



Group Leaders' Handbook, 2023

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1. Introduction

P3A would not exist without Group Leaders prepared to give their time and commitment in return for a challenging and rewarding experience. This document aims to highlight the essentials, provide guidelines and to be a point of reference.

The [Committee](#), and particularly the Groups Coordinator, 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.

2. Data Protection

Cyprus Law incorporates the EU General Data Protection Regulation, known as GDPR. The law is strict and fines can be (and have been) levied on organisations for non-compliance. It does apply to clubs and societies.

Personal Data means any information on a named and identifiable person. In the P3A, this generally just means name, email address and perhaps telephone number. Only the minimum data required should be held and it must be held securely, either in a password-protected laptop, or if held physically it must be securely stored, with access only by you or any assistant who needs to use that data. If someone asks you for a group member's email address, for instance, you may not give it without that person's consent. "I will ask them to contact you" is generally the easiest response. When emailing your group, you must use Blind Copy, unless you have the explicit consent of all group members to share emails.

The P3A has a published [Data Protection Policy](#). All our members have signed a consent form on joining, for the Committee and leaders of any groups they may join to collect and store their data for the sole purpose of organising activities.

A useful, simple guide for clubs and societies on complying with GDPR can be found [here](#).

3. Money Matters

Groups should be self-supporting in their regular activities, such as paying for venues, speakers, materials, etc. If a group finds itself in financial difficulties, the P3A Treasurer will be happy to offer guidance.

The Committee will offer loans or grants for one-off expenditure such as the purchase of equipment, exhibitions, etc. Groups should in the first instance contact the Treasurer or the Groups Coordinator.

It is **prohibited by Law** for Group Leaders or any volunteer to make a personal profit from running P3A activities. Group members may not retain for their personal use, any surplus funds or equipment. This does not apply if they are providing professional services, on a customer/supplier basis, to the P3A Committee, as part of their normal course of business.

All funds must be managed solely for the benefit of P3A activities. If there are surplus funds, for instance if the group ceases to operate, these should be returned to the group, e.g. by having a free meeting, or else passed to the P3A Treasurer.

The P3A is a legally registered Association, but not a charity. The P3A and its groups are consequently prohibited by Law from donating money to charity. If a group wishes to give money to a charity, they should do so on a personal basis from their own, personal funds, and dissociated from the P3A.

Group Leaders and other members are entitled to be reimbursed by the Group for reasonable out of pocket expenses, such as materials. The reimbursement of mileage or travel expenses is discouraged.

To help us comply with Cyprus Law, all groups, except those for which no payments are involved and no funds held, must keep a basic record of income, expenditure and cash held on behalf of the Group.

4. Quarterly Statements

If a group, including a new group, has any financial transactions, then once a quarter, the group leader should send to the Treasurer a report of the funds held by the group, in the format:

This email is in relation to the **Group Name** group. Our financial position at **Quarter Ended** was as follows:

Opening balance in hand on previous quarter	€
Add: total receipts for the quarter just ended	€
Less: total expenses for the quarter just ended	€
Balance in hand at quarter end	€

If the group has no financial transactions, then at the end of the first reporting quarter after the group was formed, a one-off report stating this must be sent to the Treasurer in the format:

This email is in relation to the **Group Name** group. As at Quarter ended, we had no cash as, under normal circumstances, we do not have any financial transactions.

No further report is then required, unless the position changes.

5. Membership and Guests

Due to the size of the P3A (almost 900 members as of late 2023) we do not distribute physical membership cards. If at any time you want to check whether someone coming to your group is in fact a P3A member, you can email the Membership Secretary.

Although our activities are intended for P3A members, we welcome non-members (such as short-term visitors) joining in a few times as guests. We suggest that they be allowed to participate in the first meeting at the same cost as members, but thereafter, if they do not join the P3A, best practice is to charge non-members an additional meeting fee of €2, to encourage them to join P3A. You may also wish to place a limit on the number of times they can come.

At the end of each year, the Membership Secretary will circulate a list of lapsed and resigned members. Please check this against your own group list, to ensure that all those regularly participating are P3A members.

The membership year runs from 1st September – 31 August. Renewal subs of €5 are due every year by 31 December latest. It is helpful if group leaders accept subs from any member wanting to pay, and pass these on with the name of the member, to the Membership Secretary (see details on [website](#)).

As a Group Leader, running a Group on 1 September, you will not be required to pay an annual renewal fee for yourself. You can also nominate one assistant to be exempt paying the renewal fee.

If a new member wants to join the P3A, they can download the membership form from the [website](#) (you may also wish to keep one or two forms handy).

If your group is full, you may wish to have a waiting list. If you inform the Groups Coordinator, they can add an appropriate announcement to your group's webpage.

6. Starting a New Group

All Groups are different and evolve over time to suit both members and leader, but initial planning can really pay dividends. You will want some clear ideas as to what your group will do, where and how often it will meet, and if some skill or knowledge is involved, what level it will be aimed at. If you have to pay for a venue, you will obviously want to factor in the cost, as well as any expenses for materials. See also section 8, **Venues**.

The Group listings and weekly [Calendar](#) on our website will help you to ensure that your group is differentiated from all those already operating. Subject to your own availability, you will also want to avoid timing clashes with other groups which might interest the same people (though since we have over 40 groups, some clashes are inevitable).

Contact the Groups Coordinator and send them a summary of your plans, including the group title and outline of planned activities. You and the Groups Coordinator may wish to meet to discuss your ideas. Once a proposal is ready, the Groups Coordinator can send this to all the members and ask those interested to contact you.

If the group goes ahead, the Groups Coordinator will make a group page on the P3A website and add your activity to the weekly calendar. It's a good idea to look at what other groups

have chosen to show on their pages. Basic essentials are obviously the day, time, place and contact details for anyone interested, plus a short description of the group's activity. But you can also have photos or other images, and whatever information you would like to advertise the group.

Another way of spreading the word is via our Quarterly online magazine, **Ad Lib**. The Ad Lib editor sends out quarterly calls for articles to be submitted, so you can use that opportunity to highlight the attractions of your group.

7. Introducing an Existing Group

The P3A has generally been open to incorporating existing groups that are aligned with our broad objectives. For a group, becoming part of the P3A can bring substantial benefits, including the cover provided by legal registration, access to a large pool of potential new group members, and the opportunity for its members to join a wide range of P3A activities.

The main conditions for an existing group to become part of the P3A are as follows:

- The majority of your members must agree to become a P3A group;
- All active members must agree to become P3A members;
- The group must either add the "P3A" name to their group or acknowledge in communications and advertising that they are a part of the P3A.

If the group's activities are similar to those of an existing P3A group e.g. walking or cookery, the Groups Coordinator will consult the relevant Group Leader(s). The two groups may be sufficiently differentiated, or there may be demand for similar groups on different days, or it may be that the groups could usefully merge. They may be able to mutually support and co-operate with each other. The Committee must be satisfied that the new group will fit.

8. Venues

Larger groups will of course require a meeting venue. Places and costs change over time and the Groups Coordinator can advise on this. Currently the most regularly used, affordable group venues are as follows:

The Coral Star Restaurant, opposite Philippos Supermarket in Coral Bay/Pegeia area.

Main room holds up to 40. Back room a similar number.

Projection and sound equipment available – belonging to the P3A

Per head charge of €3.50 including refreshments; air-con + €0.50.

For arrangements it's best to go and talk with them.

[PCFI Hall](#), Kato Paphos: Can accommodate up to 70.

Projection and sound equipment available. Reasonable per-head charges, negotiable.

The Groups Coordinator can put you in touch with the venue manager.

Angelika Taverna, Chlorakas (main coastal road): well-used for Bridge and table games.

[The Phoenix Club](#), Ikarou St, Kato Paphos. Used by the St Andrew group only.

Many other venues have been used, but some have high, fixed charges so affordability can be a problem.

9. Equipment

Projection and sound equipment are available at some venues. The PCFI Hall is well equipped and its volunteer manager, Allan Jones, is usually available to help set up.

The P3A has a set of projection and sound equipment stored at the Coral Star. Either our Technical Officer, Derek Noronha, or the Groups Coordinator, are glad to provide training to operate this. But please note, the committee are not available to run equipment for groups. Group Leaders who show presentations have all learnt to set up what they need, sometimes with a small team of helpers within the group.

10. Discussion Groups

If you will be leader of a discussion group, part of your role is to be a catalyst and create the right atmosphere in which members can express their views and opinions with confidence.

There are many ways of organising group discussions. Each Group Leader will have a personal way of working and each group will probably evolve a style that suits its members.

Best practice suggests that the Leader should:

Try to keep the discussion to the point unless an interesting related issue is being aired;
If a discussion has digressed, provided the members as a whole are enjoying the new topic, allow it to run before gently bringing the discussion back on track.

Encourage everybody to contribute and ensure they all have the opportunity to speak, but don't push a member if they are reluctant. Equally, try not to let one person dominate.

Ensure that the whole Group pays attention. Try to prevent any side conversations – this is a discourtesy to other people.

Some groups may benefit from a few, simple ground rules agreed by the members. You may want to agree:

To ensure everybody feels welcome, especially new members;
Respect everyone's opinion and value everything said – agree to disagree;
Not to allow anybody to criticise or rebuke another speaker;
Respect privacy: nobody should report on social media what another member said.

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.

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

11. Disputes

Unfortunately, there will occasionally be clashes within a group. As Group Leader, it is for you to try to defuse any disputes between the members and if necessary, privately make the individual aware and inform him or her of the matters of concern. Please make every effort to resolve the issue, and make sure that you give the member the opportunity to respond. It may be possible to tactfully suggest that the member may be not suited to the group – for example, that their knowledge or level of ability is different from that of the rest of the group.

If the unacceptable behaviour continues, the Group Leader has the right, as a last resort, to exclude the member. The Committee must be informed of the decision via the Groups Coordinator, and the excluded member has the right to appeal to the Committee. In the event of an insoluble dispute between a group leader and a group member, the Committee will normally support the Group Leader, and if appropriate encourage the dissenting member to form an alternative group.

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 Groups Coordinator immediately who will inform the Committee.

12. Health, Safety and Liability

Participation in all P3A activities is solely at members' own risk, and without any liability on the part of the P3A, its Committee or Group Leaders. All members have signed a disclaimer of liability acknowledging this. Groups should not have separate disclaimers (which count as personal data). The exception is for guests who are not P3A members: depending on your activity you may wish to ask guests to sign a [Guest Disclaimer form](#) (available on the website). Signed forms should only be retained for as long as they are needed.

Liability waivers do not provide 100% protection, but if leading a potentially risky activity such as hiking, common sense practices such as briefing the group in advance on the level of the walk and any tricky sections, do provide some additional cover.

If an accident occurs during a meeting or activity, please complete an accident report form. A copy of the form is in Appendix 1 of this document. Upon completion please keep a copy and send the original to the Groups Coordinator. It is imperative that no admission of liability is made.

13. Accidents

If an accident or medical emergency occurs during your group activity, please inform the Committee as soon as possible, via the Groups Coordinator. Please state the date, time and place of the accident, describe what happened, who was involved and what action was taken.

14. First Aid

The P3A periodically offers professional First Aid training to Group Leaders. You might also wish to identify any qualified First Aiders in your group. For outdoor groups, funds are available for the purchase of First Aid kits.