

Being a u3a Group Leader/Facilitator

What is a Group Leader or Facilitator? What do they do? What do they need to know?

One of the u3a guiding principles is: **By the members, for the members.**

Therefore you are not on your own with your group; there are always people around to help. There are many different ways to run a group; find a style with which you are comfortable.

You may start a group where members contribute each session, perhaps by leading a discussion; presenting a talk. You do not have to be an expert; researching something you are interested in is very rewarding.

Or it might be an activity which you enjoy and you want to share your enjoyment and knowledge with other people.

Starting a New Group:

Think about how you would approach the sessions: numbers involved; how often will it meet; what you hope to achieve; what you hope the members of the group will achieve; what you will call it!

Then contact the Groups Coordinator who will:

- Find a suitable venue
- Organise a preliminary meeting to discuss details
- Help sort out a day and time for your group
- Advertise your new group in the Newsletter and at the Monthly Meetings
- Help you with using Beacon and show you how to use the secure email system
- Give you advice about organising the group – if you want it
- Advise on the purchase of equipment – if it's needed
- Come along to at least the first meeting to check everything is going well
- Explain how to deal with subs and claim for expenses
- Be available at the end of the phone or on email if needed

You **do not** need to be an expert on the subject; having an open mind and being prepared to learn is far more important.

You **do** need to be inclusive and welcoming, ensuring everyone feels at ease.

The following things usually need to be done to enable a group to run smoothly – but you do not have to do all of it by yourself.

Other people can and should be encouraged to help; for example someone can be responsible for the money; for refreshments; for setting up the room; keeping Beacon up to date.

The practicalities are:

- Ensuring that the Schedule on Beacon is kept up to date, at least a couple of months in advance. This ensures your group meeting will appear in the Calendar. Help with this will **always** be available

- Ensuring the venue is set up ready for the members
- Bringing refreshments if needed
- Welcoming new members and checking their membership numbers
- Having a sign-in sheet/book and a collecting bowl for subs
- Dealing with the money at the end. Total it up and complete the slip, take out any money for milk etc. and note it on the slip. Put the money and slip in the safe at LQMH.
- If your meeting is at a different venue, you can pay the subs direct to the Treasurer by BACS – this will all be explained to you
- Keeping the Groups Coordinator informed of any changes to times and if you need to cancel a meeting for example, in August or December
- Keeping your group informed of any notices which may be sent out from time to time
- Be aware of accessibility issues members may have, for example mobility problems; sight or hearing loss. See Accessibility for Group Leaders on the website.

If your meeting is not in a particular venue, things will be slightly different; for example if it's an eating out group, or a visits group or a sports group. Things are tailored to suit the individual group and the Groups Coordinator will help.

You will be given a Group Leaders Handbook, an Incident Report Form for Accidents and/or damage to property and help and advice as necessary.

Then sit back and enjoy sharing your interests and enthusiasms with other like minded people.

Contact: lm3agroups@gmail.com

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