

P3A

PAPHOS THIRD AGE

Group leaders' **Handbook**

P3A would not exist without Group Leaders prepared to give their time and commitment in return for a challenging and rewarding experience

This document is designed to help ease the way, as a guideline and a point of reference. It is divided into two sections:

Starting a group: page 2 Running a group: page 4

The Group Coordinator and Committee are here to help and support you at any time. We wish you every success with starting your new group, or running an existing one

Starting a group

1. TYPES OF GROUPS

All groups are different and evolve over time to suit both members and leader.

Decide what type of group you are proposing to start:

* Will the Group Leader conduct the meetings with contributions from members of the group?

* Are you expecting members to take the meeting and make presentations to the rest of the group? * Is it a group where everyone takes part in a particular activity?

* Does everyone in the group share in a learning experience, such as studying a language?

2. SETTING UP A GROUP Naming your new group

Be specific, for example LOCAL History, POLITICAL Discussion. Try to give the title appeal... COMPARATIVE RELIGION might become EXPLORING RELIGIONS.

Advertising your new group

Send a summary of your proposed group to the Group Coordinator. Please include the group title, how you intend to run the group and a general outline of what you would like to achieve.

Please consider how you can make this appealing to members and remember to include your email address so any interested members can contact you.

The Group Coordinator will organize an email to be sent to all P3A members and also pass this information to the Editor of Ad-Lib magazine for inclusion in the next edition.

You could also have a table at main P3A events, such as the AGM, or organize a table at one of the larger P3A group meetings.

Don't forget word of mouth – tell your friends and acquaintances about your plans.

Inaugural meeting

Once you have advertised your group and have a list of interested prospective members you may like to hold an inaugural meeting, to agree the venue, time, date, duration and content of the group.

It may be a good idea at this stage to advertise the meeting to the whole P3A membership, as others may be interested in coming. Please consider the following points at the inaugural meeting or in other discussions:

Day and time

Find a suitable day for most people and be aware of possible clashes with other groups. Does morning or afternoon make any difference to your activities?

Duration

The duration of the series of meetings is important for booking premises, equipment, etc. Do you expect the group to go on indefinitely or for a set number of meetings? Agree how long each meeting will last (normally two hours but may be longer in case of outside visits).

Location and premises

Think about the size and location of the premises you choose in relation to the group and the proximity to most of the members you are hoping to attract. Private homes may be suitable for small numbers. Consider car parking facilities.

The Group Coordinator has a current database giving all the relevant details of venues being used by other groups. This will be forwarded to you.

Refreshments

Tea breaks can serve as a discussion stimulant and help gel the group. In private homes tea or coffee and biscuits are sufficient. Make a small charge to cover your costs including extra costs of heating, cooling and so on if necessary.

Records

At the end of this document is a group leaders' participation list for completion at the first meeting. List the name, membership number, email and phone number of all participants. A copy should be sent to the Membership Secretary for checking with the membership database.

Size

Group sizes will vary but the general experience is that at least six people are needed to be viable. Smaller numbers for specific purposes can be arranged. Discussion groups tend to get out of hand or divisive if they have more than 12 participants, but need a larger membership base..

Publicity

Once you have had an initial meeting and decided on when and where you will meet, please advise the Group Coordinator, who will arrange for the appropriate entries to be made on the Groups pages of the P3A website. A further email will advise all P3A members of the details of the new group.

Running a group

Congratulations on setting up your new group - or taking over responsibility for a current group. You will find it both challenging and rewarding and we hope you enjoy the experience.

If you need any support or advice please contact the Group Coordinator.

1. PLANNING MEETINGS

Welcome and introduce any new members to the group. Outline the format of the meeting.

If you have asked for contributions from group members make sure that all members are given an opportunity to present their contribution. People might be disappointed if they feel excluded. But others may be happy to take a 'back seat' and listen to or watch more gregarious members.

Variety in the format of sessions is stimulating but it may be wise to build new approaches on what is already familiar.

Consider members' needs if they are hard of hearing, partially sighted, or require assistance. Build up confidence within the group and encourage a supportive environment.

How to achieve your aims

Some of the main methods of achieving your group's aims are reading, listening to music, etc. in advance of the meeting and then discussing the outcome at the next meeting.

In addition you may wish to:-

Invite a speaker

Show a film or DVD

Bring along books and leaflets for general perusal Invite an expert to demonstrate a skill

Go on an outing to a place of local interest, such as a concert or play. Have a social evening with a meal and speaker.

Suggested ground rules

- * Start on time and finish on time
- * Value everything that is said – agree to disagree
- * Contribute to the sessions openly, knowing that confidentiality will be respected
- * Listen to each other. If it is obvious that there is a need for a small group discussion, break for this rather than allow divergence or just chatting
- * Support each other in learning, and emotionally if necessary

Ground rules should be agreed by all group members.

Running a discussion

The Group Leader is the catalyst and is responsible for producing the right atmosphere in which group members can express their views and opinions with confidence.

There are many ways of organizing group discussions. Each group leader will have a personal way of working and each group will probably evolve a style that suits members best. Whether the discussion is held in a formal or informal basis the following will apply;-

- * Try to keep the discussion to the point unless an interesting related issue is being aired.
- * Ensure that all members have the opportunity to speak but don't force a member if they are reluctant.
- * Ensure that the whole group pays attention and stop any side conversations.
- * Ensure all opinions are valued and respected, even if people differ in their views.
- * Be aware that some members may have more experience than others in the activity/subject.

Ways of ending

End on a high note and sum up the outcome of the discussion. If appropriate, ask each member what they have learned from the session.

Advise members of the date, time and subject of the next meeting.

2.COMMON PROBLEMS Viewpoints and discussions

All members should be encouraged to participate in group activities. On most occasions everyone may accept differing ideas/opinions but a situation may occur when it becomes threatening or emotive.

At this stage members may feel anxious and disagree vociferously with each other. If this happens, try to consider all points of view and find a common solution all can accept.

In groups where there may be discussions covering emotive subjects, the Group Leader should ensure that members realize and understand that opinions expressed should not be taken personally.

Digression

Digression can be a problem and care should be taken in allowing it to continue. However, always be aware that some digression can be useful and worth following up. You will need to make a quick decision as to whether you use it or ask the group whether they wish to pursue it.

Personality clashes

Reasons for friction may include differing goals, warring personalities etc. If you find yourself leading such a group confront them – tell them how you view the situation and suggest that they discuss what they wish to do about it.

If you feel that the group is losing confidence in you as a leader, it is suggested that you discuss this with the Group Coordinator and possibly the Chair.

Participation

Some people will be more active than others and some will choose to be less pro-active. Too much from one person is not good and may inhibit contributions from others. A member who never contributes might well be getting a great deal of benefit from the discussion. Be aware of your member's needs and try to maintain a balance

Disputes

The Group Leader must make the individual aware and inform him or her of the matters of concern and give the member the opportunity to respond.

At this juncture the Group Leader should indicate that the behaviour is unacceptable and request an immediate improvement while taking into account the member's viewpoint.

Consider whether it may be possible to tactfully suggest that the member may be not suited to the group – for example, too experienced for the general standard of the group.

Consider whether a meeting between the member, Group Leader and Group Coordinator would be appropriate at this stage.

If the unacceptable behaviour continues and the problem persists, the Group Leader may wish to exclude the member. The Committee must be informed of the decision via the Group Coordinator.

The member has the right to appeal to the Committee.

NB: In the event of theft or other criminal offence there is an automatic right to exclude the offender and report the offence. Please contact the Group Coordinator immediately who will inform the Committee.

Evaluation

Be aware of how people feel about the group as it progresses. Be flexible and change things if necessary.

3.EXTRA INFORMATION Accidents/Insurance

Not all venues will have public liability insurance and it is must be pointed out to group members that participation in group activities is at the member's own risk. Neither P3A nor the group leaders are responsible for any injuries/mishaps however caused.

If an accident occurs during a meeting or on a visit, please complete an accident report form and have it signed by the relevant parties. A copy of the form is in the addendums to this document. Upon completion please keep a copy and send the original to the Group Coordinator.

Disclaimers

If you are organizing an outdoor field trip, walking or other activities, it is advisable to request members to sign a disclaimer, a copy of which is in the addendums to this document. Please keep copies of the signed forms. Any member who is not willing to sign any such disclaimer will not be allowed to participate.

Expenses

It should be explained to members that all costs incurred in running the group - room hire, refreshments and so on - will be shared between members participating in the particular meeting.

On consideration by the Committee, funds may be available to purchase major resource items. The Groups Coordinator can assist Group Leaders as to how the process works. Completed application forms for grants should be sent to the Treasurer.

Records

Please keep financial records of your receipts and expenditure. You will not normally be required to send your records to anyone but they should be retained for your own benefit and protection.

Participants

Please keep records of members who belong to your group, including their P3A membership number and their participation in meetings. The Membership Secretary will probably contact you at some time during the year for information to ensure that all members of your group have paid their current subscriptions.

Subscriptions

If a new member joins your group and is not currently a P3A member, you should collect a completed application form from them, together with their €10 joining fee and subscription for the current year. The up-to-date application form can be downloaded from the P3A website.

You should then inform the Membership Secretary by email of the following new member details:

Full Name

Email

The Membership Secretary will then send the new member an email, welcoming them to the P3A and advising them of their new membership number.

In line with previous years, any new member joining between January and March will not be required to pay a further subscription in April of that year.

The Membership Secretary will arrange with you to collect the completed application form and subscription whenever is convenient. You will already have been supplied with a sufficient number of new cards which you can issue to the new member (cards are not actually required by the club, but many members like to have them).

When the annual subscriptions are due, the Membership Secretary will contact you and request that you collect subscriptions from your members at the relevant meetings. You will be issued with new labels for the year which you can then distribute to the members who have paid.

The collected annual subscriptions, with a list of those who have paid, should then be given to the Membership Secretary or the P3A Treasurer at the earliest opportunity.

Please be aware that some members will attend more than one group and may have paid their subscription to another Group Leader.

As a Group Leader you will not be required to pay a subscription for yourself.

Waiting lists

If a group is full please notify the Group Coordinator, who can put this information on to the P3A website. If you have any enquiries from prospective members please keep a record of their details and when a vacancy occurs you will be able to invite them to join the group.

Please consider holding extra meetings to accommodate more group members. Perhaps members of your current group would be willing to set up a second group, or a new meeting could be started elsewhere, such as in the Polis area.

First aid

Group Leaders should ask whether any members are currently qualified to administer first aid and whether they would be prepared to help. This is essential for meetings involving outdoor field trips.

Equipment

Unless there is prior agreement by the Committee, equipment owned by the P3A is only available for use by the Group Leaders and only in connection with P3A activities. The Technical Officer keeps all records as to the location of such equipment. Please advise the Technical Officer if any equipment in your possession is moved.

Communications

All communication in P3A is normally by email. When you send an email to your group you must use the Bcc option to protect P3A members' confidentiality. If a member does not have access to email another group member should be nominated to advise them of communications within the group.

Group Leaders' annual meeting

This will be held once a year to give Group Leaders the opportunity of meeting the committee and each other, and to discuss any problems and suggestions.

Keith Adair, Groups Coordinator

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<http://paphos3rdage.org/>

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Disclaimer

I agree that I am personally responsible for the state of my own health and fitness and I understand that outdoor activities can be physically taxing. Also, I understand and accept that some of the activities may take place in areas that are inaccessible to vehicles should rescue or recovery of an ill or injured person be required.

I understand that if I have a known medical condition or allergy, or take regular medication, then I am responsible for carrying information about this with me at each outdoor activity. This information would only be divulged to medical personnel in the case of an emergency.

I agree that it is my responsibility to ensure that I wear suitable clothing and footwear and carry sufficient liquids to drink.

Participation in any P3A activity is undertaken entirely at my own risk and I acknowledge that neither the P3A nor the Group Leader can be held responsible for any injuries or mishaps arising.

Signed :

Print Name:.....

Mobile No:

Home No:.....

In an Emergency Telephone:

_____ (name + number)

Medical Disclaimer Rev B May 2013