

GUIDELINES ON SETTING UP REGIONAL MEETINGS

February 2016



If you are interested in setting up a meeting of members in your area, the guidelines below will explain how we can help.

First step

To gauge initial interest, you can ask us to email members in your area. If there is sufficient interest, it is up to you to set up the meeting and we will notify members about the meeting by email and by listing the event on our website.

As the organising author, you are responsible for:

- finding and booking a suitable venue (e.g. a pub with a space that can be cordoned off)
- organising food (if required)
- sending us the details so that we can inform members with plenty of lead time (6 weeks)
- liaising with the venue (e.g. over numbers)
- inviting, liaising with and, if appropriate, paying expenses and/or fees to guest speakers

How we can help

We can let you know the number of members living in your area. If a meeting is arranged, we are happy to send an email to members in the appropriate area, giving details of the event and directing members to contact you for further information. We will also mention the meeting on our website.

Tips for members setting up local meetings

- Avoid any need to pay room hire or cancellation fees
- If meeting mid-week, pubs are usually happy to reserve an area for free
- From experience, we suggest that events are organised so that the individuals are responsible for buying their own food and drink
- Meetings more frequent than once a month can be overkill. Most of our local groups meet somewhere between once a month to twice-yearly.

Setting up a regional group

Regional groups are different from occasional regional meetings. In order to set up an official SoA regional group, there would need to be a minimum of 100 members in the area who express interest i.e. by responding positively to an email enquiry. An initial meeting is usually held where members of the group discuss the format and regularity of meetings etc. Once the operating details have been established, the group would be added to the SoA website.

The organising author, or chair, must be able to run a minimum of four events per year, supplying the SoA events manager with details of the events, which will be emailed to members of the regional group.

On request, it is possible for a member of SoA staff to give a one-off presentation to the regional group (a treat for us to be able to leave the office to speak to members!) but please bear in mind that this is conditional on office commitments and would usually need to be organised two-three months' in advance.

Please note: for occasional local meetings or regular regional group meetings, the SoA does not have the resources to become involved in taking bookings, handling payments, organising or paying for speakers.

For further information about local meetings or regional groups near where you live, or to explore setting up a local meeting or group, please contact Charlotte Buckley at the SoA on 020 7373 6642 or by email at CBuckley@societyofauthors.org.