



The Bray Head U3A

Draft Guidelines for Sub-groups of The Bray Heads

There are thousands of University of the Third Age (U3A) Groups across the world which operate in many different ways. A number are like The Bray Heads (TBH) with the core activity being a regular series of lectures on a variety of topics open to all members. These are often followed, as in the case of TBH, with an opportunity to meet informally afterwards.

At the heart of the U3A philosophy is the support of life-long learning offering members the opportunity to gain new knowledge or skills. This is frequently provided by the members themselves through special-interest Sub-groups. These allow members to pursue specific interests in much more detail and with more direct engagement. An example of this is the Climate Action and Walking Sub-groups of TBH. Other Sub-group activities take the form of short courses such as the one on Creative Writing run by Michael Gordon in TBH. The principles governing the establishment of Sub-groups across different U3A Groups appear to be quite variable. Some charge the full costs involved, others a nominal charge to cover, at least partially, the cost of room rental, while others regard it as an integral part of the activity of the Group as a whole and cover the cost from within the general budget. However, a consistent theme across all is that Sub-groups are consistent with the ethos of U3A.

The following is the set of guidelines governing the operation of Sub-groups and, as appropriate, short courses, within TBH.

1. TBH encourages the establishment of Sub-groups based on members' interests and recognises that their activities are a core part of the programme of the Group as a whole.
2. Sub-groups are intended to augment the programme of TBH by enabling members to delve deeper into topics of interest and, where appropriate, develop new skills/knowledge. The focus of Sub-groups is within the membership providing an opportunity for sustained social and intellectual engagement among members.
3. Given the strong community focus of U3A, it is important that Sub-groups do not compete with the activities of other non-U3A community groups. However, where appropriate, collaboration and joint activities with other groups is welcome.
4. A proposal to establish a Sub-group should be submitted to the Co-ordinating Team for approval setting out the aims of the Sub-group and the proposed activities.
5. Members of Sub-groups should be members of TBH but as with meetings of the main Group, guests may be invited from time to time.
6. Each Sub-group should appoint a leader responsible for liaison with the Co-ordinating Team who will be invited to attend Co-ordinating Team meetings as appropriate.
7. Ideally, there should be at least one member of the Sub-group who is also a member of the Co-ordinating Team.
8. The activities offered by Sub-groups should, insofar as is possible, make use of the skills of members or appropriate *pro bono* speakers.

9. In principle and where possible, the Group is willing to contribute to costs incurred in running a Sub-group (e.g. for room rental for meetings). The Sub-group Leader should prepare a draft programme of proposed activities together with an annual budget indicating the nature of any costs and how it is proposed they be covered (e.g. by the Group or by members of the Sub-group). The budget should be submitted to and approved by the Co-ordinating Team before any costs are incurred. Costs should be kept to a minimum.
10. Sub-groups and their members will be covered by the insurance of the Group, which is normally provided through Age Action. However, it should be noted that at the time of drawing up these guidelines (June 2020) there is no insurance cover in place. The matter is being kept under review by the Co-ordinating Team which will keep members informed.