

# Advice on starting a New Group



Thank you for starting a new group for Dart Valley U3A. This is an introductory leaflet to help you get underway.

Our Groups are the centre of our activities and we couldn't operate without your help. Many find the role of convening a group rewarding, enjoyable and fun – but sometimes it can be a little daunting. This leaflet aims to help you.

There is lots of support – just ask if you want some help. Also remember the philosophy of U3A

***“Those who teach shall learn and those who learn shall also teach”***

Groups come in many different shapes and types but the U3A promotes shared learning. You do not need to be a gifted speaker, expert or presenter. Your specific job is to convene the group - don't feel you have to do everything yourself. The other group members should be willing to pitch in. By all means give them a copy of this leaflet and use it to help discuss how you want to progress.

There are a few things that you specifically need to do at the beginning, but again spread the load across your group:

## Your Main Responsibilities

- Set up your group and hold an initial meeting
- Agree dates and book a meeting room if needed
- Keep a register of attendance for your group
- Welcome newcomers to your Group and ensure they are U3A members
- Communicate regularly with your group and send a description of your activities to the Newsletter Editor at end of each month
- Look after any money or equipment involved in running your group
- Think about safety and accessibility for your group.

These are detailed below:

## Setting up your group

The first task is to recruit enough members to make it a viable group. To do this, announce your group at the General Meeting or if needed ask the Chairman to do this and ask members to sign up for it. (See Contacts). Use the Newsletter to describe your new group and encourage people to join. Write up your entry and send it in to the Coordinator. When you have enough interest, call an initial ad-hoc meeting to discuss what the group should be about and when it should meet.

## Dates and Meeting Rooms

Most groups set a regular meeting time – i.e. 2pm the first Monday of the month but of course its what works for your group so ad-hoc times are fine too. You might want to avoid other groups meeting times – check the Newsletter for these. If you need to book a room remember we can provide any new group with a grant to cover the cost of the Venue for 3 meetings and we can also provide a grant for equipment you might need. (See Appendix for list of Venues and Resources)

## Register

Keep a register of those attending your group and check they are members of Dart Valley U3A. This is important for insurance and for keeping the U3A solvent. ([Download Blank Attendance form](#))

## New Members

When new members come, welcome them and ensure they are eligible to join and add them to the register. If they are not members give them a [Membership form](#) and give them two meeting's grace to join us. Pass on the membership forms to the Membership Secretary (Suzie Dodsworth – [suziedwong@gmail.com](mailto:suziedwong@gmail.com)) We also welcome members of other U3As as Associate Members.

## Communication

Communicate regularly with members of your group by email. Many group leaders use their Newsletter entry for their next meeting as the email to group members and the entry for the Website. Be aware of data protection. Personal information (including telephone numbers and email addresses) of a member should not be shared with others without explicit permission. Send your group emails to yourself and blind copy (.BCC) your group members into it. Review your list regularly and ask members if they still want to receive it.

## Finance

If you have expenses such as room hire you need to ask members for a contribution at each meeting to cover this. This money belongs to your group jointly and within reason it is up to you all to agree what it covers – i.e. tea and biscuits, etc. If your 'float' goes over £50 talk to the treasurer who will arrange banking details for you. Please keep records of all income and expenditure and be open with your group on what you do financially – it is their money. You can use the [Attendance Form](#) for this if you wish.

## Safety and Accessibility

Think about safety and accessibility when running your group. All groups are open to all members and you should do your best in making your group accessible to all. U3A has public liability insurance which covers you, but it is important that you take reasonable care. You may need to check the venue and there is a checklist available nationally from the U3A Trust. [Risk Assessment Checklist](#). If you create a risk assessment checklist, send it to the Groups' Coordinator who will put it on the website for others to use. Specialist activities like Archery will have their own regulations to follow.

## Once again - above all share the load

Getting more people involved in running your group helps to share the work and develop new Group Leaders for the future. You might not want to do this forever! Also come along to the regular Group leader meetings to share your thoughts and get help from others doing a similar job.

Once again thank you for volunteering to be a U3A Dart Valley Group Leader, good luck and keep in contact!

Peter Avis (Groups' Coordinator)

Dart Valley U3A November 2019

# More Detailed help

## Venues

There are many places to meet. Here are some used by current groups:

### At home

Many small groups meet at their homes, one home or rotating around member's homes.

### The Flavel

The Flavel has a number of rooms for group use. The Green Room holds up to 10-12 people and costs £8.00 per hour (£9.00 from 1st January 2020) The Studio holds up to 40 at £10.00 per hour (£11.00 from 1st January 2020). There is a screen and projector in the Studio which is available for hire. The Main Hall holds over a 100 and costs £15 per hour. For technical assistance in the main hall the fee is £15 per hour plus VAT for the hire and £15 per hour plus VAT for the technical assistance. The Café and upstairs lounge can be used for informal get-togethers. The Flavel is well used by us but is keen to fit U3A groups in so please book through Lesley Turner ([Lesley@theflavel.org.uk](mailto:Lesley@theflavel.org.uk))

### Cafés and Coffee Shops

Some groups have happily persuaded cafés to host them for the cost of a tea or coffee each.

### Stoke Fleming Village Hall

There is a Main Hall which can hold up to 200 people for indoor sports and large presentations and the Ron Harris Meeting Room (£21 for a 4 hour session) for meetings up to 30 people. These are well-equipped with AV and there is a kitchen. (contact Mary Viney on 01803 770366 or email [jeanviney@btinternet.com](mailto:jeanviney@btinternet.com))

### Dartmouth Leisure Centre

For sports activities. Non members of the leisure centre need to pay a fee (£3 per hour).

### St. Clement's Church

The Church can accommodate a large number and has refreshment facilities. Available for £35 per session (contact Lydia Guy - [lydsatnumber6@aol.com](mailto:lydsatnumber6@aol.com) - 01803 832312).

### St Clements Church Hall, Townstal Road, Dartmouth, TQ6 9SN

Available for £13.50 per hour (contact Lydia Guy - [lydsatnumber6@aol.com](mailto:lydsatnumber6@aol.com) - 01803 832312).

### St Saviours Church, Dartmouth

The charge for using St Saviour's for an event is £150, and £50 for a rehearsal. The contact is either Jill or Christine in the Parish Office (Tel 01803 835540).

### Townstal Community Hall, Davis Road, Dartmouth TQ6 9LJ

Available for £12 per hour Contact: Terry Prior - [terryandmo142@gmail.com](mailto:terryandmo142@gmail.com) - 07816 917073

### Dartmouth Baptist Church

Carey Road, Dartmouth, TQ6 9LT - 01803 835325

## Contacts

### The Committee

Chairman	Gail Richmond	<a href="mailto:gldrichmond@hotmail.co.uk">gldrichmond@hotmail.co.uk</a>	01803 839269
Vice - Chairman	Howard O'Keeffe	<a href="mailto:howardokeeffe49@gmail.com">howardokeeffe49@gmail.com</a>	01803 839237
Treasurer	Lizzie Helyer	<a href="mailto:lizhelyer20@gmail.com">lizhelyer20@gmail.com</a>	07813 803472
Secretary/Groups	Peter Avis	<a href="mailto:peteravis1@gmail.com">peteravis1@gmail.com</a>	01803 833156
Membership	Suzie Dodsworth	<a href="mailto:suziedwong@gmail.com">suziedwong@gmail.com</a>	07811 278133

Tea rota	Elaine Flanagan	<a href="mailto:elaine@flanagan74.plus.com">elaine@flanagan74.plus.com</a>	01803 832449
Committee Member	Gwendolyn Alker	<a href="mailto:jsgmalker@yahoo.co.uk">jsgmalker@yahoo.co.uk</a>	01803 833270
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Committee Member	Wendy Cullen	<a href="mailto:wendyrayment@hotmail.com">wendyrayment@hotmail.com</a>	01803 834946
Committee Member	Christine Milsom	<a href="mailto:christinemilsom@btinternet.com">christinemilsom@btinternet.com</a>	01803 843834
Committee Member	Jennifer Wright	<a href="mailto:jenniferm.wright@hotmail.co.uk">jenniferm.wright@hotmail.co.uk</a>	01803 445247

Please feel free to contact any of us for help and any information you might need.

## Website

Our website is at <https://u3asites.org.uk/dartvalley>. It is part of the Third Age Trust website and you can find many other U3As there. The Website editor is Yvonne Cottam ([ycottam@live.co.uk](mailto:ycottam@live.co.uk) 01803 835251). Each Group has its own page <https://u3asites.org.uk/dartvalley/groups> and you can send Yvonne any material you want to put up there.

## Newsletter

The Newsletter is published every month (except August). It contains an entry from every Group detailing your contact details, when the group next meets and a short account of its last meeting. The deadline for your copy is the end of each month and should be sent to the Newsletter Editor ([peteravis1@gmail.com](mailto:peteravis1@gmail.com)) who will remind you a week before the deadline.

## Insurance

The Third Age Trust provides all U3As with Public Liability Insurance which means as a group leader you are protected, should there be a claim for damages following an incident in your group. Public liability does not cover pure accidents where no legal liability has been established. You do not need first aid expertise and the insurance advice is for you to contact the emergency services immediately in the event of a serious incident, even if there happens to be a member present who has attended a first aid course. There is no formal requirement for you to carry out a risk assessment, but the Trust ([u3a.org.uk](http://u3a.org.uk)) provides advice and guidance. In all cases, however, common sense is once again the best judge. If there is an accident complete an [Accident Report](#) and return it to the Groups Coordinator as soon as possible.

## Copyright

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## Resources.

If you need teaching materials – for instance sports equipment you can apply to the Treasurer (Lizzie Helyer) for a grant. Email her ([lizhelyer20@gmail.com](mailto:lizhelyer20@gmail.com)) for an application form. However, whatever is bought belongs to Dart Valley U3A and the grant doesn't cover consumables or individual learner's materials. We do have some shared Audio-Visual equipment.

If you need to hire a room and you do not think attendance will cover up-front costs, Dart Valley U3A can cover the first three meetings. Email Lizzie Helyer to warn her and ask the venue to send her the invoice. If you need ideas then the Third Age Trust (<https://www.u3a.org.uk/resources/subjects>) provides lots of help for new Group leaders on different subjects.