



## Kings Hill & District

### Frequently asked questions

#### U3A EXPLAINED

1. **Q. What is U3A?**

A. U3A stands for the 'University of the Third Age'. It is a learning co-operative of people that enables members to share many educational, creative and leisure activities. It is a university in the original sense of the word; a collective of people devoted to learning, with members not students, all of whom are in their 'Third Age'.

2. **Q. What is the Third Age?**

A. The Third Age refers to the period of time after the First Age of childhood dependence and the Second Age of full-time employment and parental responsibility. There is NO upper or lower age limit for members.

3. **Q. What is the difference between U3A and an ARA (Active Retirement Association?)**

A. The key special focus of U3A is the concept of 'learning'. This can range from the more academic end of the spectrum, languages, science, ...through computing, history, ....to games and pastimes. We aim to use the accumulated knowledge and skills of the members to learn from each other. Have a look at the U3A National website [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk) where you will be able to register and then log into a members area with your chosen password. There you will find lots more information about U3A.

4. **Q. What does it cost?**

A. This varies across the country. Kings Hill and District's annual membership subscription is currently £20 per person. For this you can attend as many groups as you wish as well as the general monthly meetings. All Interest Groups are self-financing and should extra costs be involved such as hiring a hall, this is worked out by the convener and the group

5. **Q. Can I belong to two U3As?**

A. You can join as many U3As as you wish but you will have to pay a subscription fee to each U3A you join.

6. **Q. Is there a fee reduction for partners?**

A. No. Everyone will need to pay the same annual subscription.

7. **Q. How often are the general meetings; where do we meet?**

A. Monthly meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month at the Kings Hill Community Centre.

8. **Q. What happens at the general meetings?**

A. There is normally a speaker who will give a talk on various topics such as History, Music, Politics and Gardens. Attendance is entirely up to you but as well as the talk, you have the opportunity to meet other members over a cup of tea.

#### SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Special Interest Groups are the life-blood of the U3A and as our membership grows, the number of Interest Groups in our U3A will be increasing. You will find the list of our Special Interest Groups on our website [www.kingshillu3a.org.uk](http://www.kingshillu3a.org.uk) . We do issue all members with a handbook annually but there will be more up-to-date information on the website as we go through the year.

**1. Q. Do I have to join Interest Groups?**

A. No, it is your individual choice as to whether to join one, two or any number of Interest Groups; depending on your interests and available time. Or you can just come along to the monthly meetings. It's up to you.

**2. Q. What if there isn't an interest group for my main hobby/interest?**

A. See if you can form your own group. Talk to the Groups Coordinator (see the yellow handbook or on our website mentioned above), and between you sound out members as to whether there are sufficient others to form a group. We use our monthly newsletter to inform members, so you could put in a short paragraph asking if any other member is interested in joining you. Conveners don't have to be a subject expert but it is important that someone is the main contact for the group.

**3. Q. What takes place in a Special Interest Group?**

A. This will vary and will be decided by all the members of the group. Usually each member is expected to do something e.g. in the walking group, each member will plan and lead a walk; in the Creative Writing Group, each member writes a piece each month on a topic decided by the group; in the Play-Reading Group, all members will decide on which play to read each month.

**4. Q. When and where do the Special Interest Groups meet?**

A. Depending on the subject, groups usually meet in private homes on a monthly basis. Some members take a turn at hosting the meeting if they have the space to do so. You will find some of these details on the website or in the handbook. Some groups may need specialist equipment and would need to meet at another venue e.g. Floristry. This will be decided by the Convener and the group.

**5. Q. What do I have to do if I find a Special Interest Group I am interested in joining?**

A. You will need to let someone know you would like to attend in advance of the Interest Group meeting. You could contact that Interest Group's Convener. The Convener will be able to tell you where the next meeting will be held and give you any other details e.g. what to bring or prepare. As long as the Convener agrees, you can come along to a Special Interest Group twice as a visitor. After that you will be asked to join as a member of that group. The Conveners' contact details are in the handbook or on our website ([www.kingshillu3a.org.uk](http://www.kingshillu3a.org.uk)). You could also contact our Groups Coordinator before you decide to join a group.

**6. Q. What happens if the Convener is unable to increase the Interest Group membership I would like to join?**

A. As we grow our membership in our U3A, the accommodation where the Interest Group meets may reach its numbers limit at some point. Depending on the subject, it may not be practical for a variety of reasons to hold the meeting elsewhere i.e. a larger venue or local hall. As we do not have waiting lists for an interest group in our U3A, a second group will be formed to which your name will be added. Members of that new group will then decide who will be the group leader and when they will meet. This has happened with Wine Appreciation, Play Reading and Mahjong Groups. As you will see, we now have more than one group running in these subjects. We can also add a notice in our newsletter advising members that a second group will be starting. If you need support or information, please contact the Groups Coordinator.

**7. Q. I see that our neighbouring U3A has a Special Interest Group I would be interested in joining. What should I do?**

A. Each U3A is separate so you would probably have to pay a membership subscription to that U3A to enable you to join any of their Special Interest Groups. Please contact our Groups Coordinator to discuss which subject you are interested in. You may find our U3A can start a new group in that subject as there may be other members interested.

If you have any other questions not covered here, please send them to:

[membership@kingshillu3a.org.uk](mailto:membership@kingshillu3a.org.uk) or contact a member of the Committee.