



iU3A Members Handbook

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***To help you get the most out of your membership of
Islington U3A.***



Learn, laugh, live

Contents

1.	Welcome.....	3
2.	Islington U3A Membership Benefits.....	4
3.	How To Volunteer- "It Depends On Us"	5
4.	Attending the "Monthly" Meeting.....	6
5.	Joining an Interest Group.....	6
6.	Attending a Group	7
7.	Communication Methods.....	8
8.	Islington U3A Website.....	9
9.	Beacon Membership System	10
10.	Executive Committee	11
11.	Starting a New Group.....	12
12.	Data Security.....	12
13.	Contact Points	13



iU3A Members Handbook

1. Welcome

We are delighted to welcome you as a member of Islington U3A (iU3A) which is a local charity and is also part of the world-wide UTA (www.u3a.org.uk) organisation. We are still recovering from the Covid19 pandemic but the majority of our activities are now revived.

Membership of iU3A is open to people who want to keep their minds sharp, get out and about, learn new things, spark new interests, meet new people and keep physically active. In summary – to have some fun.



There are no entry qualifications, no exams and no prizes; just the satisfaction of keeping your mind and body active and connecting with local people who want to do the same. You do not have to live in Islington or be a certain age. At heart Islington U3A is a voluntary, sharing, learning and enjoyable organisation.

We aim to ensure that our activities, meetings and events are open to members with mobility or other difficulties. Our monthly meetings and some other events are held in locations with access for people who use wheelchairs, and facilities for those with hearing loss etc. However some groups are held in private homes and disabled access may be limited. A number of our groups meet online and help with using Zoom is available for those who need it.

iU3A Members Handbook

2. Islington U3A Membership Benefits

Your membership of iU3A gives you:

- Entry to any Interest Group (if it has room). Some Groups do have additional charges – for example for theatre or cinema tickets, or for hiring DVDs.
- Attendance at other events, for example coffee mornings, computer help sessions, summer party, quiz nights, clue trails, pub lunches (subject to booking).
- Attendance at the Monthly Meetings, which currently offer two talks on very varied subjects of interest, with time for Q and A, local announcements, and a chance to meet other members.
- Outings to various historical houses or national sites (arranged in addition to Interest Group programmes).
- Teas: 'New members' Teas (which are usually held a couple of times a year) where you can meet other new members and Committee Members, find out a little more about iU3A, and raise any questions you may have.
- Access to a Legal Helpline.
- Support and friendship when you need it.

You also get access to wider regional and national events. For example:

- iU3A membership allows you to take part in Shared Learning Projects. This is research, usually based at a museum or library in the London area. Watch the iU3A Bulletin or iU3A 'Other Opportunities' webpage for details of these.

iU3A Members Handbook

- You may want to attend the summer schools held around the country – see the iU3A Bulletin or iU3A 'Other Opportunities' webpage for details of these.
- Attendance at the U3A National Conference, open to all members of all U3As in the UK.
- Third Age Trust national magazine (for an extra charge).

Your membership is subject to payment of your annual fee. To keep our costs down we encourage members to



pay online by bank transfer or PayPal and also to receive information by electronic means such as email and website (although members may opt to receive information by other means if they prefer).

iU3A reserves the right to require a member to leave an event or to cancel membership, in case of misconduct.

We have no paid staff, and no office. Your subscription fee is used for materials and other costs (for example renting venue space when applicable). We do totally depend on members volunteering their time to help organise things.

3. How To Volunteer- "It Depends On Us"

The range of activities we can offer is totally dependent on you, the membership - who volunteers to do what. You can help in a big way (e.g. volunteer to be on the Executive Committee or a Group Coordinator) or a small way (e.g. be a 'Meeter & Greeter' at the monthly

iU3A Members Handbook

meetings). If you feel you can help in any way to sustain iU3A please contact the Head of Volunteers at: <http://www.islingtonu3a.org/contacts.html>.

4. Attending the “Monthly” Meeting

We have these meetings throughout the year. During the pandemic we have moved these online and now hold them twice a month. The ‘What’s On’ page of our website and the twice-a-month-issued Bulletin show the talk subject and speaker for the near-term meeting.



We are also using Zoom Breakout rooms to allow a bit of socialising and chat amongst members at these meetings.

5. Joining an Interest Group

The shared learning Interest Groups are the main purpose of all U3As. The full list of current Groups can be found at <http://www.islingtonu3a.org/groups.html>. We have marked all the groups to show if they meet physically or online or both. The individual Group Coordinators may have some expertise or just an interest in the subject. Everyone can take part and share their knowledge and opinions. In some Groups, members take turns to research an aspect of the subject.

iU3A Members Handbook

In most Groups an interest in the subject is all that is needed to join. For some, such as language groups, the required level of ability will be indicated.

To join a Group you must be a member of iU3A. Non-members are allowed to attend once only on a trial basis. So this allows you to bring along a friend as a 'taster'.



If you want to join a Group, contact the relevant Group Coordinator via that Group's web page or through Beacon. If the group is full, please ask the Group Coordinator to put you on a waiting list. There is usually

some turnover and if the waiting list becomes very long, the New Groups Coordinator can prioritise the formation of a similar Group.

Many groups meet in the morning or afternoon, Monday to Friday, so with over seventy Groups, we regret that inevitably there are clashes.

6. Attending a Group

There may be specific costs associated with attending a particular group. If coffee or tea is provided in a members house the Coordinator is entitled to ask for 50p per member toward these costs.

Most groups meet monthly, a few fortnightly and some, mainly the language groups, are weekly.

iU3A Members Handbook

If you are unable to attend a meeting, please contact the Group Coordinator to alert them to this and allow someone on the waiting list to attend.

7. Communication Methods

Our main method of communicating with the general public and our membership is through our website (www.islingtonu3a.org). We encourage all our members to view our website regularly to establish for example what events are scheduled, what groups we have, details of the next monthly meeting and what other opportunities exist within the broader U3A community.

Bulletins: we usually issue two of these per month to all our members. These tend to look forward – what’s coming up in the next period, announcements about changes or general information, appeals for volunteers, and other opportunities. They are issued by email to all members; a hard copy is delivered to members not on email.



Newsletters: we try to issue at least two Newsletters each year to all our members. These tend to look back, describing what we have done in the last period. They are issued by email; a hard copy is delivered to members not on email.

Group Coordinators and Committee members will contact you by email for various topics.

iU3A Members Handbook

There is a national website at www.u3a.org.uk which has details of events, summer schools, one day conferences, holidays, on-line courses and much more.

Our AGM is in November. At this meeting we present our annual accounts together with a report from the Chair and the committee members for the next year are elected. A copy of our Constitution can be viewed at www.islingtonu3a.org/about.html.

If you cannot use a computer or don't have email we will try to keep you informed by postal communication or the phone.

8. Islington U3A Website

Do look at our website, www.islingtonu3a.org which opens at the Home page, and has up-to-date information organised into 7 areas:

- home
- groups
- what's on
- join us
- contacts
- members

Please explore the Islington U3A website to find out much more about us.

iU3A Members Handbook

9. Beacon Membership System



Now that you are a member of iU3A, you can access all of the iU3A website, and most importantly, you can use Beacon, which is our database where your personal data is securely stored. To gain access click on the link

www.islingtonu3a.org

Then go to the page titled 'Members' on our website and you will see the Members Log in link. This will take you to the entry page of Beacon. Or you can use this direct link:

<https://u3abeacon.org.uk/u3aportal.php?u3a=56&sc=YAKR>

As requested on that page log in using your personal data (as provided in your Welcome letter). The fields are case-sensitive. The last box says "Confirm Identity" – and when you click on the last box you will have three choices: groups, meetings and events, and personal details.

Through Beacon you can:

- Check and correct, if necessary, your personal contact details, which include addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses and emergency contact information. Whenever your information changes, it is important that you log-in to the Members Portal and update your personal data.

iU3A Members Handbook

- You can view and/or download a personal calendar, showing your Group meetings and iU3A's Monthly Meetings as well as coffee morning and pub lunch dates. Please do check with the relevant Coordinators, as dates may change.
- See all the Groups and the contact details for Group Coordinators.
- Enrol in a Group online, providing the group Coordinator allows this to be done and there is space in the Group. If the Group is not full and the option to join the Group is not enabled, please contact the relevant Group Coordinator using their contact information.

Some Groups have a "Join the waiting list" feature enabled when they are full. If this option is not enabled, please contact the relevant Group Coordinator using their contact information.

If the contact information for the Group Coordinator is missing, then please ask the Groups Coordinator on the Executive Committee to forward your request to the relevant Groups Coordinator.

10. Executive Committee

iU3A has an Executive Committee (EC) as required by the Charity Commission. The EC provides oversight to the various activities, and guidance for all. There are specific defined roles in accordance with the Charity Commission and all our EC members have job descriptions on our 'Contacts' webpage.

iU3A Members Handbook



If you are interested in standing for an EC role please contact our Head of Volunteers (details on the Contacts webpage). New volunteers are always welcome.

A sub-committee arranges the monthly meetings – the main topic speakers and the 2nd subject presenters.

11. Starting a New Group

You may find that the groups you are interested in have too many members, or there is no group for the subject you are seeking. Consider starting a group yourself, perhaps with other people on the waiting list. The New Groups Coordinator will help you get established.

12. Data Security

When joining iU3A your personal details will have been registered (including an emergency contact number if provided). These details are available to the Committee and the Group Coordinator for the groups you join but are not shared with other members or the public. iU3A complies with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

iU3A Members Handbook



13. Contact Points

If you have any general queries do contact our Membership Secretary on: iu3amembers@outlook.com

Or you can phone us one: **07784 336219**