SHARED PRACTICE GUIDE – ALIAS EMAIL ACCOUNTS

Rev 01-3

1. INTRODUCTION

Shared practice guides (SPG) are a vehicle to share knowledge between the u3as in the London area. They are created by collating knowledge and experiences from those u3as. They are only a guide – what worked for one u3a might not work for your u3a. If in your experience something is wrong or you disagree with something, please write in to allow an update to be created and published. It's hoped these Guides will grow over time with more shared experiences.

2. SCOPE

This particular SPG addresses the aspect of how to create and use 'alias' email accounts and also autoforwarding. In other words, to avoid the use of personal email addresses and instead to have role based email addresses, for example: MembershipSecretary.PG u3a@gmail.com.

Alias email addresses can be loaded into Beacon and hence used for mailings but can also be used separately.

The use of the word "alias" in this document is in a general sense – not in the particular sense of email techspeak. The likes of Google or Microsoft use the term 'email aliases' in a more specific way - something done by their Mail System in their Domain.

3. BACKGROUND

The benefit of an alias email address is that it protects a member's personal email address. Protects in terms of keeping this hidden from public view and hence less likely to be hacked. It also is useful for succession planning – as it will stay valid, regardless of who is in post and reference to that email address (e.g. from your website) will not need to change. It is timeless and it means its history is accessible to a successor. For this guide three sources of alias email addresses will be considered, namely:

a) if a u3a has its own website-hosting service, then this may include the provision of a number of domain name email addresses.
b) For those using SiteBuilder, a similar service is provided (see Section ???). This will also be available for SiteWorks.
c) There are other sources available to create email accounts (eg gmail).

4. FORMS OF ALIAS EMAIL ACCOUNTS

4.1 Domain Email Accounts

If you pay a website-hosting company, then you probably will be provided with a number of domain associated email accounts. You can set these up with the role name, then the domain name, e.g. 'groups@islingtonu3a.org'. Each of these alias email addresses can be set up to autoforward (for incoming email) to the member's personal email address. The exact set up of these is done within the domain host's site and will vary slightly with the hosting company.

The benefit of these domain email addresses is that, with the u3a's name appearing in the address, it gives some people more confidence that this is a genuine email. This is actually misplaced. These email addresses can be hacked like any other email system. However, it still 'looks good', with the u3a being easily identified.

This sort of email address can easily be loaded and used in Beacon for sending out to the membership (part or whole). But if management of this email account is required, then often an email 'client' is needed (e.g. Thunderbird). This can add another level of complexity.

Domain type email aliases are also offered by Google or Microsoft if you have a not for profit account with them. Many email addresses can be set up within the one account.

This only works within an email domain and means that one account's mailbox could collect incoming email for multiple email addresses in that email domain.

For the likes of Microsoft 365 and Google Workspace, the administrator can set up multiple aliases.
Add another email alias for a user - Microsoft 365 admin | Microsoft Learn
Add or delete an alternate email address (email alias) - Google Workspace Admin Help

For the likes of Outlook.com, the user can setup aliases
Add or remove an email alias in Outlook.com - Microsoft Support

4.2 Sitebuilder/ SiteWorks email Accounts

If you use Sitebuilder currently (SiteWorks in the future) then there is effectively an 'alias' email service provided. If you go to the Sitebuilder main menu you can add a Contact there (to be visible on the 'Contacts' webpage or if you want to have a live web address in any narrative script on any other page). You need to use %.....% around the actual 'label'. The label can be the web address or anything else eg %Chair%

The mail address you add here can be a person's personal email address, whereas the 'label' should be the alias address (eg as above).

Once set up you can see the list with the personal addresses shown on the righthand side (can't show you these in example below due to GDPR restrictions):

Once set up, anyone using the Contacts page, or the live link (the 'label) within any other page, Sitebuilder will send on to the listed personal email address.

Get in touch

Your new 2023 u3a Committee!
To send a message to one of the Committee members below click the role i.e. Chair or Treasurer etc OR just use general enquiries and we will get your question to the right person. Some of these links are not yet live. If you dont get a response write to me Pete Way or general enquiries and will make sure your enquiry goes to the right place

Chair	Annette Dearmun
Business Secretary	Margaret Lambert
Treasurer	Peter Lambert
Groups Coordinator	Frances Wells
Membership Secretary	Maxine Bennell
Minutes Secretary	Mick Evins
Outings Coordinator	Paul deJongh
Speakers Secretary	Dorothea Dunn
I.T.	Pete Way
Welfare Officer	Diane Carver
General Enquiries	General Enquiries

4.3 Other Email Account Sources

Most of the email providers (Outlook, gmail, etc) will allow 'you' to open multiple accounts. Gmail is possibly the easiest. Therefore you can set up an email account not only for each of the Executive Committee roles but also, for example, for each Group Coordinator/Leader.

Set up will vary per provider and is probably best done by one person (e.g. your u3a's webmaster). This can be done all at one go (open several accounts for committee roles, if none have been created previously); or one at a time as a Committee member (or Group Coordinator/Leader) asks for one. It's best to open the alias account first, then get it assigned to the relevant person. Once created, then autoforward can be configured in the account to send on incoming emails from this alias account to the relevant member's personal account. For many people, sending out from the alias account within Beacon and receiving by autoforward to their personal account is sufficient. Some may want access to the actual alias account. This of course can be arranged by sharing the relevant password.

See Appendix 1 for some specific learnings or tips for this option and Appendix 2 for the gmail specific instructions for setting up autoforwarding. You can actually set up gmail to autoforward to more than one person – but it's a bit tricker than just to one person. If the primary person is on holiday then adding a second to cover over the holiday period can be useful.

5. LEARNINGS

While there might be 'pros' for using alias addresses, there are also 'cons'. It needs someone to create and manage these email accounts. This means, for example, central password management – which then means either the webmaster or another volunteer is needed (or it is added to an existing role). For users it means they need to be prepared to have multiple email accounts on their devices.

It needs to be remembered that, whichever form of alias email is used, they will generally also be used in conjunction with autoforwarding to a person's personal email address. Therefore for replying, you should not click on 'Reply' as then the reply will be coming from your personal email address. Instead you need to reply from the alias account.

If you hear complaints that the autoforwarded alias emails are not reaching the person's personal email address, ask them to check their spam/junk folder. Often initially it goes there (due to the nature of the address). If they add the alias address to their Contacts, this won't then happen for future autoforwarded emails.

6. REFERENCE MATERIAL

For more information on alias email accounts, look on the internet for example here:

https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=alias+email+accounts#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:e352bcde,vid:J7uGUD9kprs

7. CONTACT POINT

If you need further explanation of the material in this Guide please contact:
webmaster.londonregionu3a@gmail.com

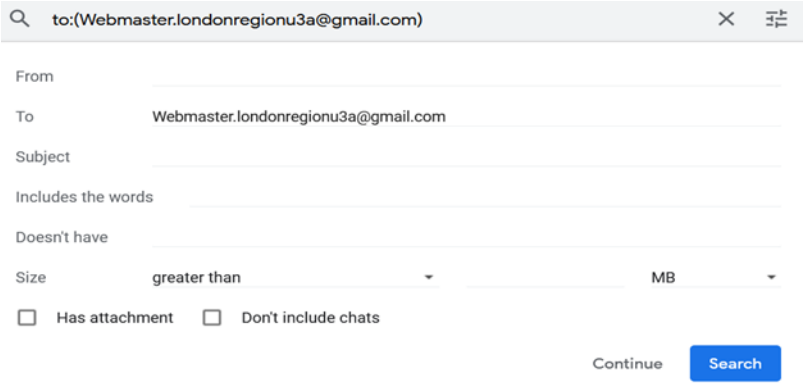
APPENDIX 1 – TIPS IN SETTING UP GMAIL ADDRESSES

1. The Committee wanted the alias email addresses to be independent (ie separate from domain or Sitebuilder provided addresses). Therefore I set them all up in Gmail.
2. The email addresses need to be kept as short as possible. Helps people spell them correctly.
3. During set up, they had to be authenticated by mobile phone. This is easy if one person is doing the set up but can be tricky if you are setting up for someone else.
4. Make the passwords simple and easy to remember. Ask users not to change them, so we could pass them on to the next Committee member, or to let you know if they do need to change it.
5. You can have multiple email accounts linked to your personal email which means you don't need to remember to look at a second email address. However watch which email address you are then sending from, make sure you select the alias email account.
6. We had some trouble in changing over as Gmail sent alert messages that someone had tried to open our emails. You can then confirm that the activity is ok – then the new users device is recognised and the alerts should stop.

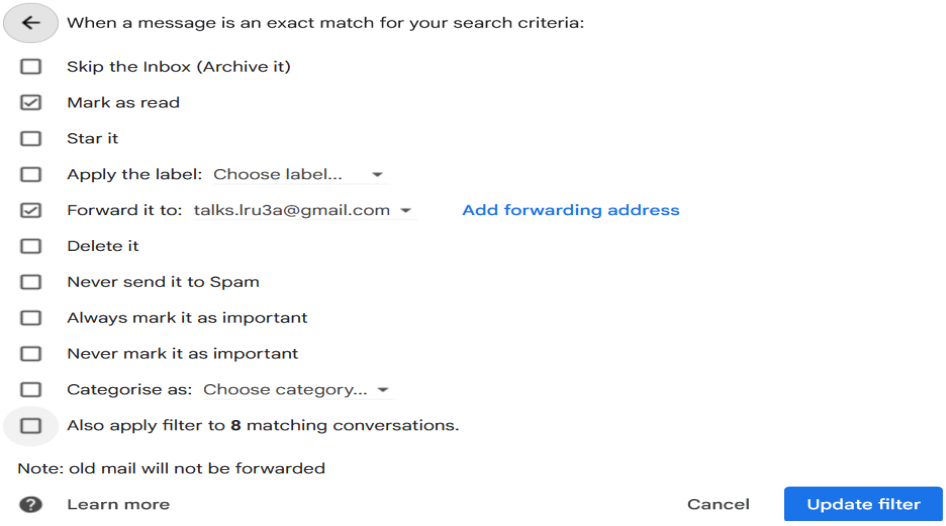
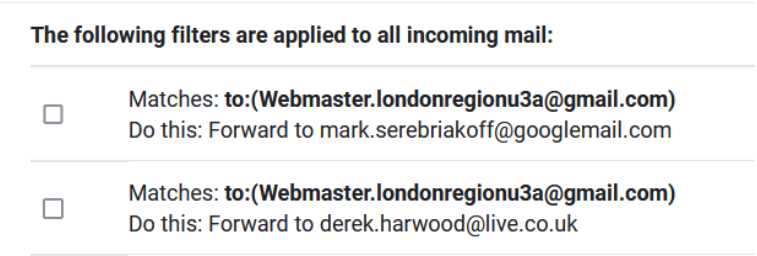
APPENDIX 2 – GMAIL FORWARDING INSTRUCTIONS

To set up autoforwarding of a Group's gmail account other Coordinators personal email address: first of all, set up an new gmail account. Add this to the 'Passwords' file. Once the new gmail account is opened, go to Settings, then Forwarding, and select Forward To. You'll need to warn the Coordinator that a google link has been sent to them requesting permission of use of their personal email address.

Forward to multiple accounts: To forward emails to multiple accounts, use the following steps. Before you start setting up the Filter do the above process for the 2nd person (ie get their permission to forward on). Use 'Filters'. Set up the 'To' as the account you are setting the filter in (ie it's incoming 'To', not forwarding 'To'). Leave 'From' blank. Then click 'continue' (or 'create filter') tab at the bottom.



You've then got an extensive options listing here. You don't need most of them.



Tick on 'Forward it to' and add here the email address you ae forwarding to. You can click on 'as read' as well. At the bottom of the window, click Create filter. You can do this multiple times, set up multiple filters, to send on to multiple people. Under the Forwarding setting you should see the two options – the autoforwarding method and the filter method, eg: