

STARTING A NEW GROUP

Without group leaders there would be no U3A.

New groups are always welcome. There is a great deal of help and support available to anyone who wishes to develop an interest, which is not currently catered for within our u3a or to start a second group if the existing one is full.

The Groups' Co-ordinator: (contact details in magazine) will offer advice and practical assistance where necessary so please do not hesitate to contact him/her to discuss plans. You can put an idea forward even if you feel unable to progress it as someone else may do so. Should the Groups' Co-ordinator not be available, feel free to speak to the Secretary, Chairman or other Committee Member.

There are no hard and fast rules on how a group is run. It is for the members to decide. There are, of course certain responsibilities and legal requirements but these are not onerous and are fully explained in the Group Leaders' Guide. The first steps to the formation of a new group are as follows.

Establish Interest:

It usually becomes apparent that an interest exists as a result of a conversation between members or a suggestion from a member who would like to learn about a certain topic. Ideally, but not necessarily, a potential Leader will come forward to progress matters. The Groups' Co-ordinator may or may not be involved.

Advertise:

You may advertise your ideas in the quarterly Magazine, the web site and on the Coffee Morning Notice Board. You can also ask the Chairman to make an announcement at the Coffee Morning. It is also a good idea to talk to other members – the personal approach is often more successful than the written word. (The

magazine Editor's and Webmaster's contact details are in the magazine)

Collect Names:

Having advertised your ideas, you will need to start an interest list. You might have enough names immediately or you may need to remind members over a period of several months before you have enough names for an initial meeting.

Set up initial meeting:

Once you have a number of people interested in your Group, set up a meeting to discuss the way forward. If you feel you need support, ask the Groups' Co-ordinator to attend the meeting, or to lead it jointly with you.

Style of Group:

Groups vary in their format and style. Some, such a keep fit class, may require an expert tutor. Others will operate successfully with an enthusiastic Leader who has some knowledge and is willing to learn more in order to lead meetings. Other groups operate on the basis that members take turns in organising meetings, perhaps researching a topic and introducing it to others. There are also Groups that require minimal organisation such as those where members come together to play a game, possibly scrabble or mah-jong.

Meeting place

Some groups are able to operate from members' homes, others will need to hire suitable premises. The committee can help with suggestions for premises.

Having got this far you should ask to see a copy of the group leaders' guide which will give more detailed information.

Good Luck