

Coordinating Study Groups

The responsibilities of a coordinator

Coordinators need to:

- keep the Study Group Adviser informed about the study group's arrangements, so that the information provided to members and new members is always up to date;
- keep the list of the study group members up to date on Beacon; for this to happen all group members must be members of Ludlow u3a; and if they are not ask them to contact the Membership Secretary;
- support members of the study group who may have disabilities by, for example, meeting in suitable venues or offering lifts, accommodating members with sight or hearing problems, allowing for members who may not be able to take their equal part in the work of the group; if you need further advice about this. Contact the u3a plus committee member;
- check the Ludlow u3a website to ensure that the entry for their study group is correct and up to date;
- report any accidents or damage to the Study Group Adviser;
- once a year respond to an email from the Treasurer about the running expenses of the group.

Operating a Study Group

How do I communicate with members of my group?

Beacon enables you to send an email to all your members without you having to store their emails on your computer. As a charity, Ludlow u3a has to comply with GDPR regulations. Our *Data Protection Policy* and *Privacy Policy* are available on our website. When you send an email via Beacon your group members can reply to you, but not to other members of the group. Members may communicate with each other if agreement is obtained to share emails within the group for group purposes.

How do I get help with Beacon?

The document *How to Use the Beacon System* is available on the Documents page of the website. You can also contact Ludlow u3a Beacon Support. Details are available on the Committee page of the website.

What if someone in the group is not on email?

You should ensure that all group members receive the information from Ludlow u3a that is sent out by email. It may be that you or another member in your group will volunteer to keep the non-email members informed and up to date with activities. If this is a problem contact the Study Group Adviser.

Do I need to keep a record of group membership?

Yes. This is easily done by keeping your list of members up to date on Beacon.

How do I encourage more people to join my group?

The u3a Study Group Adviser can help you inform u3a members about your group through the

monthly Study Group News and the website. Members interested in joining should be invited for a 'taster' session even if your group is full.

What happens when the group is full?

Members who want to join your group should be offered a 'taster' session, even if the group is full. Use Beacon to automatically keep a waiting list of people who want to join your group. When this list has three or four names on it contact the Study Group Adviser, who can consider setting up a second group with a new coordinator.

How can I get help with finding a suitable venue for my group?

Many groups meet in each other's houses. If this is not suitable, the Study Group Adviser has a list of venues that can be sent to you on request. This list gives information about accessibility. The venue should be selected in accordance with the *Accessibility Policy*, which is available on the website.

What do I do if I am having problems with a member of my group?

Contact the Study Group Adviser. There is a *Harassment and Bullying Policy* available on the website, which may also be useful if there are difficulties in your group.

If we meet in members' homes how much should we pay the host for refreshments?

No-one should be out of pocket when supporting Ludlow u3a. The committee currently recommends a contribution of 50p for refreshments.

My group wants to share cars for an outing. How do we reimburse the driver?

No-one should be out of pocket when supporting Ludlow u3a. The committee currently recommends 12p per mile per passenger as a contribution towards fuel.

If you want to organise an outing which involves hiring transport, you are advised to contact the Study Group Adviser and Treasurer.

Who pays the running expenses of the group?

Study groups are expected to be self-financing and there is no budget for grants to study groups. Any cost involved in running a study group should be shared equally by all members of the group. The cost of any necessary equipment or resources should also be shared by members of the group. If there is a need for equipment which may be useful for other study groups please contact the Study Group Adviser.

Can the group engage a tutor?

Ludlow u3a, in line with Third Age Trust principles, is against study groups using paid tutors. However, the committee recognizes that in certain exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary. It is the responsibility of the committee, as Trustees of Ludlow u3a, to oversee the engagement of a tutor. Therefore, it is VITAL that the Study Group Adviser is contacted BEFORE a tutor is engaged.

Do I have to keep records of money collected from members?

Either you, as coordinator, or another group member to whom the task is delegated, should keep a record of money that is collected and how it is spent. You do not have to keep records of money collected to cover the cost of tea and coffee and other ephemeral items. You only need to look at the *Maintaining Study Group Finances* document if you collect other money.

Are there any resources that the group can borrow?

Ludlow u3a owns a digital projector and a flip chart with a stand that groups can borrow. Contact the Study Group Adviser to request, collect and later return these items. To ensure they are available for your group meeting, please order well in advance. If you think there are other items that should be purchased for the use of all study groups, please contact the Study Group Adviser. The Third Age Trust website offers information on resources which any u3a member may access.

Do I need to report an accident to a group member or damage caused during a group activity?

Yes. All accidents or damage, however small, must be reported on the Accident Report Form (available on the website) and passed to the Chair, even if no claim is anticipated. This is needed to comply with the Third Age Trust insurance.

Do I have to organise insurance for the group?

No. The Third Age Trust insurance covers u3a members during u3a activities. This includes private and public liability, equipment in transit and in use, as well as a copyright licence. (Note: this may not cover music; music that is still in copyright is not covered.) Ludlow u3a also has a licence for showing films in study groups.

What do I do if I no longer feel able to coordinate the group?

Talk to the group about it. Perhaps the role can be shared. If not, and if the group wants to continue, they will need to find a new coordinator amongst themselves.

What do I do if I need any further help or advice?

Contact the Study Group Adviser who is always ready to give help and advice. Or if it is about money contact the Treasurer.