

u3a FERNDOWN

**GROUP LEADER
INFORMATION**

Group Leader Information and Support

Thank you for agreeing to organise an interest group. We are sure you will find it extremely rewarding. However, it might seem a bit daunting initially. This document is intended to provide advice and support.

Interest groups are the life blood of Fu3a, and each group will develop its own structure. However, it is important that your group follows our ethos of shared, participative, and self-help learning. The result will not only be an increase in knowledge, but a supportive and friendly atmosphere which enables everyone to participate.

Our Aims and Principles

- Membership of Fu3a is open to all who are no longer in full time employment.
- Learning is by the members, for the members.
- No qualifications are sought or offered. Learning is for its own sake, with enjoyment being the prime motive, not qualifications or awards.
- There is no distinction between the learners and the teachers. They are all u3a members.
- No payments are made to members for services to Fu3a.
- However, if you require equipment please refer to the Committee.

If you are starting a new group, these are the recommended steps to undertake:

- Discuss and develop the proposal for your group with the Group Coordinator/Committee. The Group Coordinator can be contacted at fu3agrcoordinator@gmail.com
- Consider what the aims of the group are – what are you hoping to learn/achieve/share by offering the group?
- Visit the National u3a public pages to see if there is a relevant Subject Advisor page for your group's activity. Identify what you want to achieve from your first meeting.

Before the first meeting

- Especially if the venue is new to you familiarise yourself with the location, layout, facilities, First Aid and Fire arrangements and Caretaker contact (Caretaker contact information on Beacon).
- A familiarisation visit can be arranged through our Venue Coordinator fu3avenue@gmail.com
- Once group membership is published email members welcoming them, confirming venue and date details.
- Separately email members on the waiting list explaining the situation.

The first group meeting

Recommended steps to take at the first meeting:

- Introduce yourself and the purpose of the group as you see it.

- Ask about the skills and experience within the group. If you can pass this information to the Committee –for future groups.
- Agree how the register is to be kept especially if members are to sign themselves in.
- Point out Fire Exits to members.
- Agree, if relevant, the level that the group will be aimed at – beginners, improvers, advanced.
- If possible, agree a deputy – illness happens.
- Agree dates, times etc. – sometimes these change.
- Identify any accessibility needs that group members may have.
- Agree how contact will be made. e.g. Beacon database.

Copyright

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Insurance

All members of Ferndown u3a are covered by the u3a Insurance policy in Venues, home groups and trips.

Equipment

We have equipment such as projectors and screen if required. Most venues also have equipment you can use. Please advise the Group Coordinator of requirements.

Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)

Ferndown u3a Equipment is PAT tested and certification issued by a qualified Electrician. If you use personal equipment at a venue the u3a will arrange for it to be PAT tested.

Venues

- Please encourage members to leave venues as you find them.
- If required to stack chairs please, not in front of radiators.
- If you need chairs and tables set out in a specific way please consult with the caretaker at the venue. A plan often helps.
- Some venues require a key code. You will be advised if this is the case and the code given.
- Some venues, especially care homes, may have particular signing in and signing out or other security arrangements. Please ensure that you group are familiar and comply with these.

Care Homes

Some of our venues are in care homes. A few clients residing in the home may wish to attend your group. Please make them welcome as this is their home.

Accidents and incidents

If an emergency incident happens during a group session you should call the emergency services as soon as possible.

Report all accidents and incidents to your Committee as soon as possible and complete an accident form. An **Accident Report Form** is available on the Fu3a website. It is important to have an accurate record in case of future problems relating to the incident. For example, if damage is caused to property by a member of the group, take full details, as it may be the subject of an insurance claim. All Venues have Accident Books.

Emergency Contact Details

These are included in the members' details on Beacon. Additionally, along with your Group Register you receive a Group Members' list which includes emergency contact numbers.

Registers

Registers are sent out at the beginning of term. These also double up as fire register. Please keep for one year.

Absence

If a member is absent for 3 or more weeks and has not informed you of holidays or illness, please contact them to

enquire if they have any problems or queries and if they no longer wish to continue with the group. If that is the case, please inform the Membership Secretary to allow any members on the waiting list to take up the place.

Illness

If a member is seriously ill / in hospital please let the Group Coordinator know so we can send a card.

Refreshments

You are not required to provide refreshments. If you do please make a small charge to cover cost as you should not be out of pocket.

Out of Pocket Expenses

No group leader is expected to fund a group. Some group require specific equipment e.g. Art / Craft. Please share the cost with members.

Policies, Procedures & Risk Assessments

All documents can be accessed on the website www.ferndownu3a.co.uk/policies/ Each venue also has its own Risk Assessment.

Website / Beacon Database

Leaders can contact their members through the Beacon system. All Group Leaders have a separate login to enable access to group members' details and allow you to contact them. Training is given. You can access this through the members' portal Group Leader section.

It is advisable to use the Beacon to email group members. If using a personal email, please blind copy (BCC) members.

Sharing Information

It can be good to share information about your group and this can be done in several ways:

- Send to the Website Coordinator to upload on group information page.
- Send to the Social Media / Facebook Coordinator
- Send for inclusion in the Fu3a newsletter.
- Photographs: if you do not wish to be included in photographs it is your responsibility to exclude yourself by notifying the Website Administrator.

Committee Contact

To contact a specific Committee member please refer to the Governance page on the website or send to ferndownu3a@gmail.com where it will be forwarded to the appropriate person.

Problem Solving

Talk to your Group Coordinator or Committee if you are unsure how to resolve a problem or just want someone to explore options with.

Open Day

We host an “Open Morning” on the last Friday before the Whitsun Holiday. This is an opportunity for you to advertise your group and answer members’ questions. The Events Coordinator will contact you prior to the day to discuss your requirements.