



STOKE-ON-TRENT SOUTH u3a

GROUPS CO-ORDINATOR

PAULINE WILLIAMS

TEL. 07928 628583

**(Please contact the Co-ordinator
if you require assistance with any
group related issue)**



STOKE-ON-TRENT SOUTH

GUIDE FOR GROUP LEADERS

Interest Groups

Thank you for agreeing to organise an interest group. We are sure you will find it very rewarding, however it might seem a bit daunting initially. This guide is intended to provide you with the necessary advice and support.

It is often said that interest groups are the life blood of the u3a, and each group will develop its own structure. However, it is important that your group follows the u3a ethos of shared, participative and self-help learning. The result will not only be an increase in knowledge, but a supportive and friendly atmosphere which enables everyone to participate.

The u3a ethos is based on three principles:

(1) The Third Age Principle:

- Membership of a u3a is open to all in their third age, defined as when their full-time employment has ceased.
- Members promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging to a u3a.
- Members should do all they can to encourage people to join the u3a.

(2) The Self-Help Learning Principle:

- Members form interest groups covering as wide a range of topics and activities as they desire.
- Learning is by the members, for the members.
- No qualifications are sought or offered. Learning is for its own sake, with enjoyment being the prime motive, not qualifications or awards.
- There is no distinction between the learners and the leaders. Everyone is regarded as an equal u3a member.

(3) The Mutual Aid Principle:

- Each u3a is a mutual aid organisation, operationally independent but a member of the Third Age Trust, which requires adherence to the u3a movement.
- No payments are made to members for services to any u3a.
- Each u3a is self-funded with membership subscriptions kept as low as possible.
- Outside financial assistance should only be sought if it does not imperil the integrity of the u3a.

Advice and Support

1. Room Hire

Group leaders, may if they wish undertake enquiries about potential room hire venues. They must not, however, enter into any formal agreements, but should report proposals and recommendations to the groups' co-ordinator. The co-ordinator will present a report to the committee to obtain the necessary authorisation. Should a written contract be required by a venue, it may only be signed by the branch chairman or treasurer (or both).

Should it be necessary to change or cancel a meeting, it is important that you notify both the venue staff and the treasurer in good time. This will prevent the branch being charged for room hire unnecessarily. The branch treasurer is: Mrs L. Stevenson, 6 Bleriot Close, Meir Park, Stoke-on-Trent ST3 7QR. Tel. 01782 395760. or email: a.stevenson09@btinternet.com

Additionally, it is important that details on the website are always factually correct. Therefore, any changes to regular bookings/holiday arrangements should be notified to the webmaster, Andrew Devin. His contact details are: Tel. 01782 942352. or email: a.devin2@gmail.com

2. Attendance Register

It is important to prepare an "Attendance Register" for each group session (template attached). It is recommended that membership cards are viewed at the beginning of each membership year (during April). The register is needed for audit, insurance and accounting purposes, and access could be required at any time to comply with these requirements. For larger groups, you may if you wish nominate a willing member of your group to prepare the register.

It is desirable that your attendance register and monies collected are handed to either Lynne or Alan Stevenson on a regular basis. The monthly meeting is an ideal opportunity to do this. If you do not attend, perhaps you could ask a member of your group who does, to undertake this task.

3. Contact Details Register

It is also important to maintain a "Contact Details Register" (template attached). In order to comply with data protection law, it is imperative that contact details remain confidential. The register is for your records only, and should only be referenced if you need to re-arrange or cancel a meeting.

4. Group Leader Consent Form

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) became Law in the UK on 25th May 2018. In order to comply, the branch obtains general consent from members to use their personal information via the annual membership form. Additional consents are, however, required from group leaders to enable the branch to operate efficiently. Leaders' details such as Name; Telephone number/s; and email address, need to be recorded in (a) the Groups Section of the website; (b) the "Timetable" that is used for publicity purposes; and (c) on occasions in the monthly newsletter. We therefore request you to complete this form (template attached), which will held on file by an appointed member of the committee.

5. Purchasing Equipment

If you need to purchase items for your group, the committee will consider written requests (via the groups' co-ordinator); these should include an estimate of the costs.

The branch asset list is appended to this guide (any updates will be placed onto the branch website). You may request any of these items for use by your group.

Please note that consumables such as paper, pens, pencils, paints, fabric, etc. must be provided by the group members themselves.

If you have any other queries of a financial nature (e.g. matters of procedure or control), please contact the branch treasurer, whose contact details are recorded in Section 1 above.

6. Copyright obligations

All u3a members are responsible for respecting the rights of others, and should only use the work of others when it is legally permissible to do so. If you have any doubts about a potential breach of copyright, please refer to the explanatory document located in the "Groups" section of the branch website. You may also speak to the chairman.

7. Additional information

If you have a group member with a Carer, only the member will be required to pay the membership fee. The Carer will be responsible for the member at all times, i.e. the group leader will not be expected to accept any extra responsibility.

Individuals can attend one meeting without payment, thereafter, they must enrol for membership and will not be permitted to attend again until enrolled. The reasoning is that attendees are not insured until their annual membership fee has been paid. Paid up members are required to pay a £1.00 attendance fee for each group meeting.

8. Documents

All of the documents that you may need to reference as a group leader are appended to this Guide. They may also be accessed and downloaded from the branch website.

The full list is as follows:

1. Attendance Register
2. Group Contact Details
3. Group Leaders Consent
4. Asset List
5. Membership Application Form
6. Incident Report Form
7. Venue Risk Assessment - Checklist
8. u3a Insurance Cover - 2023
9. Activity Timetable

If there are any other matters you need any help with, please contact the groups' co-ordinator, or a member of the committee. Also, please advise of any changes to your own contact information.

Thank you for your work and commitment to the u3a, it is greatly appreciated.

Group's Co-ordinator - Contact details:

Pauline Williams: Telephone: 07928 628583

Website: <https://www.stoke.u3asite.uk>