

Ross and District u3a Finance Policy – January 2026

(to be reviewed annually)

1. Policies

Each u3a is required to set down its financial policies and procedures. This document defines the processes that Ross and District u3a will use for its financial matters. The policy will be kept under review (at least every 3 years) and revised as necessary. A copy of this document will be given to all Trustees on their election/appointment to the Executive Committee.

This policy is part of the governance arrangements. It sets out the financial framework and principles within which the Trustees of Ross and District u3a will manage all the organisations financial affairs. The Trustees are accountable to the Membership for any non-compliance with this policy.

2. Trustees' Financial Responsibilities

2.1 Trustees

The Trustees of Ross and District u3a are financially accountable for:

- Safeguarding the assets of the charity.
- Identifying and managing the financial 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 (eg Constitution) and relevant legislation (e.g. Charities Acts, Companies Acts etc).
- Ensuring Annual Accounts are prepared in accordance with the governing document and relevant legislation and reflect a clear view of the state of affairs of the u3a.

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

2.2 The Treasurer's Role

The Treasurer's role for a Ross and District u3a includes:

- Maintaining the financial records in accordance with the u3as's published financial policies
- Maintaining the financial records in accordance with the applicable charity law and statute
- Managing the bank accounts in accordance with the financial policies
- Preparation of accounts and budgets
- Preparation of the annual accounts for the AGM, publication and filing
- Supporting the organisation and Executive committee with various other activities as may be required



3. Banking

3.1 Bank Mandate

- The Chair, Membership Secretary and Treasurer are all signatories on the bank account and can authorise all payments
- The Membership Secretary and Treasurer can make online payments independently.

3.2 Bank Accounts

- All bank accounts are in the name of Ross and District u3a and operated by the Trustees.
- New accounts may only be opened by a decision of the trustees, which must be minuted.
- Changes to the bank mandate may only be made by a decision of the trustees, which must be minuted.
- All payments must be approved by at least two signatories (one normally being the Treasurer).
- The signatories are responsible for examining the payment request for accuracy and completeness and for examining supportive documentation (invoice etc.) prior to approval (signing the cheque or authorising an internet transfer). Approval may be by a signature on the 'invoice' or in an email trail which will be kept with the finance records.
- The authorised signatories for payments are the Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Membership Secretary. This responsibility may be delegated where circumstances dictate (e.g. holiday cover) by confirming to the Committee in an email.
- All bank statements must be available for the Treasurer and one other committee member.
- Blank cheques will never be issued or be signed by one signatory for a second to complete later.
- Whenever practical two people should be involved in counting cash receipts.
- Interest Groups may not have their own bank accounts.
- No-one may use their own bank account to manage u3a activity or interest group money

3.3 Online Banking

Where online operation of the bank accounts is in place only Trustees approved by the Committee will have access to this facility (as above, at least two). The security of the online system is in line with the arrangements offered by Nat West bank and in accordance with the mandated approval limits.

Operation of the online banking service is under the control of the Treasurer who has full access rights and is responsible for assigning the appropriate delegate rights, as agreed by the Executive Committee and in accordance with the bank mandate. All payments are authorised in accordance with the bank mandate and our payment approval process. Access to the online accounts for our bank will be in line with Nat West procedures.



3.4 Payment by Bank Cards

Ross and District u3a does not use debit or credit cards.

3.5 Personal Debit or Credit Cards

If a member has to use their own credit or debit card when arranging activities on behalf of the u3a the transaction should be approved in writing with the Treasurer before the member incurs the expense. These transactions (or expenses) will be reimbursed on receipt of an expense claim.

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

Prior written approval must be given by the Executive Committee for equipment and other items to be purchased for the use of Ross and District 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.

4. Accounts

4.1 Group Finances

While this section is titled Groups' Finances the following policies will apply to activities that are organised for a u3as wider membership, for example regarding Outings or Speakers. Therefore, the term Group Leader shall cover, for example, Trip Organiser or similar.

The Executive Committee (via the Treasurer) will monitor the income and expenditure of the groups on at least an annual basis. Details of the cash held by each group will be reported as an addendum to the accounts at year end and as part of the financial reporting to the AGM. Group Leaders must 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.

4.2 Group Finance Records and Reporting

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 these groups belong to the u3a.

The Treasurer and Group Secretary will notify the Group Coordinators and Outings Secretary of which 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. Such cash floats should not exceed £100 for Groups and £200 for the Outings Secretary

Items that may be excluded from Group finance reporting include:

- Expenditure on refreshments e.g. tea, coffee, lunch does not need to be reported if paid for separately by members.
- Holidays booked directly through a travel agent/tour company/hotel with individual members paying the provider direct. If it is easier, the organiser can collate and post the individual cheques to the provider.

4.3 Receipts

The Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Outings Secretary can pay money (in any form) into the Ross and District u3a bank account.

- Where net sums are being paid over for payment into the bank account for an activity or interest group then a receipts and payments summary of how the sum is derived must be provided to the treasurer to support the payment.
- Where applicable receipts or an email will be provided to the person who submitted the payment, acknowledging the payment.
- Cash held by activity groups or the Outings Secretary for cash flow purposes must be within the u3a's approved limits (they will vary by activity)

4.4 Payments

The Executive Committee will inform relevant Group Coordinators and the Outings Secretary in writing of the approval process for payments relating to:

- When a trip or event is organised by and paid through the u3a
- Trips and holidays involving more than 24 hours must be booked and paid for by members through a registered tour operator which can be the local u3a
- When payments may be deducted from activity revenue
- When payment for venues, coaches, tutors, speakers etc. must be paid by the u3a (the Treasurer)

The Executive Committee should agree or otherwise to the use of any paid tutors or speakers for Groups. If approved, the proposed tutor or speaker must provide evidence of their self-employed status (if applicable), state their fees and any travel costs at the time of booking, and invoice



appropriately after the activity. Where a paid tutor is hired for activity classes, they need to provide evidence of holding Public Liability Insurance.

4.5 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. Statutory Reporting

Every charity needs to keep accounting records and produce annual accounts. The Statutory Authority for Ross and District u3a is the Charity Commission for England & Wales. Further information can be found on the Trust website in Finance Matters – Guidance (see References).

6. General Reporting

The Treasurer is responsible for maintaining financial records and will submit regular monthly accounts to the Executive Committee. Accounts will be kept on a payments and receipt basis.

All financial records and receipts shall be kept for a minimum of six years. This includes Gift Aid declaration data. Confirmation that all financial records have been transferred to a new Treasurer must be given to the Executive Committee by the outgoing Treasurer when a new Treasurer is appointed.

7. Reserves

Ross and District u3a aims to keep a level of reserves of £6000 that will cover approximately 8 months of regular operating activity. This is considered by the Committee a reasonable level for this type of charity.





8. Other Points

8.1 Payments to Other Charities

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

Ross and District u3a can 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.

8.2 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. Authorised signatories are stated in Section 3.2. No committee member can authorise their own claim.

All claims need to be made by the agreed procedure giving sufficient detail as to the nature of the expense.

8.3 Membership Fees and Membership of More Than One u3a

Ross and District u3a offers a 'couple' and 'single' membership. The membership year starts in April and the fees are reduced for anyone joining from 1st October each year. The membership fees will be reviewed on an annual basis in January in readiness for the new membership year.

Ross and District u3a is committed to keeping the membership subscription as low as possible to ensure that the u3a remains accessible to all members. In cases of hardship, where someone can provide proof of means tested benefits, the membership fee may be reduced or waived by the Membership Secretary in partnership with the Chair or Vice Chair.

Ross and District u3a will provide free 'Cotswold Link' membership to those who can provide evidence of membership of another Cotswold Link u3a and who only want to attend one Ross and District Group.

Ross and District u3a will provide 'Associate Membership' to:

- those in another Cotswold Link u3a who want to attend two or more Ross Groups and
- to those who can provide evidence they are members of another u3a outside of the Cotswold Link Group who want to attend any groups.

The fee for this level of membership will be reviewed annually in January with other membership categories. The Associate members membership fee must include the Beacon admin element.



8.4 Asset Register

An asset register is maintained by the Vice Chair. The register records all assets held including their initial purchase price, date of purchase and location. The register which is used to track where assets are held will be reviewed annually at financial year end. Assets will be written off in their first year.

8.5 Gift Aid

Ross and District u3a operates on the basis of a basic membership subscription which covers speaker meetings and newsletters. Gift Aid is claimed on the membership fees paid by those tax paying members who provide a Gift Aid Declaration. Groups and outings are self-financing.

8.6 Card Readers

Ross and District u3a may use a card reader to take payments by credit card in future. If we do, this will be configured to pay directly into our bank account and the card reader will offer an option for a receipt to be sent to the payer.

8.7 Procurement Process

For any procurement of a large value (above £1,000) item or service there must be a documented competitive tender process in place. If a service, then the above value refers to either a one-off charge or an annual charge.

The Executive Committee must agree to the tendering process for the particular contract or purchase order, and this must be agreed before the actual activity is started.

If there is a requirement for a change to the agreed process during the process, the reasons must be explained to the Executive Committee and accepted by them before proceeding. Prior to the final actual commitment, the Executive Committee must approve the proposed conclusion.

Any commitment below the figure above can be single sourced but the Executive Committee should still approve the expenditure.

9. Investments

- The u3a has as its prime consideration that it is merely holding money on behalf of its members. While the u3a should seek to obtain the best investment returns available, the security of funds takes precedence over returns on investment.
- Investment of funds will be with main banks or building societies and the Charities Official Investment Fund (COIF).



- These are chosen as they have the funds to withstand economic pressures. The Banks and Building Societies should offer cover by the FSCS guarantee (limited to £120,000 per institution).
- The COIF is not covered by the FSCS guarantee, however, has the strength of working primarily in the charitable sector and offers no risk cash-based accounts.
- No investments will be made into stocks, shares, gilts, or bonds as the risk level would be too high.
- All individual investments must be approved by the Committee.
- The investments should be reviewed annually by the Committee, as part of the fee setting process to take account of changing economic conditions.

