

Group Leaders Handbook



Prepared by and for members of
Goudhurst and District u3a

<https://u3asites.org.uk/goudhurst>

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1 Introduction

The following guidelines have been developed to help you set up and manage a group within Goudhurst and District u3a.

Group Leaders are valued members and are key to the success of our u3a – without you there wouldn't be one.

You will find every encouragement and support from the Groups' Coordinator and the u3a committee in starting and sustaining groups.

An important principle is that all u3as and groups within a u3a are autonomous and in general are free to organize themselves in whatever way suits their purpose. However, all u3as are charities and are therefore bound by the rules of the Charities Commission which are legally enforceable.

For further advice, please contact the Groups' Coordinator by email

veronicainniss1@gmail.com

2 Setting up a Group

If you are planning on setting up a new group, please discuss your ideas with the Groups' Coordinator. Your group will be added to our list of groups on the Goudhurst and District website and this can be updated with information about the content, venue, times and leader's contact details.

Courses may be as short as a few weeks if that is appropriate, or they may be ongoing.

Please inform the Groups' Coordinator of any change in the leader or contact details.

Only current members of Goudhurst and District u3a may join your group. You should check that everyone is a paid-up member when they join your group and annually when memberships are renewed.

A non-member may attend for a "taster" session but must become a member before attending any subsequent meetings.

3 Group Management

Encourage group members to participate in sharing the responsibilities of running the group. A co-leader or a deputy can help in the event of absence (illness or holidays). Other duties can include booking the room, sorting out the money etc., allowing the group leader to concentrate on his/her main function within the group.

It is important that groups are open initially to all members who wish to join. If your group is oversubscribed, ideally an additional group should be formed, possibly with another leader. Or a system of allocating spaces on a fair basis should be sought. Members may preferentially stay with your group if it is a continuing course or activity.

You should have arrangements in place for when a meeting has to be canceled at short notice. Also, make sure you know what to do if a group member is taken ill during a session, ie call an ambulance if necessary, or be prepared to contact a relative/friend who can help with transport home or to a doctor.

Once your group is full, and if you, or another member, cannot start a new group, you may choose to operate a waiting list. Members who are absent for a few sessions could be asked, for example, if they wish to continue to participate; if they don't, and circumstances allow, their places could be offered to others.

The key to u3a is the mutual aid principle. No payments are made to members for services rendered to Goudhurst and District u3a. You must not engage paid tutors on a continuing basis. However, a one-off payment may be made to a visiting speaker.

Newsletter

The Goudhurst and District u3a newsletter can include a Groups Update. The Groups' Coordinator will need to know if your group is full, your group is not running, you have any vacancies or any change of contact details in order to publish these details in the Newsletter.

The Newsletter editor will welcome reports of your activities, including photographs. (See GDPR section for guidelines on including photos of members). Please observe the newsletter deadlines.

Website

There is a dedicated web area for every group. You can use this to share information and communicate with prospective group members. Specific dates should not be included as over the passage of time they will become obsolete. Any pictures to be added to a website group page should be sent to the website editor and ideally should be of medium resolution, less than 1.5MB. (less than 1200 pixels wide) and a title should be provided.

Please contact the website editor, Wil Pretty - wilpretty1@gmail.com to make any changes.

The website is designed such that neither personal emails nor phone numbers should be provided, as it is open to the public. A message such as that below will be placed on your group page and any message will automatically go to the designated group leader.

--Please click on the link on this page to message (Your Name) either to register an interest or for more information.--

Ghost emails

Email enquiries sent to the Goudhurst and District u3a website that relate to your group will be forwarded by the administrator to your personal email address. If you reply to the sender, this is sent from your personal email address, so do not reply if you do not want your personal email revealed.

4 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

IMPORTANT

These new regulations came into force in May 2018, and they affect the collection, holding and use of a members' personal data. Goudhurst and District u3a have developed a new Data Protection Policy to address these issues.

The important issues for Group Leaders are:

1. You must collect from your group only personal data which is necessary for the efficient conduct of your group activities.
2. Any personal data you hold about your group members must be kept securely and password protected (if electronic) and shared only with the consent of the group members.

3. Always Bcc (blind copy) when sending an email to multiple addresses unless consent has been obtained to share.
4. Group members' information should be renewed regularly. It is important to destroy personal data of members who have left the group.
5. If you relinquish your role as group leader, you should pass on to the new leader the personal data you hold on group members and destroy your own records of group members.
6. Photographs constitute personal data. If you take photographs, consent must be obtained from all present. This can be done by asking anyone not consenting to advise the photographer.

5 Venues

Various venues are used by our u3a Groups in Goudhurst, including members' homes. Helpful venues are The Star and Eagle and The Goudhurst Inn, since these pubs do not charge u3a groups please would all participants in the group make a point of buying a drink from the bar. The Social Club is also willing to allow us to conduct meetings there. If you have any other suggestions for suitable venues, please inform the Groups Coordinator. We are of course subject to the rules and regulations of the venue being used and please ensure the number of members in your Group is appropriate for the venue you choose.

Payment

If a venue makes a charge, this cost must be divided equally between all members of the group, including the leader.

Financial support for your group, through a subsidy for rental charges, may be available. Check with our u3a Treasurer.

Member's Homes

Many Goudhurst and District u3a groups meet in the leader's or members' homes. It is acceptable to ask for a small contribution to cover costs.

6 Expenses for the running of your Group

All groups are expected to be self-funded for all running costs, including venue hire and refreshments, shared equally between members of the group.

If you need to do printing, photocopying, purchase stationery and stamps or buy materials or equipment for the running of your group, these expenses should be recorded and divided between the members of your Group.

Group leaders are reminded they are responsible for complying with copyright regulations, particularly regarding copying music and maps. (An advice sheet on licenses can be found on the Third Age Trust website.)

Goudhurst u3a does have a Copyright License

The Goudhurst and District u3a has audio visual equipment that may be borrowed (a laptop, projector, speakers and choice of screens). This is usually kept by the Chairman but we have a Whatsapp group to keep track of the equipment. If you would like to borrow it, please contact the Groups Coordinator in the first instance, giving as much notice as possible.

If you have not used the equipment before, arrangements can be made for a training session. If there are any problems with the equipment, please notify the Groups Coordinator or the Secretary. After borrowing the audio-visual equipment, please return to the Chairman as soon as possible.

7 Finance

Accounts

Recent new guidance from u3a Third Age Trust (TAT) requires that the finances of individual groups be added to the central accounts of Goudhurst and District u3a for insurance purposes. This means that any Group Leader who deals with income and expenditure must maintain accounts and if a Group Leader were to hold a Group bank account, the Treasurer of Goudhurst and District u3a must also be a signatory. From April 2019, these accounts must be submitted annually to the Treasurer for year-end (Treasurer can advise this date).

If at your group meetings the only financial transaction is the collection of a small sum (say £1) per member and something for

milk and biscuits, no accounts need to be maintained. Neither do accounts need to be maintained where a group meets in the leader's or member's home and a contribution is made for refreshments.

Venue Rental Costs

For groups having to pay for rooms, such as the social club:

Group leaders should take an equal amount from all members of the group to cover the rent. If you require more advice on the matter, please contact the Interest Groups Coordinator.

> All monies collected should be recorded. Payments to the venues should be made regularly, preferably monthly and a receipt obtained. This should form part of the group's accounts.

Accounting Advice

Please contact the Goudhurst and District u3a Treasurer via our website if you require accounting advice at any time.

8 Insurance

Public Liability Insurance

The National u3a provides comprehensive insurance cover for all local u3as. This includes public liability insurance to protect the u3a officers, Group Leaders and all members against any claims for damage or injury caused by their negligence. Non u3a members who attend for a "taster" session are also covered.

The landlord/Manager of a venue may ask for a copy of the u3a's insurance certificate. Copies are obtainable from the u3a Secretary. The limit of liability is £5m for any one incident.

Please note that this is an insurance against public liability, it is not personal accident insurance. If, for example, someone was injured in an accident while out walking, or during the course of any other strenuous activity, they could only make a claim against the u3a if they could show that the u3a or its members had been in some way negligent in causing the injury.

9 Accidents/Incidents

If there is an accident or incident whilst on u3a activities, it is important to complete an accident form and inform the Groups' Coordinator. These forms can be obtained from our u3a Secretary. On completion, please post to the Secretary as soon as possible.

10 Car Sharing

Car Sharing is legal and permissible, including a suggested donation towards costs to the driver/car owner of 40p per mile, shared amongst those traveling in the car, including the driver. A fair policy should be decided by members of the group. Anyone offering their car must have a current, valid driving license and the vehicle must be taxed, fully insured and have a valid MOT certificate.

11 Resources

If you have any suggestions for one off, large items of equipment that would benefit your own or other groups, please submit your request to the secretary for inclusion in the next committee meeting's discussions

The Third Age Trust website www.u3a.org.uk has a wealth of information for group leaders. The Members Area Homepage has links to Subject Advice sheets, the Resource Centre and documents to download on many topics useful to group leaders.

Each Group facilitator should have a Risk assessment statement and be aware of the Accessibility statement and Equality diversity and Inclusion Policy see links on Website and the Groups Constitution. There are a set of checklists for risk assessments covering venues and workshop activities. There is also extra information for those leading walking groups including a walk leader's checklist and a disclaimer, which you may find useful. Your Groups' Coordinator can supply these.

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