

Ringmer u3a Governance Procedures and Practices

Introduction

The controls and procedures outlined in this document complement the Constitution for Ringmer u3a as approved by the Annual General Meeting held on 16 May 2018. This edition was approved by the Executive Committee at a meeting on 18 October 2023. The aim of this document is to assist Executive Committee members and Convenors with their responsibilities as outlined in the Constitution.

General

As a member of the Third Age Trust Ringmer u3a agrees to do the following:

1. Adhere to the guiding principles of the u3a movement.
2. Encourage and enable older people no longer in full time paid employment to help each other to share their knowledge, skills, interests and experience.
3. Promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging to a u3a.
4. Do all it can to ensure that people wanting to join a u3a can do so.
5. Commit to the furtherance of fair treatment and the absence of discrimination in all our activities and strive to achieve a membership which reflects our local community.

Finance

1. All funds belong to Ringmer u3a and not to any specific interest group. We should try to keep cash payments to a minimum. No member should hold cash to a value greater than £500
2. u3a cheques require 2 signatures.
3. Any money collected should, whenever possible, be paid by cheque to "u3a Ringmer" if the value is greater than £10. Annual membership fees should be paid by cheque, cash, credit card or directly into the bank.
4. Payment for the hire of any premises or transport must be by u3a cheque from the Treasurer or, when approved by the committee, payment can be made directly from the bank. Groups that hire premises should pass any money to the Treasurer every four months or at the end of a series of meetings (i.e., March, July, November/December).
5. Interest Groups and Courses must be self-funding and cannot reclaim any running expenses from the u3a Treasurer. Depending on the circumstances, grants may be approved by the committee, for instance, in helping set up a new group.
6. National u3a discourages the use of personal credit cards because of the lack of trustee control and the potential risk should a supplier go into administration. It is possible that only the proportion of the payment pertaining to the individual would be covered rather than the full debt. Members must bear this in mind when making any payments on behalf of u3a and wherever possible such payments should be made by u3a cheque. In such circumstances individual cheques must be collected by the Group Convenor and passed to the Treasurer with a covering note before a cheque for the total amount can be arranged. Prior notice must be given to the Treasurer of any such events. The use of a personal credit card may be the only way of payment, as Ringmer doesn't have a Credit Card. A personal credit card can be used with the committee's approval.
7. Members cannot be paid for their u3a work, but they can claim legitimate expenses that they incur on Ringmer u3a business. No-one should authorise their own claim. Such

claims must be approved in advance by the Executive Committee. The normal refund for certain expenses will be as follows:

- a. Car Mileage Allowance: Where a member needs to use their car on official Ringmer u3a business the normal refund for fuel will be that published by the Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) as the approved rate.
 - b. Where a member needs to print material for u3a business the normal refund will be the figure published by Ringmer Parish Council for Photocopying (A4 single sheet).
8. Where members are likely to incur legitimate u3a expenditure they must inform the Treasurer in advance and, once agreed, produce an invoice or receipt with their claim.
 9. All payments must be supported by an invoice or receipt, except where it is unreasonable to expect this, for example, where very small amounts are claimed.
 10. The Ringmer u3a Financial Year will run from 1 April to 31 March and all financial records must be kept for a minimum of 6 years. The Treasurer will maintain the overall record of income and expenditure which will be independently examined and then presented to the Annual General Meeting. The Convenor of any group that has a turnover in excess of the cost of light refreshments (i.e., tea, coffee, etc) must maintain a financial record. They must produce a short annual summary of income and expenditure on 31 March each year and pass a copy to the Chairman and Treasurer.
 11. Car sharing is encouraged. The driver should receive some form of contribution towards petrol costs. Where possible members should take it in turn to use their car. National u3a advice is that members can offer lifts to other members and accept money towards petrol costs without compromising their car insurance policy. If in doubt the driver should check their own policy terms with their insurer. It is a matter for each Interest Group to decide the most appropriate arrangements for them.

Personal Data

1. The personal data held about members will only be shared with committee members and convenors and then only on a need to know basis. Ringmer u3a's use of personal data is regulated by the General Data Protection Regulation. Ringmer u3a has set out how it collects, stores and processes personal data in its Privacy and Data Protection Policies, available on its website.
2. Personal data must only be used for u3a purposes and never shared outside of u3a.

Communications

1. Communication with members who have access to the internet will be by email, unless they opt otherwise. Members who do not have access to the internet will receive a printed version of the Newsletter.
2. A "Newsletter" will be published prior to the Autumn, Spring and Summer Terms. These will outline the activities for that period and report on any matters of general interest for the preceding period. Convenors are encouraged to let the Newsletter Editor have pictures and short reports on their activities.
3. Between Newsletters the Executive Committee may circulate an "E-Bulletin", by email, containing any important information. Interest Group Convenors are asked to let non-email members know the contents. This can be done during any meetings.
4. An email to more than one member should be by "Blind Copy" unless those members have agreed otherwise. Email communication between committee members and convenors will not normally be by "Blind Copy".

5. Maintain the Ringmer u3a website as a key source of information on our group activities and to promote our contribution to the local community.
6. Essential documents will be placed on our website for access by members.

Insurance

1. As Ringmer u3a is a fully paid up member of The Third Age Trust it has the benefit of the nationally provided Public & Products Liability Insurance cover, as well as a number of other policies. These other policies include money cover, all risks equipment insurance and home contents cover for damage to the property of any u3a members whilst their home is being used to host a u3a meeting. Needless to say, that insurance is a complicated issue and full details are available on the u3a web site.
2. This u3a insurance does not remove the need for members to have their own home, contents and car insurance, where appropriate. As house owners/occupiers we all have a duty of care to people who visit our property and that remains at all times. However, this u3a insurance does provide cover for members, and particularly Convenors, when involved in u3a activities. Under these policies there is no formal requirement to carry out risk assessments for any/all of our activities, but the Trust has prepared a set of checklists covering outside venues, walking and workshop activities which we can use. In all cases, however, common sense is the best judge.
3. The attendance of non-members is covered by the insurance as long as it does not continue indefinitely. The Executive Committee has approved non-members attending on an occasional basis and this is to be monitored by the appropriate Interest Group Convenor. Any non-member who wishes to attend more regularly must enrol to do so.
4. Any Interest Group Convenor or member who has insurance questions should direct them to the Chairman, Treasurer or Secretary. Likewise, should an accident occur, this must be reported to the Chairman, Treasurer or Secretary as soon as possible so that the u3a accident form can be completed.

Membership

1. Membership runs on an annual basis from 1 September. Enrolment for the year will take place in August and the process is given at Appendix 1.
2. Group Convenors are responsible for maintaining a current list of their Interest Group membership and informing the Interest Group Co-ordinator of any changes to that list.
3. Non-members can attend a meeting (interest group or general) on an occasional basis and this is to be monitored by the appropriate Interest Group Convenor. Any non-member who wishes to attend more regularly must enrol as a u3a member.
4. Waiting lists are regrettably inevitable particularly with popular interest groups. Every effort must be made to create a new group where there are sufficient numbers and a volunteer convenor. Waiting lists must be reviewed a minimum of 3 times a year (i.e., at the start of each term).

u3a PLUS - Accessibility

1. u3a PLUS helps and advises u3as on how to ensure that all members, able-bodied, impaired, and disabled alike, can take full advantage of their membership. With a little effort

and thought we can help more of our members and potential members to access our activities.

2. When we arrange meetings and events, we must consider the advice given by u3a PLUS (<https://plus.u3a.org.uk/>) and take appropriate action where possible. As we mainly meet in members' homes, we must have reasonable expectations of what we can do.

Appendix: 1. Ringmer u3a Enrolment Process

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Date	Committee	Convenors	All	Action
By 1 July		Convenors		Inform Newsletter Editor and Interest Group Coordinator of Interest Group dates for September, October, November & December. Also, any articles/photos about activities.
By 24 July	Membership Secretary			Provide Newsletter Editor and Webmaster with enrolment form.
By 1 August			All	Contact your Convenor if you wish to remain with an Interest Group. Do the same for each group you belong to.
By 1 August		Convenors		Compile list of existing members that wish to remain with your group and update Beacon.
3 weeks before Open Day	Newsletter Editor			Publish Autumn Newsletter with details of Interest Groups for following year. Attach Enrolment Form with Newsletter.
On receipt of Autumn Newsletter			All	Contact Convenor to join an Interest Group. Do the same for each group you wish to join. Complete Enrolment Form and forward with a cheque to the Membership Secretary as soon as possible.
Open Day	Committee	Convenors	All	Attend Open Day to speak to Convenors or Committee members. Return Enrolment Form and cheque if not done.
Post Open Day	Membership Secretary			Information on enrolment forms recorded on Beacon. Enrolment forms to be scanned, stored in encrypted form and the original shredded. Cheques and cash given to Treasurer for banking. Revise enrolment form to remove reference to Diary and provide Newsletter Editor and Webmaster with copies.
September	Membership Secretary			Advise Committee members and Convenors when the Beacon database has been updated to reflect enrolment.
September		Convenors		Update Beacon with Group membership, if necessary, using the waiting list functionality. Warn the Interest Group Co-ordinator if there are members on the waiting list.
October	Groups Coordinator			Contact New groups Co-ordinator and attempt to form a new group if there are sufficient members on the waiting list.
Throughout year		Convenors		Contact members on the waiting list if a vacancy becomes available. Update your group on Beacon.
October	Committee			Discuss any membership issues at Executive Committee meeting.