

Beeston u3a Finance Policy

August 2022



1. Trustees' financial responsibilities

The trustees of Beeston 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 committee and made available to members on the website.

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

2. Banking

2.1. Bank accounts

- All bank accounts are in the name of Beeston u3a and operated by the trustees.
- New accounts may only be opened by a decision of the trustees, which must be minuted.
- Beeston u3a operates 3 bank accounts with HSBC Bank
 - Administration Account for operating income and expenses
 - Social Account for social and educational activities
 - Interest Account to hold reserve funds
- Changes to the bank mandate may only be made by a decision of the trustees, which must be minuted.
- The authorised signatories are the Chair, Membership Secretary, Business Secretary, Treasurer and Social Treasurer. This responsibility cannot be delegated.
- 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 any cheque.
- 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 any cash receipts.

2.2. Online banking

Beeston u3a has set up online banking with HSBC Bank. The agreed bank mandate signatories to have access to the online banking facilities are the Treasurer, Social Treasurer and Membership Secretary. Beeston u3a committee have agreed that online banking transactions may be carried out without dual authorisation of transactions. This is because other signatories have access to the online banking facility and can review transactions made at any time and can ask to see any supporting documentation. It is the responsibility of the person making the online transaction to have appropriate documentation or invoices to support the bank details of the person or business being paid and the amount being paid, and to give this documentation to the Treasurer or Social Treasurer.

2.3. Payment by bank debit card

The issue of any bank debit card will be approved by the committee. The use of these cards overrides the dual control aspect of the payment authorisation process, but is permitted, where agreed in advance in recognition that online purchases for certain goods and services represents the most effective, and in some cases, the only method of completing the purchase (e.g. theatre tickets). The committee will predetermine the spending limits for any card: the limit may be per transaction, per day or per month. Only members of the committee are authorised to use the debit card for u3a related expenditure only. The use of the card cannot be delegated to anyone else. All invoices and receipts must be passed to the Treasurer by the person using the card.

Beeston u3a debit card has been issued by HSBC Bank in the name of the Treasurer and is held by the Chair. HSBC Bank will not issue a debit card in the name of Beeston u3a.

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 committee where a group feels that there is no other viable way to make payments. Prior approval must be given by the committee for equipment and other items such as group memberships or website domains to be purchased for the use of Beeston 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, but only after the purchase has been approved by the committee. All equipment purchased is the property of Beeston u3a and must be entered onto the Asset Register maintained by the Business Secretary.

3. Groups' finances

Interest groups are expected to be self-financing and can collect such sums of money as the group members and leadership deem to be necessary to undertake their activities. The funds of all groups belong to the u3a.

Groups are permitted to make any expenditure deemed necessary by the group members and the group leadership and can withdraw money on request from the ringfenced funds held by the u3a on their behalf, as appropriate. The Treasurer, Groups Co-ordinator (s) and

Group Leader(s) need to agree what records they need to keep of the groups' 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.

3.1. Receipts

To manage the handover of cash and cheques to be paid into the Beeston u3a bank account the committee has decided that:

- Bank paying in slips will not be given to group leaders for this purpose.
- Group leaders may not pay sums due by issuing their own cheque or paying online through their own bank account.
- 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.

The committee has also approved the purchase of 2 Sumup card reader machines to encourage reduced use of cheques and cash, which take additional time to process and now incur transaction costs from HSBC Bank.

3.2. Payments

The committee 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.
- When payments may be deducted from activity revenue:
 - Venues
 - Coaches
 - Tutors
 - Speakers
 - Other
- When payment for venues, coaches, tutors, speakers etc must be made by the u3a.

Outside speakers should be asked to state their fees and any travel costs at the time of booking and a cheque obtained from the Treasurer or bank details given to the Treasurer.

Beeston u3a does not employ paid tutors.

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

3.3. 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 long as all expenses are supported by appropriate invoices. As all u3a members offer their services free to the movement, the organiser(s) must not get any pecuniary reward for organising an event.

3.4. Payments to other charities

In line with charity law, a u3a cannot raise funds for another charity that does not have similar charitable objectives.

Beeston u3a will make payments to speakers who have indicated that they intend to donate their fee to a specific charity but not direct to their nominated charity. This does not apply if the speaker is a member of Beeston u3a or any other u3a.

4. Expenses policy

Out of pocket expenses incurred by the volunteers who are involved with running the u3a will be reimbursed.

Expense claims must be submitted with receipts. Expense claims will be authorised by the committee and no committee member should authorise their own claim.

Expenses will include – with committee approval – attendance at the Trust's AGM and Conference or national/regional workshops. All claims need to be made on the appropriate form (copies available from the Treasurer) giving sufficient detail as to the nature of the expense.

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.

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

5. Membership Fees and membership of more than one u3a

The membership fee is reviewed on an annual basis. Beeston u3a is committed to keeping the membership subscription as low as possible to ensure that the u3a remains accessible to all members.

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

6. Asset register

An asset register is maintained by the Business Secretary 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.

7. Reserves

Beeston u3a aims to keep a level of reserves that will cover at least four months of regular operating activity. This is considered by the committee a reasonable level for this type of charity, with the experience of Covid-19 lockdowns showing the importance of having sufficient reserves.

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

Next Review August 2025