

Witney u3a

Financial Policy

Version 3.3 20/ 12/ 22

1 Purpose and Scope

Witney u3a is an unincorporated charity, subject to accounting principles laid down by the Charities Commission. Such charities are required to set out internal controls for running their charity. The most significant are those relating to how monies are raised and spent and how accounts are constructed, scrutinised and reported to the membership.

This policy is relevant to the Trustees and Group Convenors of Witney u3a.

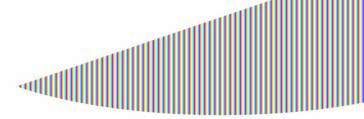
2 Trustees' Financial Responsibility

Trustees are members of the Committee of Witney u3a. and 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 available to members.
- Keeping accurate financial records in accordance with the governing document and relevant legislation.
- Preparing and presenting Annual Accounts for approval by an independent expert, appointed by the Trustees.
- Taking full responsibility for having publicly available accounts which show an accurate and complete assessment of Witney u3a's financial affairs.

Trustees are collectively responsible for keeping full financial records. These include those of Witney u3a in general and all constituent special interest groups and other sub-groups.

To enable the Trustees to carry out these responsibilities, the financial guidance and procedures detailed in this document will be followed.



A copy of this policy will be given to all Trustees on their election/appointment to the Committee and made available for all members on the Witney u3a website.

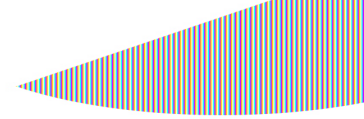
The policy will be kept under review and revised as necessary. Where a change in procedure is deemed necessary, this should take place only after Committee approval which must be documented.

A review of this policy will take place on a biennial basis, beginning in 2024.

3 Banking

3.1 Bank Accounts

- All bank accounts must be in the name of Witney u3a and may only be operated by the Trustees.
- Bank statements must be directed to the Treasurers in the first instance who will make these available to other Trustees, on request.
- Bank accounts held by Witney u3a should be accessible online to Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurers and Business Secretary, using appropriate security access measures, for purposes of viewing and verifying activity.
- New accounts may only be opened by a majority decision of the Trustees, which must be minuted.
- Changes to the bank mandate may only be made by a majority decision of the Trustees, which must be minuted.
- The permanently authorised signatories to the bank accounts are the Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurers and Business Secretary. This responsibility cannot be delegated.
- Further Trustees may be nominated as signatories, for specified purposes or periods. This would require a majority decision of Trustees which must be minuted.
- All cheque payments should be signed off by two Trustees who are approved signatories. Online payments should be digitally signed off by two signatories, if banks can provide the service. Otherwise, an approved Expense Claim must be in place to permit a single signatory to make a digital sign off.
- Signatories are responsible for ensuring that payments are legitimate, are approved by the Treasurers and where necessary, supported by explanatory documentation.



3.2 Bank Cards

Conditions for the issue and usage of bank cards in the name of Witney u3a will be approved by the Trustees.

Certain products and services, vital to the smooth running of Witney u3a may only be acquired quickly/easily by using a bank card for payment.

Purchases using a bank card may be requested by Trustees, with the approval of the Treasurers and the submission of an approved Expense Claim.

One Bank Card will be requested for each bank account held in the name of Witney u3a.

The Treasurers will be the permanent holders of the Bank Cards and may not delegate responsibility to any other Trustee, without prior approval of the Committee.

The Committee will agree and minute the upper spending-limit for any single transaction using a Bank Card which is linked to a Witney u3a Bank Account.

All payments using Bank Cards should be supported by an approved Expense Claim and an invoice or receipt made out in the name of Witney u3a.

4 Group Finances

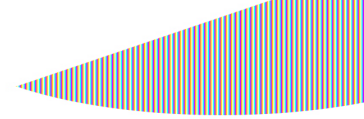
4.1 Special Interest Groups

Witney u3a comprises a broad range of special interest groups. Group Convenors and members decide on how the Groups are run and collect such sums of monies which are deemed necessary to undertake their particular activities.

It is not the intention that groups create any surpluses or deficits over or below what is required for maintaining a measure of normal cash flow to remain self-funding.

In circumstances where a Group deliberately creates a surplus to fund a single event, those funds may be ring-fenced, with the full agreement of the subscribers.

Treasurers, Groups Coordinators and Group Convenors should agree what records need to be kept and reported to the Treasurers at year-end, for inclusion in the accounting summary which is required by the Charities Commission.



Where special interest groups are unable to provide adequate accounting information, the Trustees of Witney u3a will be required to review whether the group is operating legitimately under its Constitutional rules and remains covered by u3a public liability insurance.

4.2 Trips Outing and Visits

Member Groups organising outings, visits and trips, which are available to all Witney u3a members operate throughout the year.

These are subject to a separate range of accounting requirements due to their risk, scale and complexity.

In principle, Witney u3a will ensure that no outing, visit or trip operates at a loss.

Planned outings, visits and trips should be advised to the Treasurers as early as possible after outline agreement among the organisers.

Trips, outings and visits must be charged to members at full cost and all attendees must pay in equal proportions. Organisers may not benefit from any discount or free place offered by service provider.

Notification to the general membership should be arranged on a coordinated basis with a simultaneous set of announcements designed to avoid booking inequalities.

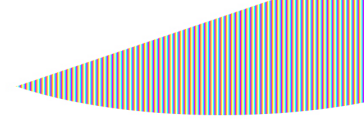
Outings, visits and trips should be fully costed by the organising group to include all transport, entry fees, guides, gratuities and incidental charges and a budget communicated to the Treasurers.

At the discretion of the organisers and once the outing, visit or trip is announced to the membership, registrations may commence with full payment being made by the intending participants.

Any unforeseen surplus resulting from a fully budgeted outing, visit or trip must be refunded directly and in equal measure to the participating members and not absorbed into general funding. This would most likely be a refund in cash at the time of the outing visit or trip.

Where a member books and pays for a place on an outing, visit or trip and is subsequently unable to go, any money paid to the organisers may be refunded, provided another person is enlisted to take their place.

Organisers reserve the right to retain all or part of the money paid by an absentee to ensure that the full expenses of the trip are met, without incurring any extra cost to others.



5 Outside Speaker and Tutor Costs

Outside speakers should be asked to state their fees and projected travel costs, including mileage, at the time of booking.

Speakers' payments must take place after the meeting for which they have been booked.

Payments to speakers must be by cheque or bank transfer. Cash is not a permitted form of payment for speakers.

Witney u3a will not pay speakers' fees directly to a speaker's nominated charity.

Under the u3a's Mutual Aid Principle, a member of Witney u3a may not be remunerated for speaking at an open meeting.

Where the Committee has given approval for a tutor to be hired, any payment for services rendered to Witney u3a and its constituent groups is subject to the tutor providing satisfactory proof to the Treasurers of their self-employment status and a copy of their current public liability insurance certificate.

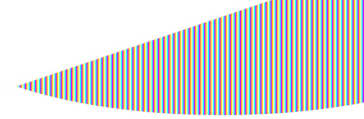
Tutors must invoice Witney u3a and not a named individual.

Payments to tutors must be made by either cheque or bank transfer.

6 Payments to Other Charities

Witney u3a may not raise funds for any other charity that does not share the same charitable object as that laid down in the Model Constitution, certified in August 2021. That is the “advancement of education for older people, usually in retirement and residing in Witney and the surrounding area”.

Witney u3a is permitted to pay another charitable organisation for services provided, such as renting rooms or providing catering facilities.



7 Expenses Policy

Expenses incurred by members involved in running Witney u3a activities and who incur supplementary and legitimate expenses will be reimbursed.

Expense Claims must be submitted with receipts to the Treasurers using a Claim Form.

Two Trustees must sign off any Expense Claim.

A list of Expense Claims must be available to Trustees for inspection and verification.

Allowable expenses will range from travel to and attendance at The u3a Trust Annual Conference and other national and regional meetings and workshops.

Similarly, minor purchases of materials and services, vital to the performance of a member's role, may be submitted for reimbursement using a Claim Form.

Travel expense claims must reflect the most cost-effective option for the journey.

Travel by car will be reimbursed at the current rate per mile used by the Local Authorities.

Parking and road charges may be reclaimed for pre-approved travel.

Parking and other fines are the responsibility of the vehicle driver or owner.

Overnight accommodation will be permitted as a legitimate expense in exceptional circumstances and must be pre-approved by the Treasurers.

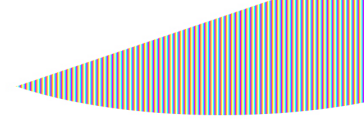
8 Financial Reporting

It is a legal requirement that Witney u3a submits an annual return to the Charities Commission, setting out Income and Expenditure with a Balance Sheet.

This must be lodged within ten months of the official year-end.

It is a requirement of the u3a that a full set of accounts is provided to members in advance of the AGM. This requires the Committee to have studied and approved the financial outcomes as soon as possible after the official year-end.

It will be at the discretion of the Committee whether a full external audit of the annual results is required.



The proposed set of annual accounts must be reviewed by an external party who is independent of Witney u3a and sufficiently well qualified to take part and to provide informed judgement.

The appointment and any remuneration of a Reviewer will be made by majority decision of the Committee and this must be minuted.

Accounts approved by the Committee will be presented to the membership in advance of the AGM and time must be allocated at the AGM for questions from the audience.

A vote to approve the annual accounts, as proposed by the Committee, must be taken at the AGM. The vote would be carried by a majority vote of all members actually or virtually present..

9 Membership Fees and Joint Membership

The annual fee for each class of membership will be reviewed yearly in advance of the AGM.

Witney u3a is committed to keeping the membership fees as low as possible to remain accessible to all potential and existing members.

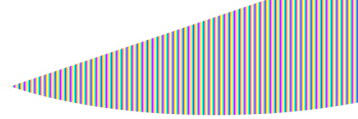
Proposed changes to fees should be communicated by the Committee to members in advance of the AGM.

Where a change in fee structure is proposed at the AGM, a resolution of approval must be sought by a majority vote, open to all members present.

Witney u3a may offer early payment discounts for annual fees if financially viable. Any offer would require approval by the Committee and be for a limited time period only.

From time to time it may be possible to offer reduced fees to members who can provide proof of certain state benefits. Candidates should be recommended confidentially from across the active membership spectrum to the Membership Secretary.

Non-members of Witney u3a who wish to participate in its activities and who can provide evidence of current membership of u3a elsewhere, can benefit from a reduced annual membership fee. This will be set at a level where the fee paid would amount to no more than half the fee paid by an existing member in the same fee category.



10 Assets Register

An Assets Register will be maintained by the Treasurers to record all physical assets owned by Witney u3a. This should record the date of purchase, initial price, estimated notional value and current physical location.

The Register will be maintained on a three year rolling basis and should be available to the Committee on request.

Assets acquired with u3a funds become the sole property of Witney u3a and may not be shared with or used by any other external parties.

At the discretion of the Treasurers assets may be written down against income in the year of purchase or amortised over a longer period of time. Treasurers will be required to inform the Committee of their decision after each acquisition takes place.

11 Financial Reserves

Witney u3a aims to keep a level of reserves that will cover six months of regular operating activity, should unforeseen events occur.

Reserves would typically be used to pay ongoing costs such as room hire, speaker fees, capitation fees and TAM costs.

Until decided otherwise by the Committee, Witney u3a will retain a minimum balance of £6,000 as reserves.

It is not intended that reserves are used to pay for any trips, outings or visits as these are generally self-funding.
