

West Wolds u3a Group Conveners Guide.

Introduction.

These notes are intended to help and encourage you to lead a group. (i.e. become a Convener). Becoming a Convener need not be very time consuming. It is not difficult and can be very rewarding. Furthermore, you do not have to be an expert on the subject. All that is needed is a desire and ability to learn.

The West Wolds u3a offers a mentoring service to help set up and run a new group and give help to Conveners. There are also comprehensive advice sheets available on its Website. There is help available from the resource centre at National Office plus a network of over 50 national subject advisors willing to advise and support.

There are however there are some things you must do!

1) Starting the Group.

- a) Any member wishing to start an Interest Group should contact the Groups' Coordinator who will notify the Committee to request that they sanction it. A notice can then be circulated, via all available communication channels, asking for expressions of interest. This will help to gauge the level of interest and to decide the way forward.
- b) Give your e-mail address to the Groups' Coordinator, or appoint a member of your group to be the e-mail contact point and give their e-mail address to the Groups Co-ordinator.
- c) If you do not wish to use your home and are not aware of a suitable venue, contact the Groups Co-ordinator who will suggest a room for your meeting.
- d) Be welcoming to potential new members and try to avoid the situation where your group is full. If it gets too large to fit into your venue please discuss with the Chairman and/or Groups' Coordinator about splitting the group or changing the venue.

2) Attendance.

- a) At your first meeting, ask to see all membership cards and take a note of the numbers, then pass this list on to Membership Secretary so that we can confirm their membership is up to date. This is important, as all attending should be covered by the U3A insurance with its Public Liability provision. You need not send their names etc.
- b) Every January please let the Groups' Coordinator have a list of the members in your group.
- c) Please ensure that the Groups' Coordinator is kept informed of any changes to your group regarding: time or location of meeting, date held, change of Convener or its ceasing to operate.

- d) A Non-member may attend three group meetings as a visitor.
- e) In the event it becomes necessary to ask a member to leave the group the convener should firstly consult with the Committee.
- f) If a waiting list develops please let the Groups' coordinator know so that he/she is aware of demand.

3). Finance.

- a) All groups must be self funding.
- b) The West Wolds u3a is a charity, any money collected should only be sufficient to cover the cost of the running of the group and not to generate a profit.
- c) You are not expected to subsidise your group. The cost of running it (e.g. venue hire, speaker fees, stamps, photo copying etc.) should be met from the meeting entrance fee (subs). Consumables such as paint, card, sewing material etc. should be paid for by members themselves, collectively or individually.
- d) If you are meeting in your own home and supply coffee/tea etc. you may ask for a reasonable amount from each member to cover its cost.
- e) As a convener you may request funding for equipment from the Committee. Each request is dealt with on its merits and must be approved before purchasing as retrospective requests will not be considered. The West Wolds u3a already owns a lot of equipment, so please check what is available before applying.
- f) Please submit a balance sheet to the Treasurer, not later than the 31st August, if your group has received any income and/or incurred any expenditure during the previous 12 months.

4. Insurance.

- a) The u3a insurance covers public liability but offers no insurance for personal accident or financial loss. Members participate in activities at their own risk.
- b) In order to activate u3a insurance, trips must be paid for through the West Wolds u3a bank account via the Treasurer and not by individual members. Full details are on the National U3A website and West Wolds u3a website.

5. Health and Safety.

- a) If your activity is out of doors and/or involves a hazardous activity you should firstly familiarise yourself with the relevant Advice Sheets available on the West Wolds u3a website and complete the "General Activity Risk Assessment" form which can be downloaded from it.
- b) If a meeting is to be held in a members home it is also recommended that a basic Risk Assessment be undertaken.

- c) If you are in a public venue ensure that it has a fire safety certificate. Find out where the Fire Exit and Assembly points are and point them out to the group at the beginning of the meeting.
- d) It is recommended that conveners ask members make them aware of any medical conditions which could arise during an outside visit or group activity. They should also request members to carry a note detailing any medication they use.
- e) If anything untoward happens please use your common sense. If for example there is a suspected cardiac arrest, a broken limb or concussion following a fall then dial 999. Also please let the Chair and the Groups' Coordinator know the circumstances as soon as possible thereafter and fill out an accident report form obtainable on the West Wolds u3a website.
- f) In the case of minor accidents/incidents, please make use of any skills (First Aid or other) of the people present. Keep a note of what happened and advise the Groups' Coordinator as soon as possible thereafter.
- g) In public venues there will usually be a First Aid Box available and if an Accident Report Book is there also please enter details of the incident in it.
- h) As a voluntary organization we are not bound by the "Health and Safety at Work" legislation. Although all members of a group are deemed to be mentally competent adults and therefore are ultimately responsible for themselves we should all endeavour to ensure the health and safety of our fellow members whenever and wherever possible. Remember, If you act in good faith you will not be liable for any unfavourable outcomes!

6. Welfare.

- a) Please respect the privacy of members and protect any personal information entrusted to you.
- b) Conveners are asked to inform a member of the Committee if a member of their group becomes ill or a close member of their family dies. This will enable a sympathetic card from the branch as a whole to be sent to them.

7. Group Conveners Meeting.

- a) Annually a meeting is held when all the group leaders get together to exchange ideas, discuss issues which have arisen and look for solutions to any common problems. If you are unable to attend you are most welcome to nominate a deputy to represent your group.

8. Advertising.

- a) Periodically we "Showcase" Interest Groups at the monthly meeting in The Festival Hall when you can "lay out your stall". The object of which is to give a flavour of what your group is about and hopefully to sign up new members.

b) Maximising the membership of your group or advertising its purpose and activities can be achieved using the monthly newsletter, Facebook page, the West Wolds u3a website and at the monthly meeting in The Festival Hall etc. Remember the more that you advertise it the more members you will attract.

9. Further information.

a) Our parent organisation The Third Age Trust is an excellent source for all kinds of information and material which you may find useful in your group activities. It publishes a newsletter, (Third Age Matters - T.A.M.) four times a year and a Sources Magazine. Its a website - www.u3a.org.uk is well worth visiting

10. For contacts.

Please refer to Website or newsletter.