

## Basingstoke – Old Basing u3a Facebook guide for Group Leaders

### **Why Facebook**

For a healthy u3a, it is important that we maintain and grow our numbers. There are other ways to achieve this, but social media is a positive addition to this activity.

The objective of using social media is to:

1. Increase the retention of existing members
2. Attract new members

### **Difference between Private and Public Facebook sites**

The Basingstoke – Old Basing u3a currently has two Facebook sites: Private and Public. There are key differences between these.

The Private Group is only accessible by our members. This is managed by administrators within our u3a. Information posted on this site can only be shared within the membership group.

We want to use this site more to make existing members aware of the activities being carried out, not just a line on a list of available groups. Feeling part of a wider community has been shown to increase retention of existing members of an organisation. It also creates a line of communication from members to other members, Group Leaders and the Committee which can help market the quality of our services and also improve them.

The Public Group is accessible by anybody on Facebook and content can be shared. This means more care is needed to avoid any mention of private information or showing images. Our u3a administrators ensure that any such material is removed before anything is posted.

We want to use this site to extend the visibility of our activities to non-members and help recruit new members in line with the Committee's growth strategy.

### **The importance of content**

To make Facebook a success we need content. It's an advert for all the wonderful work our Group Leaders and Groups are doing and as stated below, could help us retain members. It would be ideal if each Group Leader posted something regularly. However, this is probably not realistic, but there may be opportunities for enthusiastic members of a group to post content with the Group Leader's approval. We should target to post something from the u3a on the Private Facebook site 3 times a week to ensure that people find interesting things to read on the site.

## Dos and Don'ts

### Do

- Use social media to promote our u3a and its activities and events.
- Help protect our reputation by not posting inflammatory or derogatory comments.
- Make your posts interesting:
  - Each post should have a header which is interesting and includes key words. For example: Basingstoke u3a Book Club had a lively debate during our latest meeting or Basingstoke u3a Book Club had a blast ....
  - Ask a question – did you know that there really was a leper colony off the coast of Crete, as covered in the latest book reviewed by the Basingstoke u3a Book Club?
  - Most posts should have a call to action at the end, such as, if you want to join the Book Club and are not yet a member of the Basingstoke – Old Basing u3a go to [www.basingstokeu3a.org](http://www.basingstokeu3a.org) and click on the contact us button.
  - Include a photo, either of the group or something relevant. **(Taking into account privacy rules above)**
- Ensure any photos or mention of named people are agreed in advance with those involved.
- For Public Facebook posts:
  - Use hashtags, up to about 5, as this increases the number of times your group will come up in search. For example: #What's on in Basingstoke, #Basingstoke Clubs, #Hampshire Business, #Basingstoke club. If the group is very not likely to be searched for in Basingstoke, then expand out to a wider geography i.e. this will ensure your post is seen by more people.
  - Try to get your posts on other people's specific searches, for example #Milestones Museum if you tag them. This notifies them of your existence, and they may want to share information about you to reach their followers.
- If you receive unwelcome messages, think before you reply. Ask yourself if your message would offend or hurt anyone.
- Do report any content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on our u3a to a member of the Committee.
- Report any content which raises a safeguarding concern in line with the procedures outlined in our Safeguarding Policy.

### Don't

- Include personal or confidential information regarding the u3a or any member such as photos, names etc without permission – **this is very important.**
- Worry if you get negative responses. This is a good way to get feedback and will allow you to respond either privately or on the site. Administrators will delete any posts that get personal. This is very unlikely to happen, however.
- Tag (name) any vulnerable adult or anyone under the age of 18.
- Circulate or repost chain letters, other spam, commercial, personal, religious or political solicitations.
- Use social media in a way that breaches any of our other policies such as equality and diversity, data protection, safeguarding etc.

**The different styles of posts we want to encourage:**

- Educational
  - how to
  - fun facts
  - Information such as National u3a days
  - What the groups are doing
- Entertaining
  - Fun stories from the Groups
  - Photographs
  - Meet the team – do people know the Committee members or Group Leaders?

**How to get things added to each site**

Private – go onto the Private site and into the posting section and add the content that you wish to upload. The administrators will review and then post. There may be a delay as we will try to ensure posts are spread over a week.

Public – only an administrator can add posts to our public page. If you have a post that you would like to appear on this page, please send it to an administrator.

**How we stay safe**

Administrators check all posts to make sure they are in line with the dos and don'ts and will get involved if there are any issues.

If you need to contact an administrator, they are:

Liz and Rod Marshall, Paul Dodge and Elaine Budd (more to be agreed)

Feel free to contact any of the above or Janet Field if you have any concerns or ideas regarding our use of Facebook.