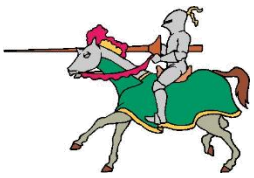
Ashby u3a



# Group Leaders Handbook

This handbook is intended as a guide to prospective and existing Group Leaders to help them with the setting up and running of their Group

1st Edition

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# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to provide help for all Ashby u3a Group Leaders and to give guidance and advice on setting up and running Interest Groups.

This handbook expands on the information given in 'Becoming a Group Leader' which gives an introduction to those thinking of taking on that role.

All u3as, and all groups within a u3a, are autonomous and mostly free to organise themselves in whatever way best suits their purpose. It is up to them to decide how they are run and what interests they follow.

However, Ashby u3a is a registered charity and, as such, is bound by the rules and regulations of the Charities Commission, which are legally enforceable, so all Committee Members and Group Leaders are obliged to carry out certain functions.

Moreover, some other procedures should be followed to ensure members of groups are covered by the u3a Insurance.

# SETTING UP A GROUP

Any member who is interested in setting up a new group should contact the Group Coordinator who will arrange for a notice to be placed on our website (www.ashbyu3a.co.uk ). A notice will also be added to the groups display board at the monthly meeting and an announcement made to advertise the new group. The notice will outline details of the group's purposes, and details of who to contact to express interest and seek further information.

## FIRST MEETING

Once sufficient interest is shown, an initial meeting will be arranged (usually by the Group Coordinator), where the aims of the group should be agreed and the Group Leader(s) should be appointed. Groups may wish to have more than one Leader or even a small committee to share the task.

## TYPICAL AIMS

a. What study/learning methods does the group want to employ, if any?

b. Suggestions for trips/events.

c. Are there any volunteer experts who could be invited to demonstrate skills or give talks?

d. Can books, DVD's, on-line materials, etc. be utilised?

e. Where, when and how frequently should the group meet? (See GROUP MEETINGS' LOCATIONS below). Try to avoid date clashes with other groups which might attract the same members, although this may prove difficult.

f. How will the group fund any expenditure?

## FUNDING

Whilst the philosophy of Ashby u3a is that groups shall be self-financing, the Committee is prepared to help with reasonable 'start-up' costs for a new group. If assistance is needed in this respect, please contact the Group Coordinator with full details of the proposed expenditure *prior to* any expenditure being incurred (See FINANCE section).

All expenditure on behalf of the group must be agreed by members of the group.

## PAYMENTS TO TUTORS AND GUEST SPEAKERS

### Paid Tutors

The Third Age Trust is against having paid tutors for various reasons, some of which could involve Ashby u3a being deemed to be an employer and hence liable for tax and National Insurance payments for the tutor.

If your group decides that it needs a paid tutor for a period of time, consult with the Group Coordinator who will take it up with the Committee.

Paid tutors, if allowed, must not be members of any u3a and they should carry their own third party insurance.

### Speakers

External speakers may be used and paid, if the group decide that they want to use them. Groups cannot use the same person as a regular paid speaker as these are considered to be 'paid tutors'.

It is up to the group to decide how much they are willing and able to pay, and to arrange collection of suitable fees from the group members and any guests (See FINANCE section).

Groups cannot pay a fee to speakers who are members of our or any other u3a. However it is allowable to pay pre-agreed reasonable expenses to speakers, including u3a members.

The external speaker's fee and expenses should be agreed beforehand. The cost should then be reimbursed to the speaker by cheque issued by the Treasurer or paid directly by the Treasurer via internet banking. If necessary, cash payments are acceptable. A receipt must be obtained.

If the speaker wants to donate their fee to a nominated charity then they need to hand the value of the fee to the charity of their choice. As a charity, Ashby u3a cannot pay another charity directly,

## ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE IN SETTING UP A GROUP

In addition to this Handbook, there are many sources of advice and assistance available for setting up and running groups.

These include:

a. The u3a National Website https://www.u3a.org.uk

b. Many other u3as have produced guidance for running groups that provide valuable information. Entering "running a u3a group" into an internet browser will give access to a number of guides produced by various u3as.

# GROUP MANAGEMENT

## GROUP COORDINATOR

The Group Coordinator is a member of the Committee who has been nominated to have the responsibility of overseeing the operation of all groups within Ashby u3a to whom any aspect of running the group may be addressed.

The Group Coordinator is also available for support and advice if needed. Contact them at interestg@ashbyu3a.co.uk

## GROUP LEADER

A Group Leader is a person who co-ordinates the group's activities. Groups may wish to have more than one Leader or even a small committee to share the task.

Group Leaders are not expected to do everything for the group. Many tasks can be delegated to other members of the group. See below.

It must be remembered that how a group is run is at the discretion of the Group Leader and the members of the group, as long as it conforms to Ashby u3a's principles.

There are some tasks needed to ensure any group is successfully and effectively managed.
Some of these tasks can be carried out by any member of the group not just the Group Leader.

Primary duties

a. To act as a contact point between the group and the Ashby u3a Committee via the Group Coordinator.
b. Make themselves aware of our Policy Documents and Guidelines particularly those covering conduct, equality, data protection, use of member's houses etc. See Appendix 1
c. Keep a list of members in their group and basic contact details for them. (see DOCUMENTATION section)
d. Keep meeting attendance records of group meetings (see DOCUMENTATION**Error! Reference source not found.** section).
e. Ensure all group members have current membership, are bone fide guests or are visitors from other u3as.
f. If an otherwise regular member fails to show for meetings, to check if they are ill or in any form of difficulty. Where appropriate, inform the Welfare Officer.
g. Give a short verbal report on the group's activities at our monthly meeting when requested by the Group Coordinator. This is likely to be no more than once every 18 months.
h. Should one of your members die, inform the Welfare Officer as soon as possible so that no insensitive contact is made with their family.

The Group Leader should also Inform the Group Coordinator:

a. When vacancies exist so that they can be advertised within Ashby u3a .
b. When the group has reached capacity so that the formation of another, similar group, can be canvassed by using our internal advertising.
c. Of any change to your group's name, format or meeting arrangements.

Duties that can be devolved or delegated

The Leader does not have to be the teacher/trainer/instructor for a learning group. Any other member(s) of the group could do that if they are better able to do it.

The group doesn't have to meet at the Leader's house. It can be any member's house or it can move around from house to house, or it can be at some other premises. It is up to the group to decide where they meet.

The Group Leader does not have to be the actual collector of any monies, another member can do that, but a record of all monies collected must be kept.

## PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

The Group Leader needs to agree, with the rest of the group, when and where they are going to meet and agree a programme of activities for the next few weeks or maybe for the whole year. If the group has a committee of leaders then it is up to them to distribute the duties as they see fit.

The Group Leader should provide the time, venue and any relevant details of known future meetings to the webmaster (webmaster@ashbyu3a.co.uk) for inclusion in the website and monthly newsletter. A brief report of the previous month's activities sent to the webmaster are also useful for keeping the general membership informed about the group.

## MEETING ATTENDANCE

Only u3a members are automatically eligible to join any Ashby u3a group and Group Leaders should confirm the membership number of all group members each year.

Non-members may only attend once per group on a trial basis before joining Ashby u3a.

Members of some local u3as can attend subject to certain conditions.

Children under 18 including children of the household are not allowed to attend.

Animals including household pets should not be in the meeting room apart from assistance dogs.

If a group makes a charge for entry to a meeting, all visitors are expected to pay the same fee.

For full details see 'Ashby u3a Non-members Policy' and 'Visiting other u3as'.

## DISPUTES

If there should be any problems or grievances within the group, refer to Ashby u3a Complaints Procedure for advice. See Appendix 1 for details.

# DOCUMENTATION

Only the minimum of records have to be maintained but these are essential to meet the requirements of the Charity Commission and u3a Insurance parameters. These can be either paper based or printable computer files:

## MEMBERS PERSONAL CONTACT DETAILS

Group Leaders must keep a record of all members of their group. The details should be kept up to date and made available to the Group Coordinator and Membership Secretary as required. The details to be recorded are:

a. Name and contact details

b. Current membership no. This need only be done at the start of each year, or when a new member joins the group.

c. Emergency contact name and phone number. This is at the member's discretion. See below.

## MEETING ATTENDANCE RECORDS

A register of members and non-members attending each group meeting shall be maintained. The date of the meeting and names of attendees is all that is required.

## EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS

Should an emergency arise during a meeting it may be advisable to inform a relative or friend of anyone involved in the emergency. Members do not have to nominate a contact but if they do not wish to, this should be recorded.

## SECURITY

Members' personal contact details shall be kept securely and under no circumstances passed to any third party without the permission of the member concerned. Group Leaders shall:

a. Delete information that is no longer required for membership purposes.

b. Ensure you use strong passwords where data is kept on a personal computer.

c. Avoid sharing passwords with others.

d. Avoid sharing email addresses or personal information via email without permission. Use bcc (blind carbon copy) when sending group emails.

e. Group Leaders may pass on lists of names of other group members to a new or any other member, but on no account may they pass on contact details of members without that member's explicit consent. The Group Leader must keep a written record of that consent.

# GROUP MEETINGS' LOCATIONS

Many groups meet at members' homes in rotation, some at the Group Leader's home and a few at a venue where a charge is made to hire a room. Some venues allow us free use of their premises provided that members buy refreshments whilst they are there. Currently the Ivanhoe Social Club and Bulls Head pub in Ashby offer this.

## MEMBERS HOMES

For guidelines on the use of members' homes see Appendix 1 'Ashby u3a Use of Members Homes'

## HIRED PREMISES

For guidelines on the use of hired premises see Appendix 1 'Ashby u3a Use of hired venues' (Awaiting completion)

For fees for hired premises see FINANCE section.

When using hired premises the meeting should ideally start with a reminder of fire evacuation procedures.

If installed, any presenters and speakers should use a microphone with the venue's PA system and if there is a T-loop system for those with hearing loss, members should be reminded to switch hearing aids over to use it.

# COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE GROUP

Communication between all members is obviously of importance and the majority find that email is the most efficient method of keeping in touch. Unfortunately, some members do not check their emails on a regular basis. The use of the telephone for quick voice or text messaging may be necessary. Keeping a record of members' names and contact details will make this much easier (See DOCUMENTATION section).

Groups may also wish to form a WhatsApp group to keep in touch.

Where regular (eg monthly) communication is necessary and a member does not have email access or an email "buddy", either phone them or request stamped addressed envelopes from the member.

# GROUP PUBLICITY

There are a number of channels through which information can be distributed.

a. Our website www.ashbyu3a.co.uk. Group Leaders, or a nominated group member, can have access to the group page on our website to update Information. For details of how to do this please contact the Communications Officer at comms@ashbyu3a.co.uk

   Alternatively, information may be sent to the Communications Officer to put it on the website for you. Contact comms@ashbyu3a.co.uk.

b. At monthly meetings the Group Coordinator displays a notice board advertising the various groups that are available and relevant contact details.

   Groups wishing to display their own notices will be allocated space on the notice board where they can display them. Sign-up sheets for events which need booking, such as trips, one off events and dining, should also be displayed here.

   Anyone proposing a new group should contact the Group Coordinator so that it can be advertised on the notice board and sign-up forms made available for members to make their interest known. Contact the Group Coordinator at interestg@ashbyu3a.co.uk.

c. The monthly newsletter. A report (and photos) of recent group activities can be sent to the Communications Officer for inclusion.

d. Social Media. We currently have a Facebook page where information about group activities and about Ashby u3a in general can be posted.

   There is an Ashby u3a Social Media Policy, see Appendix 1, which details how to post information to Facebook and other social media but the basics are:

   i Groups should nominate one person to deal with posting info to Facebook. Anyone can comment on existing posts.

   ii All content should be sent to our Moderators facebookmods@ashbyu3a.co.uk for posting. They reserve the right to correct spelling and grammar.

   iii Posts and comments should:

   - Only share members names and details with consent.
   - Be polite and respectful of others and not be contentious or libelous.
   - Stay relevant to the topic. No spam.
   - Have the permission from anyone in a photograph before it is posted, and have the right to share it.

e. Reporting to the Monthly Meeting

   From time to time the Group Coordinator will invite Group Leaders to give a brief report at the monthly meeting. This can be a description of the group's activities or aims and need last no more than a few minutes. It is likely to be no more frequent than yearly.

# GROUP TRIPS AND OUTINGS

When a visit, trip or outing is organised by, or on behalf of a Group Leader, the "Ashby u3a Trip Guidelines" must be followed. (See Appendix 1)

Members should be informed that if a trip is cancelled by Ashby u3a or by the venue or the transporter, or if a member has to cancel due to unforeseen circumstances, the organisers shall endeavour to recover whatever monies have been spent. However some deposits may not be refundable. The u3a insurance does not cover cancellation. Members are advised to take out holiday insurance if they wish to have further cover.

# WALKING GROUPS AND OTHER OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Walk leaders should at the very least carry a list of names of all those on their walk. It is recommended that the group's leader, or the leader of the walk, ask walkers for emergency contact details which should be carried on the walk. It is not compulsory for walkers to give this but it is strongly recommended.

On all walks, but particularly in remote areas, it is important that the leader nominates someone to be the backmarker to ensure no-one falls behind or gets lost.

When leaders stop for a break, or to allow stragglers to catch up, they should give the last ones to arrive time for their break. Rest stops are for all, not just the leaders.

The walk leader should carry a first aid kit. Ashby u3a will pay for these. Keep them topped up if used and keep them in date.

# RISK ASSESSMENTS

All Group Leaders, but particularly those leading activity groups, should be aware of any hazards which may befall their members. When starting a new group, the Leader should assess any potential hazards that members need to be told of, so that they can evaluate their own personal risk before taking part. This assessment should be reviewed annually or as necessary.

Walking groups should state on their website page and in any other instructions to their members, what level of difficulty and what length any particular walk will likely be, so that people can decide for themselves whether they are fit enough to take part.

# ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT REPORTING

Should an accident or other incident occur involving injury to any individual or damage to property during any group activity, it is essential that an Ashby u3a "Accident/Incident Report Form" is fully completed at the earliest possible time and passed to the Group Coordinator.

Copies of the form are available from the Group Coordinator or can be downloaded from our website. A copy of the form is shown in Appendix 2.

<u>Medical Emergencies</u>

If a member needs medical attention at a group meeting, someone should contact the emergency services, who may advise on any immediate action thought necessary, and manage emergency recovery, etc.

First aid kits

There is no requirement for any group to have a first aid qualified member, or to hold, or carry, a first aid kit. However any activity groups, such as walking, are advised to carry a small kit for minor cuts and sprains. The Committee have authorised expenditure for these first aid kits.

Group Leaders should make themselves aware of the location of a first aid kit at group venues.

# FINANCE

The philosophy of the u3a in general is that groups shall be self-financing.

For the majority of groups, particularly those who meet at member's homes, probably the only financial involvement would be the cost of any refreshments for each meeting. No record of such income/expenditure is necessary, nor is it accountable.

Some groups however may need to collect money from its members for materials, venue hire, guest speakers, trips etc. This money must is accountable.

## COLLECTING MONEY FROM MEMBERS

Any money collected from members should ideally be passed to the Treasurer as soon as possible for banking along with details of what it is to be used for.

Money for trips and outings should ideally be paid by the members directly into the Ashby u3a account. This should preferably be by BACS transfer or in the form of cheques payable to "Ashby u3a".

Ashby u3a bank account details are Co-op Bank 08-92-99 67259878

An amount of cash may be held by the group as a float and, if necessary, for any cash transactions, however **the group must keep no more than £250 in cash at any given time.**

**The cash holder is liable for any loss. A record must be kept of how much cash is held and by whom.**

**Money must never be put into any bank account other than Ashby u3a's authorised account.**

Group Leaders must ensure that an account is kept of all money received and paid out on behalf of the group. Any receipts and payment vouchers must be retained. An annual statement must be published to inform the group and the Treasurer about its financial affairs.

For money relating to trips see the 'Ashby u3a Trip Guidelines'

**Groups must not make any long-term financial agreement with any third party without the approval of the Committee.** In the first instance the Group Leader should approach the Group Coordinator who will take the matter up with the Committee. **If any such agreement is approved, the Group Leader must liaise with the Treasurer over financial details.**

## PAYMENT FOR VENUE HIRE AND SPECIAL GRANTS

In most cases the group is expected to pay for the hire of any venue from money collected from its members, however negotiations of venue costs may be undertaken by our Treasurer when several groups use the same premises. All payments for room or venue hire are handled by the Ashby u3a Treasurer who will bill the relevant groups for the costs.

Any written contract provided by the venue should be passed to Treasurer for approval before it is signed.

If a small group needs to hire a venue for which the cost per member would be excessive, the Committee may at its discretion pay some or all of the costs of the hire from Ashby u3a funds.

New groups may also apply to the Committee to have some or all of the venue hire costs paid for its first year of operation from Ashby u3a funds. This will be at the Committee's discretion.

The Committee may also make concessionary grants to groups to assist with running the group where it is shown to be a benefit the group.

All applications for grants shall be submitted to the Group Coordinator in writing for presentation to the Committee for decision at least two weeks prior to a Committee meeting. The following information must be included in the written application:

a. A brief explanation of the reason for submitting this application.
b. Supporting documentation – ie quotations for equipment/services.
c. Total value of the grant requested.

Once the grant is approved, the group should purchase the items and send the invoice to the Treasurer for reimbursement.

It should be noted that no grant can be paid in retrospect to ANY expenditure already incurred so do not make any purchase until approved by the Committee.

Examples of the type of expenditure that will be considered are room hire for a single specific event, copier paper, etc., specialist equipment or reference books (eg. a Scrabble dictionary).

Advice on whether or not a specific request meets the criteria for validity should be sought from the Groups Coordinator initially.

Examples of the type of expenditure that will not be considered are general refreshments, group meals, Christmas celebrations and donations to any third parties.

All capital equipment (ie non-consumables) will remain the property of Ashby u3a to be held by the Group Leader or a nominated group member. If the latter is the case, the Group Coordinator shall be notified of the name and contact details of that member.

If a group closes, any capital equipment in the group's possession must be returned to the Group Coordinator.

When considering any application, the Committee's decision will be final.

The Committee reserves the right to withdraw special grants at any time and without notice.

# INSURANCE

The 'Third Age Trust' has arranged a central insurance policy for all paid up members of affiliated u3as in the UK. The policy insures members against public liability and product liability claims made against them. The policy does not provide cover against personal accident.

It should be noted that only paid-up members are covered by our insurance. Visitors and guests are not covered. If any member is accompanied by a carer, the carer is not covered unless they are also an Ashby u3a member.

Paid speakers at group meetings are covered but it does not cover paid tutors. However both paid speakers and paid tutors would be expected to have their own insurance.

Equipment belonging to Ashby u3a is also insured. The Secretary can advise you on the terms of the insurance.

See Group Trips and Outings above for details of personal insurance and cancellation cover.

If trips are arranged on a private basis, ie not under the u3a umbrella, such that a trip is open to other parties or organisations, then they will not be covered by our u3a insurance.

For further information on all insurance matters, see the u3as FAQs at:
https://u3asites.org.uk/files/h/howden/docs/insurancefaqssept2022.pdf

# APPENDIX 1 – LIST OF POLICY DOCUMENTS AND GUIDELINES

All these documents can be found on our website under the 'Information' tab at the top of every page.

## POLICY DOCUMENTS

Ashby u3a Accessibility policy

Ashby u3a Code of Conduct

Ashby u3a Complaints Procedure

Ashby u3a Data Protection Policy

Ashby u3a Equality and Diversity policy

Ashby u3a Non-members Policy

Ashby u3a Privacy Policy

Ashby u3a Safeguarding Policy

Ashby u3a Serious incident reporting policy

Ashby u3a Social Media Policy

## GUIDELINES

Ashby u3a Becoming a Group Leader

Ashby u3a Copyright & Licences

Ashby u3a Trip Guidelines

Ashby u3a Use of loaned or borrowed equipment

Ashby u3a Use of members homes

Ashby u3a Use of hired venues

## OTHER FORMS

Accident/Incident report form

# APPENDIX 2 – ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Should an accident or other incident occur involving injury to any individual or damage to property during any group activity, it is essential that this form is fully completed at the earliest possible time and passed to the Group Coordinator. A copy of the form is attached below. Further copies can be downloaded from the website under the information tab at the top of each page.

# ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORT FORM – ASHBY u3a

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of injured party or property owner/address/phone no. | |
| Name/address/phone no of any others involved. | |
| Date/ time of incident. | Location. |
| Circumstances of incident | |
| Injury/property damage details. | |
| Witnessed by:1. 2.<br>Address.<br><br>Phone no. | |
| Immediate action taken. | |
| Details of any specialised assistance required at the scene. | |
| Was medical advice sought afterwards? If so give details. | |
| Name of person reporting incident Phone no.<br><br>Signed | |
| Signed (injured party/parties) | |