

U3a

Barnsley & District

Members Handbook



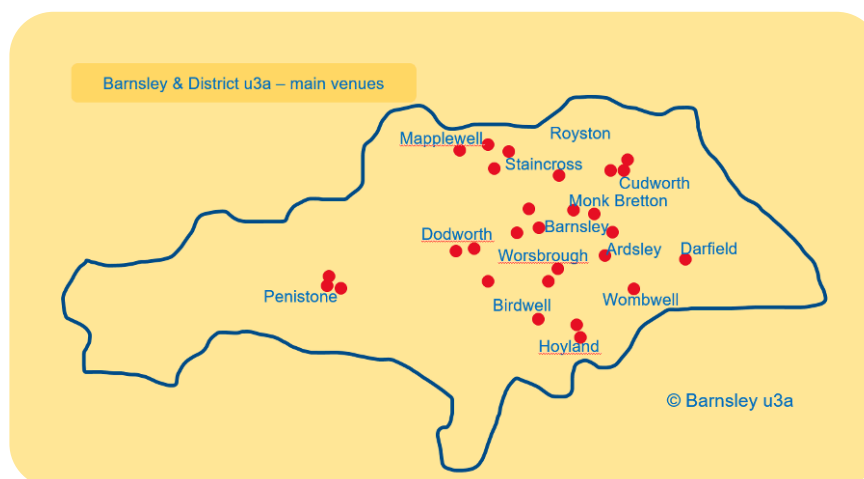
Welcome

Barnsley & District u3a is a vibrant and welcoming organisation, offering a broad array of social, educational, creative, sporting, and leisure activities. We are a community of people who enjoy learning and socialising together, keeping both our bodies and minds active as we embrace life in our third age. Our activities are continuously evolving to meet the needs of our members.

Joining Barnsley & District u3a is a fantastic way to meet new people, make friends, and stay engaged.

Please take the time to read this booklet—it will answer many of your questions and help you get the most out of your membership.

We hold events at various venues throughout the Barnsley MBC area, with most locations conveniently situated along major bus routes, ensuring accessibility for members who rely on public transport.



All our activities are run by volunteer members (Coordinators), with the workload often shared among Group members. We actively encourage members to get involved in creating and running groups, as well as in supporting the wider organisation.

We also hold a members monthly meeting, which provides an opportunity to share updates, discover new activities, and socialise. These meetings typically feature a guest speaker.

Explore, Discover, Enjoy

Our active Travel Group arranges day trips and overnight stays to events and attractions across the country. If you enjoy dining out, we also have groups that meet at restaurants throughout the borough.

Barnsley & District u3a is all about doing what you love — not for qualifications or rewards, but for the joy of learning, discovery, and shared experiences. Our groups offer laughter, friendship, and a warm welcome



What is the u3a?

The u3a is a self-help organisation for people no longer in full time employment, typically those who are retired or semi-retired.

It offers educational, creative, leisure, and personal development opportunities in a friendly and supportive environment. There are over 1,000 u3a groups across the UK, all independent charities run entirely by volunteers.

We are learning co-operatives, drawing on the knowledge, skills, and experience of our members to run interest groups based on the needs and interests of the membership.

Barnsley & District u3a

Barnsley and District u3a (Bu3a) was founded in 1996 and currently has over one thousand members. Our stated purpose is 'The advancement of education and, in particular, the education of older people and those retired from fulltime work by all means including associated activities conducive to learning and personal development in Barnsley and the surrounding locality.'

We currently operate approximately 100 Groups providing a wide range of social and personal development opportunities throughout the year. All activities are run by member volunteers who are unpaid for the work they do. As a charity we are registered with the Charity Commission and we have our own constitution and an elected Executive Committee who are Trustees. Our constitution is available to all members who wish to see it and is on our website www.bu3a.org.uk Please take the time to read our constitution and policy documents.



Barnsley and District u3a is part of the Yorkshire and The Humber Region (YAHR), which has over 22,000 members. The YAHR Management Team organises network events, training days, summer schools, and special showcase events. They also support the region's fifty-plus u3as through collaboration and shared resources.

We have two YAHR officers who were elected to stand as council representatives to represent us.

The Executive Committee /Trustees of Barnsley & District u3a

The Executive Committee is there to manage and develop the organisation and ensure adherence to the policies, principles, and constitution of the organisation

Policies

It may be boring to many but an organisation like ours can not operate without polices. We try to keep these as simple as possible as we are about having fun not working. Policies are on our website under Documents. Please take the time to read them.

We have a committee of up to fourteen members, voted for by the membership at the Annual General Meeting. This includes the obligatory offices of Chair, Vice-Chair, Business Secretary and Treasurer and other key roles including Membership Secretary, Development Officer and Website Manager. The committee meets monthly and the minutes of these meetings are available to members through the website. Committee members are also Trustees of Barnsley and District u3a and are accountable to the Charity Commission to run the organisation in line with Charity Commission regulation. Information on the role of each committee member is available on our website.

Financial Administration

The Treasurer maintains ongoing accounts which are examined annually and presented to the membership for approval at the Annual General Meeting. A copy of the current accounts is made available in the minutes of the monthly committee meetings. A summary of accounts is sent to the Charity Commission with an annual report of our u3a. These are available on the Charity Commission website.

Membership and Groups Administration

We use the Beacon membership management system to maintain accurate and up-to-date records for both members and groups, in line with our privacy policy and GDPR guidelines. It is important that members, especially Coordinators, support this by ensuring that personal and group information is kept current. Assistance is available if needed. Your cooperation helps us remain compliant with our policies and ensures smooth administration.

Membership and costs

Annual membership runs from April to March. The current subscription rates are on our website and are agreed by the membership. Your subscription funds the running of the organisation: venue rental, insurance, licences, membership fees to the Third Age Trust.

In addition to your subscription, sporting groups which hire premises will recover the hire costs for these from Group members. Groups which meet indoors will request a donation to go towards the costs of room hire. These are collected in a blue collecting box and are hence known as the Blue Box money. In some Groups there may be a small extra charge for refreshments and materials or equipment.

Monthly Members' Meeting

We hold a general meeting for all members each month, and everyone is warmly encouraged to attend. These gatherings are a great opportunity to connect with fellow members, hear updates about the organisation, learn about new Groups, sign up for trips, purchase tickets for social events, and enjoy talks from engaging guest speakers.

New Members' Link Meeting

Every couple of months, we host a dedicated meeting to welcome our new—and potential—members. This informal and friendly session is an ideal chance for new members to meet one another, get to know Committee members, and learn how our u3a operates. We also explain how to join Groups and get involved. All new members are encouraged to attend.

The Buzz

The Buzz is our vibrant magazine, keeping members in the loop with everything happening across the organisation. From group updates and new developments to social events, member news, and uplifting messages of support, The Buzz captures the spirit and energy of our organisation

Joining Our Private Facebook Group

Bu3a has a private Facebook group just for members, where we share what we're all getting up to in Bu3a. If you're already a member, just send a join request on Facebook and we'll add you once we've confirmed your membership.

We also have a public Facebook page

In addition to our private group, we also have a public Facebook page where you can stay updated on all things Bu3a. It's open for everyone, so feel free to follow us and keep an eye on the latest news and events!

Our Website – Your Go-To Resource

Our website, bu3a.org.uk, is becoming an invaluable resource packed with useful documents, detailed information about what we do, the Groups and activities we offer, and ways to get involved. Be sure to check it out and make the most of all the great information it has to offer!



Group Waiting Lists

Sometimes, Groups may not be able to accept new members due to factors like venue capacity or safety considerations. When this happens, we use a waiting list to ensure that new applications are processed fairly and in the order they are received.

If you no longer wish to be part of a Group, please let the Coordinator know, especially if there's a waiting list, so the next person can join. If you're unable to attend a scheduled activity, please inform the Coordinator in advance. If you miss several consecutive meetings, the Coordinator may reach out to check if you still wish to remain in the Group.

If a Group is full, we encourage you to register your interest. If there's enough demand, we may consider creating an additional Group to offer the same or similar activities.

Safety

The health and safety of our members, and the public who come into contact with us during our activities, is important. We have public liability insurance through the Third Age Trust and our activities and venues undergo safety checks. Members are encouraged to make themselves familiar with the safety documents relating to their activities.

If you have a condition which you feel might impact on your safety or that of others while undertaking an activity, please speak in confidence to the Group Coordinator or a member of the committee.

Carers

If you require assistance from a carer, they are welcome to attend Bu3a meetings and group activities at no charge and do not need to be a member of Bu3a. Please note that this does not apply to activities with additional costs, such as travel, venue admission, meals, or sports venue hire.

Groups

We offer a wide variety of Groups, and the most up-to-date list along with other details is available on our website. All Groups are generally open to all members, although a few may have specific requirements or expect a certain level of competence from new members. You can find information about meeting times, locations, and coordinators on each Group's dedicated webpage.

Coordinators can be contacted directly by email through their Group page on the website or in the members' management system, Beacon. Our Groups evolve based on the interests and needs of our members, and the responsibilities within each Group are often shared by volunteer Coordinators.

We're always open to new ideas and Groups! If you have an idea for a new Group, please reach out to the Development Officer for guidance. New Groups need committee approval before launching, but we aim to keep the process straightforward.

How You Can Help your u3a

Our u3a is a co-operative learning organisation, where every member is valued and has something to offer. As you start to experience the benefits of joining and participating, we hope you'll want to become more involved. By helping run Bu3a, you'll enjoy the rewards of working as part of a team, forming new friendships, gaining new skills, and broadening your horizons.

Join a Group

Groups are the heart of Bu3a, and by participating in the activities and experiences on offer, you help keep us vibrant and engaging. Each Group requires various roles to run smoothly. Volunteering for tasks, such as setting up chairs, making tea, or assisting with other simple duties, is a great way to contribute.

Become a Group Coordinator

Do you have a special skill or interest you'd like to share? As a Group Coordinator, you don't need to be a teacher or tutor – you just need to have enthusiasm to coordinate the programme and be a point of contact for Group members. You'll be learning alongside your Group, helping to guide and inspire others.

Offer Support Outside of Groups

If you have skills in administration, technical work, or IT, you can offer your expertise to the Committee in roles such as event support, website development, assisting with the Monthly Meeting, or contributing to the production of The Buzz.

Get Involved with the Social or Travel Committee

If you enjoy organising social activities and outings, this might be the perfect opportunity for you to help plan and coordinate these events.

Join the Executive Committee / Become a Trustee

If you are interested in joining the committee or taking on a supporting role, please don't hesitate to ask a committee member for more details. Role summaries are also available on the website.

Member Code of Conduct

Members are expected to conduct themselves within the u3a guiding principles (set out in the next section).

Members are expected to know, follow and promote the principles of the u3a movement.

Members must always act in the best interests of Barnsley & District u3a and the u3a movement, strive to uphold its reputation and not bring us or the u3a movement into disrepute or expose us to undue risk.

Members are expected to use our resources responsibly and only to further our stated charitable purpose: 'The advancement of education and, in particular, the education of older people and those retired from fulltime work by all means including associated activities conducive to learning and personal development in Barnsley and the surrounding locality.

Members are expected to reflect the current organisational policy of Barnsley & District u3a, regardless of whether it conflicts with their personal views.

Members are expected to abide by our procedures and policies.

Members are expected to treat each other with dignity and respect.

Principles of the u3a

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 of life in which full-time employment has ceased.

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; we are all u3a Members.

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.

Outside financial assistance should only be sought if it does not imperil the integrity of the u3a movement.

