

Welcome to Oban u3a!

Thank you for joining us. This brief introduction offers an overview of our organisation and some information to help you make the most of your membership.

Who we are

Oban u3a is a voluntary organisation which provides activities and learning opportunities for everyone who has free time during the day. There are no qualifications for membership and no age limits. The emphasis is on shared learning, with no distinction between teachers and learners.

Why 'u3a'? The name is short for University of the Third Age, which reflects our origins though our role has evolved to fit the times. We are emphatically not an academic organisation and qualifications are irrelevant; u3a is all about shared interests and enthusiasm. The u3a movement was started by retired people (third-agers, if you like), but nowadays we welcome all ages.

Oban u3a is one of over a thousand local u3as in the UK, with a national membership approaching half a million.

What we offer

Our interest groups form the core of our offering to members. Covering a wide range of interests and activities, they are run by our members. Here are some examples, though new groups may be formed at any time; you may even wish to start one yourself!

- Bridge (relaxed) • Mahjong • Scottish History • French • German • Spanish
- Poetry Reading • Reading Groups • Ukulele • Gardens & Wildflowers • Pickleball
- Table Tennis • Geology • Science & Technology • Walk & Lunch

For information about interest groups and how to join them, please see the [groups page](#) of our web site.

Your membership also gives you access to a range of online groups and events, such as [Interest Groups Online](#), [Online Across Scotland](#) and [Online Learning Events](#).

We hold monthly meetings where all members can come together. We meet on the first Tuesday of each month at the Corran Halls. The usual format is an informal coffee and chat session at 10.30, followed by a speaker at 11.00. These talks are universally inspiring and often include breathtaking photographs.

How we're organised

Oban u3a is run by its members on a voluntary basis. Day-to-day management is provided by a volunteer committee led by our Chair. The committee can have up to twelve members, and we are always looking for new people to share the workload and help us develop.

Each of our interest groups has a convenor, who acts as the main point of contact for the group. The title of convenor was chosen carefully to avoid any suggestion that they must be the most knowledgeable, or that they are solely responsible for leading the group and organising activities.

Oban u3a is funded by its members through annual subscriptions. Part of the subscription goes towards membership of the Third Age Trust, a UK charity which provides central administrative and support functions such as insurance. The Trust is overseen by a Board of Trustees, which is responsible for governance of the Trust, and the u3a Council: an elected body of regional representatives who act as a conduit between the membership and the Board, feeding members' views and priorities into the Trust management.

How we communicate

Most of our routine communication with members is now conducted electronically, mainly by email, though we can accommodate members who do not have an email address.

Our web site at oban.u3asite.uk provides a wealth of information covering news & events and full details of our interest groups, including how to contact group convenors. You will also find formal documentation about our constitution and policies.

News and events are also promoted on our [Facebook](#) page.

We use a membership records system provided by the Third Age Trust, known as Beacon. As a member you are encouraged to register with the Beacon [Members' Portal](#), where you will find information about interest groups and can sign up for any that you'd like to join. You can also use the portal to make changes to your personal details. To register you will need your membership number. You can also contact group convenors through the web site; they will do their best to accommodate any special needs you may have.

We publish a monthly newsletter which is emailed to members, providing up-to-the-minute information about group activities and other news. You will also receive National and Scottish u3a newsletters from time to time.

In print, the Third Age Trust publishes a magazine, 'u3a matters', which is sent to members' home addresses five times a year (unless you choose to opt out).

We look forward to keeping in touch, and to seeing you at future meetings. Members of the committee are always available at monthly meetings to answer your questions, and can be contacted via obanu3a@gmail.com.