



# **LETCHWORTH ARTS AND LEISURE GROUP**

## **Guidelines for Group Contacts and Activity Organisers**

### **Introduction**

These notes are intended to be a useful collection of reference information and reminders for those who are running a LALG Group or activity.

The Secretary whose contact details appear in the monthly newsletters will gratefully receive any suggestions for corrections or additions.

Similarly to contact any Officer or Committee Member please contact the Secretary.

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### **Constitution & Organisation**

The LALG organisation is defined in its Constitution, a copy of which is available to any member from the Secretary. This document describes the central umbrella organisation, but with most of the activities organised through a set of semi-autonomous sub-groups (referred to hereafter simply as 'group/s'). The Constitution lays down the rules for Membership, election of the central Committee, holding of an Annual General Meeting, etc. The LALG is a voluntary organisation, run by its members through the organisation of groups, and dependent on the continued efforts of these people for its success.



# **LETCHWORTH ARTS AND LEISURE GROUP**

## **Group contacts**

It is best to have a named contact person that current and potential new group members are able to contact for information. This person's contact details are given in the group's entry in the monthly newsletter.

The LALG Committee looks to the contact to ensure that all of the group's activities are clearly seen to be run under the auspices of LALG and to remind members that taking part in the group's activities is dependent upon their holding current LALG membership.

## **Setting up a new group**

The LALG Committee actively promotes the setting up of new groups and provides assistance with this. A designated Committee Member is responsible for encouraging the growth of new groups and may be contacted via the Secretary. This person may be able to attend your first few meetings to give immediate advice.

The following checklist contains a number of items to be considered when launching a new group.

- How many members are needed to make the group viable? This will vary depending on the type of activity.
- Where will the group meet, how often, daytime, evening or weekend?
- What is the likely level of cost? Do you expect to recover this by a group subscription, or a charge per meeting or event?
- Will the activity clash with any other established group? This is not necessarily a problem if there is the demand, and as the LALG grows there will inevitably be some clash of dates and interests, but it would be worthwhile talking to the leaders of any other groups likely to be affected (The monthly newsletter shows when other groups meet.).
- Who will take on the leadership of the group after the setting up period? Experience shows that without a Group Contact who is willing to act as at least an information point it is very difficult to keep the activity going.
- What is the expected programme for the first few meetings? Again it is much more likely that a group is successful if there is a view some way ahead, rather than working from one meeting to the next.

## **Affiliated group**

At the discretion of the Committee an established group may be given affiliate status. This means that the group benefits from the publicity provided via the newsletter. Affiliation is usually awarded for a limited period only and is seen as a precursor to full membership. A typical requirement of the Committee would be that within a year 50% of the group's members are members of LALG and that all are members within two years.

## **Halls & Venues**

Besides people's own homes there is a wide variety of meeting places used by LALG groups. These are indicated in the individual groups' notices in the newsletter. Contact the Secretary or better still a group contact that uses the particular venue in which you are interested.



# LETCHWORTH ARTS AND LEISURE GROUP

## Group Finances

This section gives the basic principles by which the finances of LALG groups should be organised.

- ❖ Groups are always able to ask for advice or assistance with financial matters from the LALG Treasurer.
- ❖ Groups of the LALG should be self-financing, i.e. they should be able to fund their own activities.
- ❖ However, to help new groups become established the LALG Committee will normally make a contribution to costs of initial meetings and may be willing to consider other exceptional requests for financial assistance.
- ❖ Groups that decide to handle their own finances should appoint a treasurer to do so, and if significant sums are involved should open their own bank account. Many banks and building societies offer a "Treasurer's Account" or similar which is aimed at small groups such as ours.
- ❖ Alternatively, and if asked to do so, the LALG Treasurer will handle the money for groups and for individual excursions or events. Have cheques made payable to "LALG" with event name on rear.
- ❖ Groups that handle their own finances should keep a record of money received and spent, as part of normal accountability to their members and the LALG as a whole.
- ❖ All group financial records are subject to scrutiny by the LALG Treasurer.
- ❖ Refer to page 4 concerning bookings made through David's Bookshop.

## Publicity

The main route for publicity about group activities and events is the monthly LALG Newsletter.

A small editorial and distribution team shares responsibility for publishing the newsletter. While earlier submission is welcomed, the deadline for receipt of copy is 15th of the month prior to that in which the information is to be published. The preferred method of submitting copy is in MS Word and sent by email to: [newsletter@lalg.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@lalg.org.uk) Paper copy should be lodged in the box (marked Editor and adverts) at David's Bookshop or sent to the shop at 14 Eastcheap, LGC, and be accompanied by the contact details of the person who has sent it. The month's editor will acknowledge receipt of your copy.

The newsletter is also circulated to local outlets such as Spotlight, What's on in North Herts. etc.

Any group that wishes further advice on how or where to publicise their activities should contact the LALG Publicity Officer.

In advertising any event material should clearly show that event is being run by a LALG group.



# LETCHWORTH ARTS AND LEISURE GROUP

## Organising a coach excursion

The following checklist contains a number of items to be considered when organising a coach excursion, holiday or other similar event.

- Check the proposed date with the web site diary or Secretary to avoid clashing with another event if possible.
- Work out a budget and a timetable so that you have sufficient time to adequately publicise your plans and to collect money etc.
- Have all arrangements with providers confirmed in writing.
- Give the LALG Treasurer at least a week's notice of any advance payments (deposits etc.) or to provide funds for payments needed on the day.
- Make clear your cancellation policy (e.g. only refund if substitute found or no loss incurred).
- Charge non-members of LALG more than members if they want to take part in a trip and arrange that booking is open to members before non-members may book.
- Have cheques made payable to "LALG" with event name on rear.
- When booking a coach confirm with the operator that the driver knows the route and ascertain whether the driver will have been to the venue before. Ensure that you have clear instructions (preferably written and with a map) on the precise location of the venue and coach parking facilities.
- Once on the coach identify yourself as the leader. It is best to use the PA system and to check that all of your broadcasts are clearly audible to everyone.
- Ensure that passengers are clear about the precise time and location for the coach's departure on all legs of the journey. It may be advisable to stand at the coach door and remind people as they disembark.
- Maintain accounts and submit a final statement to the LALG Treasurer as described on page 1. (An exemplar booking form is appended along with an exemplar expenses sheet.)

## Booking Office at David's Bookshop

David's Bookshop provides a voluntary Booking Office service to groups organising an excursion, holiday or other similar event. Please help David's staff by giving them all relevant information in good time.

The following checklist contains a number of items to be considered when using David's for bookings.

- Agree with David's Bookshop that they can handle the booking before the first publicity of the event in the newsletter or a meeting.
- Ensure that there is a Booking Form at David's Bookshop, with details of the event, in time for booking to start. (See exemplar appended.)
- Immediately prior to the event take a copy of the list of bookings from David's to use as a checklist. Please let David's know the day before so that they can have the information ready.
- Collect payments and pass to the LALG Treasurer.
- It is the responsibility of the organiser to decide if refunds can be given, not the bookshop staff.
- After the event complete the Expenses Sheet (See exemplar appended.) and return to the LALG Treasurer with any outstanding bills to be paid, or receipts needing reimbursement.



# **LETCHWORTH ARTS AND LEISURE GROUP**

## **Coach Hire**

Groups wishing to hire a coach for an excursion should make the necessary arrangements themselves. There are some experienced tour leaders in LALG who may be contacted for advice via the Secretary. It is advisable to be clear with the coach operator about the seating capacity of the coach as some of the higher capacity vehicles give less leg space.

Pricing of trips is the responsibility of the organiser, but sometimes a coach will not be 100% full, so it may be prudent to set your cost on the basis of say 80% of seats being sold. It is also usual to give the driver a tip and it may be easiest to factor this into your price to avoid going round with the hat.

## **Discount Scheme**

One of the many benefits of LALG membership is the discount scheme negotiated with local suppliers of goods and services. Generally 10% discount is offered but may vary and may not be available when using a credit card or buying sale goods. The full list (currently over 20 outlets) often appears in the newsletter or may be obtained from the Secretary.

## **Membership Calendar**

A reminder of the usual cycle of dates relating to membership subscriptions:

September 1st	Membership due for renewal.
October Newsletter	Notice given of last reminder to renew.
Mid October	Members who have not renewed are removed from mailing list (i.e. do not get the December Newsletter.)
March	Subscription runs for a year and a half.
June	Committee to confirm Subscription rate for succeeding year.
August Newsletter	Renewal form published for year starting September 1st.