

# *Sandbach & District*



## Handbook for Members 2015-2016



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Ralph Browes created the montage on the cover page.

## Committee Members and Officers

Position	Official U3A Email
Chairman	<a href="mailto:chair@sandbachu3a.org.uk">chair@sandbachu3a.org.uk</a>
Deputy Chairman	[Official email not available]
Secretary	<a href="mailto:secretary@sandbachu3a.org.uk">secretary@sandbachu3a.org.uk</a>
Treasurer	<a href="mailto:sandbachu3atreasurer@live.co.uk">sandbachu3atreasurer@live.co.uk</a>
Programme Organiser(s)	<a href="mailto:sandbachu3aprogramme@live.co.uk">sandbachu3aprogramme@live.co.uk</a>
Membership Officer	Official email not available
Webmaster	<a href="mailto:sandbachu3a@hotmail.co.uk">sandbachu3a@hotmail.co.uk</a>
Social Mornings Organiser	Official email not available
Almoner	Official email not available
Newsletter Organiser	<a href="mailto:newsfeed@sandbachu3a.org.uk">newsfeed@sandbachu3a.org.uk</a>
Other Committee Member(s)	Official email not available

- If you need to contact a member of the committee either use one of the official email addresses shown above or dial 0844 58 60670 and leave a short message when prompted. This will enable a committee member to contact you.
- A list of the names of all current Committee members with full contact details is published periodically and is available on request.

## **Introduction**

Welcome to Sandbach & District U3A Handbook for Members. It communicates essential administrative information to existing and potential members. The Handbook for Members will be updated on the Sandbach U3A website as necessary. It is designed to be downloaded and printed by those members who prefer to read from paper. A paper copy will be available for reference at the U3A desk in Sandbach library.

## **University of the Third Age (U3A)**

U3A is a university in the original sense of the word: a collective of people devoted to learning, with members, not students, all of whom are in their third age.

The third age refers to the period of time after the first age of childhood and dependence, and the second age of full time employment and/or parental responsibility. Anyone in the third age can join the U3A, including people working part-time. There is no lower age limit.

U3A is a learning co-operative which enables members to share educational, creative and leisure activities. No academic qualifications are required to join: nor are any given.

The first Université du Troisième Age was founded in Toulouse in 1972, and the universities in France made their facilities and tutors available to provide courses for older people. The first University of the Third Age in the UK was started in Cambridge in 1981. Rather than link with universities, U3As in the UK are created, organised and managed on a voluntary basis by members who also run the activities.

## **National Resources**

### **Resource Centre**

The Third Age Trust is the national organising group for the University of the Third Age in the UK. The Resource Centre, in its national office in Bromley, has a collection of non-book material available to all U3A groups to borrow free of charge, except for the cost of return postage.

There are slides, videos, cassettes, DVDs and CDs available in a wide range of subjects. Individual subject lists are available from the Resource Centre on request and the whole catalogue is available on the Third Age Trust website with an ordering facility. For details go to <http://www.u3a.org.uk/home.html>

### **Third Age Matters**

Third Age Matters (formerly U3A News) is the national magazine of the University of the Third Age. It is posted directly to the home address of members and, if more than one member shares the same address, a single copy is sent. The magazine is published five times a year and the cost is included in the annual fee you pay to Sandbach & District U3A.

## U3A Sources

*Sources* is the Educational Journal of the Third Age Trust, distributed free to members of Sandbach & District U3A with Third Age Matters. It aims to be of general interest but is particularly useful to study group leaders, aspiring group leaders and committee members. Each issue focuses on a subject and, by drawing on the knowledge and experiences of U3A members, it disseminates ideas and practical information. It is published three times a year.

## Equal Opportunities Policy

Sandbach & District U3A endorses the equal opportunities policy of the Third Age Trust, last issued in January 2012 and shown below.

All affiliated Universities of the Third Age (U3As) pursue an equal opportunities policy and as far as it is within their power to do so, provide equality of treatment to any person in their third age regardless of:

- educational background
- sex (including marital status and gender reassignment)
- sexual orientation (including civil partnership status)
- race or racial group (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins)
- religion or belief
- disability
- social status

U3As are committed to the furtherance of fair treatment and the absence of discrimination in all their activities and strive to achieve a membership which reflects the composition of the community they serve.

## Sandbach & District U3A Organisation

Sandbach & District U3A was founded in 2003 and now has over 1,000 members, with over 70 activities. It is a registered charity (no. 1105144) and the rules of operation are set out in the constitution on the website at:

<http://sandbachu3a.org.uk/wp/about-sandbach-u3a/constitution/>

The cost of running Sandbach & District U3A is met by an annual subscription (currently £8) and a small payment (currently 50p to £2.50) for attending each meeting of a group. Group activities take place mainly in hired venues, but some groups meet in the leader's home or the open air: for example, walking, bird watching and environmental action.

The committee meets every month to manage the organisation and members are encouraged to put themselves forward for election at the AGM in October. Committee minutes are available to members at the U3A desk in Sandbach library where committee members take turns to accept membership registrations and answer queries. This service operates on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month from 9.30am to 11.30am. Members may also send emails to [SandbachU3A@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:SandbachU3A@hotmail.co.uk)

The greatest expenditure for Sandbach & District U3A is the hire of venues for meetings. Members are encouraged to suggest to the Programme Organiser any new venues that become available in the Sandbach area.

## The Committee and its Membership

The committee plays an important part in the on-going management of Sandbach & District U3A. Committee members and officers are elected for three-year terms. There is usually a need for new members to be elected at the AGM.

Since Sandbach & District U3A is wholly a volunteer organisation, it is reliant on members putting themselves forward as committee members (as well as leaders). Members are encouraged to think of becoming involved in this way. Please talk to others and consider possibilities well before the nomination process and elections at the AGM in October. Sandbach & District U3A cannot flourish unless members are prepared to contribute in this way.

## Registration and Membership

Each member pays the membership fee each year. For the current year, 2015-2016, the fee is £8. To recognise their contribution to the organisation, group leaders and members of the committee do not have to pay the annual membership fee.

If a member is unable to participate in a group without assistance, they may be accompanied by a supporting companion. The companion should be a U3A member and will be offered free membership, unless they participate on their own account.

### How to register

Please collect a Registration and Gift Aid form at the U3A desk in Sandbach library or download a copy from <http://www.sandbachu3a.org.uk>. Complete the contact information and the Gift Aid declaration. If you pay tax and select the Gift Aid option, the Treasurer can claim from HMRC the tax paid on your membership fee. This is all you have to do to allow Sandbach & District U3A to recover the tax. The amount received in 2014 was over £1,000.

Deliver the completed Registration and Gift Aid Form with the membership fee in the form of a cheque payable to Sandbach & District U3A (or cash if you apply in person), to one of the locations listed below. Please provide a stamped addressed envelope for your membership card unless you apply at the desk in Sandbach library or on enrolment day. There is no facility to accept payment via debit or credit cards.

- The U3A desk upstairs in Sandbach library on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, between 9.30am and 11.30 am.
- The communications box under the U3A noticeboard in Sandbach library.
- By post to Sandbach & District U3A Membership, c/o Sandbach Library, The Commons, Sandbach, CW11 1FJ.
- At the enrolment day in September.

Members are encouraged to include their email address on the registration form, as this allows messages to be sent to members quickly and cheaply. (If you don't log on to your email account, please don't record it on the form.)

## **How to renew an existing membership**

A renewal notification will be sent to your postal address each year at the appropriate time with renewal instructions. The process of re-registration starts in May. Please contact a committee member if you have not received your notification by the end of May. The Registration and Gift Aid form has been redesigned so that when you have completed one of these forms you will not need to complete another unless you change your contact details or Gift Aid status.

Please provide a stamped addressed envelope (SAE) for your new membership card, unless you apply in person at the desk in Sandbach library, or on enrolment day. Although there will be an opportunity to renew your membership on enrolment day, the experience of queues in previous years means that all the other options listed above are preferable.

If your old card is not available, please provide your name and address with the renewal fee and a SAE. The person renewing your membership will be able to locate your unique membership number.

## **Joining a Group**

Once registered as a member of Sandbach & District U3A, you can enrol in one or more groups. Apply to the U3A desk in Sandbach library for the contact details of the leader of each group you want to join. Then contact the leader to see if there is a vacancy in the group.

Regular attendance at groups is necessary to ensure that the meeting fees are sufficient to pay for the hire of the venues. While members may occasionally miss meetings, a continued absence without explanation may prevent a new member from joining the group. Enrolment is cancelled if members miss three consecutive meetings without explanation.

If, during the group's activities, you suffer from some sort of accident or emergency, the group leader would find it helpful to have the phone number of a relative or friend to contact. You should provide an emergency contact number to the group leader and you may also like to add that number to your mobile phone with the name ICE (In Case of Emergency).

## **Continuing Group Membership and Enrolment Day**

Existing members of a group may, if they have attended regularly, carry that membership forward to the next year. Members who wish to join a group in which they are not currently enrolled, can obtain information about availability. Further information will be available on the website, from the U3A desk in Sandbach library, or by emailing or phoning the group leader.

You are urged to enrol or re-enrol prior to September. The end of the U3A term in May is a good time to inform a group leader that you wish to enrol for the next year. Enrolment day is held in September, but there are practical difficulties in attracting a large number of people that may exceed the total allowed by fire regulations. Therefore the most successful enrolment day will be one at which very few people attend because most members have registered and enrolled earlier.

It is hoped that most members will join or re-enrol in a group by contacting the group leader at a group meeting, by phone or by email.

## Communications

Members are informed about forthcoming events in the following ways.

**Email** The contact process allows messages to be individually addressed to each member whose email address has been recorded. If a member without an email address shares a household with a member who does have one, the message will be addressed to both of them. Sandbach & District U3A prefers to communicate by email, as this is quick, cheap and efficient. Members who receive information via email are asked to share it with friends who do not use email.

**Website** The website contains information about the activities of Sandbach & District U3A and this is updated frequently. The URL is <http://www.sandbachu3a.org.uk>

**Noticeboard** There is a noticeboard in Sandbach library dedicated to Sandbach & District U3A. It is located at the back of the right-hand side on the ground floor.

**Communications box** Written communications and cheques may be left in the box located under the U3A noticeboard in Sandbach library. Please do not put cash in this box: it is not secure.

**Group leaders** Members who attend groups regularly receive current information from the group leaders.

## Members' Social Mornings

From October to April on the first Monday of each month, starting at 10.00am, there is a meeting in the Town Hall in Sandbach. At the moment, no charges are made for admission. A speaker or some form of entertainment is provided; members have refreshments and chat with friends. The website and noticeboard display the details of activities scheduled for the season but no meeting is arranged if that Monday is a public holiday.

## Trips and Events

The social committee arranges holidays and trips to theatres and attractions throughout the year and also organises events in Sandbach. These are generally open only to members of Sandbach & District U3A but, if an event has not been sold out, it may be opened to non-members. This does not happen often, so people who want to attend an event or go on a trip should register as members to improve their chances. Forthcoming events and availability of tickets are publicised in Sandbach library and on the website. Tickets are sold at the U3A desk in Sandbach library on Library Duty days or at other times specifically advertised. Members may buy a maximum of two tickets.

## **Privacy of Personal Information**

Information taken from the registration forms is encrypted on a computer database so that it cannot be read, even if the computer is stolen. It is used only to administer the activities of Sandbach & District U3A.

## **Almoner**

If a member dies or becomes seriously ill, the Almoner would like to know in order to send an appropriate card. For contact details, see the list of officers at the start of this document.

## **New Groups**

In the interests of keeping Sandbach & District U3A a lively and dynamic organisation, members are encouraged to set up new groups and share their interests. Groups may be run with a facilitator, co-ordinator or shared leadership. There is a Handbook for Group Leaders that explains how to do this, plus plenty of experienced members who will provide support to a new leader. Contact the Programme Organiser for details.