

U3A Group Leaders Handbook (January 2022)

Helpful information for new Group Leaders

The success of Mawdesley u3a is largely down to the willingness of members to set up and run a range of groups. If you are considering starting up an activity then here are a number of points which may prove helpful.

1. New Group Ideas

Please discuss your idea with the Group Co-ordinator or any member of the Committee. You may also find it useful to discuss it with other Group Leaders, many of whom would be more than willing to offer guidance and answer your questions.

2. Determining Numbers

It is useful to ask for expressions of interest before undertaking too much preliminary work. This can be done by:

- 2a. Making an announcement at the Wednesday Community Morning.
- 2b. Putting a signing up sheet on the table by the notice board.
- 2c. Sending a general email via Beacon or putting a notice in the Newsletter
- 2d. Offering a taster session as a Pop Up (Contact via the Pop-Up webpage)

NB: It is advisable not to give people too many choices when it comes to offering a date and time, otherwise the whole process can become unmanageable.

3. Financial Matters

- 3a. Ideally, each group is self-funding, so monies collected (subs) should cover all costs such as room hire, refreshments, replacement equipment, etc.
- 3b. Group Leaders are asked to keep a register of attendance and monies are generally collected at the beginning of the session. A copy of this record should be handed to the Treasurer, together with any monies received and receipts for any purchases.
- 3c. Copies of signing in sheets are available on a Wednesday morning and on the Groups page of our website.
- 3d. Capital expenditure above £25 should be discussed with the Treasurer.
- 3e. In some instances, a new group may require additional start-up funds and any such request should be discussed with the Chair and/or Treasurer.
- 3f. The Treasurer will provide a regular balance sheet to each group leader.

4. Venues

4a. If you are hoping to use Mawdesley Village Hall (MVH), then please check their website to find a vacant slot.

Contact details for Gurby, the finance manager

Email mvh.finances@gmail.com

MVH phone number is 01704 822309

Mobile 07850 606168

4b. Other venues to consider include the following.

A list giving further information and contact details can be found on the Groups page of the website.

Mawdesley Methodist Hall St Peter's Parish Rooms Bowling Club	Croston Methodist Church Hall Old School, Community Centre	Eccleston Bateman Hall St Agnes Church Hall St Mary's Church Hall The Hub
Parbold Village Hall Women's Institute	Hilldale Village Hall	Rufford Village Hall
Bretherton Church Hall	Much Hoole Village Hall	Wrightington St James Church Hall
Heskin Village Hall	Ulnes Walton Village Hall	

We also use several sports venues, local cafes and restaurants, including Cedar Farm.

It is up to individual groups to book directly with the venue and the approved invoice should be passed to the Treasurer for payment.

5. Group Membership

5a. Groups are open to any member of Mawdesley u3a, subject to venue capacity. If a group is full, then a waiting list is usually opened and if numbers are sufficient, a second group can be set up.

5b. Activities are ONLY open to members of Mawdesley u3a and members who are interested in joining a group may contact the Group Leader and arrange one taster session.

6. Organising a Visit

6a. There are a number of established groups regularly running both day trips and holidays.

6b. Please note that if you intend planning a trip which is to be open to ALL members rather than just those in the group, then it is important discuss your proposal with a committee member and to liaise with the Social Group. This way we can avoid duplication and hopefully ensure adequate numbers to make the visit viable.

6c. Once a date has been set then please put this in the appropriate diary on the Signing in Table and contact the Webpage Editor so that it can go on the website.

6d. As a general rule, monies paid are non-refundable, unless the visit is cancelled.

7. Group Management

7a. Each Group should have a nominated leader or co-ordinator who will undertake the organisation of group activities.

7b. In addition, it is useful to have one or more 'deputy leaders' to assist if the group leader is unavailable.

7c. Group Leaders can add and remove members from their group and should make every effort to ensure that the list of members is accurate. Any change to members' details should be passed to the Membership Secretary so that Beacon can be updated accordingly.

7d. The Group Leader should use the Beacon system for managing and communicating with group members. This ensures that all communications comply with u3a policies and Data Protection law. The system is very easy to use and the Beacon Administrator will provide the necessary training and guidance.

7e. Support and guidance is available from

- The Groups Coordinator
- National Subject Advisers, who can be contacted via the National u3a website.
- National organisations eg: Pickleball England

8. Using an External Tutor

8a. In some instances, expertise may not be available within the group and an external tutor could be the only viable option.

8b. Paid Tutors should confirm that they are self-employed. They also require Professional Indemnity Insurance, and a copy of the Insurance should be passed to the Treasurer.

8c. Payments. The Group Leader will need to discuss with the tutor how often and by what means he/she is to be paid.

9. Health and Safety

9a. The Group Leader should be familiar with the fire exit(s) and fire precautions for the venue being used.

9b. Group Leaders are asked to familiarise themselves with the location of the first-aid facilities/box and accident book.

9c. Any accidents should be recorded in the appropriate accident book. These should be available at all the venues we currently use. If items from the first aid box are used, then this should be noted in the accident book so that they can be replaced.

9d. If an accident occurs and there is no accident book available, then details (date, time, names, a brief description of what occurred and outcome) should be recorded in the diary which is on the signing in table on a Wednesday morning.

10. Sharing Success

Once the group is up and running, why not share your success:

- A slide on the Community Morning PowerPoint presentation
- Text for the u3a Website – this can also be useful for communicating and updates.
- An article for our newsletter and/or the u3a Magazine.

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