

Skiddaw U3A

Information for Convenors

"Interest groups are the life blood of the U3A" (National Office leaflet)

Thank you for agreeing to become one of Skiddaw U3A's Interest Group convenors. You are playing a vital role and we appreciate the gifts of your time and energy. We hope the following information is useful. Please get back to us with suggestions on how to improve.

Your Executive Committee members can be found on the Skiddaw u3a website under the EC members tab.

In case of problems with starting or running a group, your first points of contact is the Groups Co-ordinator email :- groupscoordinator@skiddawu3a.co.uk

1. MEMBERSHIP

(a) Please ask all group members to confirm that they are *members of Skiddaw U3A* by showing their membership cards at the first meeting after our renewal date 30th November.

(b) For Associate Members (indicated by an 'A' on their membership card) you should also ask to see the membership card from their parent U3A. Please make a note of the expiry date of their membership and ask to see their parent U3A membership card again at the first meeting following this date.

(c) Please keep a *list of group members' names, their contact details and details of an emergency contact.* It's a practical idea to make sure that *one other person in the group besides you* also has access to the names and contact details.

2. FINANCE

Under Charity Commission regulations, anything done under the auspices of U3A has to be accountable. All activities, especially financial activities, must be visible.

2.1 Establishing Costs and Accounting:

2.1.1. You are responsible for the group's finances, although you may prefer to delegate the role of Treasurer to another member of the group.

2.1.2. The group decides the level of expenditure and charges (not the Executive Committee), and the group will account for itself. Each group must complete a simple financial return once per year **by end of February.** A reminder will be sent to each group and completed forms should be sent to the Treasurer

2.1.3. No group convenor should ever be out of pocket as a result of running a group. It is important that groups' members are not inadvertently led to expect that venues, refreshments and/or equipment will be provided free of charge. Groups should be set up on a proper financial basis. Be **REALISTIC** about your costs and charge what it costs you to run the Group.

2.1.4. Unless you convene a Group such as an outdoor activity group where money only changes hands for transport, please keep a **Register of attendees** with an accompanying note of all monies received from each member.

2.1.5. If your Group meets in members' houses, members of the group should be expected to make a contribution towards the cost of refreshments, where these are provided. 50p per person is the usual amount, although you may wish to increase this to cover the costs of printing, photocopying etc

2.1.6. All costs should be shown on the Group Accounting form. Refreshments must now be included but costs may be estimated. Please keep all receipts for other items of group expenditure.

2.1.7. Members using their own equipment for printing should be reimbursed out of monies collected from the group as follows:

- 5p per side for black and white and 10p per side for colour

2.1.8 If you collect more money than you spend, simply show the surplus on the Accounting Form. (See point **2.4** below about managing surpluses.)

2.1.9. Members of other U3As who attend our groups should pay the same as other members of the group

2.1.10. Parties, trips and social events are separate from the normal accounting. You don't need to account for this kind of expenditure to the Treasurer.

2.2 Hiring village halls and other premises:

2.2.1. New Groups: If you're meeting your Group for the first time, hire the venue for one meeting and divide the cost between the people who have indicated that they are attending this first meeting. If fewer people than expected attend and you have a shortfall in the money received, then apply to the Skiddaw U3A Treasurer to cover this. **NB this only applies to the first meeting of a new group.**

2.2.2. If the Group decides to go ahead, explain that you will block book the venue for 6/7 weeks, divide the cost between the number of members and inform the group that each member should pay the relevant amount at the next meeting they attend.

2.2.3. Existing groups: If your Group meets in a venue such as a village hall where you must pay rent, advise each member **IN ADVANCE** about their share of the rent and collect this at the first meeting. It is advisable to block book the venue for periods of 6/7 weeks, rather than for a whole term.

2.2.4. If new members appear in subsequent weeks, charge **them the same as those who have attended from the start** and explain that any surplus made will be used **EITHER** to reduce the cost of the next block booking **OR** to buy equipment/ books etc. The decision about what to do with surplus money should be a democratic

decision though the Convenor might choose to give advice. **KEEP EVERYTHING TRANSPARENT AND OPEN.**

2.2.5. Members who are absent from some Group meetings or stop attending should not be given a refund. Explain that the costs are the same whether they attend or not. This is normal practice for all Continuing or Further Education classes and it is a Skiddaw U3A policy agreed by the Executive Committee.

2.3. Transport Costs:

2.3.1. It is the policy of the U3A to encourage the sharing of cars and the sharing of the costs of travel. Based on the distance travelled, we recommend that each passenger pays the driver as follows:

00-20 miles = £3

21-40 miles = £4

41-60 miles = £5

61-80 miles = £6

80-100 miles = £7

Payments made directly to drivers do not need to be included in the Group account

2.4. Bank Accounts:

2.4.1. Groups may not open bank accounts for their group finances. If a group builds up surpluses or reserves for special activities (such as an outside speaker) and you are not comfortable with keeping that reserve, then you can give it to the Skiddaw U3A Treasurer who will hold it on behalf of your group.

2.4.2. DO NOT USE A PERSONAL BANKING ACCOUNT FOR GROUP FUNDS. This is to protect you from any accusations of fraud or from any unpleasantness which might arise in relation to money.

2.4.3. It is permitted for members to write their own cheques for agreed group expenses or to use their own debit or credit card. Sometimes this is the most efficient or only way of paying. In such cases, **the person paying must obtain a receipt** and then request the Group Convenor/Treasurer to reimburse the expense.

2.5 Income from sales and donations:

2.5.1. Money collected by a group from sale of produce etc. can ONLY be donated to another charity if that charity shares the same purposes as the U3A. Such donations must always be checked with Executive Committee beforehand.

2.6 Equipment and materials:

2.6.1. Equipment/durables are bought by group members for their activities. Generally, it is accepted that items costing £25 or less (maps, books, CDs, consumables) belong to the group but larger and/or more costly items (eg camera, table tennis table, recording equipment) become part of Skiddaw U3A assets.

The Treasurer's contact details are: email treasurer@skiddawu3a.co.uk

3. INSURANCE:

3.1. You are insured against legal liability for accidental injury and death, and accidental loss or damage to property not belonging to you, which arises in connection with the business of the U3A.

3.2 If you want details of the insurance cover, there is document called 'Insurance' which can be downloaded from www.u3a.org.uk following the links for Members area home page and reference documents or telephone 020-8466 6139. The Groups Co-ordinator also has a copy.

3.3. U3A insurance is still in place whether activities are held in people's homes or in hired premises (See note 6 below about insurance and hired premises.)

4. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

4.1 All convenors should check the public liability insurance and public performance licences of all the premises they hire.

4.2. If you use a public venue, check that they have an **up to date Health and Safety Risk Assessment document** in place. Again, this is for the protection of all of us.

4.3 If you use any portable equipment, **especially electrical equipment**, check with Ted McArdle concerning inspection and testing.

Ted can be contacted on equipment@skiddawu3a.co.uk

4.4 Walk & cycle ride leaders should recce the walk/ride first so that they can give everyone who enquires information about the distance, terrain, height, level of fitness required etc. Members can then make a sensible decision about whether or not to sign up. On the day itself, brief members on the route, known hazards and emergency arrangements. Be prepared to advise inadequately equipped members not to go. Appoint a back marker. The walk/ride leader should stay at the front and try to ensure that they can see the back marker. Check regularly that the group is coping with the pace.

5. COMMUNICATION:

5.1 Keep an up to date **list of members** with their contact details. Make sure at least one other person in the group has a copy of the list.

5.2 Consider forming a **telephone 'tree'** to get information out to group members who are not on email.

5.3 Send items for the **Newsletter** to the Editor on newsletter@skiddawu3a.co.uk or contact the Groups Co-ordinator who will pass on material.

5.4 Encourage members to attend **Monthly Meetings**.

5.5 Consider utilising the Monthly Meetings to inform other U3A people about **your group's activities** – photos, exhibitions, displays are all most welcome.

6. LOAN OF AUDIO-VISUAL HARDWARE:

6.1 Ted McArdle, now operates an equipment loan system so you can borrow a range of kit to enhance presentations or record activities. Contact details above. Because Ted isn't at home all the time, kit should be ordered well in advance of its need when arrangements for pick-up and return can be finalised. A simple sign-out – sign-in system is in operation.

6.2 As some equipment is complex to use, Ted has produced a series of Youtube instructional videos. Please contact Ted McArdle for details.

6.3 Please note: Some of the equipment has been donated or loaned long term to Skiddaw U3A. If any members have redundant AV kit that they would like to donate to us for the common good, it will be gratefully received and cherished.

6.4 A list of some of the equipment currently available can be found in appendix A. Please contact Ted for details.

7. SUPPORTING CONVENORS:

7.1. To help convenors discuss convenient meeting times with their group members, the **Diary** is updated monthly and is available on our website.

Hard copies of the above are sent to members without internet access on a bimonthly basis, together with the Newsletter.

7.2 A list of **Venues** for hire is available on our website. Hard copies are available at Monthly Meetings. Please advise the Groups Coordinator of any changes or additions

7.3 General information for members is included on the membership card. In addition, a summary of the key points contained in this document will also be available to group members

7.4 Convenors' meetings are held annually. Please tell us what you want to discuss at the next meeting by contacting the Groups Co-ordinator. There will be an opportunity to submit agenda items online, of course.

7.5. If an issue arises which needs a response from the Committee during the course of the year, please do not hesitate to contact any of us.

FINALLY, THANK YOU AGAIN FOR YOUR COMMITMENT AND HARD WORK.

Appendix A

Equipment available includes:

Sony Data Projector; Projector Screen;
Assortment of multi gang extension leads;
35 W Audio Amplifier and Speaker for sound reinforcement;
Audio Technica Radio Mics x 2 for sound reinforcement;
Wired Mics x 2 (hand held mics – no mic stands as yet);
Genee Vision 2100 Visualiser; 'Zoom' Multitrack Digital Audio Recorder; '
Zoom' high quality handheld digital stereo recorder;
Canon 'Legria' digital video camera;
'Flip' basic HD mini camcorder;
Photographic lighting heads and stands x 2.
Cable protectors

See our website for full details of all equipment.

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