

Bristol U3A, Standing Orders (updated Dec 2024)

Created Author/Date	Reviewed/Updated Author/Date	Approved by Exec Cmte/Date	Review Date
	KP/Sept 2022	1 Nov 2022	Nov 2024
	KP/Dec 2024	11 Dec 2024	Dec 2027

1 General

This document sets out the standing orders of Bristol U3A under its Constitution. They do not form part of the Constitution. In accordance with Clause 8(viii) of the Constitution where any ambiguity arises the provisions of the Constitution shall take precedence. The standing orders include appendices which list the responsibilities of officers, trustees and post-holders, and which provide a model timetable for conducting the business of the organisation. These provide necessary guidance to enable the Executive Committee to carry out its work efficiently, and in compliance with the Constitution.

These standing orders shall be reaffirmed annually by a vote of the incoming Executive Committee at its first meeting. They may also be amended as necessary by a simple majority vote of the Executive Committee. This is permitted by Clause 8(viii) of the Constitution, but the standing orders must not conflict with the Constitution. Thus, such amendments are not changes to the Constitution so are not reported to the Charity Commission.

2 General Meetings

General meetings may be called by virtue of clauses 13 and 14 of the Constitution.

2.1 Notice of Meetings

Where time permits the required 21 days notice of general meetings shall be given through the quarterly newsletter, published and made available to all members. In case of urgency a special notice of the meeting shall be issued.

Where a member has provided the u3a with an email address, notice of meetings may be given by email. Where notice is provided by post it shall be deemed to have been received two working days after the day of posting.

2.2 Circulation of AGM Papers

The annual report and accounts shall be made available to members at least 21 days before the date of the AGM, normally by means of the Newsletter, which is made available to all members. If the AGM is held in person, on the day a small number of printed copies should, if possible, be made available to attendees at the venue.

2.3 Motions at general meetings

Notice of any motion to be considered by a general meeting must be received by the Secretary at least 28 days before the scheduled date of the meeting. Any such motion must be submitted in writing by the Executive Committee or by a proposer and seconder, each of whom must be a member in good standing. Any motion submitted shall be consistent with the aims and powers of Bristol U3A and the Chair shall have the discretion to determine whether such a motion is in order.

Votes on motions may be taken by a show of hands at the discretion of the Chair. In the case of equality of votes, the Chair has the casting vote.

2.4 Proxy votes

A proxy vote at a general meeting is a vote cast on behalf of and on the instructions of an absent member by that member's named representative. Proxy instructions must be signed by the member concerned, or identified as genuine by other means as determined by the Committee, and must be received by an Officer before the start of the general meeting.

If specific motions or contested elections are expected, the member may either specify how the vote is to be cast, or leave it to the discretion of the proxy.

Proxies are treated as being present for the determination whether a meeting is quorate.

2.5 Electronic Meetings

The Executive Committee may determine that meetings may be held in person, by suitable electronic means, or by an appropriate combination of both.

In order to be suitable, "electronic means" must meet the following requirements:

- Attendance at the meeting is restricted to members and invited participants.
- Attendance can be recorded.
- Voting is restricted to members and their proxies.
- Each person attending can communicate with the meeting through the Chair.
- Other relevant provisions of these standing orders can be met.

The Executive Committee shall have discretion to determine the detailed procedures for conducting an electronic meeting in accordance with these standing orders.

3 Elections

3.1 Nominations

Nominations for Committee posts shall be made in accordance with clause 7 of the constitution.

3.2 Contested Elections

A contested election for a Committee post must be conducted by secret ballot. Proxy votes shall be eligible to participate.

3.3 Other Posts

The Committee may at its discretion appoint members to undertake duties which support the efficient and effective management of the organisation. Such post-holders may be invited to attend meetings of the Executive Committee under Clause 6(v) of the Constitution.

Members may stand for contested election to such other posts, under the same procedures applicable for contested elections to Committee posts.

4 Executive Committee Procedures

The incoming Executive Committee shall hold office from the conclusion of the AGM. The new Committee may meet immediately after the AGM, at the discretion of the Chair. The incoming Committee shall determine a timetable for its subsequent meetings, in accordance with the Constitution and taking account of the model timetable. The agreed timetable shall be recorded in the Executive Committee minutes.

Special meetings of the Executive Committee may be called in accordance with clause 8(ii) of the Constitution.

The Executive Committee may, at its discretion, conduct its business by electronic methods. Any formal meeting of the Executive Committee held by electronic means shall be formally convened, recorded and conducted in accordance with Clause 8 of the Constitution.

4.1 Transparency

Except when confidential matters are to be raised, members may attend Committee meetings as observers by prior arrangement with the Chair.

The agreed Committee minutes shall be promptly circulated to the Web Editor who shall take steps to keep members appropriately informed of Committee activities and decisions.

4.2 Trustee Succession

Any member may be appointed by the Committee to shadow or assist an officer or other post-holder in their official duties. Where such a member is not already a Trustee they may be invited to attend Committee meetings as an observer.

5 Membership

Membership is subject to clause 5 of the Constitution. A prospective member may join the U3A at any time by completing the procedures documented on the u3a website, and by paying their subscription.

Continuing members are expected to have renewed their membership and paid their subscription by the start of the membership year, which is 1 September.

5.1 Subscriptions

Collection and banking of subscription payments for both new and renewing members shall be done as far as possible online via Beacon and Paypal; banking of payments received by cheque or cash shall be the responsibility of the Membership Secretary. Assistance may be provided by the Beacon Coordinator, IT Officer and by other members. The exact division of duties in such circumstances shall be determined from time to time by the Executive Committee.

The following detailed provisions shall apply:

- The annual subscription may be amended and approved by members at the AGM
- A first renewal invitation shall be issued to all existing members promptly after the AGM in June. Subsequent reminders may be issued at the discretion of the appropriate officer.
- Where possible renewal invitations shall be issued by email. Where this is not possible postal services may be used.
- A further renewal invitation shall be included in the Annual Bulletin
- The printed Annual Bulletin shall be sent to all current members according to the agreed timetable and without regard to each member's renewal status.
- The printed Annual Bulletin shall be sent to new members on payment of their subscription.
- Other publications such as TAM and Newsletters shall be sent only to paid up members, as recorded on Beacon.
- Subscriptions lapse on August 31st, and membership ceases at that point. Members shall be reminded of this when renewals are invited.

- Lapsing members may be reinstated with continuous membership if they pay their annual subscription by 30th September. Such lapsing members may be offered the option of reinstatement. This offer may be sent by email or by post at the discretion of the appropriate officer.
- Subscriptions paid by new members between April 1st and June 30th inclusive shall be at the rate agreed (currently 75% of the full rate) at the preceding AGM and are valid until August 31st of the same year.
- Subscriptions paid by new members from July 1st shall be at the rate agreed at the preceding AGM and are valid until Aug 31st the following year.
- Admission to groups and other meetings is restricted to paid up members. Occasional guests are allowed at the discretion of the Group Leader.
- An individual, not being a member, and not having previously been a member, will normally be admitted to no more than two meetings as “taster” visits.
- Limited mutual recognition of membership may be agreed by the Executive Committee with other local U3As. Such arrangements will be recorded in a policy document and be subject to review from time to time.

5.2 Termination of Membership

Membership may be automatically terminated by reason of non-payment of subscription. Membership may also be terminated under the provisions of Clause 5 (iv) of the Constitution.

6 Group Affairs

6.1 Group Membership Records

All groups must maintain accurate group membership records on Beacon. At least one member of the group (not necessarily the Group Leader/Convenor) must have access to Beacon and fulfil this responsibility.

6.2 Room Hire

Any group which wishes to use a hired venue must apply annually to the Treasurer for funding up to a maximum of the published cap (currently £400) per year and this is conditional on their membership details being up to date on Beacon. This subsidy must be formally approved by the Executive Committee. If the annual cost of the venue is higher than the cap, the process for collecting the additional monies must also be formally approved. No hire agreement may be entered into without this prior approval. The excess will only be waived in exceptional circumstances with the agreement of the Executive Committee. Groups exceeding the cap are required to maintain their accounts in their Beacon Group Ledger.

7 Complaints

Unresolved complaints and disputes must be escalated to the Chair. If the Chair is involved, the issue should be referred instead to an officer who is not otherwise involved. See Bristol u3a Complaints Policy.

Appendix 1: List of Responsibilities

Appendix 2: Timetable of key requirements

Appendix 3: Overall Strategy

Bristol u3a Standing Orders: Appendix 1 (updated Dec 2024)

Responsibilities of Officers, Trustees and Postholders

A. Trustees

All Trustees must read and accept the Code of Conduct for Trustees produced by the Third Age Trust. This must be done by each Trustee each year when the new Executive Committee takes up office. Trustees are also subject to legal obligations under Charities legislation (see Charity Commission guidance documents on www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-commission-guidance).

Role summaries for Bristol u3a Trustees listing the primary responsibilities are as follows:

A 1. Chair

- Provide inclusive and democratic leadership of the board of Trustees (= the Bristol u3a Executive Committee)
- Ensure the Committee fulfils its responsibilities for the overall governance, strategic direction, financial stability, administration and sustainability of Bristol u3a
- Ensure Bristol u3a applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its charitable objects/purposes, abides by its governing document (Constitution) and complies with charity law and other relevant legislation
- Ensure Bristol u3a upholds its guiding principles
- Oversee adherence to the terms and conditions of affiliation to TAT
- Ensure effective and efficient administration of Bristol u3a
- Safeguard the good name and values of Bristol u3a.

A 2. Vice-Chair

- Assist the Chair and deputise for them as necessary. This means being familiar with the common responsibilities of all Trustees and with the normal Committee procedures so as to be able to assume responsibility at short notice, if necessary
- Assist the Chair in organising regular or special events
- Help the Chair induct new Trustees

A 3. Secretary

- Support the Chair in ensuring the smooth running of the board of Trustees (= Bristol u3a Executive Committee)
- Take responsibility for the day to day administration of Bristol u3a
- Ensure Executive Committee meetings are effectively organised and minuted
- Maintain effective records
- Act as an information point for members of the Committee

- Act as point of contact with TAT and Charity Commission
- Complete annual Charity Commission submission

A 4. Treasurer

- Oversee the finances of Bristol u3a in line with good practice and in accordance with the Constitution, the wishes of the Executive Committee and charity legislation
- Take day to day responsibility for Bristol u3a finances
- Provide regular reports to the Committee on the financial position
- Report the financial position of Bristol u3a to the AGM annually
- Ensure the financial resources meet the present and future needs of Bristol u3a
- Ensure effective measures, controls and procedures are in place which are appropriate to Bristol u3a and will safeguard assets and ensure financial security
- Ensure appropriate financial reserves are maintained

A 5. Other Trustees

- Together with the Officers be responsible for the good management of Bristol u3a, its compliance with the statutory requirements and its stated objectives
- Together with the Officers ensure that Bristol u3a fulfils its charitable objectives and does not stray beyond them, and ensure the safe custody of members' money.
- Take on other management tasks and responsibilities as appropriate, for example, heading the various management teams, sub-committees and working groups that may have been put in place

B. Other Responsibilities and Posts

There are other duties which may be carried out by Trustees, by ordinary members of Bristol u3a or by members with 'special expertise'. This may require the post-holder to report to the Executive Committee or, on occasion, attend a Committee meeting (under rule 6 (v) of the Constitution).

The primary responsibilities of such post-holders are as follows:

B 1. Membership Secretary

The Membership Secretary deals with membership issues that are sent by post

- Receive by post membership application/renewal forms together with subscription paid by cheque and record this on Beacon, including Gift Aid declaration as appropriate
- Send out membership card and Annual Bulletin to such new/renewing members
- Bank the cheques

- Provide the Treasurer with a detailed schedule of payment received to enable prompt and efficient reconciliations

B 2. Beacon Administrator

- Supervise the efficient operation of Beacon for Bristol u3a. This will involve monitoring how it is functioning, ensuring regular data back-up and being the point of contact for TAT Beacon Team
- Arrange appropriate access to Beacon for Trustees, Postholders, Group Coordinators, Group Leaders/Conveners and other members as required
- Facilitate/support on-line membership joining and renewing
- Provide mailing list for Third Age Matters, Bristol u3a Newsletter, Annual Bulletin etc as required
- Provide Beacon reports and data extracts as required, support the Treasurer with, for example, the annual Gift Aid claim, and support the Committee on other IT matters as appropriate.

B 4. Group Coordinators

There are several Group Coordinators each responsible for a substantial number of groups.

- Support and advise the Group Leaders/Conveners they are responsible for (eg with advice on venues, equipment, accessibility, available resources). Be the first point of contact for Group Leaders/Conveners and for members with group related queries
- Facilitate the setting up of new interest groups. Help identify demand and encourage members to take up group leadership responsibilities. Help manage waiting lists.
- Ensure good communication on group related matters. Liaise with other Group Coordinators, Newsletter, ePost and Website editors and with the Committee to share information and news.
- Help gather group information for the Annual Bulletin

B 5. Regional Representative

- Attend u3a SW Regional meetings
- Engage with other u3as and u3a networks and associations as required to further develop useful links

B 6. Committee Minutes Secretary (if appointed)

- Take the minutes of Committee and General meetings, possibly including assisting with the preparation of AGM papers

B 7. Finance Support Officer (if appointed)

- Assist the Treasurer as required
- Fulfil a particular financial task

B 8. Newsletter and Annual Bulletin Editor

- Edit, publish and arrange distribution of the quarterly Newsletter to the agreed schedule, ensuring that content required under the Constitution and Standing Orders is included
- Edit, publish and arrange distribution of the Annual Bulletin according to the agreed schedule
- If required, produce and arrange distribution of leaflets, flyers etc as agreed by the Committee
- Liaise with the Website Editor to provide content and ensure consistency of communication

B 9. Website Editor

- Maintain Bristol u3a website and keep content updated
- Facilitate and monitor editing of group pages to ensure consistency of presentation
- Liaise with the Newsletter/Annual Bulletin Editor to provide content and ensure consistency of communication
- Maintain and update all other content, referring to the Executive Committee as appropriate

B 10. Monthly Meetings Organiser

- Arrange a rolling programme of speakers for monthly meetings
- Manage arrangements for speakers attending in person or online
- Ensure the publicising to members of forthcoming talks via the website/Newsletters/Bulletin/ePost as appropriate

B 11. IT Officer

- Support the Executive Committee on IT matters
- Help Trustees, Postholders and other volunteers as required in using IT facilities
- Manage Bristol u3a email addresses as required
- Monitor security aspects of Bristol u3a
- Ensure smooth delivery of hybrid meetings and other meetings
- Consider future IT strategy and needs for Bristol u3a

B 12. Equipment Management Officer

- Maintain a record of assets and equipment owned by or on long term loan to Bristol u3a
- Ensure that all items have a designated custodian and this is recorded
- Conduct an annual audit of assets/equipment and report to the Committee

B 13. Accessibility Officer

- Be point of contact for members for issues related to accessibility, equality and inclusion
- Help the Committee improve policy and operation in relation to such issues and make the membership aware
- Be point of contact for information exchange with national u3a on developments in this area.

B 14. Archivist (if appointed)

- Assist the Officers in maintaining and storing records, inventories and historical information

B 15. Organisational Support Officer(s)

- Provide support for organisational and administrative matters as required

B 16. Social Media Manager

- Maintain and manage Bristol u3a social media platform(s)

B 17. Communications Support Officer

- Produce ePost, Group Leaders eUpdate and information to welcome new members

B 18. Sustainability Lead

- Be advocate for green issues and promote a more sustainable approach to u3a activities

Updated: KP/7 Dec 2024

Approved by Committee 11 Dec 2024

Bristol u3a Standing Orders: Appendix 2 - Timetable (Updated Dec 2024)

Month	General Requirements	Treasurer's requirements	Secretary's requirements
June (3rd Tuesday)	AGM		Record notes of meeting and outcome of any votes. Preserve for next AGM
June (after AGM)	Issue membership renewal invitation, immediately following AGM Prepare Annual Bulletin		
End June/early July	Committee meeting 1 Trustees to declare any conflict of interest Reaffirm Standing Orders	Financial report	Update Committee information to TAT and Charity Commission Identify policies to be reviewed during the year ahead.
Late July	Deadline for Annual Bulletin		
August	Publish Annual Bulletin		
31 August	Membership renewal deadline		
September	Committee meeting 2	Financial report	Complete online return to Charity Commission
Mid September	Deadline for Autumn Newsletter for publication end Sept		
End September	Invitation to members to rejoin without lapse		
October	Committee meeting 3	Financial report	
November	Committee meeting 4	Financial report	
Mid November	Deadline for Winter Newsletter		
Early December	Winter Newsletter published		
December	Committee meeting 5	Financial report	
January/February	Committee meeting 6	Financial report	
Mid February	Spring Newsletter deadline. To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formal notice of AGM and date ● Arrangements for submitting motions ● List of Trustees eligible for re-election ● List of postholders and their responsibilities. 		Prepare formal notice of AGM, list of Trustees eligible for re-election, and notice of vacancies, nomination form, list of postholders etc for Newsletter

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nomination form (to be returned to Secretary at least 28 days before AGM) 		
Early March	Spring Newsletter published		
March	Committee meeting 7	Financial report.	AGM preparation
April	Committee meeting 8. Detailed arrangements for AGM	Review of upcoming year-end financial report	Review list of nominations for committee. Review any member motions for AGM
Mid April	<p>Summer newsletter deadline. To include further AGM notice containing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nominations received to date with candidate biographies • Proxy voting form. • Expected contested elections or motions • Possible request for further nominations • Proposed AGM agenda. • Reports from officers and postholders 	<p>Year end financial report to be finalised and sent to Independent Examiner.</p> <p>Gift Aid reclaimed</p>	Prepare AGM notices for newsletter
May	Committee meeting 9	Financial report	
Mid May, to allow members at least 21 days notice of AGM and annual accounts	<p>Distribute summer newsletter containing AGM items as above including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treasurer Annual Report • Minutes of previous AGM • Officers & postholders annual reports 	Timely completion of Independent examination of Financial report	Ensure that AGM reports are made available to Newsletter Editor
June	Committee meeting 10	Gift Aid reclaimed if not done earlier Financial report	Confirm final preparations for AGM If AGM to be in person, provide a few copies of AGM documents for attendees at venue
June (3rd Tuesday)	AGM		Confirmation of Independent Examiner for coming year

Updated: KP Dec 2024 Approved by Committee 11 Dec 2024

Bristol u3a Standing Orders: Appendix 3

Bristol u3a Overall Strategy

Following a review in 2021 of overall strategy Bristol u3a now has four Teams reporting to the Executive Committee each with primary objectives defined as follows:

1. Organisational Effectiveness Team

- Maintain and improve organisational effectiveness
- Uphold constitutional commitments

2. Publicity and Communications Team

- Deliver multi-channelled communications with members that inform and reaffirm the benefits of membership (emails, social media, website, Newsletter, Bulletin, ePost)
- Increase public awareness of Bristol u3a by focussing on online communications and well distributed local magazines e.g. The Voice, Bristol Life. Additionally, seek to advertise ourselves at major events that take place around the city that are likely to attract people who could potentially join Bristol u3a.

3. Membership & Groups Team

- Oversee membership issues
- Recruit and retain membership and provide ongoing value to the membership by providing new and maintaining existing educational and social activities
- Provide support as necessary to post-holders and Group Leaders

4. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Team

- Increase and promote equality, diversity and Inclusion enabling Bristol u3a membership to become more representative of the Greater Bristol community, by focusing on the legally recognised 'protected characteristics', including race, sexuality, gender, age, disability and belief, but also socio-economic status and the geographical spread of the membership
- Report to the Executive Committee with practical and achievable recommendations as to how Bristol u3a can become more equal, diverse and inclusive in the short and longer term, including ensuring that policies and procedures are up-to-date, fit for purpose and widely understood

KP/updated 23 Feb 2026

Approved by Executive Committee 10 March 2026