

What is a U3A Learning Project?

U3A National Office is keen to build the focus on Learning within U3As. To achieve this aim they are promoting "U3A Learning Projects." Learning projects are about fostering a sense of curiosity and investigation among members. Projects can be within a group or across groups so they get to know each other better e.g. a project on the pollution in the River Windrush could involve the Science group, Walking group, Local History, Poetry, Writers' Groups. Or a group of individuals could come together for a particular project. For some ideas <http://u3aresearch.org.uk> shows over 400 projects already completed by other U3As.

Some investigations which have already been carried out include:

- U3A led research within a U3A. For example the effect on members of their membership of this U3A; how to widen diversity in a particular U3A; family history; local architecture.....
- A U3A working with an outside organisation. There are many examples of shared projects with local universities across the country, but also with organisations such as museums, the National Trust, environmental groups etc. Such projects are known as 'Shared Learning Projects' – SLPs
- A U3A acting as research assistants to an outside body. We can be the hands, feet, number crunchers, evidence gatherers for another organisation.

U3A have published useful a guide on all stages of a learning project : 'Getting involved in Research.' They stress the importance of having clear aims, staying focussed, allocating tasks, having a deadline (suggest not more than 12 months) and publishing the outcome in some form e.g. our U3A Open Day, pamphlet, presentation etc..

Your Committee would like to find out, over the next few weeks, how many Witney U3A members, individually or in their established groups might be interested in doing research within our U3A or with an external partner. There is the possibility of setting up a small sub group to oversee Learning Projects if appropriate. Any individual or group interested, please contact the Chair via the Contacts page of this website.