, 'Third Age Matters', which you will receive five times a year (Associate members should request their copies via their main u3a).

NB:

- Group activities are normally self-financing, i.e. a small charge for each session may be made to cover the cost of venue hire and any other expenses.
- Associate members do not pay the *Third Age Trust* subscription fee as they have already paid the fee once via their primary u3a.

### Future Plans

The u3a as an organisation is entering an exciting new stage of its development. Our new branding and slogan: "*Learn, laugh, live*" is just the start of exciting plans to promote u3a to third-agers across the UK as the first organisation that people no longer in full-time work will choose to join to learn new things and to have fun.

### Volunteering

Each u3a is run by members so there are lots of opportunities to volunteer and get involved in our activities. You can join or run a group or activity, offer to help out at events and we're always looking for volunteers to help out at monthly meetings (which is a great way to meet everyone). If you have any skills or knowledge which you think might be useful or of interest to members, please don't hesitate to let us know. You could also be a Trust Volunteer, i.e. volunteer to carry out a role for the national u3a body.

### Online links

- The national u3a body (Third Age Trust) website, where you can find all sorts of information, documents and free on-line courses is:  
<https://www.u3a.org.uk/>
- The website for the Northumbria Region, of which we are members and where you can find information about regional activities, is:  
<https://u3asites.org.uk/northumbria>
- To find Washington Village u3a's own website go to:  
<https://u3asites.org.uk/washington-village> or just 'Google' **Washington Village u3a**. Here you will find details of all our interest groups, where and when we meet, how to contact committee members and group leaders by email, and lots more.
- To join our Facebook group visit:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/839457706890454> or search for Washington Village u3a on Facebook. This is a private group (just for members) which we use for announcements, information and news, to share information and to chat with each other.