

GLOUCESTER & DISTRICT U3A

Guidelines For Group Leaders

The Groups' Co-ordinator's contact details are given in the Newsletter.

Group Leaders are requested to take responsibility for the effective management of their Groups as follows:

MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

1. When considering starting a new group, you should consult with prospective Group members to determine a mutually convenient meeting time. Where possible this should be arranged so as not to clash with other Groups. The Groups' Co-ordinator has a list of all Groups' meeting time throughout the month. These details are also on the Group page of the website www.u3asites.org.uk/gloucester. Choose a suitable venue for your Group. Small Groups may meet in members' homes, larger Groups may require a hall or meeting room. A list of potential venues is available from the Groups' Co-ordinator or Treasurer.
2. Keep an attendance register with the names of members. Contact details of group members are available on Beacon (including emergency contact details). Only paid-up members are entitled to attend and should produce a valid membership card at their first meeting. Non-members may attend ONE meeting as a visitor – they should then be asked to contact the Membership Secretary or use the Web site and join U3A. By agreement with the Cotswold Link, members may attend a regular meeting of ONE group run by another U3A within the Link without having to pay its membership fee.
3. An up to date attendance list is to be provided to the Groups' Co-ordinator by 31st October each year.
4. New members should be welcomed and introduced to the Group. At meetings, anyone attending for the first time should be asked to show his/her membership card.
5. Collect a meeting fee from everyone attending the meeting. This fee should be sufficient to cover the cost of hiring your venue and paying any meeting costs i.e. speakers. Refreshments may be supplied on a cost recovery basis.
6. If members increase and space is limited, discuss with the Groups' Co-ordinator the need for more suitable accommodation. The Treasurer must be consulted if increased hire charges are involved.
7. If any meeting date which is published in the Gloucester U3A Newsletter is changed or cancelled at the last moment, advise regular attendees and most importantly, arrange for a notice to be displayed at the meeting place. The Guildhall and all venues must be notified of any cancellation in good time to ensure no charge is made for the accommodation.

FINANCE

8. All Group Leaders should be familiar with the Gloucester and District U3A Finance Policy. A copy is provided in the Groups' Leaders start up pack or from the Treasurer.
9. Pay in all meeting fees to the Assistant Treasurer with payment slip (obtainable from the Assistant Treasurer or the website) monthly if possible and preferably by cheque or BACS. Expenses incurred on postage and telephone calls may be reimbursed from this money. Any charge towards the cost of Speakers, coach trips etc should be included with the meeting fee and sent, with an invoice, to the Assistant Treasurer. Cheques for costs of speakers/coach trips organised by the group can be obtained from the treasurer. Alternatively a cash card is available for Study trips.
10. When a new group is formed, the Group Leader can apply to the Treasurer for a sum of money up to £50.00 to help with start-up expenses. This is a one off payment, not retrospective and the Treasurer requires itemised receipts.

11. Photocopying can be done free of charge on the U3A copier by any member of a group at the Newsletter Editor's house by prior arrangement.
12. Group Leaders should inform the Groups' Co-ordinator if their group is full and closed to new members, discussion can establish if a second group is possible.

GENERAL

13. Appoint a deputy to assist with the group arrangements and provide a back-up in your absence.
14. Attend Group Leaders' meetings or send a deputy. This is an ideal opportunity to compare experiences, discuss problems and make requests or recommendations to the Committee.
15. Endeavour to attend Subs and Clubs Day in August and arrange a display or have information on hand to attract new members. If unable to attend, please ask your deputy to attend.
16. Be prepared to write a brief report at the request of the Chairman on any interesting or newsworthy activities of the group for inclusion in the Gloucester & District Monthly Newsletter and/or Third Age Matters.
17. Keep a copy of the Constitution for reference (available from the Chairman or Website).
18. Keep the website up to date, including details of forthcoming speakers or photos as appropriate. Those without website access should designate a group member to do this or provide details to the web master.
19. The Third Age Trust has a variety of resource material available. A list can be seen on request to the Groups' Co-ordinator or via the Third Age website.
20. Group Leaders are responsible for booking their own accommodation. At most venues three months' notice is required. Please inform the Treasurer of any changes to venues. New Group Leaders should discuss possible venues with the Groups' Co-ordinator before booking any accommodation.
21. Supply details of group programmes to the Newsletter Editor by the date required. The Editor will keep everyone informed if this date changes due to Bank holidays, etc.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

22. Group Leaders are responsible for the safety of their Group during the session. At the start of the session, an announcement should be made identifying any hazards and concerning the action to be taken in the event of an emergency evacuation of the building /premises, specifying the assembly area and the need to take a roll call. If the lift cannot be used, e.g. in the case of fire, arrangements for those with mobility problems should be announced. As new members/visitors may attend at any time, these arrangements should be announced at the start of each session.
23. Group Leaders should ensure that they have Emergency Contact details for each of their members. It is mandatory that Emergency Contact details are held for any member going on a study trip.
24. For Walking Groups, members' individual health and safety requires the following:

In addition to a Walk Leader, a person should be nominated as "back marker" specifically to ensure that no-one is "lost" at the rear of the group; this can be coupled with the person responsible for closing gates, etc during the walk.

If a lone member decides to leave the walk before its completion, someone should accompany them to an agreed safe destination. In the event that no volunteer is available, the Group Leader should record name details, etc and if possible obtain the signature of the person leaving against the fact that they are aware of possible dangers of walking alone.

25. Copies of Accident Forms are available on the website. These must be completed in the event of an accident however small or trivial this may seem. The completed form should be sent to the Secretary.

DATA PROTECTION

26. Group Leaders must be familiar with our Data Protection and Privacy Policies (available from our website). Specifically, members' information available to Group Leaders via Beacon must only be used for managing the group's activities and for no other purposes.

27. It should be recognised that Items for the newsletter or the website are visible to the public. Don't include addresses or email addresses.

28. Use Beacon to email members of your groups, to avoid exposing other people's email addresses

29. We include your telephone number in the newsletter. Let the editor know if you wish this to be removed

30. Access to Beacon is provided only to allow group leaders to maintain their group's membership list and to find contact details of the members of their group. The information is personal information and must not be used for any other purpose.

INSURANCE, SOCIAL EVENTS AND TRAVEL

31. Use the Study Trip Booking form for all events. The template is available on the groups page of the website

32. See Appendix 1 for Third Age Trust advice.

33. A list of insurance policies and other documents arranged through the Third Age Trust follows.

- Tour Operators' Liability
- Public & Products Liability including:
 - Public & Products Excess Layer Liability
 - Charity Trustees Management Liability
 - Assets
 - Home Contents
- Phonographic Performance Licence (PPL) which allows us to play sound recordings to our members.

Appendix 1 - Social Events and Travel

Many U3As arrange excellent social events for their members ranging from study trips and outings to Christmas lunches, as well as organising travel either in the UK or Europe which can either be for a specific study group or for all members. The information provided below recommends best practice and aims to make you aware when you are covered by U3A insurance and to ensure that neither participating members nor the organisers are putting themselves at risk.

There are three types of activities that are considered here:

- Study Trips: travel only, open to all members of the U3A – covered by U3A insurance.
- Study Group overnight trips: travel and accommodation, open to study group members only – covered by U3A insurance.
- Holidays: open to all members of the U3A – no U3A insurance.

THE ORGANISATION

All activities whether organised by an individual or a small sub-committee should be approved in advance by the main U3A Committee and where there are any contracts or agreements they must be signed by a trustee on the committee on behalf and in the name of the U3A. In addition, all the financial arrangements must be overseen by the treasurer on behalf of the committee.

Such activities, once the main committee has given its approval, are usually planned by an organiser or a small committee, ideally with a trustee as a member. This can involve making the bookings, arranging transport and accommodation or in the case of a holiday, arranging the package with the travel agent/tour company. When organising day events or overnight trips, care should be taken in making any prepayments, as there is no insurance provided to protect you should the supplier go out of business.

DAY TRIPS

The organiser will arrange a trip and agree with the treasurer all the payment arrangements. The organiser and treasurer will agree a “sales” price usually including a small mark-up as a contingency. The prospective attendees will usually book directly with the organiser by cheque not cash but in some cases the payment may go directly to the treasurer. All cheques should be made out to the U3A and to the U3A social account specifically if one exists, not to the organiser. The organiser should not pay for a venue or coach by means of a personal debit/credit card or personal cheque. In order to ensure that all monies are handled correctly, all payments must be made with the full involvement of the committee, with cheques being signed by two trustees.

STUDY GROUP TRIPS

The organiser in this case will be the group convenor/s with the process similar to that detailed above for day trips, except that accommodation will be required and included in the price. In order to protect the person arranging such trips, the Trust has arranged Tour Operator Liability insurance. This insurance only applies to the organisation of study group trips, not holidays.

NB. All monies paid in advance for study group travel should pass through the main U3A account as this is part of your core activity.

HOLIDAYS

As far as U3A holidays are concerned, the only safe way to organise them is through a travel agency/tour company so that you are fully covered by their liability insurance. A decision to organise a holiday yourselves could leave you personally liable in the event of a claim for any damage or accident that might occur as you would have no insurance to protect you. In addition, it is recommended that where possible payments are made on an individual basis, directly to the company and not to the U3A. Apart from the fact that you then do not have to deal with a lot of cheques, it does mean that there is a direct contract between the individual and the travel company rather than with the U3A as an entity, and should there be a problem resulting in a potential claim, it will be dealt with more quickly. There is, however, no reason why the organiser should not collect cheques and then either send them in one batch or deliver them.

INSURANCE

As long as the basic procedures outlined above are followed, then the liability insurance we provide will cover your day events and your study group overnight trips in the UK and Europe, both with respect to third party liability, your group organiser and member to member cover. If you wish to extend an invitation to members of other U3As that is fine.

It is also acceptable to have a non-member attend a day event with committee permission, providing it is not a regular occurrence for that person to do so.

It must be clearly understood, however, that it does not include personal accident/injury or travel insurance, both of which are the personal responsibility of each U3A member to take out.

In the case of a holiday, the Trust does not provide any insurance cover so personal travel insurance is essential. If the committee is agreeable there is no reason why partners and friends of members should not be included.

OTHER MATTERS

Free Trips

It is a recognised practice that Tour Operators offer a free trip for, say every 20 members booked but it is up to the U3A committee to decide how these freebies are dealt with, not the group organiser. It is strongly recommended that you adopt a policy of sharing them all out by applying a discount to all travellers whilst retaining the discretion to reflect service from the organiser which is above and beyond what you would normally expect. If, however, the organiser is a trustee, a free place should not be offered as trustees must not receive any personal benefit whilst in the role. In view of the above, it is incumbent on all U3A committees to ensure that any travel operations are run in a properly regulated manner and members are aware what your policy is.

Cancellations

If a potential attendee cancels with sufficient time, it may be possible to refund some of the cost although most likely not the deposit. However, it is important that the committee decides and publishes its policy as it is not reasonable for the organiser to have to handle this situation without guidance.

Use of Debit/Credit Cards

It is not recommended practice to expect or allow members to use their personal credit or debit cards to make payments on behalf of their U3A and as more and more venues are refusing to accept cheques, you should consider applying for a debit card or credit card. The process may take a bit of time but it should be successful.