

Introduction

Welcome to Watford U3A!

This document is intended as a short guide to Watford Park U3A - where we meet, what we do and where we go! We are always pleased to meet new and enthusiastic members and hope you will enjoy your time with us.

Full information about our U3A, and the wider U3A movement is available on our website (www.wpu3a.org.uk) and new members are encouraged to explore this, and to use the information available there.

Our U3A

Watford Park U3A (WPU3A) was founded in October 2007 as a Registered Charity (No. 1123484) to enable older people no longer in full time employment to share many educational and creative activities. It is a self-help, self-funded educational organisation. We study and learn for the fun of it and no prior qualifications are required to become a member. As well as learning academic subjects, and enjoying social activities together, our members meet and make great friends with whom they may develop further social activities.

Today we have around 500 members and over 60 study groups. These are organised by our members for our members, the philosophy of the U3A being "Those who Learn shall also Teach and those who Teach shall also Learn". Everybody can contribute something for the benefit of themselves and others.

Simple Membership

All the key information we hold about you as a member is held within a secure online system (Simple Membership – see below) as part of the website, with data only accessible to those who need to have them. Members are encouraged to review regularly the data we hold on them to ensure that they are complete and up to date.

When you joined our U3A you will have been given your Username and instructions as to how to set your Password in order to log in to the website and the Simple Membership system. A User Guide for Members is also available on the website (see Help/System User Guides, but note you will need to be logged in to view this page).

Main Meetings

Main Meetings are held once a month on the fourth Tuesday (the exception being December which is usually the third Tuesday) at St. Luke's Church, Langley Way, WD17 3EG at 3pm. This start time gives sufficient time to park after the end of the 2.30pm parking restriction on a number of roads around the church. Do check the signage on the roads though as this could change without our knowledge.

All members are welcome, and encouraged to attend, as this is where you will be able to meet other members and find out what is going on!

Please register yourself as present with the Membership Secretary each time you come to a main meeting to ensure they know how many attendees are in the hall in case of emergency.

The usual format for main meetings is an introduction by our Chairman followed by a talk on a subject of interest, followed by announcements about trips, new study groups or other items, after which tea and coffee are served. Study groups take turns to serve the refreshments which is ably organised by our Refreshments Supervisor who ensures that sufficient supplies are available. Study Groups are also encouraged to use the foyer of the hall to take turns to make a presentation of their work or exploits to the wider membership.

WPU3A has appointed a New Members' Champion who will be present at each main meeting, and they can give advice and information to new members on the operations of the U3A and the various study groups available to members. The New Members' Champion can also be contacted by email via the link on the Contacts page on the website (you will need to be logged in).

Study Groups

There is currently a wide variety of study groups operating at WPU3A. All the details of these can be viewed on the website, and summary information is published in our monthly newsletter. Some groups are run in members' homes if space and subject matter permit. Larger groups hire venues around the area. And of course the walking and cycling groups meet outside and sometimes finish at a pub or other public place for refreshments.

Study Groups are formed with the help of the Study Group Coordinator (SGC). Anyone can instigate the formation of a group by first contacting the SGC who will announce the subject in the newsletter and put a notice on one of the tables in the foyer of the hall at main meetings. Interested parties can add their names to this document. Once a few names are there a 'mini meeting' will be arranged, usually after a main meeting, for interested parties to get together to discuss arrangements such as when and where to meet and how frequently etc. Don't be afraid to put ideas forward for fear of getting committed to doing all the work. You don't have to become a Study Group Leader just because you've suggested a subject – although it helps, but you'll find that everyone helps by participating in some way.

There are a few groups which are open to all members of WPU3A so you don't have to 'join up' for those. These are noted on the details on the website, and include the 'Luncheon Club', and the 'Garden', the 'Theatre' and the 'Outings' groups. Many of these are quite popular and tend to be restricted in number to the capacity of a coach.

The 'open to all' group trips are usually run on a first come first served basis so do read the newsletter or watch the website. Also note that **currently only cheques are accepted for payment** as we have strict rules on how money is handled by organisers.

The Newsletter

The Newsletter is published once a month. Anyone can submit an article or small announcement relevant to WPU3A but publishing is dependent on space and relevance. The Newsletter Editor can be contacted by email via the link on the Contacts page on the website (you will need to be logged in).

The Membership Secretary will send digital copies to those who have email addresses several days before the main meeting. This keeps costs down and we are lucky to be one of the cheapest U3As in the area due to our care in managing our funds. However a few newsletters are also printed for the benefit of those who don't have email and these are available at the main meeting.

The eNoticeBoard

The eNoticeBoard is an online document that is compiled each month from information received, usually from outside sources and occasionally from within WPU3A. It is hosted on the website with its own page (see News/eNoticeboard, which is a public page on the website). A link to the eNoticeBoard is also sent out digitally with the Newsletter each month.

Email

As email is common place now members are encouraged to learn how to use it if they don't already. Email is the prime communication tool within WPU3A. The Membership Secretary will occasionally email notices about places which become available at short notice for theatre trips or outings, and other events. If we don't have an up to date email address you will not receive this and other information. If you don't have a personal email address please find a friend or family member who is willing to help.

The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee (EC) consists of the members listed below, whose contact emails and phone numbers are published in the newsletter.

The Executive Committee and other key personnel can also be emailed via links on the website, from the Contacts page.

Chairman – Ron Duckling
Vice Chairman – Jerry England
Treasurer – Andy Robertson
Secretary – Tony Johnson
Membership Secretary - Heather Parry
Study Group Coordinator - Zoe Mowbray
New Members' Champion – David Silver
Minutes Secretary – Tony Yates
Member – Maureen Miller
Member – Alison Imrie
Member – Frankie Logan
Member – Pam Tomlinson

Now - make your plans and enjoy yourself!