



The Astrological Association

The Astrological Association

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LOCAL GROUPS ADVICE PACK

For further information/enquiries contact the Astrological Association

Welcome to the world of Local Astrology Groups. Whether you are about to begin a new group, or whether you are part of an already established group, we hope that the information herein will be of some assistance in helping your group to prosper. Do remember to send us the details of your group so that we can help to promote it via the Astrological Association's web pages. Please send your details to groups@astrologicalassociation.com

Meanwhile, the Astrological Association would like to wish your group every success!

The advice given below was put together with the help of some long-running local groups. The Astrological Association would like to thank the groups involved: Arcturus Rising at Bristol. Aquarius Severn at Cheltenham, Old Windsor Astrology Club at Old Windsor, Berks, Suffolk Astrological Society at Bury St Edmunds and Wessex Astrology Circle at Bournemouth.



Selecting a time to start

As Astrologers, you may want to choose a good starting/inauguration time

- 1) Use astrology to elect a good time to start. This will become the chart for your group; so make sure it's the chart you want. Your group will grow into and experience the transits and progressions of its chart.

Assessing Interest

You may be surprised at how many people will be interested in an astrology group.

- 1) Decide on a time and venue (probably your home to start of with). Advertise in local newspapers and put cards in shop windows suggesting that anyone interested in an astrology group attend the meeting.
- 2) At the meeting, find out who is willing to help run the group, (a committee of at least three works well). You need people who are committed to the group and prepared to do the work necessary in running it effectively. It will need regular communication by phone and email and about three to four committee meetings a year.
- 3) Decided how often you will meet, i.e., once a month or twice a month? Initially you may want to just programme chart discussion or general astrology discussion.
- 4) Decide what your charges should be. It is a good idea to request a small charge from the start, even if you are meeting in someone's home; this way you will build up a kitty with which you can pay speakers. Charges vary across the country but tend to be in the region of £3 - £5.

Choosing a Venue

Once enough members have shown an interest in starting a group, the next stage is to find suitable premises to hold your meetings.

- 1) Community Centres/Village halls are the cheapest. Public houses may offer a cheap room providing they are getting enough bar sales, but be aware of the possibility of noise. A quiet environment is a factor to take into consideration, as not all speakers have powerful voices!

- 2) Try and visit the premises on the night you intend booking, as this will give you an idea of parking availability and other events going on at the same time.
- 3) When choosing premises, bear in mind its suitability for disabled access. If there are access problems (steps, no nearby parking etc.) make that clear when you advertise meetings.

Publicising Your Group

As soon as you have started a group you may want to get yourself known, both locally and nationally.

- 1) Once you have a name and a regular meeting date for your group, email the AA via their local groups coordinator at groups@astrologicalassociation.com. Details of your group will then be advertised on the AA and the Urania Trust Websites.
- 2) You may wish to get a press release together and mailshot the local papers and radio stations. If you can persuade a local radio station or paper to interview you, that's good publicity!
- 3) Send posters/flyers to all the libraries within the local area to attract new people.
- 4) Ask local shops, especially shop's that have an 'alternative' theme, to display posters and information.
- 5) Place regular adverts in any local holistic/alternative magazine.
- 6) Build up a mailing list and mail programmes to everyone on the list. Ask newcomers if they want to be added to the mailing list.

Meetings and Speakers

Some groups regularly alternate speaker evenings with discussion evenings, others have occasional guest speakers.

- 1) Initially you may want to begin with general astrological discussion; this is fine and helps you build up a kitty for speakers, although many groups jump straight in and invite speakers from the start.
- 2) Whether you have speakers or discussions, do decide to publish a programme of your meetings. This need not be fancy, an A4 sheet giving dates times and venue is a constant reminder to members.
- 3) It helps to decide on a set fee for speakers. Providing the amount is realistic, you will find that approaching speakers should not be a problem. Sometimes speakers may expect more, if they do you can always decline and invite someone else instead.
- 4) The AA has a list of speakers who have been recommended by local groups, an up-to-date list can be found in the Local Groups section of the AA's website
- 5) Don't be afraid to approach someone and ask them to do a talk/lecture for your group - most speakers will be flattered - and don't overlook the talent within your own group as a source for speakers.
- 6) For bigger-name speakers you could get together with a neighbouring group in order to share expenses, or plan a day workshop whereby you can charge more and therefore pay your speaker more.
- 7) Whatever you decide to do, try and publicise a programme of events

Gaining and Retaining Members

The most important focus of your group will be the members

- 1) Decide if you are going to have a membership fee and if so are you going to have a two-tier charge for members & non-members. This works for many local groups and encourages members to continue to attend.

- 2) Make membership worthwhile; – some groups negotiate discounts at local bookstores for their members, or offer freebies such as chart reports, transit or progression calendars.
- 3) Providing lessons for beginners can bring new people to astrology and to your group. Some groups offer 6 months' free membership to new students.

Use the World Wide Web

These days people often look for events and interests via the internet so try and use it to your advantage!

- 1) Have an email address. It would probably be a good idea to get an online email address as this helps avoid spam. Your ISP may offer online email, if not there are various websites that do.
- 2) Ask members and newcomers for their email addresses so that you can send out reminders before your meetings.
- 3) Try and get a website together, even if it is only basic it will do the job. You don't need any technical expertise - a free website at wordpress.com can be put together by anybody.
- 4) Set up a Facebook page - Facebook is incredibly useful for networking and sharing.
- 5) Websites linked to local newspapers and local councils will often put details of your group on their site for free.
- 6) Join an online support group. There is an independent support list for people who run astrology groups in the UK at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/astrogroups/>

Networking

Most established astrology groups are happy to help support and encourage new groups.

- 1) Make contact with other groups who are within travelling distance so that you can keep each other informed of workshops and meetings, etc.
- 2) Join the Astrological Association, the country's largest association of astrologers. You'll be keeping up-to-date with the astrological world through the Astrological Association Journal; additionally, attending the AA's annual conferences is an excellent opportunity for networking, publicising your group, and for lining up future speakers.

Continuation

*Remember that the group **is** its members.*

- 1) Try and include your members in any major decisions.
- 2) You may need to have a written constitution if you open a bank account in your group's name.
- 3) Sending out questionnaires in order to gain useful feedback from members of the group is a good starting point for planning future events.
- 4) Plan and print your programmes in advance, and put them on your website and/or Facebook page.
- 5) Members often want good speakers but don't want to pay too much, so a balance needs to be made.
- 6) It's important to continue to advertise your events in local papers, libraries and other places where the cost is minimal or free. Having the slogan 'new members always welcome' will not be of much use if new people don't know of your existence.

In addition to this, as astrologers you will know that things change, and watching the transits of your group's chart will help you understand the ups and downs of the group and how to help it continue and flourish.

Finally, good luck with running your group! If you love astrology, you will find it is hard but rewarding work.