

Finance Policy Bristol u3a

Created Author/date	Reviewed/updated Author/date	Approved by Exec Ctte	Review Date
MB 5/08/2022	MB 24/11/2022	1/11/2022	1/11/2025

1.0 Trustees' Financial Responsibilities

The trustees of Bristol u3a are responsible for:

- Safeguarding the assets of the charity.
- Identifying and managing the risk of loss, waste, theft or fraud.
- Ensuring the financial reporting is robust and of sufficient quality.
- Keeping financial records in accordance with the governing document and relevant legislation (e.g. Charities Acts, Companies Acts etc).
- Preparing Annual Accounts in accordance with the governing document and relevant legislation.
- The accounts should show a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the u3a.

Trustees are jointly responsible for keeping full financial records. These include those of the u3a and all the interest groups, sub-groups etc., where appropriate.

To enable the trustees to carry out these responsibilities, the financial procedures detailed below will be followed.

A copy of this policy will be given to all trustees on their election/appointment to the Executive Committee and made available to members on the website.

The policy will be kept under review and revised as necessary.

2.0 Banking

Bristol u3a banks with HSBC. Any decision to change banks will be decided by the Executive Committee, which must be minuted.

2.1 Bank Accounts

- All bank accounts are in the name of Bristol u3a and operated by the authorised signatories.
- The authorised signatories may be Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Other trustees may be appointed authorised signatories by the Executive Committee and this must be minuted. This responsibility cannot be delegated.

- New accounts may only be opened by a decision of the Executive Committee, which must be minuted.
- Redundant accounts may be closed by a decision of the Executive Committee, which must be minuted.
- Changes to the bank mandate may only be made by a decision of the Executive Committee, which must be minuted.
- All cheques must be signed by two signatories.
- The signatories are responsible for examining the cheque for accuracy and completeness.
- The signatories are responsible for examining the payment documentation (purchase invoice etc.) prior to signing the cheque or authorising an internet transfer.
- All bank statements must be sent to the Treasurer directly.
- Blank cheques will never be issued.
- Blank cheques will never be signed by one signatory for a second to complete later.
- Whenever practical two people should be involved in counting cash receipts.

2.2 Online Banking

Any decision to change our online banking will be made by the Executive Committee.

In the interest of Business Continuity, there should be, where possible, two Trustees, one of whom will be the Treasurer, with on-line access to the HSBC and PayPal accounts. Should a second Trustee not be available then an Officer should be given the necessary access. This should be minuted.

2.3 Payment by Bank Cards

The issue of any bank debit or credit card in the name of Bristol u3a must be approved by the Executive Committee. Currently there are none.

2.4 Personal Debit or Credit Cards

The use of personal debit or credit cards for interest group activities needs to be closely managed. Permission must be sought from the Executive Committee where a group feels that there is no other suitable way to make payments.

Prior approval must be given by the Executive Committee for equipment and other items to be purchased for the use of Bristol u3a or specific interest groups. In these circumstances, it may be appropriate for a member to purchase the equipment themselves and then claim the cost as a personal expense claim.

All invoices must be issued in the name of Bristol u3a.

3.0 Groups' Finances

Bristol u3a is run by and for our members. We are a registered charity, and the money we raise from members' subscriptions must all be used for our stated objective, i.e. to further the education of older people. One of the fundamental principles of the u3a is that we contribute our efforts voluntarily, which is why we never pay for people to lead our groups.

Groups may ask Bristol u3a to hold money in a ring-fenced account for them. They can then ask for payments to be made from this ring-fenced account on their behalf to suppliers e.g. coach companies or to Group Leaders to support the group's activities.

Most of our groups run with no need for expenditure although members may make small donations to their host for the cost of teas and coffees, and sometimes for incidentals like photocopying. Groups are free to manage these small sums as they see fit.

3.1 Use of Public Venues

Bristol u3a provides a subsidy for venue hire as part of its commitment to inclusivity. We believe that affordability and accessibility should not be barriers to joining a group. Historically, groups using public venues have only had to apply for funding once during the lifetime of the group. However, escalating fees have meant that the Bristol u3a Management Executive Committee has been forced to control costs more closely and all groups will be required to apply for funding every financial year. Guidance on the process, and the application form are [\[on the website\]](#).

The Bristol u3a subsidy for venue hire is capped at £400 per year. If a group wishes to spend more than this, it may do so subject to approval but it will be responsible for covering the excess cost by collecting the sums from its members. The Group Leader must agree with the Treasurer in advance how this money will be raised, and accounted for, it will belong to Bristol u3a (see link above for details of the application procedure).

3.2 Extraordinary Expenditure

Sometimes groups ask for help with extraordinary expenditure. Requests for funding any exceptional items should be made to the Treasurer before making the purchase.

If a group needs special equipment such as a laptop or tablet computer for use by the group as a whole, where, for example, learning computer skills is an integral part of the group's purpose, the Group Leader should make a convincing case for new purchases of this kind and submit it to their Group Coordinator and then to the Treasurer, who will decide whether we can contribute. We already own a number of machines, some of which are currently not being used, and others might be shared between groups.

We will not normally pay for books, CDs, music, stationery etc used by group members. Most books can be bought reasonably cheaply second-hand or new, and once bought, they belong to their purchaser. If a Group Leader thinks it essential to

have an expensive book (or CDs, DVDs, etc) for use by their group, he/she should ask the group members to contribute together to cover the cost.

3.3 Start-Up Costs for New Groups

1. The Executive Committee has agreed a policy of financially assisting new groups to start up, in appropriately merited cases, so they can purchase the resources or equipment or some other essential requirement such as training to enable them get established. This is in addition to any subsidy allocated for help with Zoom or venue costs.
2. A cap of up to £50 per new group has been set by the Executive Committee for any agreed funding .
3. Decisions as to whether or not to award funding to individual new groups are delegated to the Membership and Groups Team, in conjunction with the u3a Treasurer. In the event of a disagreement between the Membership and Groups Team and the Treasurer regarding whether to approve a proposal, the case will be submitted to the Executive Committee for a final decision.
4. Prior to starting up, new groups wishing to apply for funding should work with their Group Coordinator to build a case explaining the need for such funding, clearly demonstrating that the resources or equipment or other essential requirements cannot reasonably be provided by members, or from another source. This should then be submitted to the Membership and Groups Team for consideration.
5. Any resources or equipment purchased will remain the property of Bristol u3a and will be included on the Asset Register.
6. The policy will be periodically monitored and reviewed by the Executive Committee.

3.4 Receipts

To manage the handover of cash and cheques to be paid into the Bristol u3a bank account the Executive Committee has decided that:

- Bank paying-in slips will only be issued to the Treasurer and Membership Secretary.
- Groups may make over the counter payments by filling in blank paying-in slips available in banks. Group Leaders must inform, by email, the Treasurer of any such payments.
- Where applicable receipts will need to be given to Group Leaders, or acknowledged by email.
- Where net sums are being paid over this needs to be fully demonstrated to the Treasurer.
- Cash held back for cash flow purposes will be within the u3a's approved limits (they will vary by activity).

3.5 Payments

The Treasurer will inform relevant Group Leaders as to the approved process for payments relating to:

- When a trip is organised by and paid through the u3a or paid directly by the members to the trip organiser
- For venue hire.
- When payments may be deducted from activity revenue for:
 - o Venues
 - o Coaches
 - o Speakers
 - o Other
- When payment for venues, coaches, tutors, speakers etc must be paid by the u3a.

Outside speakers should be asked to state their fees and any travel costs at the time of booking and the Treasurer informed. See also [Section 6](#) if a speaker wishes their fees to be paid to a charity. The Treasurer will advise on the appropriate payment process.

The Executive Committee has currently not agreed to the use of any paid tutors. Any change to this arrangement must be agreed by the Executive Committee who will set out appropriate systems for ensuring the self-employed status of the tutor and method of payment. See also [Section 5](#) below.

3.6 Groups' Financial Records

The Executive Committee (via the Treasurer) will monitor the income and expenditure of the groups. Group Leaders need to provide regular information, as agreed, to the Treasurer. Where groups do not comply then the Executive Committee will review as to whether the group is legitimately operating in line with the insurance and financial requirements.

The Treasurer, Group Co-ordinator and Group Leader(s) need to agree what records they need to keep of the group's transactions in order to:

- Allow the Treasurer to keep accurate accounts for presentation to the AGM, for discussion with the trustees and to meet regulatory requirements.
- Allow the group members to understand how their monies are being managed.
- Maintain transparency and trust for all concerned.
- Minimise the risk of error and potential loss of funds.
- Allow Group Leaders to maintain cash floats.

4.0 Social Activities

Events such as theatre trips, visits or educational days out must be charged at cost and all participants pay appropriately. The costs paid by members must cover out-of-pocket expenses.

The organiser of an event must not benefit from any discount (e.g. a free place) offered by the organisation providing the event. The value of free places must be shared out among all participants to the event.

Out-of-pocket expenses can be paid to an organiser out of the money collected for the event. As all u3a members offer their services free to the movement, the organiser(s) must not get any pecuniary reward for organising an event.

5.0 Speakers Fees

Based on u3a's Mutual Aid Principle the intent is to not need to pay for speakers. However, in order to provide quality learning experiences it may be necessary to use the services of external speakers.

While, certainly, Bristol u3a cannot pay a fee to speakers who are members of any u3a, it is allowable to pay pre-agreed reasonable expenses to speakers, including u3a members.

For external speakers, fees and expenses should be agreed beforehand. The cost should then be reimbursed to the speaker through the u3as's accounts. If the speaker wants to donate their fee to a nominated charity see Section 6 below.

6.0 Payments to Other Charities

In line with charity law, a u3a cannot raise funds for another charity that does not have similar charitable objectives. Bristol u3a may make speakers' fees direct to a specific charity providing the speaker has signed a form [\[on the website\]](#) giving permission for the Treasurer to do so and providing the necessary bank details.

7.0 Expenses Policy

Out of pocket expenses incurred by the volunteers who are involved with running the u3a will be reimbursed. Expenses may also include – with Executive Committee approval – attendance at the Trust's AGM and Conference or national/regional workshops.

Expense claims will be authorised by a member of the Executive Committee but no Committee member should authorise their own claim.

All claims need to be made on the appropriate form [\[on the web site\]](#) giving sufficient detail as to the nature of the expense and backed by appropriate evidence (receipts, parking tickets etc.).

7.1 Travel Expenses

Travel Expense claims should reflect the cheapest travel option available. Travel by car will be reimbursed at the current HMRC approved rate for the actual mileage

travelled. Car parking and congestion charges can be reclaimed (with receipts) but parking or other fines will not be allowed.

7.2 Overnight Accommodation

Overnight accommodation will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances and will need the prior agreement of the Executive Committee.

8.0 Membership Fees

8.1 Setting Membership Fees

The membership fee is reviewed on an annual basis. Bristol u3a is committed to keeping the membership subscription as low as possible to ensure that the u3a remains accessible to all members while enabling them to participate in as many activities as possible.

8.2 Joint Membership

Where two members share the same address the sum of both fees is reduced by the cost of one Third Age Matters and one Annual Bulletin.

8.3 Membership of more than one u3a

For u3a members who can evidence membership of another u3a, Bristol u3a will reduce the cost of membership by the amount that is paid to the Trust, for the membership levy and Third Age Matters, for each member.

9.0 Asset Register

An asset register is maintained by the Executive Committee which records all assets held including their initial purchase price, date of purchase, estimated nominal value and location.

It should be noted that under a receipts and payments reporting system, all assets are fully written off against receipts in the year of purchase. The register is reviewed annually.

10.0 Reserves

Bristol u3a aims to keep a level of reserves that will cover six months of regular operating activity. This is considered by the Executive Committee a reasonable level for this type of charity.

Social activities are excluded from this figure as these activities are inflated by high cost activities such as theatre visits and days out and must be entirely self-financing.