

Maghull & Lydiate U3A



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Members'  
Handbook

# Maghull and Lydiate U3A Members' Handbook

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## THE ETHOS OF THE U3A

### AIMS AND GUIDING PRICIPLES

The u3a Groups in the UK are autonomous, self-help organisations run by the voluntary efforts of their members. All u3as are members of the Third Age Trust (a registered charity) which is their National Support and Advisory Body. Please note the u3a is not a carers group.

#### AIMS

1. To encourage and enable older people, no longer in full time employment, to help each other share their knowledge, skills, interests and experience.
2. To demonstrate the benefits and enjoyment to be gained and the new horizons to be discovered in learning throughout life.
3. To celebrate the capabilities and potential of older people and their value to society.
4. To make our u3as accessible to all older people.

#### GUIDING PRICIPLES

1. **Programmes**
  - a. u3as offer activities which reflect members' wishes and which aim to satisfy the widest possible range of interests: educational, cultural, recreational, physical and social
  - b. u3as seek resources appropriate to their learning: from their own membership; from the Trust's National Support systems and from outside the organisation, both local and national.
  - c. u3as make use of new technologies as they become available
  - d. u3a members are expected to conduct themselves in line with the Movement's Guiding Principles.
2. **Funding**
  - a. u3as are funded by members' subscriptions.
  - b. Members themselves undertake, without payment, the many and varied tasks necessary to run their U3A. Paid tutors are not recommended by the u3a but Group Leaders may apply to the Committee to bring in a paid tutor if they deem it necessary and it is in accordance with the Third Age Trust Guidelines.

#### CODE OF CONDUCT

All members are expected to treat each other with dignity and respect.

#### Specifically:

1. Members are expected to know, follow and promote the Principles of the u3a Movement at every opportunity.

2. Members must always act in the best interests of Maghull & Lydiate u3a and the u3a Movement, to strive to uphold its reputation and never do anything which could bring their own, another U3A or the u3a Movement into disrepute or expose it to undue risk.
3. Members are expected to use Maghull & Lydiate u3a's resources responsibly and only to further its stated charitable objectives/purposes.
4. Members are expected to reflect the current organisational policy of Maghull & Lydiate u3a, regardless of whether it conflicts with their personal views.
5. Members are expected to abide by Maghull & Lydiate u3a's procedures and practices.
6. Members are expected to treat each other with dignity and respect at all times, to behave in a courteous manner and avoid foul or abusive language.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

People who are retired or no longer in full time employment are welcome to join our u3a. There is no minimum or maximum age. All members are issued with a membership card on joining or renewing their membership. Group Leaders may ask to see your membership card at any time. We suggest you take a photo of your card on your phone. That way you'll always have it with you.

The back of the card has space for your emergency contact name and number. Whilst we will have this information on Beacon it does no harm to carry it with you as a backup (wi-fi doesn't always work).

Cost of membership may vary from year-to-year dependent upon numbers and cash in hand.

## **MANAGEMENT AND CONSTITUTION**

The u3a is managed by a committee of up to 15 members. The members are voted or co-opted onto the Committee at the AGM or a necessary. Terms of office mean a gap year must be taken by committee members after three years in a role. Members can stay on the committee for six years as an ordinary member with an additional three years if they take on an officer's role. Co-opted members have the same term of office as elected members.

Details of the current members of the committee can be found on the notice board in the main hall.

The u3a is run according to the Constitution based on the u3a Model Constitution but with amendments introduced and voted in place by the members during an AGM. The full Constitution can be found on our Admin page.

## **INSURANCE COVER**

Each member of our u3a is covered by an insurance policy provided by The Third Age Trust. This cover is included in the membership fee we all pay. In simple terms should you or I cause damage to any property/venue used by the u3a we are covered by our liability policy. Should any member be hurt or experience loss whilst taking part in a u3a activity the public liability cover for that venue will provide cover. Accidents to or caused by members to each other will not be covered and a settlement will need to be discussed between all parties. A copy of our insurance policy can be found on our notice board.

## **SAFEGUARDING & WELFARE**

As a u3a we do not provide a carer service but it doesn't mean we don't care about our members. If you have news of any member who is experiencing difficulties or has suffered a loss, please let us know. Your points of contacts are listed on the notice board. We will attempt to send a card to any member, or member's family when needed.

## WEBSITE & FACE BOOK SITES

Our u3a website is open for everyone to search. It provides members with the means to keep up with all our u3a has to offer. Especially handy is our calendar – found on our black menu bar on the home page. You can use this to check out today or look at what’s coming up next week, month or year. You need never miss an event again.

When a new post is listed it will come with a reply box. This is great if you want to book a place on a trip, ask the leader a question or just give us your opinion. We’d prefer it if only positive statements were left on our site, but we’re always ready to listen to any issues you may have.

Our Face Book page is private and visible only to members who have applied to join. Leaders and members are permitted to post accounts of outings, holidays, group events etc. All post will be vetted by our moderators. You will need to have an existing Face Book account to join ours.

## MEETINGS’ - ORGANISATION

### Tuesday Coffee Mornings Meeting

**Timing** – The Keyholder will arrive around 09:00 to ensure the building is ready for setting up. Members should not arrive before 09:30 unless helping setting up. The coffee morning will run from 09:45 to 11:00. Doors will be open from 09:15 so that tables and chairs can be set up but members are asked not to arrive before 09:45 unless requested.

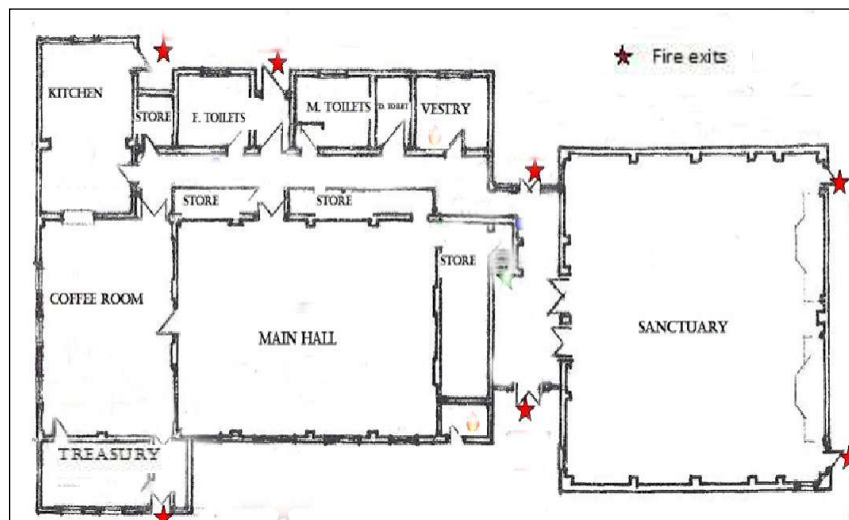
**Setting up** - tables must not be carried by any one person, their cumbersomeness and weight are best handled by two people. Care must be taken when opening and closing the tables.

Only small tables are to be placed in the Coffee Room. Care must be taken not to block the fire passages when setting up.

Large tables are to be used in the main hall. Centre positioned tables are for Leaders who only frequent the coffee morning now and then.

**Clearing away**- All members are asked to help clear away chairs and tables at the end of the session. Chairs are kept in the main hall and should be stacked so they are facing the wall in groups of eight.

### Fire regulations/procedures



Plan of Maghull Baptist Church

Fire Marshals check – all fire doors must be checked in case their opening is impeded by bins etc.

Fire Evacuation – the fire policy for the building must be on show with copies given to new members on joining.

Additional copies will be provided in the Coffee Room

Fire marshals should wear their armbands on arrival at the venue. Fire marshal details inc. photos will be up on the notice board so members know who they are. Marshals should have designated roles in the event of a fire. Whenever possible a fire marshal should give guidance to new members

A fire alarm should be sounded (with warning) every four months or so. A full evacuation should be carried out once a year.

## **Facilities**

### **Toilet Facilities**

Access to all toilets can be found on the long corridor running from the foyer to the main hall. Members are asked to ensure that they report any problems with the facilities to the Chair or Secretary of our u3a. All taps must be turned off before leaving; no taps are self-terminating. No items, other than toilet paper, should be flushed down the toilets.

### **Kitchen Facilities**

As a u3a we have access to the kitchen facilities at Maghull Baptist Church. Here we have access to the store room (all our items to be marked) and the use of the water heater, fridge jugs and teaspoons. All items, such as spoons and jugs, used must be left and stored away in a clean condition. Cardboard cups must be taken away for recycling.

The water heater will be switched on by the keyholder before the start of the meeting and will need to be switched off at the end. THE WATER HEATER MUST NOT BE LEFT ON AFTER WE LEAVE.

The fire exit door in the kitchen must be unlocked before and locked after our meeting. Groups who use the kitchen must adhere to the same rules. Only kitchen staff should be in the kitchen.

### **Photocopying**

Group Leaders have access to the Church photocopier. This is kept in the church office and can only be accessed by our Photocopying Officer. This facility is only available on Tuesday mornings. Additional access is by invitation only.

The Church office is not open to members without permission.

**Notice Boards** – We have two notice boards in the Main Hall. One is kept as a source of information regarding the Committee and Fire procedures.

The second gives Group Leaders an opportunity to put up notices about their coming events.

Notices are best kept to A5 size wherever possible. One exception is the notices re: holidays as these are often produced by the holiday firm.

Out of date notices will be removed on a regular basis.

Only notices pertaining to the u3a are allowed.

Drawing pins are allowed; no mapping pins can be used.

## **Coffee Room Protocol**

**Refreshments** – tea/coffee and biscuits will be served between 09:30 and 10:50. Decaffeinated tea/coffee is available. Insulated cups are used for the protection of our members. Please do not bring your own cup. Trays will be provided so that members carrying cups into the main hall are less likely to have any accidents. Our Tea Ladies should not carry trays for members unless there is a disability issue. Any spillages must be dealt with promptly so as to avoid accidents. Only the thermal

cardboard cups provided by the u3a may be used. Tea/Coffee is served at the coffee room at a cost of 50p per cup.

During Nov – March the first cup of coffee/tea is provided free. Subsequent cups must be paid for.

**Payment** – Counting out 20ps 10ps 5p and copper takes quite a while for the Treasury Team and to help them we politely ask that you have the right money with you each Tuesday 50p or £1.00 if buying two cups.

**Safety** - carrying cups of hot beverages can be difficult so small trays are provided. Please return each tray back to the hatch so that it's available for the next customer. At the end of the coffee morning empty cups will be collected or they can be placed on the hatch. Please do not put half full cups amid the stacked cups. These should be kept separate so they can be emptied into the sink. Waitress service is not provided.

**Seating** – seats may be moved around for your convenience but no seat should obstruct the pathway to the fire exit. Seating should not obstruct easy access to the hatch, congestion here can lead to accidents quite easily. Seating should be stacked safely in the main hall at the end of the Coffee Morning.

**Social interaction** – our coffee room provides a great way to catch up with old friends and meet new people. It is true to say that this room is the core of our Tuesday mornings and as such we need to be welcoming to new members especially those who have joined as solo members. Keeping seats for friends is always tempting but I'm sure that each one of you has experienced the "sorry this seat is being kept for....." many times. It's a sure way of making someone feel left out and hurt so I ask you to try and keep that friendly welcoming atmosphere that our coffee room is famed for.

**Lost property** – Any items left behind on a Tuesday morning will be stored in the Church Office. As a u3a we have very limited storage space at the church so items will be kept for a short time only.

**Closing** – refreshments are sold until 10:50 at which point the ladies will start clearing up. Please vacate the coffee room by 11:15 – help with folding the tables and stacking the chairs would be very much appreciated.

## **Table Arrangements in Main Hall**

### **Welcome/Membership table**

Each Tuesday our welcome table will be manned by our Membership Team. Please be aware there might well be a queue so we ask for your patience.

New members will be greeted and taken through our enrolment procedure. On joining the new member will be given:

A welcome letter

A copy of our Group Update Sheet

A copy of our Fire \ Evacuation policy.

A copy of our Members' Handbook

If possible one of the team will show new members around the hall and explain the groups who have representatives present.

Again, if available, one of our Fire Marshals will give some help re: evacuation advice in the event of a fire. New members will be directed to the notice boards where Committee members and Fire marshals' info can be found.

## **Book Stall**

Close by the Welcome desk we have our Book Stall. These books have been donated by members so they may be sold at 50p per book. No coins of less value will be accepted.

All books received should be in relatively good condition. Proceeds from the sale of books will be donated to Woodlands Hospice as a charitable donation from all members.

## **Group Leaders' Tables**

At the Coffee Morning each group may have a representative who will be able to give information about the group to new members. Not every group will be represented as space is limited but requests for a table can be made by contacting the Chair or Secretary. Leaders who attend now and again will be given space at the centre table in the room. It is generally accepted that Group Leaders will not organise sessions during the duration of the Coffee Morning.

**Access** - Congestion can occur at the group tables especially when a new trip/outing is put on sale for the first time. Please make sure that all exits are kept clear at all times.

Please may we remind you that Group Leaders attend Tuesday mornings to promote their groups and exchange group information. (Chatting with friends should take place elsewhere).

Please complete any dealings with Leaders as quickly as possible and keep non-group chatting to a minimum as it may prevent others from being able to ask questions.

New members should be made aware that joining our u3a and paying the joining fee does not guarantee you a place in a group.

Many popular groups use a waiting list and you may be asked to join that.

When a group is over-subscribed, we will attempt to find someone willing to start a parallel group. Volunteers are always welcome in our u3a

In addition, please be aware that trips/outings on display will have been on sale for a while so new members may find that they are told they will need to go on a waiting list. As members get used to the way our u3a works they will be able to find advance notice of outings/trips on our website. Places can be booked on our website as well as in person.

## **Group Payments**

Group Leaders as Day Trips, Garden Visits, Architecture for Fun, Theatre etc will collect payment for outings on Tuesday Mornings only. It is at these times that the congestion previously mentioned can occur.

Trips etc will be advertised on our website and booking on these trips can be made using our comments/reply system. Payment for the trip will be at the discretion of the Group Leader after costings. Some may well need full payment on booking whilst others will accept a deposit with full payment to follow.

New members may find that existing day trips etc are fully booked when they join. This is because the day trip will have been arranged before they joined.

Some outing will include a lunch and often these will need booking in advance. Menu slips will be given out and it is imperative that members return these as soon as possible. Once the meal slips have been sent to the hotel/restaurant the menus cannot be changed.

It will not be in the remit of the Group Leader to make changes any changes will be at the hotel's discretion.

Choices cannot be changed on the arrival at the venue as not enough warning will have been given. Members who decide to add on a dessert will have to pay any additional amount on the day.



## **Refunds**

Having booked on an outing/play/meal it does happen that unexpected events mean you can no longer attend please be aware that refunds are not generally available. The closer to the event the cancellation is made the less likelihood there is of a refund.

Please be patient with the Group Leader concerned who will be making every effort to get you a partial if not full refund. The most likely way for a full refund is that the Leader can sell your place to another member.

## **Holiday payments**

Our u3a does not offer holidays or overnight breaks directly. Group Leaders may well plan such holidays and accordingly they have been granted publishing rights on the u3a notice boards and website. All payments linked to holidays should be made by cheque or bank transfer directly to the company responsible for delivering the holiday. Check with the Leader which company is being used. They will all be approved. Cheques made out to Maghull & Lydiate u3a will not be accepted.

No holiday monies will go through our Treasury.

## **Holiday refunds**

Holiday refunds will usually not be available as all deposits are non-refundable. Now and again the Leader may have a 'waiting list' and if this is the case possibly your place on the holiday can be sold. Please be aware that no refund will ever come from our Treasury.

## **Attendance on Outings etc**

If you are under the weather, please consider the others members who in most cases will be sharing a coach with you. We are all aware how air conditioning systems are a very effective way of moving air around a coach, which means that viruses can be spread easily.

Please think carefully about whether or not you should be attending. Let the Group Leader know if you need to pull out of the outing. If this is done early enough there is a possibility your place can be sold to member who is on the waiting list.

If you find you are unable to attend on the day of the outing etc it is imperative that you contact the Group Leader early that morning so that the coach is not held back. The timing on a trip is worked out well in advance and any delay can have an effect e.g. meeting a guide at a venue etc.

An opportunity for some shopping often occurs on a day trip/garden visit. All members are reminded that they should take all their goods home with them. Items that are left behind on the coach; their return cannot be guaranteed.

## **Attendance at our Coffee Mornings**

All members are welcome at our coffee mornings but we have to restrict pets being brought in. Only guide and assistance dogs will be allowed to attend. Sadly, whilst we all love dogs, they can cause difficulties for members with allergies and also interaction between dogs is not always predictable. Long leads can also be a hazard in such a busy and crowded room.

Now and again grandparenting duties will coincide with our meetings but we have to ask that children are not brought in to the meeting. Children are not covered by our insurance policy and accordingly should not attend on Tuesdays or on any of our outings.

We respectfully request that members coping with heavy colds, coughs etc do not attend on Tuesday mornings until they are recovered.

## **Behaviour**

Sometimes disputes arise at the u3a; they may well happen at group meetings and possibly more likely at our Coffee Mornings. Whilst we do have a Complaints/ Grievances policy and sub-committee our first step is to try and resolve any dispute quickly. When a dispute descends into a 'slanging match' it brings

the whole of our u3a into disrepute. If we are showing new or prospective members around this behaviour can put people off joining our u3a.

If a member has a complaint, it is recommended that they ask the other party to meet them somewhere quiet where the matter can be resolved in private.

If this does not help it would be prudent to ask a disinterested party such a committee member to intercede. If this does not resolve the issue a complaint form can be completed which will be brought to our Complaints sub-committee. Please read our Complaints/ Grievances policy for full details.

At no time should a dispute become aggressive

### **Accessibility / Equal opportunity – Access for persons**

All current public venues including Maghull Baptist Church, are checked thoroughly to ascertain that they afford easy access to all members of the Maghull and Lydiate U3A. All members wherever possible should be able to attend any group in the knowledge that Leaders have chosen each venue with all members in mind.

Entrances should have ramps as well as steps, doorways should be able to accommodate wheelchairs and there should be toilets for those with a disability. For further details please refer to the Equal Opportunities policy on our Admin page online. Only Group Leaders and Committee members can post notices on our site.

We also have a Face Book account but sadly you'll need to apply to join this site. It is restricted to our members only. Click on join and a few questions will pop up; including one about your membership number. Once the moderators are happy you are a member they'll include you on the Face Book page. Many members use the site to post accounts and photos of the groups or the events they have just been to. All posts are vetted to ensure they promote our u3a. Again, please tell us, in private, if there's something that you don't like or something that is incorrect.

### **Group meetings**

Members who belong to specific groups such as line dancing, Spanish, Bridge etc will meet at different venues and will be expected to contribute money to cover the rent and general costs of the meeting. Each group Leader will have their own way of collecting such fees – it may be done weekly or monthly, and they will explain it to you. The attendance fee may change if numbers increase or decrease.

You may be offered the opportunity to keep in touch with the group by WhatsApp. This a very quick method used by Leaders to ensure all members know about unexpected changes to the current plan. Leaders may need to cancel a meeting, change the starting time etc.

You need to be aware that in joining a WhatsApp group your mobile number becomes visible to all who are in the group. We advise that no personal details such nature of illness, hospital appointments and dates of holidays etc be put on the group chat. Inform the Leader directly and privately. WhatsApp messages are supposed to be secure but .....

Attendance and behaviour at all meetings should be as mentioned before. With walking groups, it will be at the discretion of the Leader if dogs are allowed to join the sessions.

Venues – please ensure your Leader knows if you have any problems with the venue – difficulty gaining access, no disabled toilet, lack of parking etc. We may not be able to solve the problem but we will try.

Group Leaders may communicate with members by email (preferably Beacon), WhatsApp (as mentioned), SMS or phone call. If sending an email, bcc should be used to protect members' email address.

## ADMIN PAGE LAYOUT

Please use the online Admin page for copies of all our policies etc. The following plan will help you find any document you need.

AGM						
2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027

Committee		
Current Committee opens in new window	2024	2025
Minutes opens in new window		

Documents	Revised	Revision due
Charity Commission Certificate		
Fire Evacuation	2024	2026
Handbook - Group Leaders	2025	2027
Handbook – Members	2025	2027
Inventory & PAT testing	2024	2025
Constitution	2024	2026
u3a certificate		

Forms	Revised	Revision due
Accident/Incident	2022	2025
Committee nominations	2024	2025
Financial – paying in, claims by chqs, claims BACS	2024	2026
Holiday application	2022	2025
Membership Renewals	2025	2026
New membership applications	2023	ongoing

Group Leaders' Meetings		
Minutes opens in new window		

Policies	Revised	Revision due
Code of Conduct	2025	2027
Complaints	2024	2025
Copyright	2025	2027
Data Protection	2021	2025
Discipline & Grievance	2024	2025
Equality Diversity & Inclusion	2021	2025
GDPR	2021	2025
Health & Safety	2023	2025
Holidays/Overnight stays	2021	2025
Social media /Face Book	2024	2026
Website management	2025	2027
Welfare/Safeguarding	2024	2026