



Crawley

DAY OUTINGS AND FIELD VISITS

This guide is applicable only to single day events.

Additional requirements apply where overnight accommodation is involved which has legal and other implications; it will be necessary to consult the Committee before commencing planning these.

PURPOSE

Outings to sites, museums, galleries, theatres and other places of interest are an effective, educational, enjoyable and integral part of the year's programme:-

- they may be linked to group meetings.
- they are popular and most members will come.
- professional help at the venue may be available at a reasonable cost.
- make plans well in advance.

PREPARATION

1. Private car or mini-bus may be better for small numbers – check insurance cover.
2. Train – check conditions on concessionary rates.
3. Coach (see page 4 for details of coach firms and mini-buses for hire).
 - use a company known to Crawley U3A.
 - allow plenty of time for journey (ask advice from coach company), 'comfort stops' and refreshments. Inform coach company of any special route required.
 - decide in advance on pick-up points.
 - arrange by telephone but confirm in writing to the coach company – ask for written confirmation.
 - ensure the driver knows the route or has up-to-date maps.
 - confirm coach arrangements two/three days before hand by telephone.
 - coach to arrive early.
 - a large coach (50+ seats) is more economical than a medium sized one.
4. It is essential to have a mobile phone available for emergency contact with the leader. Ensure all of the party knows the number and from when it will be turned on. It is suggested this is about 1 hour before the first pick-up.

Coach travel is assumed in several places in this document. When another form of transport is used the associated instructions or guidance are readily adapted.

ENTRANCE TO VENUE & PROFESSIONAL HELP

- arrange well in advance and confirm in writing.
- a large group (30 +) may need splitting into two parties – venue will advise.
- ask for costs.
 - some venues offer a free service.
 - some charge per head.
 - some offer a fixed fee for a 'free lance' specialist which they will book for you (expect to pay £50 approx. for a one hour talk).
 - payment is usually in a separate cheque from that paid to the venue.
- extra-mural university departments can be very helpful.
- again check with the venue by telephone 2 to 3 days before the outing.

ORGANISATION / MONEY

- ask member of the group to help with organisation, bookings and collecting the money.
 - have leaflets, maps, instructions etc. to hand out/round on the coach.
 - do not crowd too much into the day.
 - Collect money well in advance – no money, no trip – no sae, no ticket!
 - arrange all inclusive cost to include travel, entrance fee, cost of professional help and gratuities (50p a head is suggested as the driver's gratuity).
 - check with venue the most economical rate for the party (e.g. senior citizen, group, student/educational).
 - charge enough to include administration costs¹ (50p per person or more if necessary is suggested) and break even if 49/51 seater coach has only 40 seats booked. If for a large party, where two coaches are hired this should be reduced to 30 seats per coach.
 - consider travel times with regard to route, distance, time of year and traffic conditions.
 - have cheque's made payable to Crawley U3A
 - if many cheque's are to be forwarded to the Treasurer by post then list each cheque using the form or Excel Workbook "Cheque's Sent by Post".
- pay money to Hon. Treasurer before the event (important for 'cash flow').
- obtain the necessary cheque's from Hon. Treasurer (*It is vital that no individual member or members fund such activities from personal bank accounts*).
 - state who is eligible, set 'cut off' date after which places can be reserved by other Crawley U3A members.
 - Non U3A members cannot be accepted on outings (Our public liability insurance cover would be in jeopardy if this were allowed).

¹ Some administration costs may not be apparent to outing organisers, such as inserts in the Newsletter and the consequences of late cancellation of the event (due for instance to adverse weather etc.).



BENEFITS IN KIND

- The one area that is very difficult to administer and can lead to major problems is that of goods/service providers (e.g. Theatres and Tour Operators) of offering a free place for every, say, 20 members booked.

This freebie must be declared to both the other travel participants and to the main U3A Committee.

It is a discount. The Organiser is a fellow participant who must pay for their trip, therefore the free place must be shared between all participants as a discount.

ON THE DAY

- check all on arrival at given time – allow five minutes for late comers.
- Leader take a front seat, start early if all present.
- let people arrange own lunches etc.
- ensure that items may be left on the coach.
- on arrival, mark departure point clearly.
- impress on all not to be late back to the coach.

FOLLOW UP

- You will learn from the day, both from group feedback and your own experience.
- Complete outings account form, send with outstanding invoices, receipts, and cheques to Hon. Treasurer. Keep duplicate records for future reference.
- Confirm receipt of records with Hon. Treasurer.

PUBLICITY

Publicity can be arranged if additional members are to be included.

- Crawley Newsletter – the Editor can take information by telephone.
- Group Leaders can be contacted (be aware of additional cost).
- Refer to list of members who have expressed interest in outings and telephone members.
- Supply information to Hon. Secretary in time for notices to be given at Monthly Meetings.

CANCELLATIONS

- In case of a U3A making a cancellation, the organiser is to be informed.
- Refunds cannot be guaranteed but may be possible in exceptional circumstances.
- Travel cost should generally not be returned, but cost of entry to venue may be returnable.
- A 'waiting list' may be helpful in taking up late vacancies.
- Organiser to contact the Hon. Treasurer when considering the circumstances of cancellation.
- Hon. Treasurer makes refunds of the appropriate amount when agreed.

SMALLER PARTIES

- With smaller parties where it is more appropriate to travel by public transport or Members' cars.
- When using public transport each Member is responsible for their fare payment. In this they are free to use on their own volition special offers such as '4 for 2 tickets'.
- When travelling in Members' cars, passengers are responsible for making appropriate reimbursement of expenses to the driver and for checking that the driver's/car insurance also covers them.
- Similarly Members' may each be responsible for their entrance charges to places/venues visited during the outing.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

The following documents will normally need to be used when organising outings and visits.

Appendix F Cheque's sent by post Form/Excel Workbook

Appendix G Day Outings Booking Form.

Appendix H Record of Outing.

Appendix P Name and Receipt List.

VEHICLES AVAILABLE FOR HIRE

Information compiled from experience in Crawley U3A

1. Hardings Coaches, Wellhouse Lane Betchworth, Surrey, RH3 7HH, Tel 01737 842103. Email sales@bookhardings.com. This company has been used many times recently by Crawley U3A.

They have 2 mini-coaches of 24 and 28 seats and coaches seating 36, 49 and 50.

All coaches are air conditioned. The one with 49 seats has an emergency toilet and is named "Executive".

2. Knights Travel Coaches, (Main office), Lower Broadbridge Farm, Billingshurst Road, Broadbridge Heath, RH12 3LR. Telephone 01403 268109.

This company has, recently, been strongly recommended.

All coaches are air conditioned.

They have coaches with 18, 22, 26, 35 (with toilet), 49 (with toilet), 53 and 57 seats.

In a telephone conversation, it was suggested that if a price had been obtained from a coach company, telephone Knights and they would see if they could improve on the quotation.

3. Crawley Community Transport, A Registered Charity. Tel 01293 657080 before 1:00 pm.

This is a new service using minibuses, for day, evening, weekdays and weekends.

A Crawley U3A Group has used this service and found it very good.

For further information see WSCC Directory – updated each year.

This information has been updated on 25 November 2009.