

GENERAL PROCEDURES

MEMBERSHIP

The easiest way to keep track of the current membership for your group is to use our Beacon membership system. This allows you to see and print off contact details, to send emails, and to check membership status. You are strongly advised to contact beaconadmin@stoneu3.net and obtain a username and password if you have not already done so.

Adding current members to your group is an easy process, but please ask our Group Coordinator, groupcord@stoneu3a.net if you need help.

You need to check anyone joining your group is a current member and record this on the register. If you cannot do this via Beacon you will need to see the receipt they received after paying their subscription with their membership number.

In the past many members failed to provide email addresses so postage and printing was a major cost for the branch. The present Committee has decided that this is not sustainable and that all communication will be via email. Obviously, members without email addresses need to be contacted so the use of a “buddy system” is encouraged. Group Leaders are asked to try and ensure that their members can be contacted via a friend’s email address (maybe someone from the group?). This email address should be included in their contact details on Beacon, so you may need to contact the Membership Secretary, memsec@stoneu3a.net.

Potential new members can attend two taster sessions, but if they wish to continue, they must become members, paying the annual membership fee which from September 1st 2023 is £45.00. This includes the annual subscription and fees to attend sessions/groups. They should contact the Membership Secretary, memsec@stoneu3a.net.

Group Leaders should keep a **REGISTER** (copy in pdf and Word format on this website) of members’ attendance at group meetings and forward copies to the Group Coordinator by the first week of the month following the activity.

Members from other U3A’s within the Staffordshire U3A Link (Burton on Trent, Cannock Chase, Cheadle, Leek, Stafford, Stoke-on-Trent South and Uttoxeter) pay a £2.00 per session fee. Their name, their branch and membership number need to be recorded on the register.

Please remind members to advise you if they know in advance that they will be unable to attend a session. After three consecutive unexplained absences for weekly meetings (two for monthly) members’ names may be removed from the register so others on the waiting list can join.

Refreshments consumed by members at Group Meetings are not funded by the U3A. The practise of selling raffle tickets to members, distributing sponsorship forms or other similar

activities during group sessions are not allowed and you may occasionally need to remind members of this rule.

Some groups ask a volunteer to take on part of the group's administration tasks, such as maintaining the register.

VENUE HIRE

Our venue manager is available to help with advice, venues@stoneu3a.net Once the venue has been booked and hired, if for any reason the activity is not going to take place the Group Leader should inform the Venue provider, so that Stone U3A is not charged for that period. Group Leaders need to monitor the number of members attending their activity to ensure that the cost of the venue hire is mostly covered.

Please remind members to advise in advance if they know that they will not be able to attend a session i.e., holiday, child-minding, etc.

GUIDANCE FOR GROUP LEADERS STARTING A NEW U3A GROUP

Any proposal for a new Stone U3A group should be made initially to the Group Coordinator, groupcoord@stoneu3a.net

The proposal will be tabled at the next U3A Committee Meeting. If approved, arrangements for the new group will go ahead.

The Newsletter Editor could also be contacted so that information on the proposed new group can be published: newsletter@stoneu3a.net.

You may want to post an item on our Facebook page :

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/627369864649985>

ASSESSMENTS

Group Leaders should continually keep their activity under review and ask themselves the following questions: -

- Can the activity absorb new members on a week-by-week basis?
- Is the activity viable?
- Is the venue suitable for the needs of the activity?
- Is there somebody available within the Group to help with the administration?

Group Leaders who want advice, assistance or who are contemplating making changes, should initially contact the Group Coordinator, E-mail: groupcord@stoneu3a.net

HEALTH AND SAFETY ASSESSMENTS

Group Leaders must ensure that the venue chosen is suitable for their activity. Fire exits should be easily located and a risk assessment of hazards should be made. Group Leaders must make themselves aware of members with disabilities. Please note that the terms of our insurance policy exclude children from attending any meeting.

With the ongoing situation with Covid-19 it is important that we always comply with current Government and U3A advice. No group will be permitted to operate without a satisfactory written risk assessment. The Group Coordinator is available should any assistance be

needed in completion of the Risk Assessment)

ACCIDENTS

An **Accident Report Form** is included on this website and a copy should be available at all meetings

PRESS/PUBLICITY

It is very important that we have good coverage in the local press and to help achieve this will you please send any news about your group to our Press/Publicity Officer at publicity@stoneu3a.net

WEBSITE

This is another important resource which is often the first contact point for prospective new members. It is therefore **important that it is kept up-to-date**.

Events and News can also be published on the Website. Pages can be made more interesting by using media. (Images and links to video or outside websites)

To help achieve this objective, please ensure that you send appropriate updates for your individual activity page to webmaster@stoneu3a.net

MEMBERS NEWSLETTER

This is an important document to raise awareness generally regarding Stone U3A. The Editor will always be on the lookout for news that can be posted in the Newsletter. Please send information to: Chris Norcross, newsletter@stoneu3a.net

FACEBOOK

Staying in touch with members across our local U3A and publicising your activities via our Facebook page is worth considering.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/627369864649985>

RESOURCE CENTRE

The U3A National Office has a collection of DVDs and CDs on many subjects available to borrow free of charge. Information is available from the Resource Centre, telephone 020 8466 6139 or at <https://library.u3a.org.uk/liberty/libraryHome.do>. The office is open Monday to Friday 9.30am – 4.30pm.

BANKING PROCEDURE

Registers should be forwarded to the Group Coordinator on completion of the last group meeting at the end of the month. Any subsequent fees collected from Link u3a's should be forwarded to the Treasurer Brian Hughes, 1, Meadow Side, Stone, ST15 8WA every three months.

FULL GROUPS

Many groups, for a variety of reasons, have limitations on the number of members in the group. The decision about that lies with the Group Leader. Members should be reminded that if they wish to join a group, they must contact the Group Leader prior to attending to check if there is an available place.

If a group becomes full, the Group Leader should keep a waiting list, and contact the Group Coordinator, groupcord@stoneu3a.net so the activities list can be updated.

They may want to consider if there are any ways of starting another group or finding a larger venue.

EQUIPMENT PROCUREMENT

Applications for equipment procurement are handled by our Procurement Officer, la.thompson@talktalk.net. There is an application form on this site. Because of the financial situation the amount Group Leaders may spend without prior Committee approval is currently being reviewed, so please check with Linda.

PAID SPEAKERS

The committee may give financial support to requests for outside speakers providing that a strong case is presented to demonstrate that the Group in question would benefit in terms of increased knowledge/understanding. You will need to complete the **“Application for Group Activity”** which can be found on this site.

DECEASED MEMBERS

On the sad occurrence of the death of a member of a group, could the Group Leader please inform the Membership Secretary so that we remove the name from the members' database and therefore do not cause offense by sending unwanted mail. The current Membership Secretary is at: memsec@stoneu3a.net

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

Our Secretary, will try to offer advice when she can secretary@stoneu3a.net. Serious concerns about our U3A branch should be addressed to our Chair, chair@stoneu3a.net

December 2023