

“New (u3a) Year” Newsletter

Membership

A big thank you to everyone who has renewed their membership for our 2025/2026 year which started on 1st September. And a special thankyou to those of you who renewed using the Membership Portal in Beacon. Renewing this way really helps us with our admin as your Beacon record is automatically updated and you will receive a confirmation of your renewal straight away. If you pay through the bank by standing order we have to list all these individual entries and manually input them into the Beacon system and then send you a confirmation which obviously takes an awful lot of time and effort now that we have over 1600 members, so we apologise in any delays in notifying you. Sending us a cheque means even more work so please, next year, give some thought to using the Membership Portal.

Groups

So, welcome to the new year for Richmond upon Thames u3a. We now have over 1600 members and upwards of 140 groups of varying sizes and categories and are always very happy to add to this and to give help to anyone who would like to start a new group. Our Section Leaders are always ready to give advice if required and their details are at the top of the “Groups” page on our website. We like to look after our Group Leaders, we welcome any feedback and we hold a Group Leaders’ Lunch each year in July to say thank you to them for all their efforts. This year we are also planning to reintroduce New Members’ Lunches to help new members with information about the organisation and finding their way into anything that interests them.

What is Richmond u3a ?

Many of our members probably do not have a very clear idea of what u3a actually is as an organisation so this is just a very short summary:

u3a is a UK-wide movement of locally-run interest groups that provide a wide range of opportunities to come together to learn for fun and is open to everyone who is not working full-time. Members explore new ideas, skills and activities together. There is no age limit but obviously retired older people make up the bulk of the membership.

Richmond upon Thames u3a is one of these local organisations and is a registered charity with a Committee who are also Trustees of the charity.

We are members of the South West London group of u3a’s and also the wider London group as well as part of the National organisation. As members of these organisations, we have access to even more activities, events and learning opportunities all which can be accessed through the National website at www.u3a.org.uk.

We pay annual subscriptions per member to the National organisation, which is where over 50% of your membership fee goes, and in return we are covered by insurance, copyright licences and have access to advice on any local issues. Each of our members is also entitled to receive the National quarterly magazines.

As members of the National organisation we are required to follow the principles and code of conduct of u3a which is copied below and which sets out the ethos of the organisation.

Code of Conduct

Mutual respect, supporting and learning from each other and effective communication are key elements to our work. u3a staff, members, Volunteers, Trustees and Council Representatives have the right to carry out their responsibilities without being bullied or abused either verbally or physically.

We expect u3a members, Trustees, Council Representatives, Volunteers, and contractors to:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect regardless of their age, gender, ability, race, cultural background, sexual orientation or religious belief.
- Maintain a respectful attitude towards the opinions of others.
- Act as a good role model with appropriate behaviour.
- Act in the best interest of the Third Age Trust and not do anything which may bring the Trust or the wider u3a movement into disrepute or expose it to undue risk.
- Uphold the Principles of the u3a movement.
- Promote diversity, equality, and inclusion in everything we do.
- Abide by Third Age Trust policies and procedures (as relevant to their role).
- Use the Trust's resources responsibly and only to further its stated charitable objects/purposes.
- Reflect the current organisational policy of The Third Age Trust, regardless of whether it conflicts with personal views.
- Ensure organisational and individual confidentiality at all times.

We expect everyone to contribute in a positive way and ask that everyone keep this Code of Conduct in mind to make the Third Age Trust a positive place to work, volunteer and be a part of.

The Third Age Trust operates a zero-tolerance policy towards violence, harassment, bullying and sexual, religious or racial discrimination of staff, u3a members, Volunteers, Trustees, Council Representatives, contractors and the general public. If this is identified, the Trust will take appropriate action to protect the relevant parties.

All those who are part of the u3a movement have a duty to report any safeguarding concerns either to their local u3a where it concerns a member of their own u3a, or the u3a Office if it relates to Trust Volunteers, Trustees or staff

Group News

Visit Kew Gardens in October

Join us for the last visit this season on Monday 27th October

This visit will be the last of this season at Kew – their year runs until 30th October – so I hope we can grab some autumn colour by visiting the Tree-Tops Walkway (provided the lift is working!) and just in case the weather has turned autumnal, we'll also spend some time in the Princess of Wales Conservatory. It's worth a 2nd visit even if you've been before.

There will be some visits over the winter too, provided we successfully rejoin next year's scheme.

This visit will start as usual at 10:30am, meeting at Victoria Gate – if you're not familiar with this scheme, we are part of Kew Community Access Scheme, which allows us a number of visits for our members each year at a very low price – but there is no cost to you!

You are welcome to join us, even if you have been before with u3a. The visits are simply designed to give you a taste of Kew – it's not a guided a tour, just a chance to spend time in lovely surroundings with fellow members, or you can go it alone, and organise your own bespoke route, staying as long as you like.

If you'd like to join us, please drop a line to Geraldine Wear geraldinewear@btconnect.com and please give your name and membership number if possible. We'll get back to you confirming your place on the visit, and providing more joining information.

Look forward to seeing you!

Annie Keane & Geraldine Wear

Caring Skills and Attitudes

The figures for the UK from Co-pilot may make us think:

- 30% of people over 65 live alone
- 45% of people over 85 have a disability
- 22% of us end our lives in care homes
- 17% of us have dementia mentioned on our death certificates

This leads me - a former GP – to think that we older people need to cater better for disabled neighbours, friends and relatives. Doing so may limit their costs in private social care, and the need for costly provision by the local authority or the NHS.

If we are carers already, we may wish to engage with others to share the load.

In sharing knowledge, experience and practical skills with other older people we may develop friendships, and these may lead to mutual care agreements.

The plan is to hold meetings on every second Monday afternoon from 2.30 pm. However, at this stage we can afford to be flexible about this.

The curriculum will include such items as: agreements with disabled people and their domestic partners, communication skills with people with dementia and other disabilities, security, avoidance of scams, misunderstandings and dishonesty, dealing with correspondence, lifting skills, household skills, medications, sources of help and advice.

If this interests you, please contact me:

Alick Munro alick@munro.com. Phone: 020 8892 9243. Text 07944 93353

Chess

Keep those brain cells agile and fit. Chess does just that whether you are a beginner or a seasoned player, and of course, if so, you already know. Chess needn't be a tough start, or a mesmerising myriad of multiple choices, but just one move at a time. And, when you start playing you'll never look back – thought, challenge, memory and friendship are all part of the U3a club.

We play every fortnight at the ETNA Centre in St Margarets from 2.00-4.00p.m. We always start with a theme or puzzle to promote our thinking and deepen our understanding of the game. Our members enjoy their games whether against beginners or seasoned players.

If this is an activity you enjoy or wanting simply to start after many years of absence from playing chess please contact: George Wallace (george-wallace@btconnect.com)

Other Events

Brandenburg Choral Festival of London

Wednesday 3rd December 2025 from 2 – 4pm

At St Margaret Pattens Church

Rood Lane, Eastcheap, London EC3M 1HS

Nearest Underground Station: Monument (5 minutes walk)

U3a Christmas Concert 2025

With the Brandenburg Camino Singers

Join u3a for a concert of traditional carols enhanced by the gentle glow of mulled wine and mince pies.

Tickets: £27.00 including programme and mulled wine/soft drinks/mince pies served during the interval.

Details for booking can be found on the London Region website at

lru.u3asite.uk/events