

u3a learn,
laugh,
live

Welcome Pack

Towcester u3a

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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 <https://www.towcesteru3a.co.uk/>

Local u3a information

All about us

Towcester has a thriving u3a which celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2022.

With around 600 members, we offer a wide variety of interest groups, providing regular activities, visits and opportunities to socialise.

Our monthly email bulletin keeps members abreast of upcoming events, as well as providing a snapshot of what our groups have been up to. Join our Facebook group and contribute to the conversation.

Interest groups

Some of our interest groups have been going for many years, whilst others are fairly new – there's always the opportunity to set up a new group if your particular interest is not currently catered for.

From French to Folk Dancing, Genealogy to Garden Visits, Petanque to Pickleball, the range of groups are diverse, offering exercise for the body and mind.

As well as making friends within the groups you join, every month there is the opportunity to socialise over a cup of tea at our members' meeting. Speakers cover topics ranging widely from WW2 spies to poisons in the garden!

Contacts

Contacts for all of our interest groups are listed on our website – please visit: <https://www.towcesteru3a.co.uk/groups/interest-groups>.

You'll also find details of our committee members, any of whom would be happy to put you in touch with relevant contacts.

Look out also for our new member meetings which are advertised in Towcester library.

We look forward to welcoming you to Towcester u3a.



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

What you will gain by joining Towcester u3a

Membership of Towcester u3a will provide opportunities to enjoy as many activities as you care to become involved in and enjoy the companionship of like-minded individuals.

You may join any of the interest groups listed on our website, with the reassurance that you are covered by our insurance when you attend an activity.

As well as existing activities and interests, we're always delighted to see the creation of new groups. So, if you have interests that you would like to develop with others, then do talk to us about setting up a new group.

Benefits include:

- As well as having opportunities to take up new interests or enjoy existing ones, you'll make new friends amongst our membership.
- You automatically become a member of the Towcester u3a Theatre Bookers group that offers tickets at very competitive prices.
- You will be able to join our active Facebook group.
- You will receive quarterly copies of the *Third Age Matters* magazine produced by the Third Age Trust, filled with interesting articles and updates.
- You'll also receive a monthly email bulletin which keeps you informed of Towcester u3a activities.
- You will be welcome to attend our monthly meeting where speakers cover a wide variety of topics, and you can socialise over refreshments – all at no extra cost.

We extend a warm welcome to you and look forward to seeing you at future u3a events and activities.