



The Role of the Interest Group Convenor

Our interest group convenors are very important to Dawlish and District u3a. Without them, we will not have our vibrant and interesting local u3a, so members of the committee want to do all they can to support them in setting up and running their groups. This is a short guide to help you run your group easily and enjoyably for yourself and your members.

It is worth remembering that:

- You do not need to be an expert to be an interest group convenor. Many successful groups are set up by people just wanting to explore interests among themselves.
- Different groups run in different ways and there is no fixed way of running a group. The best groups develop according to the wishes of their members and can be quite formal or loose depending on the nature of the group. The main thing to remember is that the groups need to be about learning and social activities in a relaxed and enjoyable way.

What does the role entail?

Broad Outlines

- Be clear about the purpose and nature of the group and communicate this to the group members, being aware that this may evolve over time and as membership changes.
- Encourage members to share their knowledge, skills, interests and experience. The ethos of the u3a is very much about being an organisation for members and by members.
- Be aware that not all group members will feel confident, and a key part of the convenor's role is to make all members feel welcome.
- Maintain good contact with the Groups Co-ordinator who can be contacted by email.
- Find out what help is available both locally and nationally.

Practical Matters

- Organise meetings of the group as agreed with them and keep in direct contact with them. The best way is to use Beacon which has an up-to-date record of members of each group and their contact details. The Beacon Administrator will always be pleased to help.
- When a member does not use email, please do your best to keep contact by other means.

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- Advertise and promote the activities and meetings of the group to all u3a members so we can all find out what your group is doing, and perhaps be encouraged to join new groups. This can be done by making the Newsletter Editor and the Webmaster aware in good time of times and venues. Where possible, please write, or get another group member to write, a short item for the Newsletter before the end of each month so that it can be included in the next month's edition. Where possible and appropriate, provide photographs. Please send news articles to both the newsletter editor and the webmasters. Email addresses are webmaster@u3a.dawlish.info and newsletter@u3a.dawlish.info
- To ensure that the information we provide on our website is accurate, it is helpful for convenors to regularly check their own group's web pages and send any updates to the webmasters.
- If the Group is to handle any money, refer to the Treasurer and follow his/her guidance.
- Keep a register of attendees and a note of any visitors so that there is an accurate record of who is a member of each group and those having 'taster sessions'.
- Be aware of how to deal with any emergencies, including an accident report form. If in doubt, seek guidance from the Groups Coordinator.