

## **CRAVEN u3a**

### **Guidelines for Group Leaders**

**Issued February 2024**

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## 1. Why these guidelines?

These guidelines, covering a wide range of practical issues, are designed to assist Group Leaders in carrying out their work effectively. As Group Leaders have invariably been ordinary members of group in the past, the guidelines assume a reasonable degree of experience about how Craven u3a runs its groups. But these groups vary enormously in aims, size, venues and financial control. Consequently, the contents of these guidelines will not apply equally to all groups.

Group Leaders are central to the u3a ethos and mission. As such they play a crucial role in the life of the u3a. The Craven u3a Committee values its Group Leaders and is committed to providing them with every possible support in their work. These guidelines take it as axiomatic that Group Leaders

- exert a positive influence over members' well-being and quality of life
- enrich our local community and make it a better place to live
- are the public face of the u3a

Craven u3a warmly thanks and proudly salutes its Group Leaders for their commitment and enthusiasm, without which the quality of our members' lives would be appreciably diminished

## 2. Group Leaders: practical points

### Group Leaders:

- are volunteers and do not receive any payment but are entitled to a discounted membership fee.
- are represented by a member of the Craven u3a Committee, the Group Leader Representative, who should be consulted first with any general query or suggestion which may need committee consideration.
- have the opportunity to publicise their groups and meet prospective group members at the Craven u3a Open Event held at Skipton Town Hall in August each year.
- are invited to Group Leaders' meetings, held at least once a year to discuss issues affecting them
- are expected to operate within rules and policies of Craven u3a, and in a manner that maintains and enhances its reputation.

*Note: Each group can only have one leader nominated as the honorary member.*

## 3. Group Leaders and groups

Members join our u3a to take part in groups. The benefits of membership such as getting people out and about, promoting mental health and kindling and sustaining friendships accumulate over time. It can be well said that groups are the beating heart of the u3a. It follows therefore that Group Leaders are a good deal more than 'mere' organisers.

### a) The Craven u3a programme

The annual Craven u3a programme lists details of every group. The Programme Secretary is responsible for producing this key on-line document which is designed to help members finalise their choices of groups. This is a multifaceted operation requiring close cooperation between the Programme Secretary and Group Leaders.

As of the end of February the Programme Secretary will ask all Group Leaders to provide details of their course for the following u3a session, which will begin as of the end of September (see the simplified flowchart of the process below). That information having been collated, Group Leaders will receive two or three drafts of the programme and it is their responsibility to check that their entry is correct in all respects.

Month	Key tasks co-ordinated by the Programme Secretary (PS) (DBM = Data Base Manager, VS = Venues Secretary)
February/March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DBM, PS and VS agree format of Airtable for submitting group details</li> <li>• Group Leaders confirm if they are offering the same courses or new ones</li> </ul>
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PS and DBM make manual form and Airtable link available on website and send our Airtable link to Group Leaders</li> <li>• Submitted course entries are uploaded on Airtable by PS and DBM</li> </ul>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Venues Secretary confirms venues</li> <li>• Group Leaders confirm accuracy of their entries for the draft programme</li> <li>• All course details to be received by PS on 31 May</li> </ul>
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group Leaders receive the draft programme and are invited to make any last-minute changes to their entries</li> </ul>
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The programme is ready to be sent to members</li> </ul>

**Simplified flowchart of the process for assembling the programme.**

Group Leaders are asked to meet deadlines for information on their groups as requested by the Programme Secretary. In particular, they should check their group descriptions and timetables as soon as they are received. Any errors and amendments to avoid misunderstandings should be promptly communicated to the Programme Secretary

Starting and finishing dates and half term (if any) are determined by each Group Leader. Please note that Craven u3a encourages experimentation with formats e.g. fortnightly meetings, short courses (i.e. less than 10 weeks), as well as alternation between in-door and outdoor activities.

### **b) Group activities.**

Group Leaders are encouraged to organise outings and trips, as these can increase interest as well as social involvement. However, they should not use their own bank accounts for any monies (See item 5 below 'Group Leaders and expenses). These trips should be optional unless advertised as an integral part of the group.

It is usual for Group Leaders using indoor venues to organise a refreshment break halfway through each class. Facilities are available for tea/coffee making at most venues. You should encourage group member participation in the organisation of this by seeking volunteers to organise refreshments, washing up, collecting money for materials etc., and setting up and restoring tables and chairs. The 'Organiser' should provide tea, coffee, sugar, milk and biscuits, and levy a charge to offset the cost. Some groups donate unused coffee break profit to an agreed charitable cause. The 'coffee money' is controlled by the group and should NOT go through the Treasurer.

Where Group Leaders have to cancel a meeting because of illness, weather or another reason, it is their responsibility to contact all group members and advise them of the cancellation or to arrange for group members to assist in the contacting. Let the venue know of the cancellation and also inform the Venue Secretary and the Treasurer. Where meetings need to be cancelled for more than two weeks, the Craven u3a Chair should also be informed.

### **c) Handling group enrolment, reserved places and waiting lists**

These recommendations with respect to group enrolment, reserved places and waiting lists. have been developed in consultation with Group Leaders during 2023 and 2024 and drawn up to be of practical use to Group Leaders and meet three criteria:

- They support the u3a ethos.
- They counter perceptions of unfairness (including among new or prospective members) and lack of inclusivity.
- They are acceptable to Group Leaders, but allowing them discretion

The last point is important because some recommendations simply cannot apply to certain types of groups. For example, the recommendation for waiting lists below has no relevance for some but not all the walking groups!

#### Group enrolment

Group Leaders are expected to be responsible for members' enrolment and to decide how manage reserved places. Enrolment will not take place at the Open Event, but at a date somewhat later as determined by the programme Secretary. Between those dates (in July and August) enrolment help, including help sessions, will be available. Group Leaders have priority booking for one group of their choice. Where applicable (e.g. on session-based courses), groups may enrol over their maximum number, as it is rare to get 100% attendance.

#### Reserved places

This is a fraught issue, as some Group Leaders are against the reservation of places in any circumstances, whilst others find it acceptable to have up 25% of places reserved. By their nature language groups are relatively small-sized and many of their members prefer to continue from one year to the next.. Furthermore, groups that take place in the Group Leader's home are automatically limited in size. In fact, only a relatively small number of groups exercise reserved places for what they regard as good reasons. In these cases, the Group Leader's judgement should be respected in the case of reserved places. The view of the committee is that our groups should be as open as possible to new members because that fits the u3a ethos. Group Leaders who are in doubt should seek the advice of the Group Leader Representative.

#### Waiting lists

If an enrolled member does not attend the first three sessions without giving apologies, they are to be removed from the group and their place given to the first person on the waiting list. In the case of those groups to which this recommendation can be readily applied, Group Leaders should make this stricture clear in their initial communication with the group. Where applicable, Group Leaders are entitled to expect that the individual member will attend most sessions.

### **d) Visitors**

Visitors to u3a Groups should be recorded on a separate piece of paper giving the name of the individual and date. This is for Insurance purposes with the Third Age Trust. Please see 'Visitor Policy' on the web site.

### **e) Publicising your group**

Group Leaders are encouraged to publicise their group in Craven u3a's on-line Newsletter. They can also submit photographs to the webmaster for publication on the Craven u3a website. The e-mail address is [website@cravenu3a.org.uk](mailto:website@cravenu3a.org.uk). Please note that photographs can only be published with the permission of the people who appear in them. This is a requirement of GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations).

### **f) Good communication practice**

Group Leaders are requested to respond to each and every call and mail from members. If a member raises a matter which causes you uncertainty, you should contact the Group Leader Representative.

## **4. Craven u3a Executive Committee**

The members of the Craven u3a Executive Committee (hereafter the committee) are all trustees and as such ensure that the our u3a is run in compliance with the constitution and policies of the Third Age Trust. They view themselves as servants of all our members. In time Group Leaders are likely to be involved with various members of the committee. The Group Leader Representative is often your first port of call on matters of general concern about running groups. He or she may refer you to another member of the committee, as necessary. Group Leaders are free to contact a specific member of the committee on specific matters. Accordingly, it is useful for Group Leaders to have an idea of the remit of member of the committee. Here are their role descriptions and their Craven u3a e-mail address.

#### **Chair**

- *The Chair will have a thorough knowledge of our constitution and all related polices to ensure that Craven u3a as a charitable body complies with these requirements and duly carries out its purposes for the public good.*
- *The role involves maintaining the charitable objectives and purposes of The Third Age Trust (TAT) covering such things as insurance, copyright licensing, H&S (Health and Safety), GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations)*
- *The task requires ensuring that members of the Craven u3a Executive Committee, Group Leaders, trustees, and any ad- hoc appointments are aware of their responsibilities, whilst providing support and assistance to officers and trustees in their roles.*

E-mail: [chair@cravenu3a.org.uk](mailto:chair@cravenu3a.org.uk)

#### **Business Secretary**

- *Liaise with the Chair and executive committee members to produce an agenda for the monthly meeting, and the AGM plus supporting documents.*
- *Circulate the agenda 7 days before meetings*
- *Take minutes at committee meetings and the AGM and circulate draft for amendments preferably within 4 days the meeting*
- *Include a table of action points as an appendix to the minutes*
- *Upload agendas, draft and approved minutes to the website.*

E-mail: [bussec@cravenu3a.org.uk](mailto:bussec@cravenu3a.org.uk)

#### **Database Manager**

- *Administer the Beacon membership database.*
- *Advise the committee and other Beacon users on best practice about the system*
- *Sort out membership data problems*
- *Facilitate access for Group Leaders and other members who require a higher level of access.*
- *Offer training to members in general and specifically to Group Leaders to help them administer their groups on Beacon.*

- *Develop and maintain the Beacon training website*

Email: [datamanger@cravenu3a.org.uk](mailto:datamanger@cravenu3a.org.uk)

### **Group Leaders' Representative**

- *Support and advise Group Leaders on all aspects of running their groups*
- *Ensure that Group Leaders perform their role in accordance with the u3a ethos*
- *Represent Group Leader concerns to the committee and seek to resolve them*
- *Call and run meetings of Group Leaders (at least once a year) to bring them up-to-date with issues of importance affecting the running of groups*
- *Resolve issues between individual Group Leaders and members of their groups*
- *Facilitate the setting up of new groups*

E-mail: [tutorrep@cravenu3a.org.uk](mailto:tutorrep@cravenu3a.org.uk)

### **Membership Secretary**

- *Act as the interface between the Committee and the membership at large about all aspects of members' records with reference to up-to-dateness and accuracy.*
- *Help members who are not confident with using the computer to renew their membership and to enrol onto groups or activities.*
- *Advise potential new members<sup>1</sup>.*
- *Help current members who in error have created two membership accounts*
- *Process the postal applications for renewal of membership and enrolment onto Groups of those members who do not use a computer.*

E-mail: [membership@cravenu3a.org.uk](mailto:membership@cravenu3a.org.uk)

### **Programme Secretary**

- *Produce u3a annual programme of group activities in close liaison with Group Leaders, the Venues Secretary and Database Manager*
- *Check and double-check with Group Leaders that their entries are completely accurate prior to the release in July of the programme to our members and interested parties*
- *Inform members of any necessary updates to the programme and its operation*
- *Organise the Open Event (usually at the beginning of August) at Skipton Town Hall and handling supporting publicity in the community*

E-mail: [progsec@cravenu3a.org.uk](mailto:progsec@cravenu3a.org.uk)

### **Treasurer:**

- *Maintain financial records, in accordance with the financial policies and guidance of the Third Age Trust*
- *Prepare the financial accounts for the annual general meeting and for filing with the Charity Commission.*
- *Use Beacon to record the financial activity of Craven u3a.*
- *Work closely with Group Leaders in the administration of group venue charges.*

Email: [treasurer@cravenu3a.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@cravenu3a.org.uk)

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<sup>1</sup> Group Leaders who receive queries from their group member about their membership status should advise such members to contact the Membership Secretary

## Venues Secretary

- *Assist in wider aspects of Craven u3a programme development.*
- *Liaise with the Programme Secretary and Group Leaders to find and book cost-effective venues that have the facilities required for the different activities.*
- *Provide Group Leaders with a list of venues with prices and facilities.*
- *Manage the financial risk, with the Treasurer, providing a venue budget for the entire u3a programme.*
- *Update the Treasurer and committee throughout the year on venue costs and any problems that may occur*
- *Identify any new suitable venues.*
- *Review the venue risk assessments submitted by the Group Leaders*

Email: [venues@cravenu3a.org.uk](mailto:venues@cravenu3a.org.uk)

Please note: there are two other members of the committee fulfilling various roles without a specified portfolio.

## 5. Beacon

Beacon is the u3a movement's integrated membership, groups, finance and mailing system. Beacon allows you to keep in touch with your group in its entirety as well as with individual members. It is available via the Craven u3a website as follows:

Membership > dropdown menu > Beacon Links > Group Leader Logon > (with your username & password > Groups > your group).

You can then input or change the information that you want to appear and the dates and start time of your group. Remember: if you change these, let the Programme Secretary and Venues Secretary know. Under Members you can see your group's membership list, which you can download. You may use this list to send them emails.

*Note: Every Group Leader must become familiar with using Beacon as a store of information about group members and communicating with groups in their entirety or individually*

A list of group members with names, addresses, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers is available on Beacon to each Group Leader prior to class commencement.

If, after enrolment, a change has to be made (e.g. concerning a start date or venue), each Group Leader is responsible for notifying group members accordingly. Group members should be telephoned with any urgent information, rather than depending on email where there is no confirmation of quick receipt. Any changes should be notified to the Programme Secretary and the Venues Secretary.

Group Leaders should check attendance against the list of group members at each meeting of the venue-based groups. Where the group has a waiting list and there are spaces available because of 'no shows' the Group Leader should contact these people to determine if they do intend to take part. If not, the Group Leader should invite people from the waiting list and advise the Membership Secretary so that the group records can be amended.

## 6. Group Leaders and Money

Group costs might include consumables such as hand-outs, photocopies, playing cards, board games as well as charges for the purchase or hire of equipment or materials. These costs should be advertised prior to enrolment. Group Leaders are entitled to levy a charge on their members. Groups can collect such sums of money as the group members and leadership deem to be necessary to undertake their activities. Group Leaders should keep records of their groups' transactions in order to:

- Allow the group members to understand how their monies are being managed.

- Maintain transparency and trust for all concerned.
- Minimise the risk of error and potential loss of funds.
- Allow group leaders to maintain cash floats.
- If asked by the Craven Treasurer, be able to show how money was collected and spent

THE ARRANGEMENTS AND USE OF ANY MONEY COLLECTED BY GROUPS SHOULD BE EXPLAINED TO THE GROUP MEMEBERS AND THE CRAVEN U3A TREASURER

(See Appendix 1)

### **Group Venue Charges**

In 2023 Craven u3a instituted a system of group venue charges. Collecting the charges and banking the proceeds proved less troublesome than many Group Leaders anticipated. However, at the end of 2022 it was announced that Barclays Bank would be closing its branch in Skipton in March 2024. This situation will inevitably affect how we are able to bank the group venue charges. Please refer to Appendix 2 for note from the u3a Treasurer about handling the venue charges for the foreseeable future.

### **Group financial issues and Insurance.**

Please note that all Group Leaders are covered by Public Liability Insurance through the Third Age Trust that oversees u3a activities nationally. Please contact the Chair if you have any concerns about the extent of this cover.

*Note : Craven Stationery, 22/24 Coach Street, Skipton offers a discount to u3a Group Leaders for photocopying (mention Craven u3a) and can usually do small quantities, while you wait.*

## **7. Awkward Situations**

Occasionally, situations arise which cause Group Leaders uncertainty or problems. For general queries, you should contact the Group Leader Representative. In the case of specific issues to do with venues, membership or Beacon, contact the respective committee appointee. In the case of serious problems, which might involve an external body such as the police or social services, you should contact the Chair.

### **a) Dealing with difficult group members**

The behaviour of individual group members may, on occasion, cause problems for Leaders as well as other group members. It is recognised that the success of Craven u3a is dependent upon the expertise and goodwill of the Group Leaders, who give their time and experience freely. The Committee will give maximum support to Group Leaders to ensure that they and their groups have the most enjoyable experience possible.

If problems occur the following action is recommended:

1. The Group Leader should take the member on one side and inform them that such behaviour is unacceptable as it interferes with the well-being of the group. It is emphasised that an early word is likely to have the best results.
2. If no improvement occurs, then the Group Leader should inform the member that the problem still persists and it will be referred to the Committee if the situation does not improve.
3. Group Leaders should NOT bar a member from their group. The Craven u3a Chair should be informed and will take the following action:

- a) A Committee member will contact the group member concerned and warn them that a continuation of their present behaviour could result in the termination of their membership of the group.



**b)** The final stage, if (in the view of the Group Leader) there is no improvement, is for the Committee, following an opportunity for the group member to have a hearing, to terminate their membership of Craven u3a.

## **8. Members with disabilities**

- a)** As part of the enrolment process members will be advised that, if they are worried that a disability or health problem (including memory-related ones) might be an issue, they should contact the Group Leader to discuss it. Leaders may be contacted by a member's carer to see if the venue environment is suitable. Please **do not ask** the group as a whole if any member has any disabilities.
- b)** Many people experience hearing loss as they get older, so please speak clearly and check, at the start of a session, that people can hear you. Some people with hearing problems lip-read (occasionally without knowing they are doing so,) so try not to turn your back to the group when you are speaking and make sure your face is not in darkness. Some hearing-impaired members may appear shy or not answer you – they are not ignoring you; they may not have heard you!
- c)** If there is a hearing loop at your venue make sure that it is switched on and tell the groups

## **9. Venue matters**

Those Group Leaders who use inside or outside venues **MUST** confirm the availability and suitability of venues with the Venues Secretary before the Programme is finalised.

Craven u3a will pay accommodation costs for up to 20 meetings a year for each group with 10 or more enrolled members. Any additional meetings should be booked by the Craven u3a Venues Secretary so that the group is covered by the Third Age Trust Insurance. However, the cost of using the venue for these additional meetings will need to be met by the group, and the Group Leader is responsible for making the appropriate payment to the venue owner.. We do not pay for any materials or equipment specific to a particular group. If there are fewer than 10 in your group we suggest meetings are held in someone's house in which case the small annual sum referred to above is paid.

Please check the venue before leaving to ensure that it is left in a clean and tidy state. Leaders with any concerns about their venue should contact the Venues Secretary and let the Group Leader Representative know.

### **a) Risk Assessment Form and Incident Report Form**

Prior to the course commencing each Group Leader should obtain a risk assessment form, which can be found on the Craven u3a home page. Click on Committee Matters and the drop-down box will lead you to various policy documents including the risk assessment form The completed form should be sent to the Venues Secretary.

In the unlikely event of an accident or injury to a group member or the Group Leader, the incident should be reported to the Group Leader Representative using the Incident Report Form, which is also to be found on the Craven u3a home page (Committee Matters>Incident Report Form.)

## **10. Copyright issues**

The Third Age Trust holds a copyright licence which permits Craven u3a Group Leaders and members to copy extracts, within clearly defined limits from books, journals, magazines and periodicals published in most countries. You are limited to one chapter from each book, one article from a journal or magazine, a short story or poem not exceeding 10 pages from an anthology, or 5% of the publication if greater than the above. Note that the licence does not cover printed music (including words), newspapers, maps, charts, exam papers and various other categories. Craven u3a and the Third Age Trust hold licences that mean groups are allowed to show DVD's, videos & films (including copying & showing programmes from TV) for educational purposes, provided no separate charge is made to see them.

## 11. On-line and other resources for Group Leaders

- a) The Craven u3a website ([www.cravenu3a.co.uk](http://www.cravenu3a.co.uk)) has plenty of useful information for Group Leaders. For example, policy documents are available on the home page.<sup>2</sup> Group Leaders are advised to be familiar with these documents.
- b) The Resource Centre of the Third Age Trust in London (0208 315 0199, open Tuesdays and Thursdays 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.) has a collection of non-book material for loan free of charge, except for the cost of return postage. The Third Age Trust website is: [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)
- c) Various teaching aids are available for loan to Group Leaders for use only on Craven u3a business. Contact the Chair to arrange to borrow any of them. Please see the Equipment List on the Group Leader Information page of the website to see everything that is available. *When being transported this equipment is only covered by our insurance when locked in the boot of a car.*

## 12. Group leaders and the future of Craven u3a

Craven u3a has long prided itself on the high number and diversity of its groups. In order to flourish, we need a steady flow of members to come forward as Group Leaders. This may be a case of taking over a group when perhaps after many years a Group Leader steps down or setting up a new group based on a particular topic or enthusiasm to share with others. Either way, the most important influence on prospective Group Leaders is a leader who they themselves have found inspiring. Furthermore, without new Group Leaders coming forward, there is no u3a!

## APPENDIX I

### Third Age Trust Advice to Group Leaders on Handling Money

The Third Age Trust has provided advice to all u3as about 'Handling Money and Payments in u3as'. The members of the Committee of Craven u3a are the Trustees of that Charity and are responsible for the proper handling of all funds of our u3a. Minor expenses, coffee money etc., should NOT be referred to the Treasurer.

Group Leaders dealing with large sums of money (for trips etc.) should NOT use their own bank accounts nor should they under any circumstances set up a bank account for their group using the u3a name. Group Leaders should seek advice from the Treasurer who, if it is deemed appropriate, will make arrangements for the Craven u3a account to be used.

**Travel Activities:** Leaders may organise field trips and outings to suitable subject areas. This should be encouraged as it increases interest and social involvement.

**Accommodation:** It is recommended that any Leader organising trips which include accommodation, should ensure that all cheques for payment be made out by individual members to the accommodation provider and not to the Group Leader. This is to ensure that he/she cannot be accused of acting as a Tour Operator, which has significant legal and insurance responsibilities and the possibility of serious financial and legal risks to both individuals and the main u3a.

**Donations:** Group Leaders are reminded that any money received or collected by their group as donations to charities should be paid direct to those charities and not to the Craven u3a Treasurer. Receipts should be obtained and retained by the group.

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<sup>2</sup> On the u3a website click on Committee Matters. In the drop-down box click on Policies. The following documents are listed.: General Data Protection Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Equality & Diversity Policy, Risk Assessment Forms, Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, Visitors Policy for u3a venues being used, TAT Insurance Cover Note, Incident Report Form

## Appendix 2

### Guidance on the handling of venue charges

Group Leaders will be aware that the *Barclays* branch in Skipton will be closing in March this year. This means that the committee has had to rethink the procedure for group leaders to pay in the group venue charges they collect.

The group venue charge of £5 or £10, should be taken from members at the first class they attend. If the course runs for two terms, you should take payment for them both at the beginning of the year. It is a good idea to ask a member of the group to manage these payments so that group leaders can concentrate on running the class. You should keep a record, for your own use, of the members who have paid. When you have collected most of the money, please pay this into the u3a account with *Barclays*. There are a number of ways you can do this.

1. Cash and cheques - made payable to *Craven u3a* - can be paid into a post office, using a business card.
2. You can keep the cash yourself and pay the u3a by *BACS* from your personal bank account. Please enter your name and the name of the group - abbreviated if necessary - as the reference. Please also keep a record of such payments for your own protection.
3. The committee is looking into the possibility of issuing group leaders with card readers so that they can accept payments via debit or credit cards.

For all methods, please take a photograph of the receipt or a screenshot of the *BACS* transaction and email it to [treasurer@cravenu3a.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@cravenu3a.org.uk), with the group name. If you receive additional payments, you can keep these until your final meeting and pay them in then.

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These new guidelines supersede and significantly update the last version dated August 2019.

Nigel Holden who is responsible for the guidelines warmly acknowledges the assistance of several members who commented on earlier versions: Keith Berrington, Vera Brearey, Anne MacDonald, Doug Hirst, Nick Jarvis, Mick Richings, Lesley Perkins, Laurie Prowse, Mike Valiant.