

# Welcome Pack

Bexley u3a

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# Introduction



**“U3A shows the value of communities of interest and learning which are not defined by age, or by past experience, but instead are defined by the experiences still to be explored”.**



Thank you for joining us. Our u3a gives you opportunities to develop your interests, make new friends and have fun. During these uncertain times, demand to be part of the u3a movement is as high as ever, with people looking for new ways to keep connected with each other and keep up their cultural, educational and social activities.

Our amazing members have stepped up and found new and creative ways to keep connected with each other and continue their learning. You will see in this pack – there are many examples of new projects, ideas and shared skills and learning that our members are taking part in.

In this pack you will find what’s available in our u3a including access to interest groups and communication platforms. You will also have access to the national Third Age Matters magazine, to the national online newsletter and various social media sites.

For more information about what we offer, go to our website at [Bexley](#)

# Local u3a information

## All about us

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Bexley u3a is a smaller group, of about two hundred and twenty members. We distribute a monthly newsletter to members, mainly by email, with a few hard copies available at our monthly meetings. It can, in addition, be found on our website.

We are a group of volunteers run by the members, for the members.

A Bexley subscription is £20 per annum, for 2026 to 2027. The year ends on March 31st. Renewals can be paid from January, by BACS, cash or cheque. When you have joined, you will receive a membership card. Take this to group and club meetings, to verify membership and insurance cover.

## Interest groups

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Interest groups, social activities and new member monthly meetings  
New members' meetings are held monthly, organised by BexleyU3A committee. The venue is The Furze Wren, Bexleyheath, at 10 am, on the first Wednesday in the month. If no one turns up by 11am, the committee members leave.

We have speakers at our monthly meetings; the topics are diverse. You will find out about them in the Newsletter and on our website, in advance. We have two members' socials in August and December. From January 2026, our monthly meetings will take place in the Bexleyheath CIU Club located down the side of Primark. Entry is through the door marked Fire Exit. Please arrive at 13.45pm for a 14.00 start. They take place on the second Thursday in the month.

## Contacts

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Our newsletter and our website lists the current interest groups we have. They are for members only. If you have an interest in joining any of our groups, please email the group directly. Your email will go directly to the group leader of that activity and they will get back to you. Sometimes, there is a waiting List to join. If you feel you have a talent to share as a Group Leader, we encourage you to let the committee know. They will help you to get it off the ground.

We help each other. Everyone takes part. Most groups meet during the day, Mondays to Fridays, sometimes at members' houses. Some groups hire venues. We do have travelling groups, where additional costs are payable e.g. theatre or museum trips. We thrive on new ideas, and willingness to take on a degree of responsibility. We are the sum of us not one of us.



**From Walking to Talking, Gardening to Cookery, Yachting to Yoga, Current Affairs to Supper Clubs – the choice is endless and determined by each local u3a**



# History

Our founders envisaged a collaborative approach with peers learning from each other. 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.

## 1981

beginning of movement

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## 2010

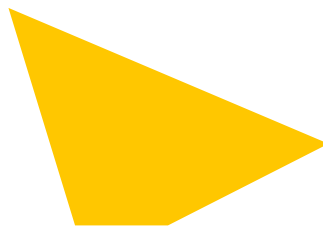
membership reach  
quarter million mark

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From its beginnings in 1981, the movement grew very quickly and by the early 1990s, a u3a was opening every fortnight. u3as grew in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and in 2008 membership was increasing by 11% every year. 2010 saw our membership hitting the quarter million mark.

At the end of 2016 the u3a movement reached the milestone of 1,000 u3as celebrated by a conference with speakers including Eric Midwinter – one of the founders of the u3a movement.

Today, our movement includes over 400,000 u3a members in more than 1,000 u3as and is continuing to grow every day.



# Ethos and Principles

## The Principles of the u3a Movement

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The u3a movement is non-religious and non-political.

It has three main three main objectives.

### Lifelong Learning

- Membership of a u3a is open to all people who have retired from full time work
- Members promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging to a u3a.

### Self Help

- Members form interest groups covering as wide a range of topics and activities as they desire; by the members, for the members.
- No qualifications are sought or offered. Learning is for its own sake, with enjoyment being the prime motive, not qualifications or awards.
- There is no distinction between the learners and the teachers; they are all u3a members.

### The Mutual Aid Principle

- Each u3a is a mutual aid organisation, operationally independent but a member of The Third Age Trust, which requires adherence to the guiding principles of the u3a movement.
- No payments are made to members for services rendered to any u3a.
- Each u3a is self-funded with membership.

# Benefits of u3a membership

## Why join our u3a

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Groups are held during the day in the homes of members in a relaxed and informal way. These groups are led by unpaid but enthusiastic members who often have expertise in the subjects they have volunteered to lead. There are no examinations, and no qualifications are required to join or participate.

The range of activities undertaken is not set, it continues year on year or changes to reflect the abilities of our various group leaders and the interests of our members whether they be academic, cultural, physical or recreational. The emphasis is on self-help, the pleasure of learning and the opening of new horizons.

There is money available for new group leaders to enable new groups to get started. Members are expected to play an active role in the running of our branch by bringing ideas, skills and enthusiasm. We also ask our members to volunteer at events, help with tea making, putting out chairs at monthly meetings etc.

So Join the Bexley u3a Community.

Learn, Laugh, Live.

Keep your mind and body active with us.

We look forward to welcoming you.