

u3a learn,
laugh,
live

Welcome Pack

Witney u3a

Witney u3a

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 Witneyu3a

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Introduction



“U3A shows the value of communities of interest and learning which are not defined by age, or by past experience, but instead are defined by the experiences still to be explored”.



Thank you for joining us. Our u3a gives you opportunities to develop your interests, make new friends and have fun. During these uncertain times, demand to be part of the u3a movement is as high as ever, with people looking for new ways to keep connected with each other and keep up their cultural, educational and social activities.

Our amazing members have stepped up and found new and creative ways to keep connected with each other and continue their learning. You will see in this pack – there are many examples of new projects, ideas and shared skills and learning that our members are taking part in.

In this pack you will find what’s available in our u3a including access to interest groups and communication platforms. You will also have access to the national Third Age Matters magazine, to the national online newsletter and various social media sites.

For more information about what we offer, go to our website at

Local u3a information

All about us

Witney u3a was founded in 1985 and has grown to around six hundred members with a Committee of twelve. Members live in Witney or in many of the villages around. Everyone who is no longer in full time employment is welcome to join us to continue with lifelong learning and activities while making friends and enjoying each others' company. There are **Interest Groups** and activities for everyone.

And if you don't find what you're looking for, let us know and we'll try to set up a group for you. Membership of u3a also gives you access to other u3a groups and tutors across UK for **online courses, webinars and podcasts**. **Speaker Meetings** are held twice a month in Witney with a wide range of speakers and the chance to meet up with friends over refreshments: www.u3asites.org.uk/witney/events

Interest groups

Interest Groups are at the very centre of every u3a. There are no entry qualifications and no tutor fees. The interests range from intellectual to social i.e. from philosophy to lunch clubs. The groups are a great way to develop your interests and make new friends - the possibilities are endless. Witney u3a has over fifty interest groups to choose from.. Groups often meet in each others' homes, or larger groups may use a public venue such as a café or pub. Several groups often arrange outings and visits. The Groups' Co-ordinator will introduce you to the groups you are interested in. During Covid, approximately one third of our groups are meeting online by Zoom, skype or email. You can find these at: www.u3asites.org.uk/witney/groups. Support from our Zoom team is available.

Contacts

New Members

You will be invited to meet other new members soon after joining.

Contacts

New Members Contact: www.u3asites.org.uk/witney/contact.

Member Secretary: infowitneyu3a@gmail.com. Tel: 07732 597087 . If you are not online, just telephone the Member Secretary and they will put you in touch with the Committee member you need.

Zoom Administrator: witneyu3azoom@gmail.com

Committee: www.u3asites.org.uk/witney/contact



From Walking to Talking, Gardening to Cookery, Yachting to Yoga, Current Affairs to Supper Clubs – the choice is endless and determined by each local u3a



History

Our founders envisaged a collaborative approach with peers learning from each other. The u3a movement was to be self-funded, with members not working towards qualifications but learning purely for pleasure. There would be no distinction between the learners and the teachers – everyone could take a turn at being both if they wished.

1981

beginning of movement

2010

membership reach
quarter million mark

From its beginnings in 1981, the movement grew very quickly and by the early 1990s, a u3a was opening every fortnight. u3as grew in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and in 2008 membership was increasing by 11% every year. 2010 saw our membership hitting the quarter million mark.

At the end of 2016 the u3a movement reached the milestone of 1,000 u3as celebrated by a conference with speakers including Eric Midwinter – one of the founders of the u3a movement.

Today, our movement includes over 400,000 u3a members in more than 1,000 u3as and is continuing to grow every day.



Ethos and Principles

The Principles of the u3a Movement

The u3a movement is non-religious and non-political and has three main types of principle:

Lifelong Learning

- Membership of a u3a is open to all people who have retired from full time work
- Members promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging to a u3a.

Self Help

- Members form interest groups covering as wide a range of topics and activities as they desire; by the members, for the members.
- No qualifications are sought or offered. Learning is for its own sake, with enjoyment being the prime motive, not qualifications or awards.
- There is no distinction between the learners and the teachers; they are all u3a members.

The Mutual Aid Principle

- Each u3a is a mutual aid organisation, operationally independent but a member of The Third Age Trust, which requires adherence to the guiding principles of the u3a movement.
- No payments are made to members for services rendered to any u3a.
- Each u3a is self-funded with membership.

Benefits of u3a membership

Witney u3a

“I joined the U3A to make new friends; to continue learning, and to explore new ideas. Discovering the U3A and all its variety of subjects on offer and the amazing range of its membership has broadened my life and interests still further. It has gone a long way to replacing the colleagues and associations you engaged with in your working life.”

“My friends told me about trips they had been on and when I moved back to Witney I joined the French Conversation group to keep my brain active. And the Play reading group because I was in the theatre. However, the best thing is you meet new people and make new friends.”

“It's surprising how many others share your interests!”

“When I moved to Witney a neighbour suggested I went with her to sample a meeting. I soon became a member and have since enjoyed hearing speakers on a wide range of subjects. Going on to volunteer help was a great way to meet people and feel increasingly involved in the successful running of the group.”

“I moved to Witney in 2018, newly retired, with a lot of time on my hands. Happily, I found Witney u3a, and discovered it has a thriving Writers Group. When I first joined the group, we were able to meet in our Chairperson's comfortable home once a month.”

"Having moved to Witney from outside the area, the u3a has provided a source of many new friends and joining some of the many interest groups has kept my brain active in an entertaining and informative way."

"The u3a has kept me interested and entertained and opportunities for volunteering have ensured I've kept busy despite the pandemic."

‘I was looking for new interests and hobbies when I retired 2013 and I saw an article about Witney u3a in the local paper. I thought it looked interesting and my wife and I joined and have never looked back. We have made lots of friends, discovered new interests and had lots of fun.