

# Welcome

Whether you have decided to join or are still considering, we would like to welcome you on behalf of Mawdesley and Neighbouring Villages u3a.

From its small beginnings in 2006 we have grown, due to the dedicated efforts of many volunteers, to be the thriving organisation you see today. We believe we are a friendly supportive group and that there is something to interest everyone. If you cannot spot exactly what you want then, you may wish to start something new and what better environment than an organisation with so many members.

We hope you will find friendship, support if you need it, and the opportunity to pursue existing and new interests. It is possible to fill your whole week with a range of activities, from the purely social to the overtly intellectual, not forgetting the need for physical exertion. A healthy mind and body.

By joining us we trust you will gain a sense of enjoyment, purpose, and a feeling of life fulfilled by taking advantage of all that is on offer and hopefully by making your own contribution.

The Wednesday Community Morning is the ideal place to ask for any advice and to get answers to any queries.

Visit the Group Pages of our website for the latest information. Here is the link to our website:

[Mawdesley Villages u3a Website](#)

We look forward to your involvement.

# What is the u3a?

The **u3a** is a national, self-help organisation for people no longer in full time employment providing educational, creative and leisure opportunities in a friendly environment. The National motto is Learn, Laugh, Live and the website is [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk) It consists of local u3as all over the UK, which are charities in their own right and are run entirely by volunteers.

Local u3as are learning co-operatives which draw upon the knowledge, experience and skills of their own members to organise and provide interest groups in accordance with the wishes of the membership. The teachers learn and the learners teach. Between them u3as offer the chance to study over 300 different subjects in such fields as art, languages, music, history, life sciences, philosophy, computing, crafts, photography and walking. A typical u3a has about 250 members but could be as small as 12 and as large as 2000.

The u3a approach to learning is - learning for pleasure. There is no accreditation or validation and there are no assessments or qualifications to be gained.

## **Aims and Guiding Principles**

The u3a is a learning co-operative of older people, which enables members to share many educational, creative and leisure activities. Activities are organised mainly in small groups that meet regularly. Members, through sharing their knowledge, skills and experience, learn from each other.

Although all local u3as remain operationally independent, they are members of The Third Age Trust. As such they must abide by both the original Objects and Principles written by Peter Laslett in 1981 and the Principles of the u3a Movement (2014).

The Trust is a national, umbrella body (a registered charity and limited company) which represents all u3as in the UK at national and international level. It is run by a National Executive Committee democratically elected from the membership and offers a range of services, to support and advise local u3as.

The u3a movement is growing all the time; approximately 50 new u3as are started every year. They pursue an amazing range of topics; some academic, some practical and others recreational. Most local u3as offer a combination of opportunities to study, create, socialise, and contribute greatly to members' overall health and wellbeing.

The National u3a Principles can be viewed by clicking on the link

[\*\*u3a - Principles and Vision.\*\*](#)

## How Most Groups Operate

In common with the principles of u3a all groups are self-help groups. Anyone can join any group other than in exceptional circumstances, e.g. lack of space.

All groups will have one or two leaders who take responsibility for the management of the group.

Groups meet regularly, some weekly, some fortnightly, some monthly and some irregularly by arrangement. You need to have your membership card with you.

There is usually a charge for attending each session to cover the cost of venue hire and refreshments. Typical costs per session are likely to be in the region of £2-£3.

All groups are self-financing with costs being met by contributions from the group members. However, funding is available from the central fund to support groups if required.

Some groups pay for a teacher, who is not a u3a member, as they may need a particular expertise. These costs will be covered by the members of the group.

Group leaders are responsible for depositing the money collected from the group with the u3a treasurer (minus any small expenses such as refreshments) and the treasurer will pay hire charges and other major expenses directly. The treasurer or a deputy always attends the Wednesday Community Morning.

The treasurer and group leader will maintain a record of each group accounts which are always available to group members.

All the above sounds very formal but is important in underpinning the enjoyment everyone gets from their involvement with various groups. Almost without exception all groups run smoothly.

# The Wednesday Community Morning

Everyone is welcome to come to the weekly Community Morning held in Mawdesley Village Hall every Wednesday. If you are arriving by car, please be aware that parking can be difficult as the car park gets very busy.

In order to allow for setting up and clearing away the official opening time is 10.00 to 11.45 am. You will be asked to sign in and have your membership card with you. This is to monitor numbers and to comply with Health and Safety requirements.

Tea, coffee, and biscuits will be available for a small charge and there are chairs and tables to sit and enjoy a chat. There is also a lovely outside seating area when the weather is clement.

If you are new to our u3a or by yourself, there is a Tea and Chat table where volunteers will be happy to talk and enjoy a drink with you. There is also a Helpdesk where there will be volunteers who will try to answer any of your questions. If you would like to view our u3a website and don't have internet access there will usually be someone at the Helpdesk who would be happy to show it to you on their computer. It is also the place for those thinking about joining our u3a can find out all about us.

The Community Morning provides a chance for a number of groups to offer opportunities to members to book trips and events, e.g. walks, theatre and musical recital trips, excursions, lunches, talks etc.

General information is freely available with notices and announcements being made weekly around 11.00 a.m.

The Community Morning is an essential element in creating the cohesion and friendship which we hope is a fundamental part of our u3a.

It is also an opportunity for members and new members to help with refreshments or at one of the information desks; assist in setting up and clearing away - all excellent ways to get to know people.

# The Role of the Committee

Our u3a is essentially a 'bottom up' and not a 'top down' organisation. The role of the committee is defined by the constitution and involves the following responsibilities:

- To be the point of liaison with the Third Age Trust
- To uphold the constitution
- To take responsibility for ensuring the requirements of the Charity Commission are adhered to, our u3a being classified as a charity.
- To oversee the financial management of our u3a
- To co-ordinate and support the functioning of the various groups
- To take any strategic decisions in making our u3a as beneficial to its members as possible.
- To listen to and respond to the needs of members, via surveys, informal conversations, electronic communication and the annual AGM.
- The organisation of the weekly Community Morning

The committee meets monthly on the third Wednesday of the month in the lounge at Mawdesley Village Hall at 12.00 p.m.

A list of present committee members and their roles can be found on a separate sheet

Copies of the minutes are available at the Community Morning and on the website

## The Present Committee

<i>Name</i>	<i>Role</i>
Stuart Kirkman	Chair
Sue Jones	Vice Chair
Roger Darling	Treasurer
Jane Clarke	Business Secretary
Pat Bright	Groups' Co-ordinator
Stephen Doyle	Website Editor
Robert Baker	
James Farrell	
Marie Gornell	
Michael Jolley	
John Latham	Co-opted as Rep on MVH Committee
Irene Molyneux	
Veronica Murphy	
Janice Parr	
Ted Southworth	
Kate Williams	

# What Happens to your Membership Fee?

The Third Age Trust, more commonly known as the u3a is a national organisation and Mawdesley and Neighbouring Villages u3a is affiliated to the national organisation.

Approximately 50% of your membership fee is paid to the Third Age Trust. In return for this our organisation has third party liability insurance\*, equipment insurance, and every member will receive directly through the post, four or five times a year, a copy of the magazine 'Third Age Matters', published by the Third Age Trust.

The remaining 50% is held by our u3a to cover any administrative costs, the purchase of major expense items (e.g. projectors), to support groups, and to provide a buffer against any exceptional circumstances.

We hire two rooms in the Village Hall every Wednesday for the Community Mornings which are free to enter.

The Treasurer is responsible for maintaining the accounts which are externally audited and made freely available at the AGM each year.

\* It is important to note that our Third-Party Liability insurance is not a personal accident or illness insurance.



## How You Can Become More Involved

Our u3a is a self-help organisation. What you get out of it depends entirely on the contribution of those around you. It also depends on your own contribution. Perhaps you would like to consider some of the following.

You may wish to set up a new group. The Group Coordinator and the committee will give you every assistance in advising you on the best way to do this.

You will find useful information for group leaders in the links on the Groups page of our website [Mawdesley Villages u3a : Group Information](#)

You may want to assist in running an already established group. If so, then just talk to the group leader(s)

Refreshments are served every Wednesday at the Community Morning. Volunteers are always needed to join the rota.

In preparation for the weekly Community Morning tables, chairs, and other equipment needs to be set up and cleared away at the end. Help is always appreciated.

You may be interested in becoming involved with the production of our regular newsletter.

You may be interested in standing for election to the committee.

## How Your Voice Can Be Heard

In an organisation with so many members it is vitally important that the views and opinions of everyone are taken into account. It is essential that your voice is heard. You can do this in a number of ways

- Talk informally to group leaders
- Talk informally to members of the committee, the majority of whom are to be found at the Wednesday Community Morning
- Telephone, email, or write to a member of the committee or group leader
- Use the Contact facility on our website to email Stuart, our Chair [Mawdesley Villages u3a : Contact page](#)
- Write a piece for the Newsletter
- Attend the AGM
- Volunteer and become more involved
- Stand for election to the committee

## Disability Statement

- Mawdesley and District u3a is committed to the treatment of every member equally and without discrimination or prejudice on the grounds of age, race, ethnic origin, nationality, cultural or educational background, gender, sexual orientation, disability, social standing or religion.
- We are an inclusive organisation and will therefore try to accommodate all members as far as possible. However, because of the external venues that we have to use for some events we have no, or limited, control of those environments. We will strive to make reasonable adjustments whenever we can to enable as many of our members to enjoy the programme of events that we offer.
- If you have a disability or severe health issue, restrictions to some venues or group activities may apply depending upon the nature of the activity and its venue. If you think this may be an issue for you and are considering joining a particular group, please raise any concerns you may have with the group organiser or any member of the committee before signing up, or at the first meeting that you attend, depending on the group/activity.