

# Groups Workshop (November 2024) - ISSUES BY E-MAIL

*In order of receipt (copied and pasted – highlights are mine – AG)*

- 1 I'm new to the role (and to u3a - only joined in February, was on the committee by July!!) so happy to just sit, listen and learn.

??NEW Coordinators ??

Shelagh Murray – Beverley u3a

- 2
1. I think I would like to discuss how we can encourage more members to lead groups to extend the range of activities on offer
  2. Also , just a thought, would a 'buddy up' system , between u3a's ,work to give support to new group leaders
  3. Also , how to encourage members to become Committee members!

Anne MacDonald - Craven

- 3
- Increasing groups, ideas to encourage confidence in folk to put themselves forward, ways to encourage deputy  
Group Leaders sharing responsibilities and of course succession planning.

Samantha Trigg - York u3a

- 4
- We're just starting up a project give more support to our group leaders and to encourage people who may be interested in starting new groups.

We hope to look at:

- a. The information on our web site - keeping it accurate
- b. Is it worth doing more with Facebook ?
- c. The Group Leader's handbook - trying to make the GL task less onerous
- d. Our publicity - monthly memo and Newsletter
- e. Open meetings - could we include something about groups news
- f. Annual Showcase - what's the best approach

This workshop is very timely for us and we're hoping to listen to others experiences and try to figure out the best approach for Wetherby U3A

Tim Mallett – Wetherby

- 5
- Group finances would be interesting although I imagine that there are many different approaches.

I'm also interested in what a group co-ordinator does. We don't currently have one and I don't think we miss the role.

I'm interested to find out

1. If anyone uses the Beacon portal to allow members to join and leave group mailing lists (which would mean the group leader wouldn't necessarily know who was in the group).
2. If anyone registers attendance at group meetings, and if they do, what they use the information for. (In case of having to exit in an emergency + checking attendance for calculating subs etc \_ AG)

Helen Billington – Selby

- 6
1. Increasing groups,
  2. ideas to encourage confidence in folk to put themselves forward,
  3. ways to encourage deputy Group Leaders sharing responsibilities and of course
  4. succession planning.

Samantha Triggs (York)

- 7
- You asked for points for discussion. I should like to find out how other u3as handle the following.
1. The problems we have in Tadcaster u3a is that some Members are reluctant to sign up for Groups, & several of those who do sign up never appear. Group Leaders send out reminders & I send out reminders to all members twice a month to tell them what groups are meeting & when. How can we encourage these non active members, or should we just accept that some people want to only come to our monthly Members' Meetings? *(not all members want to – or have time to – join groups. AG)*
  2. Secondly, a problem experienced by many u3a's I think, how do we find group leaders? We have ideas, & enthusiasm from the members, for particular groups, like gardening, or a lunch group for example, but no-one will volunteer to lead them.
  3. Another problem is that we have lost members this year, mainly associate members, with the closure of two groups, Circle Dancing & Flower Arranging as their leaders are moving out of the area. None of the remaining group members is willing, or feels equipped to take over. *(Succession planning issue AG)*

I suspect that these problems are not unique to Tadcaster. I'm sorry it seems so negative. The good news is that we are getting some new members & we always hope that they will become group leaders in the future.

Glenda Smith  
Membership Secretary Tadcaster & Villages u3a

- 8
- Suggested issue to include :
- In Ilkley we disappoint new members with many popular groups like languages and walking full and not accepting new members. In spite of efforts to start new groups from waiting lists we find a reluctance to take on the role of group coordinator. What can we do about this? Should we be more explicit during our recruitment process about sharing your interests?

Neil Stevens – Ilkley & District

- 9
- I do have a question!
- Sometimes we have groups which focus on contentious issues like current affairs, feminism, or the environment. It might be useful to hear how the attendees feel about these groups and how they are run. A recent example was our current affairs group discussed euthanasia / assisted dying which (to use a dreadful phrase) might inadvertently trigger something in a participant. I'm against molly coddling and a free speech absolutist but neither do I want to inadvertently cause hurt!

Thanks  
NIALL Clarke – Barnsley u3a

- 10
- a) The Trust guidance for groups doesn't seem to offer much guidance, do u3as generally use **paper guidance**? Are there any good examples (I have been googling). I like the idea of **a simple flow chart** rather than pages of text.
  - b) Do other u3as **centralise their waiting lists**? Is there value in doing this? It makes the process more open but seems like it's more difficult to administer?
  - c) **Do u3as offer GLs training/workshops as part of the thank you lunch/supper?**
  - d) **Unusual groups** tend to be frowned upon eg Go With Otley, what's the consensus? If we don't open out to new ideas and partnerships we're going to continue to struggle to have enough groups.

Jacqui Wellbrook - Ilkley & District u3a

- 11 **Members not wanting to become leaders:** Groups closing due to above. We are trying to alleviate this by having one or two members in the group managing the group. Taking particular roles as a small Committee (small c) Helps with holidays the leader may be taking or maybe being sick or whatever .

Glenys Bailey – Ripon u3a

- 12 I am sure you will cover most things but there is concern that **groups are full** and **members are unwilling to start another**. Failure to get into groups is the reason so many give for not renewing membership.

Cheryl Johnston – Harrogate u3a

- 13 I would hope we can **cover safeguarding and data protection**.

Stella Barclay – Harrogate

- 14 we are currently trying to work out how to support/deal with **members who are no longer fit enough for the requirements of their groups - either physically or mentally**. So any advice would be very welcome.

Rose Cuthbertson = Holme Valley

- 15 I would like to hear about **transparency of group leaders collecting money for their sessions**.  
Also **how to ensure group leaders are using beacon properly**.

Karen Clark Dalgliesh – Ripon

- 16 Do we really need **EXPERTS** to run groups? Can't the vast majority be run by members and just **organised** by a Group Leader?  
Angie Grain – Ilkley