

Introduction

Welcome to Watford Park U3A.

This document is intended as a short guide to Watford Park 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 our U3A and the wider U3A movement is available on our website (www.wpu3a.org.uk). New members are encouraged to explore this, and to use the information available there.

Our U3A

Watford Park U3A (WPU3A) was founded in October 2007 as a Registered Charity (No. 1123484) to enable older people no longer in full time employment to share many educational and creative activities. It is a self-help, self-funded educational organisation. We study and learn for the fun of it and no prior qualifications are required to become a member. As well as learning academic subjects and enjoying social activities together, our members meet and make great friends with whom they may develop further social activities.

Today we have approaching 500 members and almost 70 study groups. These are organised by our members for our members, the philosophy of the U3A being that there is no distinction between the learners and the teachers; they are all U3A members. Everybody can contribute something for the benefit of themselves and others.

Your Personal Data

All the key information we hold about you as a member is held within a secure online system (accessed via the website – see below), 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.

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 User 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).

Main Meetings

Main Meetings are held once a month on the fourth Tuesday (the exception being December which is usually the third Tuesday) at St. Luke's Church, Langley Way, WD17 3EG at 3pm. This start time gives sufficient time to park after the end of the 2.30pm 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 each time you come to a main meeting to ensure she knows how many attendees are in the hall in case of emergency.

The usual format for main meetings is an introduction by our Chairman followed by a talk by a guest speaker on a subject of general interest. This is followed by announcements about trips, new study groups or other items, after which tea and coffee is served. Study groups take turns to serve the refreshments, ably organised by our Refreshments Supervisor who ensures that sufficient supplies are available. Study 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, and he can give advice and information to new members on the operations of the U3A and the various study groups available to members. The New Members' Champion can also be contacted by email via the link on the Contact Us page on the website (you will need to be logged in).

COVID

At the time of writing we are prevented from holding physical monthly meetings. Instead, we have an online presentation by a guest speaker and an opportunity to chat to other members.

Study Groups

There is currently a wide variety of study 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 cycling groups meet outside and sometimes finish at a pub or other public place for refreshments.

How to join a study group:

Look at the list of study groups on the back page of the Newsletter and contact the study group leader using the details provided or

Look at the list of study groups on the website. This list shows which groups have vacancies. Contact the study 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 are open to all members of WPU3A so you don't have to join up for those, e.g. the Theatre Group, the Outings Group and the Garden Group. Many of the events run by these are popular and tend to be restricted in number to the capacity of a coach. Events are usually run on a first come first served basis so do read the Newsletter or watch the website. Payment is by cheque or, in the near future, online. We do not accept cash.

If you can't find what you are looking for contact the Study Group Coordinator at study.wpu3a@gmail.com. The Study Group Coordinator can find out if other U3As have a joint study group for a subject you are interested in.

How to form a study group:

Study Groups are formed with the help of the Study Group Coordinator (SGC). Anyone can instigate the formation of a group by first contacting the SGC 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 there a 'mini 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 a Study Group Leader just because you've suggested a subject – although it helps - but you'll find that everyone helps by participating in some way.

COVID

At the time of writing we are prevented from holding physical meetings. Instead, many study groups are continuing to function successfully online.

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 can be contacted by email via the link on the Contacts page on the website (you will need to be logged in).

The Membership Secretary will send digital copies to those who have email addresses several days before the main meeting. This keeps costs down and we are lucky to be one of the cheapest U3As in the area due to our care in managing our funds. 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.

Email

As email is common place now 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 will occasionally email notices about places which become available at short notice for theatre trips or outings, and other events. 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.

The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee (EC) is elected annually from within the membership.

Names and contact details are published in the monthly newsletter.

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