

Welcome to the u3a in Sevenoaks

The u3a (formerly University of the Third Age) 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 over 750 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, and Computer open 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 Monthly 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 ten times a year. A leaflet listing all groups and when they meet is sent out each autumn with your membership card.
- **To Join** any number of study or activity groups. These are listed on the website, along with details of where and when they meet

- **To apply** for any special events advertised in the Newsletter 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

Neighbouring u3as may offer spare places on some events they are running.

What is the Third Age Trust?

The Third Age Trust (TAT) is the national umbrella organisation for over 1,000 u3as throughout the UK. It is a registered charity and company, and the u3a logo is copyright. As part of the Third Age Trust our members benefit from:

- Four Copies a year of **u3a Third Age Matters (TAM)**, with access to online resources on educational topics and u3a national news. TAM is sent directly to members' homes.
- Summer schools, seminars, conferences etc, all organised by the u3a
- Access to a resource centre, free online talks and workshops
- Third party liability insurance
- Administrative support of our membership database and website

All u3as pay a capitation grant to the national office; this is included in your membership fee. It means that Sevenoaks u3a has the professional backup 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 a welcome event for new members. The Chairman, Membership team and Groups Coordinator 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 look at the website and decide which groups you would like to join. Remember not to 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 on the website 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. A small charge may be made towards hall hire or refreshments, 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 a learning co-operative. Its success depends on everyone contributing in some way and apart from joining one or more groups, coming to the open meetings, or organised visits, holidays 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:
<https://sevenoaks.u3asite.uk/> or the National Office website: www.u3a.org.uk

Sevenoaks u3a
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Introduction to the u3a



Reg. Charity No. 1051712

<https://sevenoaksu3a.site.uk>

