

Guidance for Group Leaders and Secretaries

Introduction

These notes have been prepared to help Group Leaders and Secretaries with the vital tasks of keeping the groups running smoothly. Please feel free at all times to raise issues, air problems, make suggestions, or ask for help or guidance from the Groups Coordinator.

If there are any significant changes or difficulties affecting your group please inform the Groups Coordinator by email.

Please appoint a deputy Group Leader/Secretary. If this is not possible, please arrange for another member of the group to take over your responsibilities in your absence.

Data protection

We have all experienced rogue emails with the objective being to try to hack into our computers. If hackers successfully obtain data of u3a members stored on your computer, Farnborough and District u3a could be held in breach of data regulations.

It is therefore important that members' email addresses are not stored on personal computers unless you hold unambiguous written consent of such members to do so. This is a requirement of GDPR. (General Data Protection Regulations).

You must only send emails to group members via the Beacon system. This makes it unnecessary to store other members' email addresses on your computer and ensures that the email address of a u3a member is not disclosed to any other member.

Some smaller groups may be content for mutual exchanging of personal data, but no pressure should be applied to any member to participate in any such exchange and the agreement of all members involved is required for this to take place.

Visitors and prospective members

Visitors and prospective members are able to attend 2 taster sessions of 3 different activities, subject to the agreement of paid tutors where applicable, after which they are asked to join our u3a before continuing with any more of our activities. Please inform the Groups Coordinator of any such visitors to your group so that we can ensure that these taster invitations are not being abused.

Registers

Each Group Leader / Secretary should keep a Group Attendance Register. The register should contain the name, u3a Membership Number and contact phone number for each member of the group.

Group Leaders who use Beacon will be able to check the subscription status of their members, and add new members to, or remove members from their group as necessary. Leaders will be asked to update their group member list during the penultimate week of every term, preferably on Beacon if possible, when the treasurer will be calculating the additional tutor and venue fees for the following term.

If as a Group Leader you are not able to use Beacon, you can appoint a co-Leader to be set up on the system to maintain your group's details. Please contact the Groups Coordinator for assistance.

Additional group fees

If additional venue and/or tutor fees apply, please notify your group members at the start of each term. These fees are paid termly and are not refundable apart from rare occurrences where either a venue or a tutor is unavailable following which a suitable adjustment will be made to the fees for the following term. It is preferred that payment is made by bank transfer so as to minimise our costs. Cheques should be made payable to u3a Farnborough.

For those Leaders not yet using Beacon, a list of paid-up members will be sent to you before the start of the autumn term and you will be able to use this as the attendance register. Please keep this list up to date by deleting members who do not attend and adding new members as and when they join your group. To check whether a member is registered, please ask for their membership number.

Registered Charity: 1025969

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If the status of a member is not clear then please check with the Membership Secretary.

Registers are necessary in the case of an emergency, such as after a fire alarm to ensure everyone is safe or, in the event of an unusual illness, so that all members can be contacted (e.g. Covid).

Please ensure that any changes concerning members, especially bereavement, are made known to the Membership Secretary.

Controlling the size of your group

Beacon allows Leaders or Secretaries to limit the size of the group where necessary, and to create a waiting list.

It is for the Leader and Secretary to ensure that, as far as possible, all members can take part in the activities of your group. It is recognised that the size of some groups does have to be limited for safety and practical reasons. If it is necessary in your view to close your group to new members, then, before doing so, please let a member of the committee know so that they can investigate the possibility of starting a new group or, if the limitation is due to venue size, an alternative venue can be sought.

Cancelled meetings

If a group meeting is cancelled, the Group Leader/Secretary should:

- Advise group members about the cancellation in an email via Beacon at the earliest possible opportunity (even if the cancellation is at the last minute).
- Copy the email to the following Committee members:
 - o Groups@u3afarnborough.org.uk
 - o Venues@u3afarnborough.org.uk
 - o Treasurer@u3afarnborough.org.uk

This will allow the committee to know when refunds should be sought from booked venues or professional tutors. If cancellation is frequent, there may need to be consideration about whether a group is viable or should meet less frequently. This procedure should help us to make the best possible use of u3a funds without adding any significant burden to the workload of Group Leaders/Secretaries.

Costs and Expenses

Members of groups such as Wine Appreciation and Creating Cards will continue to share costs of ingredients, wine and materials.

Costs incurred in producing photocopies and/or computer-generated documents for your particular group should be met by the group participants on a shared basis.

Some other expenses may be claimed from the Treasurer, using the claim form (copies available in the Documents section of the website).

Please contact the Treasurer for advice prior to purchase.

Visits, study trips, study weeks

Leaders and Secretaries are encouraged to arrange visits which are appropriate to the group's activities. These will need to be self-funded. For small groups it may be possible to hire a minibus through Rushmoor Voluntary Services, 01252 540162 or email info@rvs.org.uk.

Organisers should inform the Committee Secretary and Treasurer as soon as a visit is planned, with details of the date.

Our u3a can act as banker for such activities. This is especially important when the sums are large, to ensure that records are properly maintained, and that money can be accessed without relying on a single individual.

Payment by bank transfer is preferred. Members should be asked to send monies to our u3a bank account with a reference that includes both their u3a membership number and the appropriate activity code (as notified by the Treasurer to the Leader). Please contact the Treasurer for the bank details. Any cheques collected from members should be forwarded to the Treasurer, listing names and membership numbers.

The organiser should inform the Treasurer of any payments relating to the visit including date payment required, payee details and any required reference. Such requests should ideally be made at least one week prior to the required payment date.

Members should be advised that they are responsible for themselves when on a visit. If assistance is required, other members of the u3a on the trip can offer to help, but if a carer or assistant is required then the member should arrange this. Please contact the Groups Coordinator if you need to discuss issues around carers or assistants.

Newsletter

Short items to promote your group are always welcomed by the editor of the newsletter.

Activities outside the u3a schedule

Many groups organise social activities amongst themselves outside the group's usual programme. These include lunches, dinners and coffee meetings. These are encouraged as the social side of this u3a is considered important. These activities are to be self-funded and are outside the u3a. The Treasurer will not need to be involved.

In Case of Emergencies (ICE)

Members of walking and cycling groups who do not meet at a venue should complete and carry an ICE card. These are also available for groups going on study trips. The cards can be requested from the Groups Coordinator. To read our policy on Members with Disabilities and Additional Needs, please see the documents page.

Incidents/Accidents/Damage

In the event of an incident, accident, or damage occurring during a group activity, it is the responsibility of the Group Leader, if present, or other member, to complete an Incident Form at the earliest opportunity. Incidents forms can be found in the documents page of the website. The form can be completed electronically or printed off and filled in manually. When complete the form must be sent to the Committee Secretary (secretary@u3afarnborough.org.uk).