

### ***Introduction***

Welcome to Watford Park u3a (WPu3a).

This document is intended as a short guide to our u3a - where we meet, what we do and where we go. We are always pleased to meet new and enthusiastic members and hope you will enjoy your time with us.

Full information about WPu3a and the wider u3a movement is available on our website ([www.wpu3a.org.uk](http://www.wpu3a.org.uk)). New members are encouraged to explore this, and to use the information available there.

### ***Our u3a***

Watford Park u3a was founded in October 2007 as a Registered Charity (No. 1123484) to enable people no longer in full time employment to follow areas of common interest, be engaged by fascinating speakers on a wide variety of topics each month, and to participate in regular organised events with like-minded people. It is a self-run, self-funded organisation, which looks to the members to play an active part in its development and operation. It offers members the opportunity to broaden their horizons, find new interests and learn new things in later life. Further, the many social activities together enable our members to meet and make new friends.

Today we have over 400 members and over 50 Interest Groups. These are organised by members, for members, the philosophy of the u3a being that everybody can make an equal contribution to the development of the group for the benefit of their fellow members.

### ***Main Meetings***

Main Meetings are held once a month. on the fourth Thursday (the exception being December which is the second Thursday) at St. Luke's Church, Langley Way, WD17 3EG at 3 pm. This start time gives sufficient time to park after the end of the 2.30 pm parking restriction on a number of roads around the church. Do check the signage on the roads though as this could change without our knowledge.

All members are welcome, and encouraged to attend, as this is where you will be able to meet other members and find out what is going on!

Please register yourself as present with the Membership Secretary ([membership.wpu3a@gmail.com](mailto:membership.wpu3a@gmail.com)) each time you come to a main meeting to allow the number of attendees in the hall to be determined in case of emergency.

The usual format for main meetings is an introduction by our Chair followed by a talk by a guest speaker on a subject of general interest. This is followed by announcements about trips, new Interest Groups or other items, after which tea and coffee is provided, ably organised by our Refreshments Supervisor.

Interest Groups are also encouraged to use the foyer of the hall to take turns to make a presentation of their work, trips or projects to the wider membership.

WPu3a has appointed a New Members' Champion who will be present at each main meeting, who can give advice and information to new members on the operation of the u3a and the various Interest Groups available to members. The New Members' Champion can also be contacted by email via the link on the Contact Us page in the website (you will need to be logged in).

### ***Interest Groups***

There is currently a wide variety of Interest Groups operating at WPu3a. All the details of these can be viewed on the website, and summary information is published in our monthly newsletter. Some groups are run in members' homes if space and subject matter permit. Larger groups hire venues around the area. And of course, the walking and similar groups meet outside and sometimes finish at a pub or other public place for refreshments.

### ***How to join an Interest Group:***

Look at the list of Interest Groups on the back page of the Newsletter and contact the Interest Group leader using the details provided or look at the list of Interest Groups on the website. This list also shows which groups have vacancies. You can contact the Interest Group leader via the website.

Even if a group doesn't have vacancies there may be a waiting list so you should still contact the leader. Some groups and most visits are open to all members of WPu3a so you don't have to join up for those, for instance the theatre visits and coach outings. Many of these events are popular and can be restricted in number to the capacity of a coach. Events are run on a first come first served basis so do read the Newsletter or look at the website. Payment is preferred by online bank transfer, or by cheque. We do not accept cash.

Interest Groups, events, and trips are open to WPu3a members only.

If you can't find what you are looking for contact the Interest Group Coordinator at [groups.wpu3a@gmail.com](mailto:groups.wpu3a@gmail.com). The Interest Group Coordinator can find out if other u3as have a joint Interest Group for a subject you are interested in.

### ***How to form an Interest Group:***

Interest Groups are formed with the help of the Interest Group Coordinator (IGC). Anyone can instigate the formation of a group by first contacting the IGC who will announce the subject in the Newsletter and put a notice on one of the tables in the foyer of the hall at main meetings. Interested parties can add their names to this document. Once a few names are put forward a short meeting will be arranged, usually after a main meeting, for interested parties to get together to discuss arrangements such as when and where to meet and how frequently etc. Don't be afraid to put ideas forward for fear of getting committed to doing all the work. You don't have to become an Interest Group Leader just because

you've suggested a subject – although it helps - but you'll find that everyone helps by participating in some way.

### ***The Newsletter***

The Newsletter is published once a month. Anyone can submit an article or small announcement relevant to WPU3a but publishing is dependent on space and relevance. The Newsletter Editor may be contacted at [wpu3anewsletter@talktalk.net](mailto:wpu3anewsletter@talktalk.net).

The Membership Secretary will send digital copies to those who have email addresses several days before the main meeting, thus avoiding the rising cost of postage. However, a few Newsletters are also printed for the benefit of those who don't have email, and these are available at the main meeting.

### ***The eNoticeBoard***

The eNoticeBoard is an online document that is compiled each month from information received, usually from outside sources and occasionally from within WPU3a. It is hosted on the website with its own page (see News/eNoticeboard, which is a public page on the website). A link to the eNoticeBoard is also sent out digitally with the Newsletter each month. This is for events that are not organized by WPU3a, but might still be of interest to our members.

### ***Email***

As email is commonplace, new members are encouraged to learn how to use it if they don't already. Email is the prime communication tool within WPU3a. The Membership Secretary or Social Secretary will occasionally email notices about places which become available at short notice for theatre trips or outings, and the Interest Group Coordinator will use email to pass on information about new groups and vacancies in old groups. If we don't have an up-to-date email address for you, you will not receive this and other helpful and important information. If you don't have a personal email address, please find a friend or family member who is willing to help.

### ***Your Personal Data***

All the key information we hold about you as a member is held within a secure online facility with data only accessible to those who need to have it. Members are encouraged to review regularly the data we hold on them to ensure that it is complete and up to date. We also encourage members to tick the "Gift Aid" box if they are eligible. This provides an added income from HMRC to help us keep membership fees down.

When you joined our u3a you will have been given your Username and instructions as to how to set your password in order to log in to our website. A Guide for Members is also available on the website (see Help/System User Guides, but note you will need to be logged in to view this page).



## **New Members' Information Sheet**

### ***The Executive Committee***

The Executive Committee (EC) is elected annually from within the membership. Names and contact details are published in the monthly newsletter. We encourage members to join the Executive Committee. You can bring your ideas, expertise and enthusiasm to help in providing more opportunities for the members.

The Executive Committee and other key personnel can also be emailed. You can find the required email links on the website, on the Contact Us page, or in the Newsletter.

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