

FLEET & DISTRICT U3A

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Handbook for Group Leaders 2021/22



Learn, laugh, live

Registered Charity Number 1055104

HANDBOOK FOR GROUP LEADERS – 2021/22

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Chairman's Message

Dear Group Leader,

Thank you for taking on this important role for Fleet and District U3A. We are a totally volunteer led organisation and without people like you we would not be able to function at all. It is a testament to the many people who have volunteered in the past and who do so currently that Fleet and District U3A is as busy, vibrant and successful as it so obviously is.

I wish you well in your role, especially if you are a new Group Leader, and look forward to seeing you at Group Leader meetings, our 'thank you' lunch for Group Leaders and at our Monthly Meetings and other events.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or any other committee member if you have a query about being a Group Leader.

Thank you again.

Paddy Powell

Chair, Fleet and District U3A

July 2021

HANDBOOK FOR GROUP LEADERS

INFORMATION SOURCES

All contact details for committee members referred to in this handbook are available in the Annual Programme, the monthly newsletter or on the Fleet U3A website <https://flu3aweb.wixsite.com/fleetU3A> .

All GDPR policy documents and Group Leader forms are also available on the Fleet U3A website.

1. STARTING A NEW GROUP

1.1 New subject area

If the Group Leaders' Secretary (GLS) is approached by a member requesting that a new subject group be established, the GLS should ask that individual to be the Group Leader (GL) or for them to find someone prepared to undertake the role of GL for the new group. The GLS and the Newsletter Editor (news@fleetu3a.org.uk) will then advertise the proposal in the Newsletter to assess the level of interest in the proposed new group and its viability, after which the "formal" establishment of the group will proceed.

Any proposed new group does not need to have a minimum number of attendees if it is looking to hire a venue. However, the membership of the group should be reviewed after the first term to see if it is feasible to continue.

Once a GL has been found the GLS will provide a copy of this Handbook and explain to the GL the procedure for running a group.

1.2 Additional Group in an Existing Subject

The current GL must provide a written request to the GLS for approval to form another group and include the following information:

- Approximate number of members who wish to attend the group
- The frequency of the meetings
- Length of time of meetings
- Who will be the Group Leader

1.3 General

In all cases the GLS will seek ratification from the Committee.

2. RUNNING A GROUP

2.1 Venues

2.1.1 Finding and Booking a Hired Venue

Once Committee approval has been given that a group can be formed, the GL should contact the Venues Secretary (venues@fleetu3a.org.uk) and request a venue be found. The Venues Secretary will require the following information:

- Preferred day and time of meetings
- Frequency of meetings
- Length of time of meetings
- Approximate number of attendees
- Any special requirements

2.1.2 Changing a Booking at a Hired Venue

Should you wish to make any changes to the meeting dates during the year, or wish to change the venue, you must inform the Venues Secretary in the first instance.

For the avoidance of doubt all contact with venues concerning bookings in the current or following Fleet U3A year must be made via the Venues Secretary.

2.1.3 Hired Venue Keys

Several Venues issue a key to the GL so they can access the building when the Administrator is not there. If the Administrator of your venue provides you with a key, it is essential to follow their instructions regarding the issue and care of the keys. Some venues will request a deposit for the key. The Venue Administrator and the Venues Secretary keep a list of key holders. It is important to inform the Venue Administrator and the Venues Secretary if you pass your key permanently to another member of your group.

2.1.4 Taking Care of Hired Venues

The GL is responsible for ensuring the facility is left as found, i.e., that windows and doors are secure, lights are turned off and, if relevant, the heating is turned off. Where applicable, all tables and chairs should be returned to their storage points and the floor should be left clean and clear of litter. Please do not drag tables and chairs across floors.

2.1.5 Risk Assessment Checklists.

The Third Age Trust (TAT) has produced a series of model risk assessment checklists: -

- Venue Risk Assessment Checklist
- Venue Checklist (Day of Use)
- Walk Leader Risk Assessment Checklist
- Workshop Activity Risk Assessment Checklist

These are available on the Fleet U3A website in “Group Leader Docs” under the “Documents” menu item.

The degree of relevance of the risk assessments will depend on the type of group you lead but it is recommended that activity groups and especially walking, cycling and sailing have a checklist that is run through before each activity. Some GLs may decide that they need a bespoke risk assessment or checklist for their group’s activities.

2.2 Equipment

2.2.1 Existing

Various resources are available to assist with the running of a group. Please see the Fleet U3A website or newsletter for contact details.

Anyone wishing to use a laptop, data projector or any other Fleet U3A equipment for their class should contact Dennis Parkinson on 01252 622982.

Please note that all equipment should be booked in advance to ensure that the particular item you wish to use for your class has not been booked to someone else.

It is the responsibility of the GL to store safely and securely any borrowed equipment. It should be returned as soon as possible after use. If the equipment is damaged in any way the GL must inform Dennis Parkinson when it is returned.

If the group holds any U3A equipment for the specific use of the group, this may be loaned to group members, but without charge.

2.2.2 New

If new equipment is required, please refer to Capital Expenditure under Financial Procedures (see below).

2.3 Professional Tutors

A guiding principle of U3A is the self-help ethos. TAT has recently re-emphasised this principle and therefore in future, except in exceptional circumstances, tutors will only be sanctioned for groups involving physical exercise, where a suitably qualified volunteer cannot be found.

In such cases the tutors must be able to demonstrate that they have appropriate insurance cover (the Secretary will advise), have received the correct, recognised training and/or have relevant experience for the group in question. Appropriate first-aid training is desirable.

The person concerned must have a current Public Liability Policy of at least £2 million. If not, you must not proceed because the U3A policy does not cover a person who is in employment. The GL should obtain a copy of the tutor's current Certificate of Insurance and pass it to the Secretary. The Secretary will keep a note of insurance renewal dates as well as the copy cover-notes. The Secretary will write to the relevant tutor requesting an up-to-date cover-note at renewal time. In addition, the Secretary will check each year that the Tutor is self-employed and thus paying income tax. If this is not the case, we cannot use the tutor/instructor as we are prevented from employing such an individual by our parent body, The Third Age Trust.

Once the above preliminaries have been cleared, a formal contract will be put in place by the Secretary between the tutor and Fleet U3A. The Secretary will be the custodian of these contracts. The Secretary will ensure that the relevant GL is aware of the tutor fee at the start of each term.

Finally, for the avoidance of doubt, if a group uses a tutor who is a member of Fleet U3A or any U3A, that tutor cannot receive payment.

If a paid tutor gives notice to stop tutoring a group, the GL must seek the committee's approval before entering into any discussions with a potential replacement paid tutor.

For the avoidance of doubt occasional tutors who attend to demonstrate an activity must have the minimum Public Liability Insurance noted above and show this to the GL.

2.4 Registers

Members are expected to enrol in their chosen groups on Group Enrolment Day or such other time as notified in advance by the committee. However, some members request to return to a group in the upcoming year, so the GL may wish to create an enrolment list at the last meeting in June or July. If at all possible, the GL should endeavour to create spaces for new members (for example by deleting those members' names where attendance has been less than 70%). A waiting list can be created by the GL.

Note: for Groups led by a Paid Tutor. During the last meeting or two of the summer term "taster" sessions should be made available for new members considering joining the

group the following September. This is to overcome the problem of new members not being sure if the group is right for them at the start of term and affecting the calculation of fees due for tutors.

Note, members intending to join a Paid Tutor Group or any group that uses a commercial venue that has to be contracted in advance for the first time will be asked for a non-refundable £10 deposit on Group Enrolment Day.

At the first meeting of the year (September and onwards) or the first attendance of any member, please check that members have a new and current membership card.

Each Group is supplied with an Attendance Register for recording attendance at each meeting. There are two parts to the Attendance Register. Part A is for the GL to record the names and membership numbers of the members of the group and any attendance fees collected. Enter details of "one-off" guests and visitors/temporary members on the form (see 2.5). The GL can retain this part of the form if they wish. Part B of the Attendance Register showing the numbers attending each session is for the GL to send to the Treasurer (treasurer@fleetu3a.org.uk) with the collected fees.

A Group Secretary should be appointed for each group as soon as possible each year to take on the administrative details, e.g., keeping the Attendance Register and collecting fees. For the calculation of attendance fees please refer to the Finance section below.

The GL is exempt from paying the attendance fee.

2.5 Guests and Visitors

Guests are defined as members of Fleet U3A who are not members of your group. Visitors are defined as people who are not members of Fleet U3A.

Attendance at Group Meetings is limited as follows: -

Guests:

- Must obtain prior permission from the GL and pay the attendance fee for the meeting
- Should not attend more than two meetings per year without joining the group
- Should be restricted in number by the GL consistent with the normal demands of the group's activities, space restrictions and health & safety considerations
- Should not be accepted at meetings of groups with paid tutors, unless by special prior arrangement with the GL and by making a contribution to the tutor's fee.

Visitors:

- Must always be accompanied by a group member and satisfy the four conditions above: and, if not a member of any U3A. Visitors must pay the attendance fee as well as the temporary membership fee.

- Must complete a Fleet U3A Temporary Membership Application Form and pay the temporary membership fee of £1. These forms are available on the Fleet U3A website.

More information and a procedural guide can also be found on the Fleet U3A website.

2.6 Carers

Some members may have carers and wish to be accompanied by their carer. Carers are welcome to attend group and general meetings free of charge, provided the member requests it and is also present. Under these circumstances, the carers are also covered by TAT liability insurance.

2.7 Emergencies and Accidents

It is good practice to ascertain at the start of each year the location of a venue's First Aid kit, the nearest defibrillator point and whether any group members have first aid training.

If it is important to have ICE (In Case of Emergency) information, should the need arise to contact a member's relative or friend, for instance on a planned visit or in a physical activity group, e.g., sailing, if it is permissible to do so. However, the provision of this information is at the member's discretion. If the GL, after consultation with group members, decides to have ICE data then those group members who wish to participate by providing ICE data must complete the ICE Form found at Appendix 1 of the Data Protection Policy, giving their name and signature alongside their ICE contact details.

If a member wishes the GL to hold medical condition data, e.g. a peanut allergy, there is a form "Group Leader Medical Data Consent Form" available from the website or the GLS.

You are required to inform the group you lead of the Fire Evacuation Procedure at the start of every meeting. Please make sure you are aware of this Procedure for the venue(s) you use. The GL should have a note of the venue's postcode and this should be noted on Part A of the Attendance Register as it may be requested by the Emergency Services.

If an accident occurs during a group meeting, please ensure the venue manager is informed and *their* accident reporting procedure is followed as well as ours. You should also inform the Secretary (secretary@fleetu4a.org.uk) of the incident and send him/her a completed accident report form.

2.8 Services of a Speaker and Sundry Other Costs

Groups wishing to engage the services of a speaker must fund the cost involved by levying charges on attendees. Those attending also need to pay the appropriate attendance fee.

The Speaker Fee Acknowledgement form (Revised April 2018) should be completed by the Speaker and GL and retained by the GL.

Note. On the advice of TAT, very small expenditures (i.e., occasional items at group level and funded solely by group members) are deemed “not material” as an overall cost compared with Fleet U3A’s overall budget, so are not included in the treasurer’s accounts. However, for the sake of prudence, GLs are advised to keep their own records, as it represents expenditure of their members’ money. Please note that due to covid we are not expecting to be able to use venue kitchens until January 2021 at the earliest and so members should bring their own refreshments until further notice.

Note. If a group speaker is particularly interesting and could appeal to a wider audience, please pass on the details to the **Monthly Meeting Secretary**.

2.9 Data Privacy, Protection and Communications with Group Members

GLs often hold members personal data at the Group level and are responsible for taking proportionate precautions that such data is kept secure and does not fall into the wrong hands. GLs are asked to keep such data in password encrypted format, where possible, if this data is held on computer files such as Word or Excel. If there are paper copies containing members’ personal information, then these should be kept securely when not being used for group activities. GLs are advised that any historical data should be destroyed at the end of each academic year or whenever no longer required for group activities and communications.

Please note that in order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations all email communications to your group members or other groups of people must be sent as “blind copies” (Bcc) to preserve the confidentiality of the email addresses. Non blind copies can only be sent where you have written agreement from the recipients to that effect. The use of emails should be restricted to group business or Fleet U3A business. [Note if you delegate communications to sub-groups make them aware of the Bcc requirements].

Note – Fleet U3A Data Protection and Privacy Policies are available on the Fleet U3A website.

Beacon and Group Management and Communication

There are facilities within our Beacon Membership Management System to help in administering Groups and communication with Group Members. Functions available include maintaining your Group Record and a list of Group members, securely and easily emailing your Group Members (in line with GDPR requirements), creating one-off and regular Group Meetings on the Calendar and recording your group's income and expenditure.

To request a Beacon System User ID and Password and for further details of the Group functions available in Beacon please contact the Beacon Administrator via email to beaconadmin@fleetu3a.org.uk

2.10 Publications and Website

2.10.1 Newsletters

The **Newsletter Editor** sends a monthly Newsletter, with the exception of August and January, to all members by e-mail. The first part refers in general to matters concerning GLs; the rest is made up of articles and information relevant to all members. All GLs will be expected to contribute from time to time and it is suggested that you keep a few notes regarding your group's activities to make your contribution interesting and/or amusing. You may like to ask a group member to write the piece for the Newsletter. Please respond promptly to requests from the **Newsletter Editor** for any items. All contributions for the Newsletter must be with the Newsletter Editor- by 5.00 pm on the third Friday of the month.

If any member of your group does not have email, please try to arrange for them to have an e-buddy who will print the newsletter for them and also take a printed copy of your newsletter to your meetings.

1.10.2 Website

The Fleet U3A website includes sections for GLs (which contain a lot of useful information for GLs), Groups and Newsletters. The section 'Groups' contains a brief description of your group - please ensure it is kept up to date. If you need to change or add any information, please contact the **Webmaster**.

2.11 Group Visits

A few groups arrange their own visits from time-to-time. To ensure that these are recognised as "official" Fleet U3A visits and are therefore covered by TAT insurance (see section 4), the procedure to follow is:

- Inform the Fleet U3A **Secretary** and **Treasurer** of your intention and details well before the visit.
- Ensure that there are sufficient group members available and willing to pay to cover all costs.
- Ensure that all invoices are sent directly by the service provider (e.g., the coach company) to the "Treasurer, Fleet & District U3A", who will settle the account.
- Ensure that all members' payments reach the **Treasurer** before payment of the invoice is necessary.

- Where members are travelling en-bloc to a venue (e.g., by hired coach), ensure that a list of emergency contacts for those travelling is provided to the **Secretary in advance** in case of need.
- If empty spaces are offered to friends and families of members, they must enroll as temporary members for the duration of the visit.
- It is highly recommended that members going on group visits take out personal travel insurance to cover cancellations. Where Fleet U3A is able to obtain a refund, this will be passed on to the members.

Payments from members should be by cash or cheques only, payable to **'Fleet U3A'**. We do not have the facility for credit card payments. No refunds are given in the case of disinclination or inability to travel unless the place can be sold on. Also, no refunds can be given in the event of cancellation of the visit due to circumstances beyond the control of Fleet U3A unless the monies paid can be recovered from the travel agent/coach company/venue, etc. Unpaid entry tickets to venues will be refunded. Driver's tip and parking are included in the price.

2.12 Problem Solving and issues between group members

2.12.1 Problem Solving

Sometimes, issues can arise within a group that disrupt the smooth running and spoil the enjoyment for everyone. Please do not leave a problem too long before trying to resolve it. Talk to your Group's Coordinator, the GL Secretary or the Committee if you are unsure how to resolve the problem or just want someone to explore options with. You can also ring the National Office if you want to talk something through or check something out. [Tel: - 020 8466 6139]

2.12.2 Issues between group members

Where there is potential for friction it is advisable to begin by bringing it into the open. Either you or another person could try to facilitate a discussion either with the members concerned or with the whole group, but it is important that the facilitator remains neutral and non-judgemental. If you cannot reach a resolution informally speak to your Group's Coordinator, the GLS or a member of your committee. If a situation does not resolve itself and becomes acrimonious your committee can consult the advice on resolution procedures provided by the Trust. There are also Trust volunteers trained to support with resolving disputes. [Tel: - 020 8466 6139].

2.13 Handover of Group Leadership

In the event that you hand over the role of GL in the middle of a term or end of year, please ensure that this Handbook, group members' personal data and all other unused registers, etc. are handed to the person taking over. Delete any group members' personal data kept in computer files. Ensure you inform the GLS and provide the name, telephone number and email address of the new GL. If you have a key to the venue, please pass your key to the GL and inform the Venue Administrator and the **Venues Secretary**.

3. FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

3.1 General

As we operate as a charity there is a need for us to be transparent in our management of income and expenditure. Our accounts are examined annually and are subject to scrutiny by the Charity Commission. We need to ensure that this transparency is carried through in all our activities. Thus, all attendance or tutor fee income and associated expenditure must be clearly documented on the "official" forms provided and supported by relevant receipts. We need to be able to produce evidence to support monies collected and paid out for the examiner of the accounts or any individual member of Fleet U3A who may wish to challenge such transactions.

The funding for Fleet U3A comes through the annual membership fee (currently £14), attendance fees collected by Group Leaders (currently £1.00 per for up to a 1 hour session and £1.50 per for a meeting longer than 1 hour) and voluntary donations received from members and non-members. These three main funding streams contribute to our central fund.

All venue hire costs are paid by the treasurer from our central fund. Consequently, larger well-attended groups pay more than the cost of their venue hire and therefore subsidise smaller groups' venue costs. It is worth noting that members can join as many groups as they can fit into their diaries and will pay the same attendance fee at them all knowing that any small group they attend is supported by their attendance fees paid at the larger groups.

The Third Age Trust (TAT) states that there are two options for funding activities. We have decided to adopt the second option which is to charge a small annual subscription covering general meetings, central costs and newsletters, etc, with all other activities paid for separately by a set fee per session. [*Information for Treasurers Feb 2011 - Third Age Trust*]. It is worth noting that the main U3A Committee can subsidise any interest group by covering losses which are directly related to the objectives of the U3A [*Information for Treasurers Feb 2011 - Third Age Trust*].

3.2 Income

3.2.1 Attendance Fees at Hired Venues

Each meeting members will pay an attendance fee of £1 for a session of one hour or £1.50 for a session longer than one hour.

Please note that going forward, when “hybrid” meetings take place which combine people attending a venue in person or via zoom, all attendees will need to pay the attendance fee in order to cover the cost of the venue.

3.2.1.1 Standard venue hires

In an effort to decrease cross contamination from handling cash during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, GLs are requested to collect the attendance fee for the term at the beginning of each term, ideally by the second meeting to ensure full commitment from group members. No refunds are made to those unable to attend a session in that term as the venue must be hired and paid for, however many group members are present. Those who enrol into a group in the third or subsequent week of a term should pay the remaining portion of the term’s attendance fee. All payments should be made by cheque or BACS to the GL or group secretary.

For example,

- Sessions longer than one hour
 - those who attend the first and second session of a fourteen-week course where each session is longer than one hour pay $14 * £1.50 = £21$ by the second meeting.
 - Those who enrol in week three of the example course above will only pay $12 * £1.50 = £18$.
- Sessions one hour or less
 - those who attend the first and second session of a fourteen-week course where each session is one hour pay $14 * £1.00 = £14$ by the second meeting.
 - Those who enrol in week three of the example course above will only pay $12 * £1.00 = £12$.

3.2.1.2 Non-Standard venue hires

Some groups, for example sailing and bowling, incur higher fixed costs which have to be covered by the group members. It is suggested that the fee should be based on the number of attendees at the first session together with other enrolled members who

confirm by email their intention to attend. There would be no refunds for non-attendance.

Any shortfall in fee collected during the term/year should be added to the costs of the following term/year.

3.2.2 Private and Hire Free Venues

An attendance fee is not required to be paid to Fleet U3A by Groups that meet in a Private or Hire Free Venue. The Committee recommends that a fee should be paid by the members directly to the person providing their own home as a venue to cover refreshments and any other costs. An Attendance Register must be sent to the Treasurer at the end of each term.

3.2.3 Professional Tutor Fees

The GL must ensure that all those that signed up for the sessions are charged the appropriate fee. This will be the tutor fee divided by the number of attendees on week two together with other enrolled members who confirm by email their intention to attend. No one should be able to join after week two unless they have paid the **full** tutor/instructor fee. This does not apply where new members are being enrolled from the waiting list. In this case they would pay the same weekly rate as the other group members for the remaining weeks of the term. All payments should be made by cheque or BACS to the GL or group secretary.

Any shortfall in fees collected during the term/year should be added to the costs of the following term/year.

Those attending also need to pay the appropriate attendance fee. (See Section 3.2.1).

3.3 Expenditure

There are 3 categories of refundable expenditure as detailed below: -

- 1. Items that may be deducted from Attendance Fees on Part B of the Attendance Register.** For example, occasional photo-copying costs (the cost of regular photocopying to facilitate group activities should be covered by the group). Details and relevant receipts must be provided.
- 2. Other consumable items.** These are items other than the ones at 1 above which would typically be consumed over the course of the year. Approval must be obtained from the Treasurer before expenditure is committed. The GL may reclaim agreed expenditure direct from the Treasurer using the official expense claims form (Revised November 2018) attaching relevant receipts.

3. **Capital Expenditure** – the purchase of equipment or high-cost items - must be approved by the Committee before an order is placed. Once approval has been given, the Group Leader may place the order and request that the invoice be sent to the Treasurer for payment. Capital Expenditure is characterised as: -

- Items cannot be consumable
- Items would have a lasting quality – say a minimum of 1 year
- Items would be owned by the Group – not an individual

Any other group-specific expenditure must be agreed and paid for by group members. These will not be chargeable to Fleet U3A general funds. See also the note at 2.8 concerning record keeping of these group-specific expenditures.

The above-mentioned claims forms can be found on the Fleet U3A website in the Group Leaders section.

3.4 **Banking and Accounting**

GLs should send to the **Treasurer** the attendance fees either by cheque (made payable to Fleet U3A) or transfer the money electronically by BACS to “Fleet U3A”, giving a unique group reference and notify the **Treasurer**. BACS account details are: - 00006405, sort code 40-52-40). In either case Part B of the Attendance Register, along with any receipts for expenses, must also be submitted.

GLs who do not collect fees must provide a copy of Part B of the Attendance Register at the end of each term to the **Treasurer** with details of the weekly attendance figures.

GLs that collect fees to cover the cost of a professional tutor should complete the Tutor Finance Form and return it to the **Treasurer**, with the tutor fees, within a month of the beginning of term.

The GL must also receive, check and approve the tutor invoices and then submit to the Treasurer. The tutor will not be paid until the fees due have been received.

The Treasurer is responsible for the payment of invoices for Professional Tutors, the hire of venues and any Capital Expenditure. Any capital expenditure must be submitted to the committee for approval before it is incurred.

4. INSURANCE

We are covered by the Third Age Trust Liability Insurance. Please contact the GLS if a copy is required.

5. HOLIDAY PERIODS

5.1 Summer (July and August)

Those Groups which use a venue hired by Fleet U3A stop at the “end of June”. The end of June for this purpose is defined as the 30th June where this falls on a Saturday or Sunday or otherwise the following Saturday.

Those Groups which do not use a venue hired by Fleet U3A may continue through this period but should include the meeting dates in the published programme.

Those Groups that use a hired venue may continue through this period provided they book and cover their own venue costs and any applicable tutor fees. These dates should not be included in the published programme.

5.2 Christmas, Easter and school half terms

Groups are encouraged to avoid having meetings at these times. Any decision to hold such meetings rests with the GL. Such decisions should be confirmed on the form that is provided during the annual programme development process that takes place in the January - March period.