

GETTING TO GRIPS WITH BEACON

Beacon is the u3a computer system which we adopted two years ago to handle our membership database. It is also designed to be used by our groups.

However, some members have struggled to get to grips with it. The secret is the **MEMBERS PORTAL**. This is *just a password* to get in, but a bit more complicated than your usual passwords. I have had many members email me saying “I can’t get into Beacon” - and I have got into their record every time - without exception.

To get to the Members Portal open up the **Southport u3a** website and click on the **Beacon Tab**. Once in this tab, you should click on **Membership Portal**. This will open up a screen asking you to enter your details. To enter, you should know your membership number, your name, post code and email address. It is a bit slow, so have patience!!

[Groups](#) [Membership](#) [Beacon](#) [Documents](#)

This is where it gets tricky!! Like any password, if you get it wrong it will not let you in. The Portal is case sensitive. Also, when entering your Forename, if you have also given us a shortened version of your name “Tony instead of Anthony” use the shortened version. When entering your Post Code make sure you add the space between, and make sure you add the correct email address (many people have more than 1!!). Make sure you enter the email address in lower case.

The Portal seems to be sensitive to some computers using autofill. From what I can see those using Microsoft seem to be able to use it ok. If you are Mac based, either on an iPad or iMac, it doesn't seem to like it. So, you must click on each box separately as you enter your info.

The screenshot shows the 'Southport U3A Members Portal' login page. It has a title bar 'Please identify yourself'. Below it, there are input fields for 'Membership number' (with the value 2884), 'Forename' (Pansy), 'Surname' (Flower), 'Postcode' (PR1 1AA), and 'E-mail' (anyaddress@southportu3a.org.uk). A note says 'All fields must be completed'. At the bottom, there is a 'Confirm Identity' button and a link for enquiries: membership@southportU3A.org.uk or contact the Membership Secretary.

If you get any one thing wrong, when you click “**confirm identity**” the screen goes to blank and you have to start again from the beginning. You can try as often as you like.

When you get into Beacon it will give you some options. If you have already renewed your membership it gives you the three options shown. If you have not renewed it gives you that as your only option.

The screenshot shows the 'Select an option' screen. It has three links: 'Southport U3A groups', 'Calendar of meetings and events', and 'Update your personal details'. At the bottom, there is a link for enquiries: membership@southportU3A.org.uk or contact the Membership Secretary.

IF YOU WANT TO JOIN A GROUP

Not all groups are on Beacon but for those who are. If you have gone into Beacon to join a Group, click on the **Southport u3a Groups line** and you will go to a list of Groups. Scroll down till you see the one you are interested in and click on it. You will see one of two messages. Either **Join now** or **join waiting list**. In each case click the yellow text and you will be added.

You do not get an acknowledgement but the Group leader gets a message to know you have joined, so they can then contact you. If in doubt, just log out and log back on again to check

The screenshot shows the details for a group called 'Local History Waterloo Walk'. It has a 'Join group' link. Below it, there is a table with the following information:

Meets	Wednesday 14th July at 11.00
Venue	Bus Exchange opposite Waterloo Station
Contact	Myra 07751 130481
Details	A discovery walk the The Birth of Waterloo Wednesday 14th July meet at The Bus Exchange Waterloo

Below this, there is another group called 'Meet and Eat Thai Rice'. It has a message: 'We regret that this group is full: [Join waiting list](#)'. Below it, there is a table with the following information:

Meets	11th August 2012 at 7pm
Venue	Thai Rice

If all else fails - contact Jim Hay on:- membership@Southportu3a.org.uk