

Usk and District



What is u3a? Members have often mentioned that, when telling people about their u3a activities, a glazed look may sometimes appear on the listener's face and the question "What is u3a?" comes up. Well, u3a stands for University of the Third Age. Now that may sound a bit hippy dippy to you, however the reality is anything but, u3a is a national organisation which encourages people in retirement or semi retirement to continue learning, have fun whilst doing so and make new friends. In Usk we have 9 healthy u3a groups: Bridge, Craft, Cribbage, Gardening, Reading Group x 2, Scrabble, Walking - gentle walks, Walking - longer walks. We have members meetings with exciting speakers, a yearly meeting to celebrate the anniversary of our u3a, an annual quiz and a Christmas lunch with entertainment. We have fun.

Up and down the country u3a groups are doing amazing things. On a national level u3a impact is about using our voice to make a difference and influence change, locally and nationally, beyond the great work we do everyday in our u3as.

Here is a message from the Chair of the u3a movement Liz Thackray:

"We all know that u3a provides opportunities for people who are no longer working full-time to come together to learn, volunteer, continue their interests and take up new pursuits. The things that we enjoy doing as u3a members is positive ageing in action and sends an important message to the wider community that later life is a time of possibility and growth. As a movement made up of nearly 400,000 members, we want to put our powerful voice as older adults at the heart of the public perception and conversations around age. For example, we can and should encourage better design and more appropriate housing as well as challenging negative attitudes to older people. Through our Pushback Ageism initiative, our Future Lives group, and supporting u3as to get involved in their local communities, we are making a difference. The u3a voice is making an impact. The u3a movement is also building important relationships with organisations who share our values and vision: the Royal College of Art's Design Age Institute, the Centre for Ageing Better, Specsavers #GenerationWow campaign to name a few."

The national u3a website is full of information. There are free Zoom talks and meetings on a huge variety of subjects. These include: Understanding On Line Safety, Secrets of the Human Brain: Brain, Pain and Anaesthetics, Artificial Intelligence News, and Bruce Springsteen and the American Dream.

And so back to activities in Usk u3a. In May Members were invited to a fascinating talk in Llangybi Village hall, with an exciting twist on Shirley Bassey: "The Early Years and the man who discovered her". The talk was given by Will Cross who is something of an expert on the star. All the groups continue to thrive ensuring members exercise minds and bodies. Members from all groups can look forward to coming together for celebrations in September when Prosecco and afternoon tea will be on the menu at the members meeting.

If you'd like to be a part of u3a, it's easy, join an existing group or start one of your own. There is lots of support available for new groups. Do get in touch. Here are the contact details: Maggie, Membership Secretary, email Maggie on Membership@usku3a.org.uk for more information. The local website: <https://usku3a.org.uk/blog/> and the National u3a website <https://www.u3a.org.uk/>.