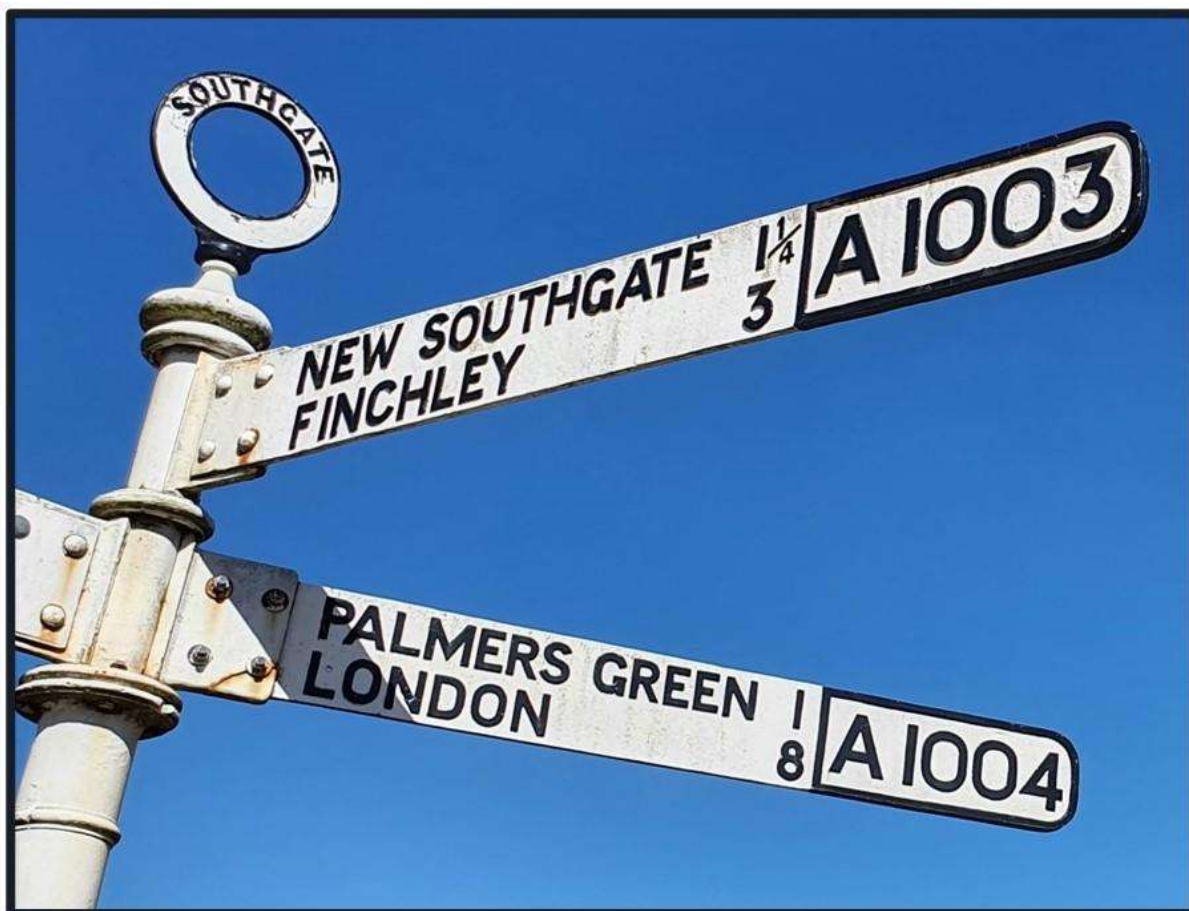


Palmers Green and Southgate u3a



Membership Handbook 2022

**Palmers Green and Southgate u3a
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1. Welcome

A warm welcome to Palmers Green and Southgate (PG&S) u3a. New members often say how friendly they find us and we want this to be your experience too. We hope you enjoy your membership.

2. Introduction to the u3a and its principles

The u3a (university of the third age) is a voluntary movement which brings together people so they can make new friends and develop their interests in an informal environment. We draw upon our knowledge and experience to teach and learn from each other. Despite the term “university”, no qualifications are required to join and none are awarded. Membership is open to anyone who is no longer in full-time employment irrespective of their age, gender, race, religion, politics or disabilities. Members may be accompanied by carers if required. Our philosophy can be summed up by our motto: Learn, Laugh, Live!

For those members who wish, there are opportunities to carry out research. This can be at the individual level (for example to prepare a talk for an Interest Group) or in collaboration with others at the local u3a, regional or UK level. Shared Learning Projects provide the opportunity for members to work in partnership with institutions such as museums, galleries and universities.

All we do is for pleasure – learning is its own reward.

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3. Organisation of the u3a

The first u3a was established in France in 1972. The idea was then introduced into the UK in 1981 where it has been a great success and there are now more than 1,000 local u3as, over 450,000 members and over 40,000 interest groups.

In the UK, the activities of the u3a are under the umbrella of the Third Age Trust and its Board of Directors. The Trust coordinates efforts to raise the profile of the movement, helps with the development of new u3as and provides assistance for existing u3as. The u3as within a geographical area are also supported by a local office. PG&S u3a, for example, is a member of the London Region of u3as.

Both the central and local offices organise events including lecture programmes and, in non-Covid times, study days, summer schools and an Annual National Conference.

Each local u3a is administered by an Executive Committee elected at an Annual General Meeting (AGM).

4. Palmers Green and Southgate u3a

Palmers Green and Southgate is a young u3a which started up in 2014. Since 2016 we have also been a registered charity.

We have approximately 400 members and run more than 40 interest groups covering art, crafts, home entertainment (e.g. bridge, scrabble and magic), music & language, reading & discussion, science, nature and technology, theatre, travel,

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walking , wining and dining, and others such as MOTO (members on their own).

Our u3a Executive Committee meets monthly. As our u3a is a registered charity, all members of the committee are also trustees.

The committee consists of the officers – Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer – plus a number of other committee members including Groups Coordinator, Membership Secretary, Travel Co-ordinator, Speakers Secretary, Minutes Secretary and Welfare Officer.

Other roles may be carried out on or off committee – Bulletins Secretary, Magazine Editor, Web Master and Zoom Master for example.

Group activities are administered by our Group Conveners who arrange group meetings and carry out the necessary administrative tasks required to run their groups.

Other volunteers carry out ad-hoc tasks, for example, setting up and organising catering at meetings, filling envelopes with magazines and posting them to members.

The main activities of our u3a are interest groups and monthly meetings both for learning and social interaction.

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5. Volunteering/Suggestions

PG&S u3a has no paid staff and is run entirely by a community of volunteers who give their time freely to help in many different ways. Our executive committee, group conveners and other helpers are all volunteers.

Please consider volunteering, even a little time will be appreciated. If interested, please contact a member of the executive committee.

Similarly, if you have any comments or suggestions for areas of improvement, please let us know.

6. Terms and conditions of membership. Membership guidelines and responsibilities.

All members must:

- Abide by the Aims and Guiding Principles of the u3a movement.
- Always act in the best interests of the u3a and never do anything to bring the u3a into disrepute.
- Abide by the terms and conditions of membership as stated in the constitution.
- Treat fellow members with respect and courtesy at all times.
- Comply with the decisions of the elected committee.
- Advise the committee of any change in their personal details.

Members are required to pay a small annual fee for their membership. The membership subscription covers the costs of administering the u3a and holding monthly all-members

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meetings, virtual, face-to-face or hybrid. Additional charges may be incurred whilst participating in interest groups to cover costs such as entrance fees or hire of venues and equipment.

7. Confidentiality

Members will be asked for their permission for the membership secretary and conveners to hold their address, telephone number(s) and email address. All member's details will be held in a secure data base and will only be used solely for administration and communication of u3a matters.

In addition to the above details, conveners will request the name and contact details of next of kin in case of accident/illness.

8. Groups

Before joining as a member of PG&S u3a those interested are allowed to attend a group for two taster sessions and also attend two monthly meetings.

Our magazine includes a list of groups with conveners contact details. This information is also available from our website via the groups pages.

Examples of group activity might be . . .

A Spanish speaker might help a group of complete beginners gain a basic knowledge of this language or assist others with some previous experience to improve their conversation

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skills. Similarly a keen amateur photographer or artist might offer to share their expertise.

Attendance at individual groups will be recorded for safety reasons, and if a member fails to attend the group for three consecutive meetings without giving notice, the member will be contacted by the convener to ask if they wish to continue to be a member of the group.

9. Group Meeting Venues

Some groups meet in member's homes, but any venue which complies with current health and safety rules can be booked as a meeting place e.g. church halls and residential homes.

There are also opportunities to meet outside e.g. outings, holidays and some group activities.

During the pandemic many groups met on Zoom, which has proved to be successful, and some may continue to do so.

10. Accident/Incident form

This form is held by all conveners, and it must be completed as soon as possible after the accident/illness, witnessed then sent to the Secretary of PG&S u3a for filing in case of problems arising later.

11. Complaints form

This form can be obtained from the Secretary.

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12. Communication

PG&S u3a communicates with its members in a number of ways:

- Our website (<https://u3asites.org.uk/pgs/home>) provides information about monthly meetings, the activities of the interest groups, and the outings and short holidays organised by the Travel Group. The site has a news page covering local, regional and UK-wide u3a events. It also provides links to our constitution, and to the minutes of the monthly executive committee meetings and AGMs.
- Our bulletin, which is emailed to members once a month, gives details of the next monthly meeting and its Zoom log-in link. It also provides information about the forthcoming meetings of the interest groups plus items of news and general interest. Members without access to a computer may elect to have a shortened version of the bulletin posted to them with contact details for forthcoming events.
- Our magazine, which is published several times a year, can be picked up at our monthly meetings, otherwise it will be posted so that all our members receive a copy. Members can request an email version instead. The magazine usually includes reports on talks given by guest speakers at monthly meetings, accounts of the activities of the interest groups and of the visits organised by the Travel Group. Members are encouraged to make contributions on special themes (e.g. summer holidays or winter festivals) recording their own experiences.

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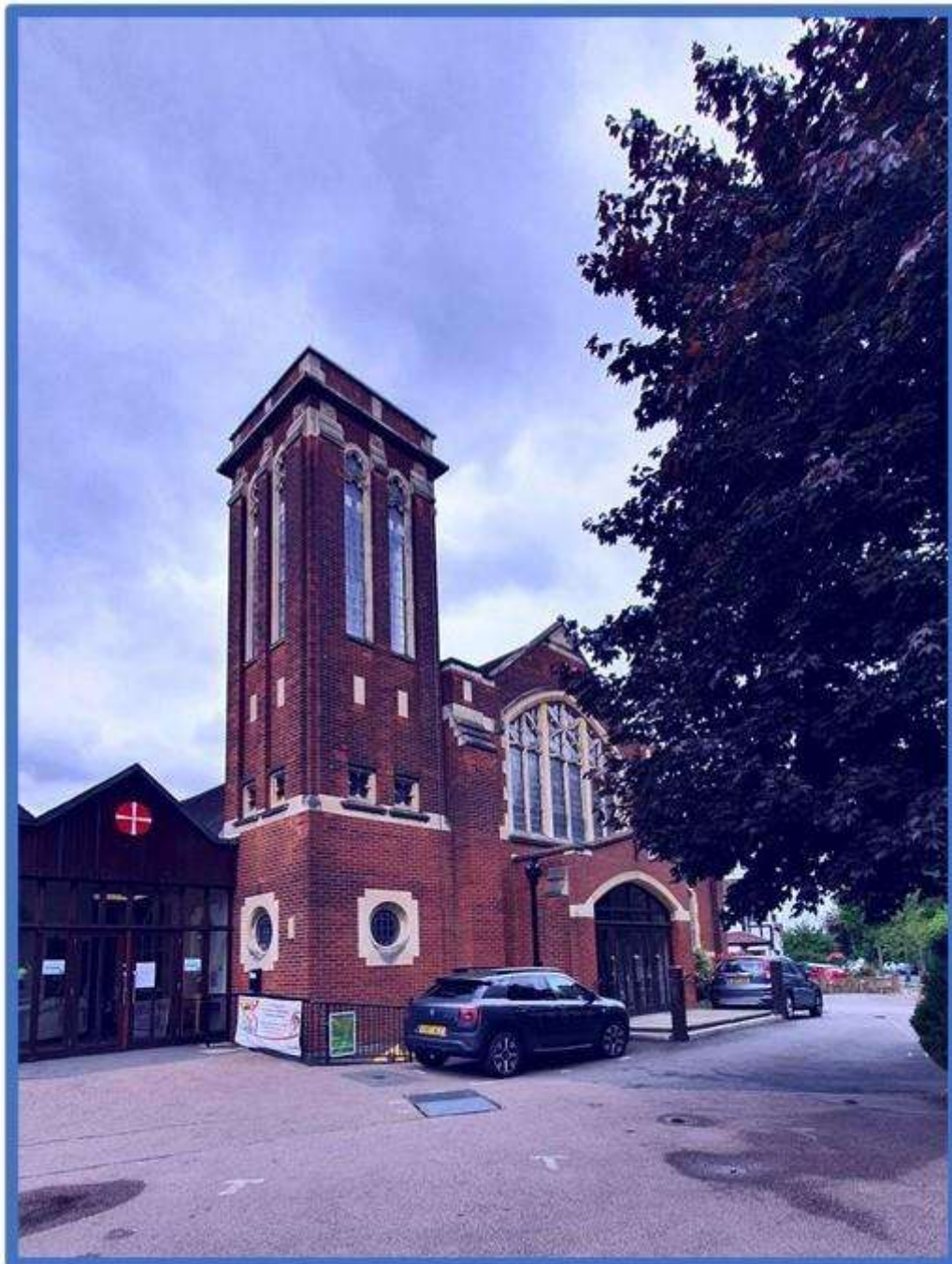
Members also receive Third Age Matters (TAM) which is the Third Age Trust's in-house magazine which is posted to members five times a year. This includes articles about the activities of u3as and their members across the UK, plus celebrity interviews, lifestyle information, games and competitions, and a letters section. One part, known as Sources, is dedicated to learning activities and includes the contact details of the UK-wide Subject Advisors who provide support for Interest groups. A screen-reader version of Third Age Matters, which enables the magazine's contents to be read out by computer, is available for those members with visual impairment.

Communication is, of course, a two-way process. Monthly general meetings and group meetings (in the virtual or real world) provide the opportunity for informal conversations with fellow members including the interest group conveners and the executive committee. More formally, any member may propose items for discussion at the Annual General Meeting.

Our website's contact section enables written queries to be submitted, for example, to the Chair or the Membership Secretary. Interest group conveners may be contacted via links in the groups section. However, if you prefer to speak to someone please phone the number on the contact page of the website.

We hope you enjoy your membership.

Southgate Methodist Church
Venue for our Monthly Meetings



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