



Sevenoaks U3A

Introduction to the U3A



University of the Third Age

Reg. Charity No. 1051712

www.sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

Welcome to the U3A in Sevenoaks

The University of the Third Age (U3A) began as a concept in France in 1972 and was established in the UK in 1982 but developed under a different model of collaborative self-help.

Sevenoaks U3A was established in 1994 and has grown steadily over the years to its current size of nearly 1000 members. In 2009 Knole U3A was established in Sevenoaks, and this has also grown in size. Both U3As work closely with each other and some shared groups and activities exist.

As a large organisation the newcomer may feel joining in with activities somewhat daunting but this leaflet aims to explain the organisation and help you to integrate. The topics covered are:

- A resumé of what your membership includes
- Why everyone is automatically a member of the Third Age Trust
- What happens on joining and how you can help

What Does Membership Offer?

You are entitled to all of the following:

- **To attend** the Monthly Meeting, Science group and Computer Group Meetings. These are meetings open to all with a speaker talking on a specialist topic. There is no need to book for these meetings, just come along. Entry to the General Meeting is free (it is included as part of your membership fee) but a small door charge is made for the Science and Computer meetings to cover hall hire. Refreshments are served at each meeting. It is a good way to meet others and make new friends.
- **To receive** a copy of the **Newsletter** by email. Alternatively a paper copy can be posted if you do not have access to a computer. You will also receive a copy of the Annual Handbook. This is issued in late summer of each year.
- **To Join** any number of study groups. These are listed in the Handbook which will be issued to you on joining.
- **To apply** for any special events advertised in the Newsletter, by Flyer or on our Website. Some of these may be organised by other U3As or the Third Age Trust. The events include:
 - Study Days Run by Sevenoaks or Kent U3As
 - Visits to places of interest
 - Holidays abroad or longer trips in the UK
 - Other one-off events

Adjacent U3As may offer spare places on some events they are running.

Why do we pay a fee to the National Office?

The Third Age Trust is a registered Company, and the U3A Logo is copyright. No organisation may call itself a U3A without paying a capitation fee to National Office, this is currently £3.50 per head and is included as part of your membership fee. The main benefits are:

- Four Copies a year of **U3A News** and three of **Sources** magazines on educational topics and U3A national news. These are sent directly to members' homes.
- Third Party Liability Insurance
- Free legal help line on all personal or U3A matters.
Tel: 0344 770 1040 (Quote - U3A Legal Helpline)
- Discounts on Computer Software through a third party company
- Access to direct on-line Learning Courses
- Summer Schools, Seminars Conferences etc. all organised by the Third Age Trust
- Use of the Resource Centre. Videos and CD's on a wide range of subjects can be borrowed free of charge once registered but return postage has to be paid on items borrowed.

All of this means that the Home U3A has the professional back up of the National Office and regional networks which can provide a source of great interest and cross-fertilisation.

What happens now that you have joined?

You will be invited to an induction event for new members. The Chairman, Membership team and Groups Co-Ordinator will be present to explain how our U3A works. It is your opportunity to discuss your expectations of what you are seeking from the U3A and in turn what you can offer. The U3A is a collaborative learning organisation and is dependent on all members playing a part.

Take time to read the Handbook and decide which groups you would like to join. Remember do not take on too much at first. Each group will require participation and many will require some preparatory work. In such groups you will be expected to introduce a topic for discussion by the whole group. This could include undertaking some research, reading a book or presentation of material for discussion.

To join a group contact the Group Organiser listed in the Handbook and see if there is space. You can attend one meeting without committing yourself. Make sure you are free to attend regularly as failure to attend disrupts the group and may block others who may wish to join. Normally a small charge (50p) is made for tea or coffee and you buy your own materials. Sometimes a charge is made for resources in a group and Sevenoaks owns a stock of media equipment that can be borrowed for a group meeting.

The U3A is learning co-operative. Its success depends on everyone contributing in some way and apart from joining one or more groups, come to the Open Meetings, or apply for Visits or Study days. Everything is priced to make these events as affordable as possible. Perhaps you can help with the administration. Your contribution will be welcome as it makes Sevenoaks U3A a success.

Note: All membership data, as provided by Members at their enrolment, is held by the Membership Secretary and will be treated with confidentiality in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) under the Data Protection Act 2018 .

More information can be found on our Website:

www.sevenoaksu3a.org.uk, or the National Office website:

www.u3a.org.uk

Sevenoaks U3A June 2021