

Welcome to Southwell u3a

By joining Southwell u3a, you have given yourself the opportunity to:

- Make new friends
- Take part in our wide range of interest groups
- Attend our monthly meetings and social events
- Read and contribute to our monthly newsletter
- Enjoy our national magazine: **Third Age Matters** (quarterly) and a monthly on-line or printed newsletter.

***The information on this page will help you make the most of your membership: Within a few days of becoming a member, you should also receive an email from our Membership Secretary with more “new member” information. IF this does not arrive, it is just possible that we have logged your email address incorrectly, or the email has gone into “Spam”: Please [contact us](#) so we can make sure you receive the Membership Secretary’s information pack!***

#### **Who we are:**

We are one of over 1000 u3as spread across all parts of the UK; The national motto is Learn, Laugh, Live. All we do aims to support the motto!

We are a friendly, self-help, registered charity group, affiliated to the national body, the Third Age Trust, and we want to involve you in pleasurable, sociable and active learning.

We have over 800 members from Southwell and the surrounding area. Most of our activities take place during the day as our membership is primarily for people who have left full time work and have time to spare.

## How we work:

We are a self-help group and we rely on your and other people's energy, enthusiasm and activity. Everyone can contribute something, from welcoming new members, making tea and clearing up all the way through to organising and coordinating our activities through our committee, teams (see *below*) and groups.

## Finding Information:

There are five main sources of information, described below, after which you will find our "Principles of the u3a Movement" and our Code of Conduct which all members are expected to follow.

- The Monthly Meeting
- Local and national u3a magazines
- Our website
- Interest Groups: Your Group Leader(s).
- Your Committee and other post-holders

## Monthly Meetings:

We have a monthly general meeting held at the Southwell Leisure Centre. You are welcome to bring along a friend or relative as a visitor. The meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every month 10.00am to 12 noon. There will be a speaker as well as a chance to chat to other members and find out what is going on.

The meetings start with announcements and Interest Group news and opportunities to sign up for Trips and social events. In the break, there is free tea/coffee (if possible please bring your own mug!) and a short time to socialise and then the speaker has the floor. Usefully, for new and more established members, volunteers run information tables, usually "New

Members" "Groups" and "Membership", and committee members are on hand to listen to your feedback.

### **Newsletters & Magazines:**

Our Southwell u3a newsletter, Newsline, is published every month. It contains reports of group and other activities, the monthly meeting speaker details, notices of forthcoming events and more. It is sent out by email to members, but if you are not able to access email please [contact us](#) for a printed copy. Back-copies of Newsline are in the "Members' Area" of our website. The last page of "Newsline" contains the contact details for committee and postholders.

The national u3a magazine, "Third Age Matters" (TAM) will be posted out to you every few months, unless you [contact us](#) and ask not to receive it.

There is also a monthly national newsletter published on-line with news and ideas from u3as around the country. You can subscribe to the monthly national newsletter without charge, by going to the national u3a site via our own site: <https://www.southwellu3a.com/the-u3a-in-britain.html> and click on the big gold banner.

### **Our Web Site:**

Almost all general information is available via our website, <https://www.southwellu3a.com/> This includes "Contact us" links if you are unable to find answers to your queries.

The part of the site that contains contact information about committee, postholders and group leaders, is password protected. As soon as you have a membership number, please [contact us](#) with your name and membership number so we can send you a password (allow a day or two – this is manual, not automatic!)

### **Our Interest Groups and other activities:**

We have over 60 varied interest groups, all organised by fellow members,



where we meet together for social activities and for learning, plus other activities such as coffee mornings and concerts. Our interest groups range from Art History to Table Tennis; Astronomy to Gardening; Music Making to Music Appreciation to Walking, Badminton to Ukulele, Trips and Visits to Bird Watching to Wine Tasting.

Reports from our groups also appear in our monthly newsletter. Meetings take place in many venues in our area as well as members' homes.

We are always looking to start new interest groups and if you have an interest you would like to pursue with others, we have a New Groups Enabler who will explain and help all the way.

### **Joining an interest Group**

By joining u3a you can discover new interests as well as further exploring your existing interests. With the wide range of topics covered there is bound to be something you would find worthwhile. You can find details of all our groups and activities on our website, <https://www.southwellu3a.com/>

- Look for the menu item "Groups and Activities" and click on "Interest Groups".
- The menu "Members' Area" includes the monthly timetable of events and interest groups, the contact details for group leaders, and whether each group is full or has vacancies.

To join a group, contact the Leader of the group in which you are interested. Groups generally meet on a regular basis, once or twice a month. Groups are very popular and can become full. If a group you are interested in is full, please let the Group Leader and the Groups coordinator know that you are interested. It could be possible to start another group, and the Group Leader can tell you how long their waiting list is.

You don't need experience for most groups, except for the obvious. Yes, you do need to be able to ride a bike to join the cycling group!

Most groups have a range of experience and expertise and you will be able



to fit in whatever your prior knowledge. So bring along your energy and curiosity and give the groups a try.

Whilst we cater for a huge range of interests, we are but one of 34 branches of the u3a movement across Nottinghamshire: See our home page menu/[u3a in Nottinghamshire](#). As a Southwell u3a member, you can join one or more other u3a branches as an “Associate member” for a reduced fee, and attend their monthly meetings and interest groups. This can be great if you really enjoy listening to good speakers, or find we do not have a specific interest group (or if ours is full), or enjoy a particular interest so much that you want to pursue it more often, with different groups of people.

Looking ahead, as we must, to the possibility of failing health or loss of mobility, If in the future you have difficulty getting to meetings or group activities through illness, location or any other reason you might find that the Virtual U3A can help. To find out more about what they have to offer go to <https://vu3a.org.uk/>

### **Our committee and teams of helpers**

We have an all-volunteer committee of around 12 members who are elected at our Annual General Meeting in August. The Committee is made up of the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer and other roles such as Groups Coordinator, New Groups Enabler, Publicity officer, and Welfare officer.

*If you are a new or existing member and have any additional needs or welfare concerns, please tell us: We want to be as inclusive and supportive as possible.*

Details about “who does what” are available on our website, with contact details in the password-protected “Members’ Area” for all of our committee and “post holders”: We all welcome emails/calls from members if you have any questions, suggestions for improvement or information to give us.



Our committee meets monthly, the week before the monthly meeting.

Other teams focus on:

- Membership and Finance
- [Facebook](#) and social media:
- Social events and trips
- Website
- Newsletter team
- Our team of Group leaders and organisers

The other volunteer helpers are... YOU! Nothing happens in our u3a unless the members do it! Your u3a needs you, and helping out in all sorts of ways can be a fulfilling and sociable experience.

## Principles of u3a

### Our Vision

Our Vision is to make lifelong learning, through the experience of u3a, a reality for all third agers.

### The Principles of the u3a Movement

The u3a movement is non-religious and non-political and has three main principles:

#### The Third Age Principle

- Membership of a u3a is open to all in their third age, which is defined not by a particular age but by a period in life in which full time employment has ceased. There is no age limit (other than a minimum age of 18).

- Members promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging to a u3a.
- Members should do all they can to ensure that people wanting to join a u3a can do so.

### **The Self-help Learning Principle**

- 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 u3amembers.

### **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 subscriptions and costs kept as low as possible.
- Each u3a is a registered charity and is subject to regulation by the Charity Commission and HMRC (this means that GIFT AID can be offered: Please check that you have agreed to this if you are a UK taxpayer)
- Outside financial assistance should only be sought if it does not imperil the integrity of the u3a movement.

## Member Code of Conduct

Now is as good a time as any to draw your attention to our “Code of Conduct”, though it is good to know that it is rare for us to need to draw attention to it otherwise!

u3a members are expected to conduct themselves in line with the Movement’s Guiding Principles. They are also expected to treat each other with dignity and respect. Specifically:

- Members are expected to know, follow and promote the Principles of the u3a Movement at every opportunity.
- Members must always act in the best interests of Southwell u3a and the u3a Movement, strive to uphold its reputation and never do anything which could bring their own, another u3a or the u3a Movement into disrepute or expose it to undue risk.
- Members are expected to use Southwell u3a’s resources responsibly and only to further its stated charitable objects/purposes.
- Members are expected to reflect the current organisational policy of Southwell u3a, regardless of whether it conflicts with their personal views.
- Members are expected to abide by Southwell u3a’s procedures and practices.
- Members are expected to treat each other with dignity and respect at all times.



Southwell u3a is a caring organisation: Yes, we do care about each other! However, we are not a "Care Provider", so we do not provide a personal care service, and our u3a insurance does not provide personal accident insurance. If a member can no longer take part in an activity independently, they may (subject to committee approval) bring a carer or companion with them to enable them to continue with that activity. The carer does NOT need to be a member of the u3a movement.

**FINALLY:**

To reiterate, a BIG welcome to the Southwell u3a family; we all hope that you will find Southwell u3a becomes an important and positive part of your life. Remember our motto of "Learn, Laugh, Live", as we support each other in our "third age of life". It can be rough at times, and the friends so many of us make in the u3a can help us to keep learning, laughing even in adversity, and help each other to live life to the full. Welcome!