

Suffolk IVC

Members Handbook

Available to all SIVC members

And
hopefully containing useful information and hints on how best to use the club.

The list of contact details is on a separate Excel spreadsheet that is only available to members

About IVC

IVC stands for Inter-Varsity Club – it was founded in 1948 by a few university graduates who wanted to perpetuate the social life they'd experienced – the basis of foundation was that it should be non-profit making and provide a social environment for like-minded people – that hasn't changed. The idea developed and there are now about 45 IVC groups around the country.

IVC is run by the members for the members and all events are put on or hosted by members. The IVC remit is to meet people, make friends and to enjoy ourselves.

Suffolk IVC

Suffolk IVC was founded in 1999. It currently has a relatively small membership which we are keen to increase. There are excellent links with Essex IVC, especially with members in the north of Essex, and with other IVCs around the country.

Suffolk IVC is centred round Bury-St-Edmunds, Ipswich and north Essex but, as with the growth in Essex, we are looking forward to the time when there will be members across the county and activities on most days. Even if you don't see many activities in your area that appeal to you do try to come along to one or more of the club nights to get to know people – the more interaction, the better your chance of making it work for you.

AIVC

The Association of Inter-Varsity Clubs (AIVC) is the umbrella organisation to which all of the IVCs are affiliated. There are about 40 clubs nationally (with about 4,000 members) which operate independently; all have separate (and different) membership subscriptions. Locally there are Cambridge, Norfolk, Herts and Beds, and Essex, the latter with more than 300 members which has many events open to Suffolk.

AIVC organises a national conference every year, usually in April, and acts as a co-ordinating body for inter-IVC events. All of the IVC clubs pay a levy per member to AIVC to cover its running costs. Further information about AIVC and IVC generally can be obtained from their website at www.ivc.org.uk.

The AIVC annual conference is itself an excellent weekend event well worth attending. Even if you don't wish to go to the conference meetings the hosting club always has plenty of things organised to make it an interesting weekend.

Also, if you are on holiday or working in another part of the country our ALO (Association Liaison Officer) can put you in touch with an IVC club in the area.

The Membership

IVC is all about finding interesting things to do. Suffolk IVC is open to individuals and couples and, as with all IVCs, is no longer restricted to graduates. There is no age limit and like-minded people with similar tastes and interests are welcome to apply for membership.

It is NOT a singles or dating club - It's a social and activities club. That is not to say that relationships are barred (Essex IVC is much larger and there are several married couples who met in the club); people looking for a relationship can still view IVC as a useful adjunct to their social life.

Attending Events

All events are organised or hosted by members. These include meals, pub nights, theatre, walks, and many others activities of local and individual interest.

All events will normally be made available for members to view by a monthly newsletter or bulletin. Members can also participate in events offered by other IVCs that include day trips, weekend breaks, holidays and major events, such as formal dinner-dances.

First Events

We are all aware that the most difficult step is normally that of attending your first event but we've all been there and we do understand. Each event has the name and telephone number or e-mail of the host to contact for further details. IVC is a very friendly club but if you are unsure at this stage we recommend that you ring the host/organiser, as you will then have made that difficult initial contact, and he/she can look out for you and introduce you to others.

Don't be put off by one poor event, they happen sometimes; if you are unfortunate enough to go to something on a bad day just remember that most events are good fun and, even if there are only a couple of you at say a theatre event, it's better than going on your own. Give it another shot, and ring the Membership Secretary for advice and consolation.

The more things you attend the more likely you are to make new friends.

Go to as many events as you can at first, even things you might not normally consider - just to meet people. You're almost certain to meet someone at your second event that you met at your first – and it really does get better.

If you have any queries about the club before you join or attend your first event then contact the Membership Secretary.

Once you're a full member you will be entitled to put on your own events.

Finding Your Way to an Event

Event write-ups usually include some directions and a postcode. A satnav is brilliant, web maps can be helpful or an A-Z atlas is also a great asset to have with you. If all else fails ring the organiser.

Recommended Events

Walks are particularly suitable for prospective and new members to meet and get chatting, as it's easy to chat whilst strolling along, and change companions at every stop or stile. Local walks are always easy going and often have a stop for tea/coffee or food before or after. Club Nights are good too.

Bookable Events

If you book then you are committed to attend. If you are unable to go, e.g. through illness, you MUST let the host know as soon as possible. If the host has had to make some outlay on your behalf, you will be required to repay that expense, whatever the reason for your non-attendance. The Club's policy is that no host should be out of pocket.

Range of Events

Events may be one-off or regular and can be at a person's home, at an outside location, or participation in the activity of another organisation such as theatres and show grounds etc.

If you have a special interest we will be happy to e-mail the membership to see if there is any interest – discuss it with a committee member.

Advertising an Event to The Club

Events are the lifeblood of the club and without them we can't retain members - events and socialising are the reason we are all in the club.

Since the loss of Activity Exchange the only way of telling all members and prospective members about an event is to send the details to be included in the newsletter/bulletin. This isn't difficult but might require a little practice to get the right sort of format and all the details. If you have trouble you can call a committee member to ask for help. Details of events should be sent to the Membership Secretary until further notice.

If you are worried about putting on an event, don't be. It's very easy and any committee member can help and maybe co-host. Walks are the best, as everyone talks to everyone else; other obvious ones are pub nights, meals, and theatre but they can be anything that you are interested in, and where you would like to have friendly company – like my longbow club, or it could be a knitting circle, book club, flower arranging or extreme ironing ! – or your local church fête or open gardens. An event doesn't have to have a lot of people to be a success – sometimes just one or two is better, as is often the case with theatre.

Please note that members are not permitted to bring guests to events except with the approval of the organiser, and in any case not at events hosted in a person's home. Also, events must not be held for the financial benefit of the host.

Suffolk IVC Website (www.suffolkivc.org.uk)

You are probably already familiar with this and most of the content is repeated in this handbook. We are in the process of updating it and will advise further in the not too distant future.

Activity Exchange

This is now defunct and the rest of the Handbook has (hopefully) been updated to reflect this.

Holidays and weekend breaks offered by other IVC groups will for the time being be advised by aIVC. These are a great opportunity to meet up and make friends across the country but of course they are only available to members.

Hosting Your First Event

If you haven't put on an event before, or if you would like help in organising one, contact a committee member. Again, it may be possible for a friend or a committee member to co-host with you. The event can be very simple, like a few drinks in a pub, or as elaborate as you like e.g. a quiz and a meal at home. If you are going on your own it's an opportunity not to be on your own !

It's a good idea for your event not to clash with a similar one in a similar location and date.

Cost of Hosting an Event

Nobody should be out-of-pocket through hosting. Most events are paid for by members on site or for tickets in advance. However, if for example you are providing food you can make a small charge to cover your own costs.

Late Events and Late Changes to Events

Contact the Membership Secretary who will send out an e-mail to the membership. If there is a late change to a bookable event then it is your responsibility to advise those who have already booked.

Specific Events

Club Night

This is a monthly social get-together. It's normally on a fairly regular monthly basis to meet for a drink and a chat and to discuss the events for next and future months.

It's also a good opportunity for discussion with committee members and others what you want from the club and to arrange to book a date to host an event.

At the moment the main Club Night is in Bury St Edmunds and there is a regular pub night at The Red Lion in East Bergholt, which should be convenient for Ipswich and Hadleigh. There is also a monthly club night shared with Essex at The Woolpack in Coggeshall.

Meals

These are very popular. However, an enjoyable event can sometimes be spoilt when the bill comes. Cash arrives from everywhere but the total is short of the bill ! To avoid this, here are some tips to meal organisers :-

1) Try to arrange for people to have separate bills – not usually an option in restaurants but there are lots of places where people can order at the bar and pay separately. Just remind everyone who is 'running a tab' to pay before they leave !!

2) Not that sort of restaurant !

a) Make sure that people buy drinks on a 'pay as you go' basis so that there are no drinks on the bill – few people know the cost of the drinks they've bought and some forget what they've had.

b) If you're lucky, it may be possible to get everyone to just split the bill evenly.

Otherwise

c) Ask people to add up their share, preferably before the menus have been taken away (paper and pens are a help). Make sure everyone includes enough for a tip - unless it seems reasonable not to.

d) Tips – 10% is the norm and if the service was worth it, it may be helpful to remind people. Also, this often covers small anomalies in the bill.

Consider taking a calculator – some people have one on their mobiles.

If non-refundable deposits are required you can remind members that no-shows will still be expected to pay for whatever reason.

Don't let this put you off doing a meal, it always works out OK.

Theatre and Concert Trips

Owing to uncertainty in numbers, it is almost always best to book tickets only for the people who commit themselves by actual payment and forgo possible group discounts.

Preferably ask people to book their own tickets and arrange to meet in the foyer or the bar. It can be a nice idea to meet for a meal beforehand if there is a suitable local venue and also in the bar at the interval - don't forget to order your interval drinks beforehand to avoid the rush.

Special Interest

One of our greatest strengths is that our members bring varied interests to the pot – real tennis, rock and roll dancing, and long bow archery are good examples – you may not ever have considered them but why not give them a go ?

If you have a hobby or pastime, or something you'd like to try why not invite others ? Don't be upset though if others aren't as keen as you but anything you may be interested in someone else might like to have a go at as well whether its knitting or extreme ironing !!

Running The Club

The Club is governed by a written constitution, which is available to all members from the Secretary on request.

The Club is run by a committee elected at the AGM, which is held around October time. The Committee currently meets bi-monthly and members are welcome to contribute ideas and opinions via any committee member.

If you would like to become more involved please do talk to a committee member.

Functions of Committee Members

The Committee members and their duties are as follows :-

Chairman Maintains control at committee meetings and the AGM.

Secretary Responsible for the legal side of running the club including establishing the date and venue of all Committee meetings and the AGM.

Treasurer Looks after the club finances.

ALO (AIVC Liaison Officer) Liaises with AIVC and keeps club members abreast of events and information available from AIVC and the other clubs in the association.

Publicity Secretary Responsible for marketing SIVC.

Membership Secretary Responsible for maintaining the membership and prospective members database, replying to all requests from prospective members, and sending out 'new member' and 'renewal' letters.

General committee members Without portfolio. Help as and when required.

All Committee members are expected to submit a report at each Committee meeting and for the AGM.

Your Help in Running Your Club

Your Commitment to The Club

What is true of most things is that you only get out what you put in, and it is especially true of a social club like IVC.

There is no mandatory commitment to SIVC. However, to get the most out of the club it is really necessary to put yourself out a little bit to come along to events. Initially this may be difficult but you do soon make friends who you will want to keep up with and you may find yourself coming to events that you once would not have considered.

Putting on an event may sound difficult but it's actually really easy and you only have to ask for a bit of help if you need it. You could find yourself becoming a 'serial host' once you realise that anywhere you are going you can have friends going with you.

How You Can Help with Recruitment

If you enjoy IVC, the friendships and the events, you really do have an interest in not only maintaining the current membership but in trying to increase it. The club is run to provide events for its members. Consequently in order to get more events we need more members but to encourage new members we need more events etc. etc.

So we need you to put on more events and to find us new members !

Suffolk is full of wide open spaces and we realise that many people are 'out on a limb' and some are rather a long way from anywhere. We would really like to increase the numbers in all areas to get a more homogeneous membership across the county. The achievement of this ambition will provide interesting events in out of the way places of which none of us would previously have been aware. As the Suffolk membership increases the range of events on offer locally for everyone will become wider and more frequent.

We already have superb contact with Essex; we are in the process of generating a similar relationship with Cambridge and maybe with Norfolk in the future. So if you haven't managed to get to anything, hang on, membership is a pittance and it will be worth the wait.

The main sources of new members are from our website and 'word of mouth'.

Listings in the local press can be very useful but they need to be free (rare these days) and it usually means that it has to be an ad for a local event. Advertisements really need to be a regular feature in a publication, even if it's a different event, as people don't notice the IVC connection the first time and maybe won't react until at least the third or fourth listing.

You can help by telling the Publicity Officer of any local publications in which we can get a (free) listing, or post the adverts yourself and let us know. You can also encourage others to apply for membership (word of mouth works very well) and maybe display a poster in your workplace, gym, library or some such – we can let you have a poster if you wish.

Business cards are also available from our Membership Secretary for you to hand out.

If you have any other ideas for marketing the club to prospective members we would love to hear from you.

If you have any ideas for adding to this handbook we would love to hear from you.

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Ring the Membership Secretary