

BECOMING A GROUP LEADER

Your decision to become a group leader is greatly appreciated by your Committee. All groups are different, but each one needs a leader, convener, facilitator - whichever name you prefer - to act as the main contact with the Groups Coordinator, Treasurer and of course group members. **However, once established, responsibilities within the group can be shared.**

Starting a group

Contact the Groups Coordinator who will set up a contact page for you on the website and on BEACON (see below)

Provide a statement about the group for the website. This should include:

- Title of the group
- Aims of the group
- Venue and times (in the first instance this may be "TBA")

Timing

Look at the Latest Group Timetable on the website to see when other Groups are meeting

Once you have enough members to start your group, you need to:

Find a venue in a private home?
 in hired premises?

If an outdoor activity meeting point?
 length of activity?
 equipment needed?

Private home - Who will host the group?

Consider how many people can be accommodated in the host's home. Will refreshments be provided by the host? If yes, members should pay a nominal sum to cover the host's expenses

Hired premises

There is a list of premises available on the U3A website or you can ask the Groups Coordinator for suggestions. Things to consider:

- **Availability** - which day? morning or afternoon? how many hours?
- **Cost** - groups are expected to be self-financing and you will need enough group members to share the cost of hire. This is important.
- **Facilities** - it's a good idea to check these out beforehand, particularly for mobility access and toilets. You will be the main point of contact for the hirers.
- **Insurance** - All venues will require copy of the U3A's Public Liability insurance certificate - this can be downloaded from the website - or ask the Secretary to provide you with a copy.

Outdoor Activity

You will need a meeting point and duration time of the activity.

Most groups, particularly outdoor ones, need to provide a Risk Assessment. The Groups Co-ordinator should advise on the format for this.

Managing your group: Data protection/Register/Finances

Data protection:

EG U3A uses the BEACON platform which enables Group Leaders to securely manage members' membership and contact details and send emails BCC. This is very straightforward. Training is provided.

Register

You must keep an attendance register for each meeting. The main purpose is to ensure that everyone attending is a paid-up member and additionally to record how many people are turning up each time.

Finances

Each member will be required to contribute to the running of the group and all monies must be collected and forwarded to the Treasurer. Check with the Treasurer how this should be handled. Confirm before hiring, that the venues will agree to invoicing the EG Treasurer directly. You will have to provide the Treasurer contact details.

First meeting with your Group

Make sure everyone has all the details regarding venue, day and time. Agree some ground rules e.g:

- how group members will communicate with each other in light of data protection concerns
- expectations of the group; the level that the group will be aimed at (beginners, improvers, advanced); format - discussion? presentation? instruction?

Sharing Responsibilities

While the Group Leader is the main contact point, there is no reason why responsibilities cannot be shared. e.g.

- taking turns to host the group
- keeping the attendance register
- helping with IT tasks e.g. updating the web page / managing Beacon

We encourage all groups to have multiple members tagged as "leader" on Beacon which is very helpful when a leader is absent for any reason.

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