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## New Group Leader's Notes

These notes are to help anyone who is thinking of setting up a new interest group ("**Setting up a new Group?**" - page 2) or who takes on the leadership of an established group ("**Group Leader Responsibilities**" - page 3).

Contact information for the Risborough U3A committee etc. can be found in PReVIEW. Key contacts are the Treasurer, the editor of PReVIEW, the website editors, the Membership Secretary and the Group Leaders' Convenor.

## Setting up a new group?

### A new idea?

If you have an idea for a potential interest group, ask around to see if any others share your enthusiasm. It is a good idea to talk to a member of the committee or the Chair as they may know if it has been tried before. The Membership Secretary also asks new members what their interests are and may be able to point to possible interested parties.

Useful information is available on the U3A website ([www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)) including start-up leaflets in some subjects, online course materials and free study material (log in to the members area). There are also subject support specialists available to help with some subject areas. The U3A Resource Centre can also be contacted on 020 8315 0199. There are also online courses, study days and summer schools which may provide a stimulus for the group.

To promote the new group:

- Make use of PReVIEW as this goes to all members. The deadlines for copy are the end of July for the September edition and the end of January for March.
- Put a noticeboard in the clubroom - be sure you get it up early so you catch people as they come in.
- Speak at a monthly meeting to invite others to express interest.
- Put some information on to the website by contacting Michael George

Once you have some expressions of interest, set up an introductory meeting.

Most groups run for two hours with a break in the middle and they meet monthly on a specific day. Look through the monthly programme to identify a time slot that does not conflict with a popular group or likely similar interest. It is a good idea to select this for your introductory meeting as well.

At the introductory meeting, discuss how the group will run and what will be expected of members. As a potential leader, do not over-commit yourself, but decide how much time/expertise you will realistically be able to offer. Use this meeting to set some objectives for the group and find out the expertise among the members of the group as well as discussing the practicalities of when and where to meet and what it will cost per meeting. It is a good idea also to do a mini session relating to the subject if appropriate.

Many groups meet in the Club Room at the Community Centre. If the group becomes a Community Association member, the rate for room hire is much reduced. Small groups can use the Information Centre in Horns Lane, for which there is currently no charge. A few groups meet in other specific locations such as PR School, the Aylesbury record office, church hall etc.

Once the venue is booked you need to be prepared to arrive first and leave last and check arrangements for keys, refreshments and any other Health and Safety issues.

## **Group leader responsibilities**

### 1. Membership of the group

Keep a register of attendance at each meeting.

Do check that everyone is a fully paid up member of the U3A. Call the membership secretary if you are not sure. Take telephone numbers or e-mail so you can let people know of any last minute changes or just keep them in touch with what is going on if they have to miss a few sessions. Ask them to let you know if they cannot make a meeting or if they decide to leave the group.

Introduce new members and encourage them to integrate within the group.

Encourage everyone to take an active part in the group.

### 2. Continue to publicise the group

PREVIEW is produced twice a year and each group should have some information in there. It may be a general statement about what happens at the meetings or a list of the planned programme for the next few months.

Send information about the activities of your group to Tim Addison or Michael George to put on the website. This includes your future programme (which you will be able to update yourself in due course) and reports of past activities (which can include photographs). Provide information on your programme (especially any changes from any programme that has been published in PREVIEW) to Tim Addison to put on to the monthly activities list. This list is circulated at the monthly meeting, by other Group Leaders at their meetings and is placed in the information centre and the library.

Group Leader meetings are held twice a year and are an opportunity to discuss issues relating to group management and publicity.

Richard Baker produces a rolling one year ahead schedule of outings and trips so as to seek to ensure that Groups and the Social Committee do not arrange events that clash with each other. This is circulated by e-mail and can also be found on the website (Events -> Schedule)

### 3. Expenses

You need to keep a careful record of income and outgoings and retain receipts for any expenses incurred. Charges for the meetings should be appropriate - to cover refreshments, any materials, room hire, speaker fees etc. If there are set-up costs for a new group, then apply to the Treasurer who may be able to provide initial funding which you can repay from monthly subs.

You must report the balance to the Treasurer at the end of August and the end of February. Advice is available if required.

#### 4. Record of activities

It is useful to keep a record of what the group has done and feedback from members on speakers, activities, visits made or topics covered. This is not only helpful for you to plan future activities but also for whoever takes over from you as leader.

#### 5. Housekeeping

You are responsible for ensuring that the venue for meetings is booked and you need to be prepared to arrive first and leave last and check arrangements for keys, refreshments and any other Health and Safety issues.

If you use the Club Room at the Community Centre you should ensure that the group's Community Association membership is kept up to date so as to get the room at a reduced rate (this does not apply to the Carrington Room or Main Hall).

#### 6. Support for the wider group

All Groups are expected to make and serve the refreshments at the monthly meetings on a rota basis. (The rota can be found on the website under the Group Leader tab). The Group is also responsible for taking notes of the presentations and sending them to Tim Addison for the website.

Groups are asked to support various activities during the year, such as presentations at the AGM, meetings for new members and other internal events.

The U3A also supports some local activities such as the Risborough festival and group members are encouraged to help with these events.

Group leaders are responsible for ensuring that Associate Members in their Groups are kept informed of social events and other items that might be mentioned at the monthly meetings. They can remind members of the need for volunteers for such tasks as the chair rota or committee membership.

Leading a group can be both challenging and enjoyable, but above all it should provide an opportunity for learning about something in which you are interested.

3 October 2011