



# New Members Guide

Registered Charity No; 1100094

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## WELCOME to Bourne u3a

### What is the u3a?

Founded in France in 1973 as universities to further educate and stimulate retired members of the community. In 1982, the u3a started as a UK-wide movement of locally-run interest groups that provide a wide range of opportunities to come together to learn for fun. Members explore new ideas, skills and activities together.

It's all voluntary; a typical u3a will be home to many activity groups covering hundreds of different subjects - from art to zoology and everything in between.

The UK u3a movement aims to encourage groups of people no longer in full-time work to come together and continue their enjoyment of learning subjects of interest to them.

From the start, the guiding principles were to promote non-formal learning through self-help interest groups covering a wide range of topics and activities as chosen by their members. There is no minimum age, but a focus on people who are no longer in full-time employment or raising a family. The u3a movement was to be self-funded, with members not working towards qualifications but learning purely for pleasure. There would be no distinction between the learners and the teachers – everyone could take a turn at being both if they wished.

**Why u3a?** This stands for ‘University of the Third Age’.

1<sup>st</sup> age – Learning at school, college, university.

2<sup>nd</sup> Age – Learning skills at work or at home.

3<sup>rd</sup> Age - being the period of time after the first age of childhood

dependence and the second age of full-time employment  
and/or parental

responsibilities

In recent years, we have dropped the word university, as this seemed to put potential members off, by thinking it was further education or even a cult. So now we are referred to as the Third Age Trust.

The Bourne u3a branch started in 2001.

Currently we have over 500 members.

It is registered as a Charity

## **Groups;**

We run on the principle of interest groups, covering many subjects and activities, from Art to Walking and most letters of the alphabet in between.

As a member, you have access to almost fifty groups, all organised by a Group Leader(s).

Each group has a leader, but this title does not mean that the group leader is responsible for the total running of the group. They are members just like yourself but are the link from the outside world to the group. Often, they have a skill that they are willing to share but the group is run by its members for its members.

If you go to our website at [www.bourneu3a.org.uk](http://www.bourneu3a.org.uk) and click on Groups you will see a list of the groups, if you then click on a group, you will get a brief description of what the group does and when they meet.

You can join any group, as long as there are vacancies. Some groups hold meetings in members' houses, or hire a room somewhere, making the number of members that can attend limited. Most groups that are full will have a waiting list that you can ask to be included in.

Each month, we email a copy of our newsletter to all members, near the end of the newsletter, we publish a list

of groups that do have vacancies, if there is a group you would like to join, telephone the group leader named on the list.

If you have not yet received your first newsletter, please email the Groups Coordinator who volunteers to be contact between members, Group Leaders and the Committee, at [groups@bourneu3a.org.uk](mailto:groups@bourneu3a.org.uk) and ask for someone to contact you regarding the group(s) you are interested in.

It is standard practice in our u3a, that you can try any group to see if it is for you. If you attend a group meeting, but decide it is not what you wanted, please let the group leader know, so that they can remove your name from the groups register, which will stop you getting emails informing you of what the group are doing and when.

We know it can be daunting, turning up at a house or a village hall, that has a load of strangers inside, but all members have been through this and know to make you feel welcome and at ease. The chances are the last member only joined a few weeks before you.

You will not be expected to remember the name of each member in the group, you will after a time, get to remember the faces and the names, and even longer to remember which name goes with which face.

## **Monthly Meetings;**

On the third Monday of each month, we have a meeting at The Corn Exchange in Bourne, where we listen to a speaker or musician or entertainer, for about forty-five minutes, then we get an update on any u3a matters from our chairman, and an update from our Group Coordinator, we have the raffle, then we have tea or coffee.

Once again, it can seem daunting to walk into a large hall, with between 80 and 100 people that you may not know. But there are always members at the entrance to help you if you need it.

Or just search for a face that looks as if it belongs to a nice person, and ask if you may sit next to them, soon you will recognise faces from groups you attend and will have people to sit next to and gossip with.

The entrance to the meeting is opposite the entrance to Bourne Library, enter from the car park and turn right.

The meeting starts at 2-15pm,  
Please be seated by 2-10pm.

There is an entrance fee of £2-00, this is to go towards the cost of the speaker/entertainment and a cup of tea or coffee afterwards. There is also a raffle that costs 50p per ticket. 1<sup>st</sup> prize is normally a £20 shop token, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize wine and 3<sup>rd</sup> choccies.

The main meeting normally ends around 3-15pm.

There is then a stampede of members to the rear of the hall for the tea/coffee queue.

At the back of the hall, you will normally find the Groups Coordinator who will try to answer any questions you have regarding groups.

There will also be notice boards with a list of groups that have vacancies and other useful information.

## **The Committee;**

The committee is made up of about ten members that volunteer their time to keep Bourne u3a running.

There are four officers on the committee, Chairman, Vice-chairman, Secretary and Treasurer.

We then have committee members that are;

**Membership Secretary;** who receives your membership form each year, enters members details onto our computer system and keeps it up to date.

**Groups/New Members Coordinator,** liaises between group leaders, members and the committee.

**Speaker Finder,** literally finds people to speak at our monthly meetings, maybe a year in advance and informs the committee of the dates and cost of the speakers.

**Raffle Organiser;** goes shopping for prizes and then sits at the entrance of the monthly meetings selling raffle tickets, then at the end of the meeting, calls the winning numbers and hands out the prizes.

**Publicity Officer;** makes sure our details are updated each month in the 'Bourne' magazine, this normally consists of an email to let the magazine know what date our next monthly meeting is and who the speaker will be. Maybe once a year, a paragraph for the local press, if we are holding a special event.

**Rotas;** organises members to be on hand at the entrance to monthly meetings, to assist any newcomers, and direct them to the membership secretary, notice boards, or to help search for that nice face to sit them next to, so that they can chat with a current member.

**Webmaster;** as the name implies, they keep our website up to date at all times.

We also have one or two Committee Members without a job title, but are willing to help out in any way that may be needed.

The committee meet on the second Monday of each month at 10am at Wake House in Bourne. If you think you would like to be a volunteer on the committee, members are welcome to come along and watch and listen to a group of interesting people having a chat. The meeting normally ends just after 11am.

If you would like to attend, please email the Chairman first, as we meet in a small room, but can move to a larger one if we know members wish to be present.

We also have two non-committee posts.

**Newsletter Editor;** who collects the articles from the committee and groups and puts them together. A copy is sent to all members by email, or if you do not use email, a paper copy is available at the Monthly Meeting.

**Data Manager;** who keeps the software database running.

The software system we use is called Beacon, which securely holds all membership, group and financial information.

As a member, you will have access to this system, but only to check and/or update your personal details, such as home address, email address, telephone number or to renew your annual membership.

The information held on this system is not shared outside Bourne u3a except with your permission. All data protection rules are followed. The one time it is shared is if you decide you would like a copy of the Third Age Trust magazine, then we give your name and home address to the publisher to enable a copy to be posted to you.

If you think you may wish to join the committee, for a specific role or just to help keep Bourne u3a going, please contact the Chairman. We hold our AGM in April of each year, and most years there are vacancies as committee members can only hold a post for a limited amount of time (normally three years).

## **Membership Fee;**

So, what do you get for your annual fee?

You may opt to receive the Third Age Trust magazine, Third Age Matters which will be sent to you by post each quarter.

- meet and socialise with like-minded people
- opportunity to attend monthly General meetings where visiting speakers talk on a vast array of interesting subjects.
- choose to attend from a selection of around 50 Interest groups, covering different subjects.
- participate in events
- a copy of our monthly newsletter which contains up to date news from the groups, the committee and friendly banter and recollections from members

Most contact is done by email.

Group messages are sent from group leaders via our Beacon system. If you receive an email and wish to reply, Beacon does not accept replies, scroll to the bottom of the email, you will see the address of the person that sent it.

Information can be found on our website

**www.bourneu3a.org.uk**