

Grange & District U3A Communications Policy

Scope of the policy

This communications policy covers all communications issued by the Grange & District U3A (Grange U3A)

Why this policy exists

The purpose of this communications policy is to ensure that communications on behalf of the Grange & District U3A are consistent and have the approval of the Executive Committee. To this end no member of the Executive Committee shall promulgate information which either contradicts, or pre-empts discussion of, an agreed policy or decision.

Communications with individual members

Provision of information to members

Communications with individual members fall into two categories; regular, repeated provision of information (such as the newsletter, information about membership renewal, etc) and individual ad hoc information (such as notification of special events). Both categories shall be made known to all members of the Grange U3A.

The processes for disseminating regular communications are well established and effective. Any proposed changes to these processes (by, for example moving from paper documents to electronic media) shall be agreed by the Executive Committee and made known to the membership.

Information relating to membership matters shall be circulated by the Membership Secretary.

Dissemination of information relating to Grange U3A social events shall fall within the remit of the Social Secretary.

Grange U3A communicates with its members via direct e-mail, paper documents and the Grange U3A website. (The website information is also available to non-members.)

The default approach to communicating with members shall be e-mail as this is the most efficient and cost-effective mechanism. The Beacon system should be used to send e-mails to members in order to ensure compliance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Where this is infeasible and another email system is to be used then multiple recipients should be addressed using the BCC (i.e. "blind copy") facility to ensure confidentiality.

However, it is recognised that not all members have access to, or are prepared to use, electronic media and information will continue to be provided to these individuals using hard copy documents. The exception to electronic distribution is the members quarterly newsletter which will continue to be delivered in printed form while it remains cost-effective to do so.

The Constitution of the Grange and District U3A (clause 8 vii) states that:

"The Executive Committee shall keep minutes of the proceedings at meetings of the Executive Committee and any sub-committees and these minutes shall be available for inspection should a member request it."

However, as a courtesy to members the formally accepted minutes of Executive Committee, or of formally constituted sub-committees, shall be posted on the Grange and District website and a paper copy posted on the noticeboard at the monthly general meeting

Neither draft minutes of the Executive Committee meetings nor of working party/working group discussions shall be made available as these documents may be subject to amendment prior to formal adoption and their contents may prove to be misleading or inaccurate should they be circulated prematurely.

Material which is of interest not only to Grange U3A members but also to the general public will be hosted on the Grange U3A website. Such information includes, but is not limited to, details of the interest groups available, galleries of photographs, Grange U3A policies, Grange U3A governance, upcoming events, etc. No confidential material is to be hosted on the Grange U3A website.

Receipt of information from members

All communications received from members should be treated with strict confidentiality.

Contact details (telephone numbers and e-mail addresses) of members of the Executive Committee are available to members of Grange U3A and any Executive Committee member may be contacted by a member. If the message relates to a membership issue it should be forwarded to the Membership Secretary. In all other cases the Executive Committee member should inform the member that the matter will be considered at the next Executive Committee meeting. Where the matter is considered urgent it should be brought to the attention of the Chairman at the earliest opportunity and he/she will determine the appropriate course of action.

Should a member request that an item of information be promulgated to the wider membership this will be considered by the Executive Committee after which the Secretary shall inform the member of the decision reached.

Communications with and within groups.

Communications between the Executive Committee and interest groups (and vice-versa) shall normally be via the Groups Liaison Officer (GLO). This will ensure that the GLO is seen as the prime conduit for dissemination of information and will minimise the potential for conflicting information to be given to groups.

Any Group Leader (GL) may contact the Executive Committee as an individual member.

Communications within a group is a matter for the GL and the members of the group. However, all information about the group's members held by a GL should be stored in accordance with Grange U3A's Data Protection Policy.

Communication with non-members

The Grange U3A website hosts general information which may be of interest to non-members.

Communications and events targeted at non-members fall within the remit of the Outreach and Publicity group which will decide how best to promulgate information to, and communicate with, non-members and other potentially interested parties.

Communications with third parties

Charity Commission (CC)

The Secretary shall be responsible for completing the legally required CC Annual Return for Grange U3A.

Any information received (other than that which will go to all Executive Committee members in their guise as Trustees) shall be brought to the attention of the Executive Committee by the Secretary.

The Third Age Trust (TAT)

Information received from the TAT which has a direct impact on Grange U3A shall be brought to the attention of the Executive Committee by the Secretary. The Secretary shall monitor the TAT newsletter, and other TAT publications and events, for items which may be of interest to Grange U3A.

Neighbouring U3As

Grange U3A will seek to maintain close, but informal, relations with neighbouring U3As. The main vehicle for this at present is the Bay Network, to which Grange U3A is entitled to send two representatives. The Executive Committee will decide who will represent Grange U3A at meetings of this and other similar bodies.

Other charities

There are other charities with which Grange U3A may have an overlap in terms of the demographics of members/clients. As with neighbouring U3As benefit may accrue from maintaining links with relevant charities (for example AgeUK) in order to enable exchange of information which may be of mutual interest and the Executive Committee will decide upon these links on an individual basis.

If Grange U3A is asked by other charities to disseminate publicity information on their behalf the Executive Committee will decide whether to make this available to members. Where it is agreed to promulgate another charity's material this will not be sent to individual members but will be restricted to displaying the information on the noticeboards made available at Grange U3A monthly general meetings and/or making an announcement at those meetings.

Commercial organisations

Grange U3A shall neither endorse, nor promulgate information provided by, commercial organisation.

Contacts via the Grange U3A website.

The Grange U3A website has a contact form whereby a message may be sent to the Chairman, the GLO, the Membership Secretary, the Secretary or the Website Administrator.

Should a message be received via this route it will normally be dealt with by the relevant officer. If he/she feels unable to deal with it directly, it should be brought to the attention of the Executive Committee.

Messages from individuals or organisations offering their services as speakers for Grange U3A meetings should be routed to the Speaker Finder.

Communications not covered by this policy are subject to approval by the Executive Committee.

Author: Ged Jones

Version 1

Date of adoption 17/1/20