

Alnwick u3a Finance Policy

1. Trustees' financial responsibilities

The Trustees of Alnwick 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 Alnwick u3a.

Trustees are jointly responsible for keeping full financial records.

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 Alnwick U3A and operated by nominated 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.
- The authorised signatories are as designated by the Trustees but must include the 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 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.

2.2. Online banking

Where online operation of the bank accounts is in place only Trustees approved by the Executive Committee will have access to this facility. The security of the online system is in line with the arrangements offered by the bank or banks involved and in accordance with the mandated approval limits.

2.3. 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 viable 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 Alnwick 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 Alnwick U3A.

3 Payments

3.1 Group Activities

The Executive 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.
- Payment for venues, coaches, tutors, speakers etc. must be paid by the u3a.

3.2 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.

3.3 Payments to other charities

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

3.4 Incidental Purchases

The Treasurer may authorise incidental payments for small essential items up to a limit of £30. Purchase of items of greater value can only be made with the approval of the Executive Committee.

4. Expenses policy

Out of pocket expenses incurred by the volunteers who are involved with running Alnwick u3a will be reimbursed. Expense claims must be submitted with receipts. Expense claims will be authorised by the Executive 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.

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 Executive Committee.

5. Membership Fees and membership of more than one u3a

The membership fee is reviewed on an annual basis. Alnwick 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 evidence membership of another u3a, Alnwick u3a will reduce the cost of membership by the amount that is paid to the Trust for each member. Further reductions may be applicable to local u3as in accordance with joint agreements.

6. Asset register

An asset register is maintained by the Treasurer 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

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

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.

This Revised Policy was formally adopted on 5th February 2024.

Review Date 2nd February 2026.