

DEREHAM U3A - STARTING A NEW INTEREST GROUP

If you have an idea for a group your first step is to speak to the Groups Co-ordinator either at a Thursday meeting or via the website link. They can give help and advice and support you through the process.

Your next step is to find out who would be interested in joining the group. You can do this by advertising in our monthly newsletter, our website, and at the Thursday meetings. When collecting names, email and telephone contacts etc remember that the use of these details is covered by the General Data Protection Regulations and they should only be used by you to contact people about your group.

You will then need to arrange a first meeting. This could be at a Thursday meeting, in your home or the home of one of your members if numbers permit, or elsewhere. If you need a venue the Group Co-ordinator may be able to help. Please bear in mind the access requirements of your members. The committee may be able to help with the cost of venue hire to set the group up.

At your first meeting you will need to talk about what the members would like to do and plan a programme. You will need to discuss the date, time and frequency of your meetings and choose a venue.

Remember that U3A is all about shared learning, so encourage members to take a turn to take the lead or to make arrangements, and to share in the admin responsibilities – eg as group treasurer, putting out chairs, keeping the register and so on.

Look at the resources in the Convenors Resource Pack on our website for more information and for useful forms. Enjoy the activities, and ask for help when needed!

Some thoughts from the U3A booklet about Interest groups.

- ◆ Tap into the knowledge and skills within your group.
- ◆ Think if there are any resources available that might be a useful aid
- ◆ Consider the value of visits.
- ◆ Try to steer the session so that it stays focused and ends on time.
- ◆ Keep in touch with your group by email if possible and make sure they have your contact details.
- ◆ Think about the possibility of car sharing when the groups meet away from the town centre.

Consider the different ways of running a group.

Teamwork. A small team of members share the delivery and facilitate the study between them.

Co-ordinator led. The co-ordinator acts as a “leader” to facilitate the planning of the learning activities. Once a programme has been decided individual members take it in turns to take responsibility for the various parts of the programme but the co-ordinator continues to “lead” sessions.

Tutor led Here the member with the necessary expertise leads the sessions. Other members could take on the necessary administration.

Resource led Enthusiastic members, keen to pursue an interest but with limited expertise amongst them, join together and use resources to lead their learning.

The national U3A has a resource centre from which you can borrow materials on various topics – details on the national U3A website.