



## YATE & SODBURY DISTRICT - INFORMATION FOR NEW MEMBERS

### 1. Welcome!

Well done for joining the Yate & Sodbury District (Y&SD) u3a! You can learn, laugh and live while exploring a whole range of activities, maybe to take up interests you have had no time for while working or to try something new!

The u3a is an international movement, and in the UK we have over 1000 branches in towns and cities with about 380,000 members nationally. In the Y&SD u3a we have over 1,500 members. We are a shared-learning organisation - so let us make use of your talents – you can have fun learning from others and helping others learn from you. The Y&SD u3a is an independent charity affiliated to the national organisation.

The charitable object of the Y&SD u3a is “the advancement of education and, in particular, the education of older people and those who are retired from full-time work by all means, including associated activities conducive to learning and personal development.”

Check out the ‘Welcome’ tab on the Y&S u3a website: <https://u3asites.org.uk/yate-sodbury/home>

### 2. Groups

You get the best out of the u3a by trying new things. So, what sort of things are there available? We have some 80 groups for you to explore. Why not take a look at the list of groups on the ‘groups’ tab? <https://u3asites.org.uk/yate-sodbury/groups>

There is a group there for everyone, so find one, contact the group leader and join in. You can visit any two groups for a ‘taster session’ before fully joining the u3a. If you don’t find what you are looking for, then why don't you start a new group? You can ask a Group Coordinator (see the ‘Contacts’ tab on the web site) how to do this. There is also a good deal of help in "Guidelines for Group Leaders" which is on the group leader’s page under the ‘Groups’ tab.

### 3. News

As well as joining groups, you are invited to attend our monthly Town Hall meetings. They are usually held on the first Friday of each month, from 2-4pm at the Town Hall, Chipping Sodbury. There you will hear interesting talks by visiting speakers. You can check dates, venues and speakers on the ‘Events’ tab. Then on the ‘News’ tab, we place recent editions of our local quarterly newsletter; this should give you a flavour of our u3a, reflecting the wide range of interests and the friendly and welcoming nature of our members. Would you like to contribute to the newsletter? for example, by sharing your experience of joining the u3a. Another way of finding out about u3a groups is to come along to the ‘Open Afternoon’ at Chipping Sodbury Town Hall in October and see most interest groups.

## **4. Events**

Have a look at the 'Events' tab. Try clicking on "Display events in date order" to see the full calendar of group meetings and social events. Each group can flag dates of their upcoming meetings on their own group webpage.

## **5. Executive Committee**

The u3a is run entirely by volunteers, so we need you to join in and make a contribution using your skills and talents. We have an Executive Committee to keep things running smoothly. If you are good at organising things and like a challenge, why don't you put yourself forward at the election for next year's committee at the AGM in April? Committee members are trustees of the Y&S u3a Charity and are collectively responsible for all aspects of the u3a on behalf of its members. The Committee also organise the monthly branch talks, the quarterly newsletter and the annual open afternoon as well as maintaining the Beacon management system and website.

## **6. Policies**

To ensure that we run everything properly and legally, we have developed policies on finance, conduct, grievance, safeguarding, equality, inclusion, diversity, accessibility, web-publishing and privacy. The policies are available on the website on the group leaders' section under the 'Groups' tab. If you have any comments on these, please contact a Group Coordinator, we'd like to hear from you.

## **7. Third Age Trust**

The Third Age Trust is the national umbrella body for u3a branches throughout the UK. The Trust sets the overall vision and mission of the u3a and advise us on policies and regulations. They maintain an extensive advice webpage which is really helpful when setting up your own new group (you will need to register for access to advice pages): <https://www.u3a.org.uk/advice>