

u3a

Countesthorpe

Group Leader Handbook

February 2022

INTRODUCTION

First of all, thank you for leading a **u3a** group – without group leaders there IS no **u3a**! The committee members, but especially the Groups Co-ordinator, are all there to support and guide you so that your group is an enjoyable experience for you and your group members. Additional information and support is available on the Third Age Trust website (www.u3a.org.uk) (you will need to register to access some of this). The Third Age Trust also has a number of Subject Advisers who can provide support for certain interest groups. Information can be found in the magazine “Third Age Matters” or on the website.

The committee members are all trustees of Countesthorpe **u3a**, which is a registered charity. As such the **u3a** has to adhere to the legal requirements laid down by the Charities Commission, and HMRC, as well as abiding by the guiding principles of our ‘umbrella’ organization – the Third Age Trust.

The committee members are there to serve the membership and can only operate through you, as Group Leaders. Therefore, the committee has an obligation to make you aware of certain important issues – mainly relating to handling money and personal information. Two key documents embody most of the details – the Constitution and this Group Leaders’ Handbook. In return, the committee asks for your assurance that you will take these responsibilities on board and agree to abide by the guidance contained in this handbook.

When the handbook is first issued, you will receive a briefing which may be in a group or as an individual. If you subsequently lose the manual, it will be available to download from the website, or you may request a further copy from the Groups Co-ordinator. You may have questions afterwards, and you can be sure of reassurance, guidance and support from the Groups Co-ordinator, or other appropriate member of the committee.

Above all, the committee is committed to helping you run a successful group for your enjoyment and that of the members. Your first point of contact is the Groups Co-ordinator.

Please take a moment to familiarize yourself with the contents of this handbook, and refer to it if any issues arise before speaking to the Groups Co-ordinator. Attendance at the twice-yearly Group Leaders’ meeting is strongly recommended so that you keep up-to-date with developments and can air any issues with other Group Leaders.

CHECKLIST FOR GROUPS

Each new group has to be authorized by the committee before it can begin holding meetings or events. This is to make sure that every detail is in order and that any pitfalls can be avoided before the action begins! The committee will work through a checklist which covers the points below. Helpful notes are shown in italics, and more detail is given in the following section on Group Management:

1. Group title
2. Name and contact details of group leader/key contact
3. Name and contact details of a named deputy group leader/key contact (*in case of illness or extended absence*)
4. Details of the activity (*Look at the leaflets in the Village Hall foyer at monthly meetings, or the Activity Groups section of the website*)
5. Meetings schedule – eg weekly, monthly, etc, together with day of the week and time. (*Look on the website or Groups List to avoid clashes with other groups where possible. Try to avoid ‘fortnightly’ as this can cause confusion and clashes when there are, say, five Wednesdays in a month! Go for first and third, or second and fourth instead*)

6. Venue for meetings (*The Groups Co-ordinator has a list of possible local venues*)
7. Cost to members (*Consider venue hire and refreshment costs*)
8. Records of attendance (*Refer to the Data Protection section of the Handbook*)
9. Records of payments from members (*All money immediately becomes the property of the u3a; refer to the Finance section of the Handbook*)
10. The use of paid tutors is strongly discouraged, as it goes against the ethos of the **u3a** and Third Age Trust. (*However, if this is totally unavoidable, special arrangements must be put in place to ensure our legal position, and every detail must be fully agreed by the committee before the group's activities can commence.*)

GROUP MANAGEMENT

As a group leader, you are not expected to do everything for the group, nor be an expert. Your key role is to act as a **facilitator and contact point** between your group and the committee and your members; your key tasks are shown below. These can be shared with group members.

- 1) Group leaders should keep a record of their group membership numbers and their attendance.
- 2) A visitor from another **u3a** may join a group for an Associate Membership fee payable to the Treasurer
- 3) A prospective member may attend ONE meeting of ONE group to help them decide whether **u3a** membership is for them before joining.
- 4) Group leaders should explain to group members the requirement for membership and about any financial contributions that will be necessary
- 5) Group leaders must closely liaise with the Membership Secretary to ensure that all attendees are members or associate members.
- 6) Group leaders should attend group leader meetings and disseminate any further information obtained there to group members
- 7) Where money is collected, this immediately becomes **u3a** money and must be passed to the Treasurer on a regular basis. A receipt is issued. (More details are given in the Finance section)

Group size

Each group should determine its own size. Some will be restricted by various factors, such as venue size. Others may be restricted by the nature of the activity – eg anything involving discussion or activities needing space. Group leaders should be prepared to help set up a second (duplicate) group when appropriate

Time and place

The leader needs to think carefully about which day and time of day the group should be held, and the venue needs to be selected carefully. It may be possible to hold the group meeting in a member's home or rotate between a number of homes. Otherwise consider a venue that other groups already use. The Groups Co-ordinator can be consulted about possible venues and timing. Access for disabled people also needs to be considered. See **POSSIBLE LOCAL VENUES FOR u3a GROUP ACTIVITIES**. Please be aware of the times, dates and venues of other **u3a** groups. These are available on the Countesthorpe **u3a** website or the printed Activity Groups List in the foyer at monthly meetings.

Goals

The group needs to have a clear idea about its goals. What does it want to achieve? What do they expect themselves and the other members to get out of the group?

For example: we would like to:

- a) Share and exchange ideas in a friendly and tolerant setting
- b) Try out new ideas
- c) Learn something new
- d) Become more confident
- e) Participate fully in deciding what to include in programmes.
- f) Participate fully in group sessions
- g) Become supportive of each other
- h) Have fun!
- i) Make friends

When the goals have been decided the leader is in a better position to decide how to achieve them. Ideas may include:

- a) Devising ways in which all group members will become involved in activities
- b) Ensuring that there is time for members of the group to chat informally to each other and meet new people — perhaps while having tea/coffee
- c) Sharing thoughts about the goals for the group and collecting members' ideas
- d) Helping the group to shape some guidelines for the way in which sessions will be conducted.

Resources available for loan to all groups

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Digital Projector• Projector screen• Laptop• Laminator• Flipchart	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Radio Microphones<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Head set○ Stick○ Lapel
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Please discuss your requirements with the committee's Technical Officer

Monthly meetings

At monthly meetings you are asked to collect and wear a badge that will identify you as the leader of your group. This will enable new and changing members to know who to approach if they are interested in joining the group.

INSURANCE

In your group activities you are covered by Public Liability Insurance, which is included in the capitation fee portion of your subscription which is paid annually to the Third Age Trust. This covers **u3a** members for loss due to accident or injury to a person or accidental loss or damage to property not belonging to them, as long as it arises from or in connection with a **u3a** activity. Should you ever experience such a situation, please contact the Secretary for advice. Details of the insurance policy are available on the **u3a** national website at www.u3a.org.uk

Anyone giving lifts to fellow **u3a** members should be covered by their own motor insurance in the usual way. However, the **u3a** discourages payment to drivers, and also please be aware that taking money for giving lifts may invalidate your personal car insurance! Offering to buy a coffee is a good substitute, or just taking turns with transport.

FINANCE

Countesthorpe **u3a** is a registered charity and these guidelines are provided to ensure that we, and you, comply with Charity Law, the requirements of HMRC and also the most up-to-date advice from the Third Age Trust, our 'umbrella' organisation.

New Groups

1. Groups should be self financing but help is always available from general funds to cover certain pre-agreed initial set up costs.
2. Any group using a paid tutor must be wholly self-financing, and cannot draw any financial support or subsidy from general **u3a** funds.

Equipment

1. General funds are also available for the purchase of equipment for new and existing groups. Ongoing costs (room hire, consumables, etc) should be covered by the group itself.
2. Forms are available for group leaders to complete, to obtain Committee approval, for any purchases. Please obtain authorisation before purchasing. The forms are held by the Groups Coordinator and the Treasurer.
3. All equipment is the property of Countesthorpe **u3a** and is insured to be kept in group leaders' homes or secure external premises. It would be helpful for the Treasurer to be informed where any property is moved from its original location.

Holding of Funds

1. It is **strictly forbidden** for individual group leaders or organisers of events to hold **u3a** funds in their own name in a bank or building society. Once monies have been paid for a **u3a** activity they automatically become the property of the **u3a**.
2. Where groups or individuals within a group wish to run events, there is a Countesthorpe **u3a** Group Account which can be used. This account is operated by the Treasurer. Simple, accurate records of income and expenditure must be kept and passed to the Treasurer together with monies received. Where a cheque is required to pay for an event, please ensure at least 10 days' notice is given to the Treasurer so that it can be made available in time for the event. Receipts are required by the Treasurer.
3. Small weekly collections can be held in cash by group leaders to pay for refreshments etc during meetings, but must be passed to the Treasurer on a regular basis as they accumulate. The name of the group, the amount and date must be clearly shown. A receipt will be provided by the Treasurer.
4. Some groups may collect a small amount purely for refreshments, in which case no surplus will be held or passed to the Treasurer. Refreshment contributions should not exceed more than 50p per head.
5. Except in specific, agreed circumstances Group Leaders should not hold more than an agreed sum in cash before these funds are passed to the Treasurer. Cheques should be passed to the Treasurer as soon as reasonably possible.

Hire of Accommodation, Transport or Equipment

It is essential that the cost of all premises rented for **u3a** activities be paid for through a **u3a** bank account. This is to ensure that any contracts created are with the **u3a** and not individual group leaders/event organisers. With the exception of Travel, Theatre and History Groups (which have their own separately operated and audited accounts), this must be done through the Treasurer.

Claims for Expenses

Group Leaders are encouraged to claim legitimate out-of-pocket expenses incurred solely in connection with their **u3a** role, by submitting to the Treasurer a completed claim form supported by receipt(s).

Paying for Tutors

1. A **u3a** member is never paid to lead a group. However, a member from another **u3a** may be paid reasonable expenses for doing so.
2. Neither is it recommended to pay a non-member to run a group because this can lead to problems with employment law and the tax authorities. It is not considered part of the ethos of the **u3a** movement as everybody is both a teacher and a learner. However, certain exceptions may be made for short courses, or where a professionally qualified instructor is essential – perhaps for health and safety reasons.
3. Any such paid instructor must undertake to hold appropriate professional and public liability insurance in respect of the relevant activity, and provide proof of their qualifications or expertise to operate as a tutor for the specific group.
4. Any such paid instructor **must complete the Contract for Services form**, (available from the Secretary) and agree in writing to abide by the points within it, including advising of any relevant changes to their status
5. It should be noted that classes **MUST NOT** commence until the Contract for Services form has been completed and the **u3a** has proof of appropriate qualifications and/or competence, professional indemnity insurance, and a Public Performance Licence where appropriate (eg where commercially produced music is to be used).
6. Any such paid instructor must submit a monthly invoice, which will be promptly settled by cheque. The invoice must include date, address of instructor, time period to which the invoice relates, and amount due, with any VAT due clearly and separately indicated.
7. The group's activities cannot be subsidized from general **u3a** funds, and must be financially self-supporting over a period of a year.
8. The group must hold a credit balance with the **u3a** Groups Account (operated by the Treasurer) sufficient to cover one month's fee for the instructor, and one month's venue hire costs.
9. Arrangements in connection with groups using a paid tutor will be reviewed on a regular basis by the committee
10. Occasional speakers can be paid a fee, which should be self-financed within the group, plus any reasonable expenses as appropriate

Travel, History and Theatre Groups

1. These groups each operate a separate bank account in the name of the specific group.
2. The group leader and all signatories to the account **MUST** be committee members, and may be co-opted for this purpose.
3. There must be two signatures on each cheque
4. Where a debit card is used (Theatre and Travel), a maximum transaction amount will be agreed by the committee and another account signatory must countersign the relevant invoice.
5. Accounts must be maintained in a manner agreed by both the Treasurer and the Auditor, and will normally take the form of a simple 'cash book' spreadsheet, with supplementary sheets for bank reconciliation, petty cash reconciliation and running balance after calculation of surplus or loss for each event.
6. The group leader who is the account administrator will be required to report the relevant accounting balance on a monthly basis to the committee
7. The accounts will be audited at least annually by the Treasurer, who may at his/her discretion carry out interim test audits throughout the year.
8. The accounting year for these accounts will conform to the Countesthorpe **u3a**'s accounting year, as all the accounts must now be aggregated and reported and a set of accounts submitted to HMRC and the Charities Commission on an annual basis, along with a trustees' report.

Should you have any queries relating to financial matters at any time please contact the Treasurer and the Groups Co-ordinator.

CHECKLIST AND GUIDE LINES FOR GOOD PRACTICE FOR DAY VISIT ORGANISERS USING PRIVATE COACH TRAVEL

You do not need to organize an event entirely by yourself! Some groups (eg Outings and History) operate in a collaborative way, with another group member assisting in various ways with the event. There is a guidance sheet to assist with this (“Who Does What”)

Planning Stage

1. Telephone proposed venue to check opening days, times, group entry rates, catering facilities, appropriate amount of time at venue and (if required) Guide prices and number of visitors per Guide.
2. Decide on a suitable date – consult What’s On to avoid clashes where possible.
3. Consider access issues – is the venue suitable for those with restricted mobility or other disabilities? Can special arrangements be made (eg a buggy from coach park to entrance, etc)? Are there any specific hazards to make people aware of?
4. Check AA web site for best route
5. Telephone or email bus company for quotation – give date, venue, likely departure and dropping off point/s, departure times at beginning and end of day and size of coach required (in the case of Robinson’s 27/29 or 49 seater – tel 01455 613925, mobile 07778 255525, email: enquiries@robinsonscoaches.co.uk)
6. Standard pick-up/drop-off points should normally be limited to Mulberry Court (MC), lay-by on Winchester Rd near The Southway (SW), layby on Winchester Rd opposite the College (Coll), the Village Hall (VH), and The Square (SQ). Western Drive must **NOT** be used for pick-up or drop off. The sequence and timings should be organised to suit the route to the destination and the participating passengers
7. Note that parking at the Village Hall is not normally available in the evenings, and where permitted in the daytime, must be at the very rear of the car park. Permission to park must be obtained in good time from the Parish Office (0116 277 9518)
8. Estimate the trip price based on a few spare seats on the coach and including driver’s tip – standard tip currently payable is £20 evening, £25 half-day or £30 full day.
9. Prepare notice and participation list – give dates, price and what it includes, pick-up points, estimated departure and arrival times and pay-by date. (Remember to leave a column for participant’s telephone number).

Prior to day of visit

1. Prepare a final list of participants together with their telephone numbers
2. Collect fares and pay in to appropriate account (History, Theatre, Outings or Travel) or to the Treasurer for other groups
3. Confirm the coach (including size) with coach company
4. Confirm numbers with venue and likely arrival and departure times

Two days prior to visit

1. Telephone/email bus company (agree exact route, stops and departure times)
2. Telephone/email venue, confirm visit and ascertain arrival procedures.
3. If leaving early, phone Parish Council Office to check car parking arrangements
4. Based on final numbers, ascertain whether there will be a surplus sufficient to provide a small cash refund to participants. If so, obtain cash to distribute on the day. Events should not show a significant surplus.

Visit day

1. Take your mobile phone, list of participants and their telephone numbers, telephone numbers of coach company and venue, cheques for coach, venue entrance fees and cash tip for driver (the route is also helpful), plus any cash refunds if applicable.
2. Check participants onto coach and ensure you know the number of people travelling

3. Ensure the driver knows where to pick up, intends to take the route you have planned and is aware of planned stop/s.
4. When all participants are aboard welcome them on the trip, give the format of the day including what to do on arrival at venue, the departure time and any other appropriate information.
5. On stopping at the service areas, agree departure time with driver and make an announcement.
6. Never leave any stopping point without checking numbers
7. On return pay the coach driver and give him his tip.
8. Keep receipts – coach, entrance fees, guides, etc, and pass to the Treasurer where appropriate, or file appropriately where a separate account is used (Travel, History or Theatre groups)

General

1. Any service area stop, which is intended as a coffee break, should be at least 30 minutes (20 minutes is insufficient to negotiate the various queues, eg to get off the coach from the back, queue for coffee and often ladies' toilets). Any journey exceeding 2 hours should include a 10-minute comfort stop except in special circumstances, ie a plane to catch or if no service areas are available.
2. Liaise with appropriate bank account holder (eg: Treasurer/Travel/Theatre/History), to obtain cash for the driver's tip and cheque for venue/s and coach.
3. If appropriate issue your mobile number to participants for use in emergencies.
4. Finally – local routes – do check that the driver is taking the arranged route
5. Avoid passengers making their own private arrangements with the driver concerning drop-off points or route on the return journey
6. Once the outing has been completed, destroy documentation showing personal data – eg names and telephone numbers, to comply with Data Protection legislation
7. You may wish to obtain emergency contact numbers, particularly where an overnight stay is involved or particular hazards may be encountered on any outing, and again, this data should be destroyed once the event has concluded.

POSSIBLE LOCAL VENUES FOR u3a GROUP ACTIVITIES

1. Cornerstone (St Andrew's Church), Countesthorpe
2. The Bridge (St Andrew's Church), Countesthorpe
3. Village Hall – main hall and small lounge (with kitchen facilities)
4. Methodist Chapel Schoolroom (also the chapel is possible, plus an upstairs room)
5. Residents' Lounge, Brook Court, Countesthorpe
6. Bowls Club, Countesthorpe
7. Cricket Club, Countesthorpe
8. Scout Hut, Countesthorpe
9. Baptist Schoolroom, Countesthorpe
10. Local Schools
11. Countesthorpe College
12. Residents' Lounge at Mulberry Court, Blaby

Liaise with the Groups Co-ordinator. Group Leaders cannot rent, hire or contract with a venue themselves; this must be done via the Treasurer.

DATA PROTECTION GUIDELINES

1. Countesthorpe **u3a**, in common with most other organisations, is required by recent legislation to have a Data Protection policy and procedures which comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This is for the protection of its members, group leaders and trustees. The full policy for Countesthorpe **u3a** is available on its website, or as a printed copy on request. It is important that all group leaders follow the current policy and procedures carefully.
2. Countesthorpe **u3a** will hold some necessary personal data on its individual members. This personal data includes names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, passport numbers, dates of birth and will be used
 - a) To generate membership cards
 - b) To monitor payment of membership subscriptions
 - c) To provide a regular return to the Third Age Trust for the magazine and capitation fee
 - d) To submit to HMRC our **u3a**'s claim for Gift Aid money
 - e) To communicate with participating members regarding group activities
3. Certain principles apply, and briefly, these are as follows:
 - a) Personal data must be processed (ie: collected, stored, used and disposed of) lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner.
 - b) Personal data must be collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes only and are specified in the current Data Protection Policy
 - c) The collection of personal data must be adequate, relevant, accurate and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed
 - d) Personal data held should be accurate (as provided by each member) and current, having regard to the purposes for which the data are collected. When and if changes occur, the data must be erased or rectified without delay
 - e) Personal data must be kept in such a format that permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which it is collected.
 - f) Personal data must be processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing, and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures.
4. This may sound overly complex and unnecessary in the context of running your **u3a** group. However, it is incumbent on the committee (as they are trustees with legal responsibilities) to ensure that everybody who uses members' personal data is aware of, and agrees to comply with, the requirements of the GDPR.
5. In simple terms, if you are a group leader, you are likely to need to keep a list of your group members and usually their telephone numbers and email addresses. This is a minimum requirement to allow you to communicate with them. If you do collect such additional data, it must be for a legitimate and specific purpose, and should be processed in accordance with the principles above.
6. Data must be kept securely, and not be distributed to the general membership or other group members or leaders without the specific agreement of the member concerned. Once the purpose or event has been completed, data should be destroyed. (An example might be an outing where a list of names and telephone numbers will be necessary, but which can be destroyed at the conclusion of the event. Additional information would almost certainly be required in the case of a residential event, but again, should be destroyed after that event.)
7. If you are in doubt about your responsibilities in relation to data protection, please seek the advice of the current Groups Co-ordinator, or any member of the committee. Please help us to keep Countesthorpe **u3a** compliant with the law, and thus protect the privacy of all our members.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

1. It is accepted that these guidelines will be irrelevant for groups such as walking or where the meeting is in a member's home.
2. However, where a venue is used, the advice is especially important at the first meeting of a new group, at a change of venue or where new members join.
3. Ensure that, where appropriate, you are aware of venue evacuation in case of emergency.
4. If applicable, be aware of First Aider availability (for example at the Village Hall, or Brook Court)
5. Do not attempt to give first aid yourself unless you have been trained to do so. Use of local defibrillators may be undertaken where necessary – usually, though not always, with the supervision of the Ambulance Service
6. Consider how you can assist members with limited mobility or other impairments
7. Do not put yourself or others at risk

INCLUSIVITY

1. The **u3a** is an inclusive organisation and, as such, trustees, group leaders and members have a responsibility to ensure that it is accessible for everyone.
2. For example, working dogs for the sight and/or hearing impaired, or medical detection dogs are to be welcomed and accommodated so far as is reasonably possible.
3. Carers who are non-members may accompany a member (free of charge) at meetings and outings where it is safe for the member to participate
4. Group leaders should consider any special requirements their members may have (dietary, access, sight or hearing support)
5. When organising an event or outing, consider any hazards which may be present or might reasonably arise, and make intending participants aware of these. (For example, if an outing involves much walking, many steps, or a lot of standing, ensure that this is known to members before they commit to it)

SUGGESTIONS AND IDEAS

We always want to be responsive to our members' ideas for making our **u3a** as good as it can be! We currently have over three dozen groups, but these are not static. Some are designed to be short lived groups, a few disappear as interest wanes, and others start up.

If you, or any of your members, have ideas either for new groups or to improve any of the existing groups, or even the way in which our U3A runs in general, then please do contact the Groups Co-ordinator, or any member of the committee. They say two heads are better than one, so think what 400+ heads might achieve!

... AND FINALLY

Thank you again for putting in the effort to be a group leader. YOU make the **u3a** what it is – a great organisation which benefits so many people in so many ways. We hope that the foregoing is not too daunting – it is not meant to be so, but rather to provide you with an awareness of the various responsibilities of being a group leader and where to go to for support and advice should the need arise. Enjoy leading your group(s) and keep in touch with the Groups Co-ordinator who is always happy to help and advise.



EXPENSES CLAIM FORM

NAME DATE

COMMITTEE MEMBER / GROUP LEADER *(delete as appropriate)*

CLAIM DETAILS	£

FROM	TO	MILES	RATE <small>(40p per mile)</small>	£

TOTAL	£
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For Countesthorpe u3a Treasurer's use only:

Approved by

Date

Cheque No



GROUP EQUIPMENT FORM

NAME OF GROUP

GROUP LEADER'S NAME

TELEPHONE NUMBER

DETAILS OF EQUIPMENT

.....

ESTIMATED COST

GROUP LEADER'S SIGNATURE

AGREED BY COMMITTEE: YES NO (DATE)

The Group Leader will be notified once the purchase has been agreed. The purchase will then be paid for, or reimbursed, by the Treasurer upon receipt of a valid invoice/receipt.

**ALL ITEMS PURCHASED REMAIN THE PROPERTY
OF THE COUNTSTHORPE u3a
AND MAY BE REQUESTED FOR USE BY OTHER GROUPS**

For Countesthorpe u3a Treasurer's use only:

PAID: cheque no **Date**