



Crawley u3a

Registered Charity No. 1029004

PROCEDURES & REFERENCE GUIDE

Guidance for Group Leaders

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GUIDANCE TO GROUP LEADERS

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FOREWORD

Crawley u3a provides the opportunity for people, no longer in full time employment, to learn together in an informal setting where knowledge and experience is shared with like-minded members. All are equal and learning comes in many forms through a wide variety of topics. It is an enjoyable and unpressured way in which to expand one's knowledge and to keep one's brain mentally active. It is not the intention that Group Leaders or Committee Members should feel a heavy burden of responsibility, as this should be shared through collaboration and participation.

Communications and support are key to successfully running a group. The Group Leaders are not alone they are members of a team that collectively runs the u3a, so can call upon support from the other members of that team at any time. A full list of those roles and their contact details can be found on both the "contact" page of the Crawley u3a website site and the u3a Officers page on the Beacon Management System.

In this digital age, it is the intention of Crawley u3a that most of its business is conducted via electronic means, either using email, web-based applications, or the Beacon Management System. This helps to reduce running costs and makes the dissemination of information more immediate and relevant.

The Beacon Management system is provided by the Third Age Trust for all affiliated u3a's to use to maintain a register of base information about individual members and group activities being undertaken. Crawley u3a use it as the cornerstone for the management of the organisation. Group Leaders will be expected to use the system and maintain their groups information and active membership records. Support from the Beacon Administrator is available to help with access and use of the system. Please contact them if help is required.

To ensure that the objective of sharing and inclusivity is achieved Group Leaders should where practically possible seek the support from other members of their Group to aid in the general operation of the group.

Groups without the benefit of electronic access to information may be at risk of missing important notices and special offers available to u3a groups e.g., visits, concerts, lectures, and theatre performances.

1. Starting and running a Group

1.1 New groups can be formed in the following ways:

- A potential Group Leader securing sufficient interest in a subject.
- A list of interested members without a nominated Group Leader.
- The splitting of an activity group that has become too large.

1.2 The Groups' Coordinator should be advised of any potential new Group and will help co-ordinate an initial meeting of interested parties.

1.3 Individual Group Leaders should ensure that the content and information about their activity group is appropriate and correct before it is published either on the website or in hard copy documents. Details should include the venue, day, time, and dates, plus an outline of the intended programme of activity. This ensures that members making enquiries are adequately informed.

1.4 Group Leaders are encouraged to involve all Group members to plan the programme. This will encourage ownership and participation from Group members. There is support and advice available from *U3A Subject Advisers on the Third Age Trust website at <http://www.u3a.org.uk>*.

1.5 The frequency of meetings is determined by the Group Leader in liaison with members of the Group.

1.6 For more advice issues about running Groups and venue bookings, contact the Groups' Coordinator.

2. The Administration of running a Group

2.1 The Group Leader should consider gathering the support of other Group members to help in the administration of the Group.

2.2 Group Leaders should maintain details of their Group on the Beacon system. Group Leaders should also view the Crawley u3a website on a regular basis and advise the Webmaster of any required changes to the Group's information.

2.3 There is no limit to the number of Groups that an individual member can join, subject to payment of the appropriate fee for each one.

2.4 To ensure that there is compliance with both Health & Safety and Insurance requirements, and in case of any emergency. Group Leaders should take a register of the Members attending individual meetings. This can be achieved by use of the Account Forms (see Section 6 below) for room-based groups. For outdoor groups they can either use the Account Forms or a similar form of their own design. Any bespoke form should be made available for review by a member of the Executive Committee when required.

2.5 A confidential emergency contact name and number is required on the Annual Membership Renewal Form and this information is stored on the Beacon system. Group Leaders, including members temporarily acting as Group Leader in cases where the Group Leader is not present on a walk or outing or other group activity, have access to this information for the members of their group. This information is restrictive and should not be shared without the prior written permission of the individual, as this may contravene data protection legislation, and nor will it be retained for longer than is necessary.

2.6 Contributions from members should be encouraged and the provision of topic outlines for subsequent sessions will enable members to conduct their own research. This should promote learning and a feeling of inclusion.

2.7 Group members should be encouraged to inform the Group Leader if they are aware of any group member experiencing health issues or other problems. When appropriate this information should be passed onto the Membership Secretary to help us maintain pastoral care of our members.

2.8 Newcomers are permitted to attend a taster session with a Group without payment. They should be entered on the Account Form separately as a visitor. If not already a Crawley u3a member, they should be invited to contact the Membership Secretary or go to the Crawley u3a website to become a member of Crawley u3a and formally join the Group. Note that for insurance cover reasons such newcomers or visitors are not permitted to attend more than two “taster” session across the u3a (not per Group).

2.9 Promoting activities is key to generating new members and retaining existing ones. Group Leaders should make themselves aware of the latest Crawley u3a Communications Strategy which outlines the channels of communication and publicity used by Crawley u3a. Group Leaders should also talk to the Communications Co-ordinator where it is felt extra publicity would benefit their group.

2.10 The venue for a Group meeting is normally booked by the Groups’ Coordinator. When requesting a booking adequate time for room preparation and clearance before and after

the meeting should be allowed for. The Executive Committee has responsibility for arranging an appropriate contract and terms of hire with all venues.

2.11 Group Leaders should ensure that all groups' meetings are advertised by including them into the event calendar of Beacon. The calendar to then used to confirm the booking with the venue and the associated payment to them for the room hire.

2.12 Where a Group meets in a member's home, the Group Leader may make the arrangements. The Groups' Coordinator is to be informed of all meeting arrangements. Note that some u3a insurance cover is available to protect members' processions but that the member whose home is used needs to conduct a risk assessment in advance of the meeting (see Crawley u3a Guidance on Insurance, section 3(g)).

2.13 If a meeting is cancelled or rearranged, Group members must be informed where possible, and the venue booking cancelled/amended. Where this occurs, the Groups' Coordinator must also be advised. It is important that the meeting is removed from the Beacon calendar.

2.14 Where applications for membership of individual Groups exceeds the Group Leader's expectation, the Groups' Coordinator must be informed. This should include instances where numbers exceed the limits of an individual meeting room. The outcome of the discussion may require a change in venue or the establishment of a waiting list on the Beacon system.

3. Health & Safety

3.1 All Group Leaders must make themselves aware of emergency arrangements in their chosen venue in case of accident, fire or other emergency and should relay these arrangements to group members. Special attention should be paid to access to defibrillators.

3.2 An Incident Report Form must be completed when accidents occur during group meetings or outings. Copies must be signed by the injured party and Group Leader and sent to the Secretary as soon as possible after the event. Group Leaders should also advise the Secretary by telephone in the first instance. Incident report forms are available on the Crawley u3a website under Documents

3.3 The Secretary will inform the Committee and the venue when appropriate.

4. Resources

Equipment

4.1 Crawley u3a maintains a list of shared equipment for use at Group meetings. This list is available on the Crawley u3a website. A copy can be obtained on request from the Treasurer.

4.2 Some equipment may be group specific. The Group Leader is responsible for ensuring that the equipment is safely used, maintained, and stored in a secure place. Any breakages or loss of equipment should be reported immediately to the Treasurer.

Learning Aids and Material

4.3 The Third Age Trust website, provides a source of guidance and information for Group Leaders. <http://www.u3a.org.uk/learning> But you will need to register on the site to access some areas.

4.4 It is recommended that all Group Leaders should visit the Third Age Trust website on a regular basis as new learning materials is being constantly added.

4.5 Other general advice on how to set up and run a group can also be found on the Third Age Trust website. <http://www.u3a.org.uk/advice>

5. Insurance & Risk Management

5.1 The Third Age Trust nationally organise insurance cover for all affiliated u3a's activities.

5.2 An overview of the insurance policies provided by the Third Age Trust is on the Crawley u3a website Documents page and entitled 'Crawley u3a Guidance on Insurance'; or can be requested from the Secretary. Group Leaders should study section 8 FAQs particularly carefully. The essential matters to note are:

- (a) The u3a insurance policies are intended to protect the u3a and those who run individual u3as, such as Trustees and Group. They do not provide standard personal or accident insurance to members participating in activities.
- (b) To minimise the future costs of insurance cover Group Leaders are required to undertake risk assessments in advance, though for room-based groups in which

the members sit rather than move around these will require little more than checking fire exits.

- (c) Note that, as stated in 2.8 above, to protect the insurance cover newcomers or visitors are not permitted to attend more than two “taster” sessions per u3a (not per Group).

- 5.3 A copy of the current Policy Schedule is also under the document section on the Crawley u3a website though this is a technical document and all relevant information from this is included in the guidance covered under 5.2 above.
- 5.4 Should an incident take place which could conceivably give rise to a future insurance claim then an Incident Report Form (available to download on the Crawley website) should be completed and sent to the Secretary as soon as possible after the event.
- 5.5 If a Group Leader becomes aware that a member, or third party, is intending to make a claim against the Third Age Trust insurance the Secretary should be contacted as soon as possible. The Secretary will then get in touch, if necessary, with both the person intending to make a claim and the Third Age Trust.
- 5.6 Any insurance excess (see the Crawley Guidance to insurance for a definition of this and the amounts for the different insurance types) and any financial cost or liability that is not covered by insurance at all, will have to be funded directly from Crawley u3a reserves. Therefore, Group Leaders should seek to minimise potential risks in all activities that are undertaken.
- 5.7 Any questions on insurance matters should be directed to the Secretary.

6. The Financial Aspects of running a Group

Overview

- 6.1 The following section, should be read in conjunction with Crawley u3a’s Financial Policy, copy of which is available on the Crawley u3a website, under the document section.
- 6.2 For financial management purposes Activity Groups are designated into one of the following three categories, which determines the fees applied to it.

Room Based - This includes all Groups holding regular meetings, at a fixed venue.

Home Based – This covers all Groups that hold regular meeting at the home of one of the group members. A group with eight or less members are exempted from the need to collect Attendance Fees and the associated claiming of expenses, but still need to keep an attendance log for insurance purposes. This log should be made available when requested by a member of the Executive Committee.

Outdoor Activity – This includes all Groups which may hold regular meetings, but for activities at external venues. Whilst not exclusive, this includes all Out and About, Amblers, Walkers, Theatre Groups, Allotments, and Outdoor sports groups. Whilst some Groups follow a set meeting pattern, others are likely to meet on an ad hoc basis during the year.

6.3 For general administration purposes Crawley u3a operate on a termly basis, that broadly matches the academic year. It breaks the year into three terms for both reporting and financial management purposes. The year is split as follows

Autumn Term (September, October, November, and December)

Spring Term (January, February, March, and April)

Summer Term (May, June, July, August)

Note: The schedule, practically ignores when Easter falls as this moves from year to year. Also, Groups generally do not meet in August.

6.4 The Crawley u3a general financial principles are that each activity group should be self-financing, but no group should be disadvantaged due to low membership and/or attendance numbers.

6.5 To ensure that all groups can function. Room Based groups venue hire costs and other running costs are averaged out evenly over all the Members that actively participate in those groups and recovered as part of a standard 'attendance' fee, levied each time a member attends a group.

6.6 Outdoor Activity Groups are charged an annual membership fee which again is set to recover the collective costs that these groups incur.

6.7 If a group organises a trip or outing then the costs associated with that are recovered as a direct contribution from the members how go on that trip.

6.7 The Crawley u3a Financial Year runs from 1st September to 31st August. All Receipt forms, expenditure claims and income should be passed to the Treasurer by 25th August at the latest so that all payments and receipts can be processed within the current financial year.

6.8 The Treasurer will monitor individual Group's income and expenditure and will highlight potential issues to both the relevant Group Leader and Executive Committee. It should not be necessary for a Group to close because expenses are not being covered by fees; the Committee will however keep under review any group where expenses are significantly exceeding income.

6.9 Members' cheques for all u3a activity should be made payable to Crawley u3a.

Receipts and Income

6.10 The level of fees is set annual by the Executive Committee. The fees for the current year is set out in the following table.

Crawley u3a
Activity Groups - Attendance & Membership fee
Schedule 2022/23

Room Based groups	-attendance fee	£2.00 per session
Outdoor Activity	-membership fee	£3.80 per annum
<i>(For members joined during the year, a pro-rata rate of £1.30 per term)</i>		

6.11 The attendance fee is to cover room hire charges and the groups general operating costs.

6.12 The Outdoor Activity membership fee is to cover the venue costs of holding planning meetings and the groups operational costs.

6.13 Group Leaders are responsible for the collection of these fees, unless they have pre-agreed with the Treasurer to collect them by electronic billing of the members involved.

6.14 Group Leaders can determine when to collect the fees. Current practice is for Groups meeting weekly or fortnightly to collect at each meeting/session. For all other Groups to collect the termly fees in one go, at the beginning of each term.

6.15 Group Leaders do not pay any attendance or outdoor management fees.

6.16 All income received should be banked complete into the Crawley u3a bank account. This can be done in the following ways

- Cash and/or Cheques can be sent or delivered to the Assistant Treasurer.
- Group Leaders can request a Bank Paying in book from the Treasurer and pay the income directly into the Lloyds u3a bank account. For insurance purposes the

Treasurer will check with the Group Leader what their proposed banking procedure will be to ensure that all risks have been covered. Together with the procedure for completing the paying in slips and associated income form. This procedure will ensure that all transactions go through the accounts in a transparency manner to meet audit requirements.

- Group Leader can make an electronic transfer directly into the u3a bank account. The bank details are 'Crawley u3a General Account' sort code 30-90-89, account number 35819268. Either the 'Group' or 'Trip' name should be used as the reference narrative to enable the payment to be linked with the associated income form.

For accounts and audit purposes all income payments must be accommodated by a completed Account Form 01, 02 or 03 (see Account Form's section below). These can either be in hard copy or sent as an email attachment to the Assistant Treasurer, at the same time as the income is transferred or paid in.

6.17 For current procedures and rules on 'refunds' or 'deferment of termly fees' where members are unable to attend meetings, go to the Financial Policy and associated Executive delegated decision sheet. Both are on the Crawley u3a website.

Expenses

6.18 Expenditure incurred by activity groups, has been separated into two classifications, dependant on the way the expenditure is funded. The classifications and their funding streams are:

- **Group Management Expenses and Consumables** – These are costs incurred in both managing the group and delivering the activity. These are funded from either the Attendance Fee or Outdoor Activity membership fee. A schedule of the costs that come under Management Expenses and Consumable classification is set out on Annex 1. Where a cost does not appear on the Annex please discuss with the Treasurer before incurring any costs.
- **Equipment** – Large/major items of furniture or equipment (valued over £100) required to undertake the activity and that will last for a period longer than one year. (e.g., Table Tennis table, Short Mat bowls mats) are funded directly from Crawley u3a's general reserves.
Equipment under £100 is classified as consumables, but any item costing more than £20 needs to be approved by the Treasurer before it is purchased.
All requests for large equipment (valued over £100) must be made to the Executive Committee through the Treasurer.

6.19 Group Leaders can claim back Group Management Expenses and Consumables, using Account Form 04. Whenever possible receipts, copies of orders or other associated paperwork should be obtained for all purchases and sent to the Treasurer with the claim form for audit purposes.

6.20 For items of general administration such as photo-coping, printing or car travel pre-set reimbursement rates have been set by the Executive Committee and are set out on Account Form 04.

6.21 Wherever possible pre-planned large volume of printing/photocopying should be printed on the central printer operated by the Membership Secretary. Where this is required, please liaise directly with the Membership Secretary.

6.22 For financial control purposes all expenditure will need to comply with the authorisation and payment limits set out in the Financial Policy.

6.23 Completed requests for payments, will normally be processed and the money transferred to the claimant bank account within 14 days.

Trips

6.24 Trips/Outings can be organised by any activity group, subject to the full cost of the trip being funded by direct contribution from the Members going on the trip.

6.25 A group of individual members may organise a collective visit, trip, or holiday, where each member pays directly for their own associated costs to third party organisations. These trips will be classified as an event organised by the u3a; but not run by the u3a. The income and costs are not required to be reported to the Treasurer for inclusion in the u3a accounts.

6.26 Where the u3a are required to pay a third-party supplier for any elements of a trip, whether directly or indirectly, then the trip is classified as an event run by the u3a. The income and costs will need to be included in the u3a accounts. On all trips run by the u3a Group Leaders should discuss potential costings and pricing with the Treasurer when they are considering or planning the trip or event to ensure that all financial risks have been considered.

6.27 All monies paid by Group members for u3a run trips, should be in advance and must be paid into the Crawley u3a bank account as soon as possible, using Account Form 03. They will be held in a specific designated reserve account, until required to settle the associated costs.

6.28 Any losses or deficits incurred on u3a run trips will be funded from Crawley u3a general reserves. Any surpluses will belong to the u3a unless they are identified as being required for a future specific purpose, such as another trip.

Account Forms

6.29 To aid the quick and efficient processing of financial transactions, a set of standard forms have been established. These forms are explained below. Copies can be found on the Crawley u3a website. All income forms are provided in Word, PDF & Excel version and expenditure forms in Word and PDF versions. If you require them in a different version, then please contact the Treasurer.

The Folio and Acct number boxes on the forms are for the Treasurer's use only.

Accounts Form 01 – Attendance and Receipts form – Weekly/Fortnightly groups (A&R Form)

This is a multipurpose form, for use by Room or Home-based groups (over eight members) meeting either weekly or fortnightly, it records/reports both activity fees received and attendees, required for insurance, venue management and Health and Safety purposes.

The forms can be populated with the members names and membership numbers in a variety of ways.

- Group Leaders can download the data directly from Beacon and copy/paste it into the form.
- Group Leaders can populate it directly.
- Group Leaders can ask the Treasurer to provide an already populated version, in an appropriate computer format that they can access.

Data will be downloaded directly from Beacon, so Group Leaders should ensure that membership records for their group are kept up to date.

It is important that regular returns and payments are made to the Treasurer. Groups meeting weekly or fortnightly, should submit at least one return per calendar month.

The Membership number is required for compliance with general insurance requirements.

Group Leaders can devise their own bespoke electronic form, as long as it contains all the information/data required. Any bespoke form must be agreed with the Treasurer before being used.

Completed forms should be sent to the Assistant Treasurer, with or at the same time as income is either passed over or paid into the bank.

Accounts Form 02 – Monthly Attendance Fees receipt form

This is for Room or Home based (over eight members) groups meeting monthly or less frequently. It should be used to record attendance fees collected. It should be completed and return to the Treasurer as soon as 'termly' fees have been collected.

Fees from Members who for some reason pay late, or new members who join the group mid-term can be submitted on a separate form, when those payments have been collected.

Termly fees are determined by multiplying the 'standard attendance fee' by the number of times the group will meet that term.

The Membership number is required for compliance with general insurance requirements.

This form should also be used by Outdoor Activity groups to report fees collected from new members who have joined the group after the beginning of the financial year.

Completed forms should be sent to the Assistant Treasurer, with or at the same time as income is either passed over or paid into the bank.

Accounts Form 02A – Attendance form – Monthly groups

This is for use by Room or Home-based groups (over eight members) meeting monthly or less frequently. It only records attendance for insurance, venue management and Health and Safety purposes. Fees are reported using Account Form 02.

The forms can be populated with the members names and membership numbers in a variety of ways.

- Group Leaders can download the data directly from Beacon and copy/paste it into the form.
- Group Leaders can populate it directly.
- Group Leaders can ask the Treasurer to provide an already populated version, in an appropriate computer format that they can access.

Data will be downloaded directly from Beacon, so Group Leaders should ensure that membership records for their group are kept up to date.

Groups should complete the form and return it to the Treasurer after at the end of each Term.

The Membership number is required for compliance with general insurance requirements.

Group Leaders can devise their own bespoke electronic form, as long as it contains all the information/data required. Any bespoke form must be agreed with the Treasurer before being used.

The form can be sent in either as a paper copy or electronically as an email attachment.

Accounts Form 03 – Events Receipt form

This is for reporting fees collected for 'one-off' trips or events.

For trips where the number exceeds thirty, then multiple forms can be put together to form one return.

Completed forms should be sent to the Assistant Treasurer, with or at the same time as income is either passed over or paid into the bank.

The Membership number is required for compliance with general insurance requirements.

Accounts Form 04 – Claim for Expenses form

This is for claiming back group management expenses incurred in running groups.

Documentary evidence or receipts should be attached to evidence the expenses have been incurred.

Completed forms should be sent to the Treasurer either in paper form or as an email attachment. Scanned copies of associated receipts or supporting documents can also be sent electronically.

Accounts Form 05 – Request for Payment form

Used to obtain reimbursement for:

- Pre-payment for event, activity, visit or speaker.
- Reimbursement of payment made by Credit or Debit Card.
- Payments to third parties.

Documentary evidence or receipts should be attached to evidence the expenditure has been or will be incurred.

Completed forms should be sent to the Treasurer either in paper form or as an email attachment. Scanned copies of associated receipts or supporting documents can also be sent electronically.

CLASSIFICATION OF EXPENSES

The primary objective of the u3a is to create an environment within which members can be comfortable and confident to undertake self- learning and develop their skills and knowledge.

To facilitate this Group Leaders can claim the following costs in respect of both the management of their Group and the preparation and delivery of the Group's activities.

- Printing/Photocopying for both managing the group and to facilitate the delivery of group activities.
- Postage for sending out communications to Group Members or sending documents/cheques to Executive members (e.g., Treasurer, Secretary, Communications Coordinator).
- The purchase or hire of written or published material for use in group activities.
- Consumables to aid the learning experience during group activities.
- Subscriptions to magazines, libraries, and other sources of learning material.
- Costs associated with the preparation of group activities, including scouting/recce activities for trips & events. (Any cost of scouting/recce activity is limited to one person per trip).
- Production and distribution of advertising material for the promotion of the group.
- Hiring in of Guest Speakers to facilitate learning. (Limited to one per year per Activity group).

Costs that cannot be claimed.

- Refreshments provided and consumed during group activities.
- Membership fees to other organisations.

If any individual item of expenditure is going to cost over £20. Prior approval of the Treasurer is required before the cost is incurred.

If there is an item of cost that does not fit under any of the above heading, then discuss it with the Treasurer before incurring any costs.