

GETTING THE BEST OUT OF YOUR U3A MEMBERSHIP

Like all things in life you only get out as much as you put into something. So, make sure you take the greatest possible advantage of your membership. The U3A is a vibrant group that is open to people just like you. So, you have a great opportunity as you get to know us.

So, what are the benefits of your membership

- Make new friends with similar interests to you
- Join in our activities at the Monthly Meeting and hear speakers
- Learn new skills and expand your existing ones
- Join many groups covering a wide variety of interests, hobbies, skills
- Start new groups yourself using your skills, or passion for a hobby and share with other members
- Take part in Outings, Coach trips, Theatre visits, Wine tasting, Eating out
- Receive your printed quarterly magazine and monthly online newsletter
- Have access to all news and information through the U3A website, (including signing up for a daily alert), our newsletter and sign up for our Facebook site to join in our discussions

How to get the best from your membership

First and foremost, attend the monthly meetings in Christ Church, Southport, from 9.30 onwards, first Thursday of each month. It will give you a feel for us and allow you to meet other like-minded people. It will give you an opportunity to talk to Group Leaders – or any of the Committee about your needs. And if you have particular skills, or a passion for a particular hobby and we do not cover it, then talk to Dawn Oldfield, Group Co-ordinator, about starting up your own group. She will be able to give you a lot of help and guidance to do this. We always have a Guest Speaker who can be speaking on a whole range of topics.

Dates for monthly meetings for the membership year 2024 are:

January 4 February 1 March 7 April 4 May 2 June 6 July 4
August 1 September 5 October 3 November 7 December 5

So, please put these in your diary to make sure you do not miss them. When these are running, please note the doors close at 10.30, so as not to disturb the guest speaker, and admission is not allowed until after they are finished.

Next, spend time with the U3A website (www.southportu3a.org.uk). To navigate your way around it follow the tabs at the top. This will allow you to see the various aspects of our organisation.

The About Us & News tabs will let you know what is going on currently with our organisation and will keep you up to date with one-off events that are happening, and that you might be interested in. Keep an eye on this page for news of new groups starting up. These happen frequently, and the new group may just be what you have been looking for!! All news items usually have a “click through” highlight to get more information. You can also sign up for our “**Daily Alert**” which keeps you up to date with any new information as it is loaded to the website.

Also, this will keep you up to date with news about our parent organisation, U3A UK. Just click on the running news feed at the bottom right of the page.

The Events & Meetings tab will keep you up to date with Theatre Trips, Coach Trips, Quiz Nights, Jazz Nights, Christmas Party, and other social events. So, keep an eye on this page as things tend to get sold out quickly!! Most social events can be booked through the website and paid for online or at the monthly meeting

The Membership Zone tab will access your member Login, allow you to amend your membership profile, renew your membership online, access your personal calendar, events you have booked and paid for and find out more about what is going on with groups and book events and trips.

Probably the page you will visit most often is the Groups page. On this page you find every Group that is currently running in the U3A. It gives you details of what it is, where it is held, what it will cost you, (if anything), how often it runs and the level of expertise you will need to take part, (if any). We have a number of groups on the same subject in some cases. This is either because an existing one is full and a new one has started, or it is because it allows members with no experience in the activity to start from scratch. Either way this will be explained on the Group page.

Sometimes, some of our groups are already full and we don't have a volunteer to start a new one. In this case the Group leader will add you to a waiting list. Please do this - as you will be surprised how quickly you are added to the members list!!

The Groups are organised into subject groups. So, decide which subject you are interested in first (eg Walking) then click through and it will show you all the Groups in this category. To look at other activity groups simple go back to the activities menu. Alternatively, all groups are listed alphabetically if you prefer.

When you have decided which Group(s) you are interested in, just click on the blue "email" link in the summary box at the top and this will give you email access to the Group leader. Alternatively, some group leaders prefer you to phone and have left their contact number

Explore our website to find out other things that are going on, and, if you are new to the area under "Useful info" you will find a list of other organisations in the area that could be useful.

If there are any areas that you are not sure of, then go into the "Contact us" tab on the website and ask. If the person you contact does know the answer they will know someone who does!

Best of luck – and enjoy your membership of our U3A