

Haywards Heath U3A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the University of the Third Age (u3a)?

The u3a is one of the largest membership organisations in the UK. Our members come together to learn for fun in retirement. You don't need to have gone to University or have a Degree to become a member. The u3a runs interest & learning groups as well as social events & talks so we can come together to explore ideas, skills and activities.

Is there a Joining Requirement?

There is no lower age limit to join the u3a. Our members are typically no-longer in full-time employment, either semi-retired or fully-retired.

Is the u3a Local or National?

Each u3a is based in a local area and is a separate registered charity with its own trustees. There are over 1,000+ u3as in the UK. Each one has its own set of procedures & membership fees and offers different opportunities to its members. Some have a large selection of interest groups. Some just focus on social events. If you are a member of one u3a you should **not** expect another u3a to operate in exactly the same way.

The [Third Age Trust](#) is a national body that supports u3as. Each u3a is affiliated with the Third Age Trust. The Third Age Trust produces a magazine called [u3a Matters](#) which member can choose to receive, if they wish.

Do I have to be a full, paid-up, Member of HH u3a if I am a member of another u3a?

Each u3a operates independently, as they are separate charities. Some u3as offer **Associate Memberships**, with which members of one u3a can join another for free. They can then take part in groups and activities with the "associated" u3a.

In the case of [Haywards Heath](#) (HH), we operate associate memberships for members of [Burgess Hill](#) (BH) and [Hurst, Hassocks & Ditchling](#) (HHD). Members of these u3as can join **Haywards Heath** for free, by contacting the [Membership Secretary](#). Fully paid up members of HH u3a can apply for associate membership of BH and HHD u3as as well. You can find more about our Reciprocal Arrangements [HERE](#).

HH **does not offer** Associate Membership to any other u3as, no matter how local.

Do all u3as operate in the same way?

Each u3a operates independently, as they are separate charities, with separate trustees. There will be similar interest groups in different u3as, but they will be run by different leaders in different ways. It may be that there's a group in [Burgess Hill](#) (BH) and [Hurst, Hassocks & Ditchling](#) (HHD) that doesn't exist in [Haywards Heath](#) (HH) and vice-versa.

Why are the Fees different for different u3as?

Each u3a operates its own fees structure. At Haywards Heath, we charge **£15** for Individual Membership, plus an additional **£4** (a total of **£19**) if you wish to receive the [u3a Matters](#) magazine. If you become of a member of a walking or exploration group, then the leaders may arrange for private tours or group entry tickets. This will come at an additional cost. If you become a member of an interest groups that requires the use of a hall, then this will also come at an additional cost. There are also some groups that do not come with any costs.

Other u3as may do this very differently. Please see the websites of other u3as to find out their fees.

Do you have an Open Day?

Many u3as have Open Days, but Haywards Heath u3a **does not**. We usually have a stand on the common on [Lindfield Village Day](#), where you can meet various members.

Can I Try Out a Group or Events Before I Join?

You may attend one of our Events (such as a talk or a social gathering) before deciding to join HH u3a. Please contact the [Membership Secretary](#) before you attend.

You cannot attend any of our groups until you are a paid up member. This is because paid up members are insured through the [Third Age Trust](#). Anyone who has not paid, is not insured.

Once you are a paid up member of HH u3a, you can attend any group that has vacancies before paying any fees. You can then decide if you do not want to join the group. You will pay nothing. If you decide you do want to join that group there may be additional fees, e.g. hall hire.

Do I have to belong to a group or can I just attend the social functions/talks?

Some members just attend one group, others attend many groups, some just attend the social events or the talks. It's entirely up to you how involved in the u3a you want to become.

Am I Insured when I attend a group meeting at HH u3a?

Fully Paid Up members of HH u3a are covered by Insurance provided by the [Third Age Trust](#). They have an Insurance FAQ which you can download by clicking [HERE](#). This also applies at member's homes used for group meetings.

If you are **not** a fully paid up member you are **not insured** and therefore cannot join a group



When did the u3a begin?

The U3A, began in Toulouse, France, in 1972 as a summer school for retired people, guided by a local university. The UK version started in 1982 and does not have affiliations with universities. The UK u3a movement is self-funded, with members learning purely for pleasure. There is no distinction between the learners and those sharing their skills and knowledge. Everyone can take a turn at being both.

By the early 1990s, a u3a was opening every fortnight, and by 2008 membership was increasing by 11% every year

HH the u3a was formed back in 1991. The first meeting of the HHU3A was on the 29th March 1991. By January 1992 there were 122 members and 20 groups. We now have over 1,000+ members and 87+ groups.