



Blyth u3a

Finance Policy

Purpose

To provide a Finance procedure, this will be fair and effective, according to Blyth u3a legal obligations and local requirements.

Scope

Relevant to all Blyth u3a members, including associate members. For the purposes of this and all adopted policy documents all elected and co-opted committee members will automatically be named as trustees of Blyth u3a.

Trustees' financial responsibilities

The trustees of Blyth 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.
- Ensuring that accounts 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 where appropriate.

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

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

Banking

Bank account

- The bank account in the name of Blyth u3a is operated by the trustees.
- The authorised signatories on the account will be The Chair, The Treasurer and at least one other Trustee.
- 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 cheques must be signed by two signatories.
- The signatories are responsible for examining the cheque for accuracy and completeness.
- Blank cheques will never be issued.
- Blank cheques will never be signed by one signatory for a second to complete later.

Online banking

Only trustees approved by the committee will have access to online banking. The security of the online system is in line with the arrangements offered by the hosting bank and in accordance with the mandated approval limits.

Payment by bank cards

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 committee and in accordance with the bank mandate. The issue of any bank debit or credit card in the name of Blyth u3a 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 an online purchase for certain goods and services represents the most effective, and in some cases, the only method of completing the purchase.

All transactions made using these cards appear immediately on the appropriate bank account (subject to the timescales for electronic banking transactions) and are subject to review by the nominated officers through the online banking service. All such payments must be supported by an invoice or receipt made out to Blyth u3a.

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 to be purchased in this way.

All invoices must be issued in the name of Blyth u3a.

Group 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 these groups belong to the u3a although funds raised by a specific group shall be ring fenced for use by the members of the said group. 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 ring fenced funds held by the u3a on their behalf, as appropriate.

A request for making up a shortfall in funding can be made to the committee (an example would be where a member has pulled out of a trip). If committee is not due to meet then the Treasurer and Chair or Vice chair are allowed to ratify these decisions.

Groups requiring equipment must submit a request to the committee. Priority will be given to any purchase of equipment which will be of benefit to the majority of members.

The Treasurer, Group Co-ordinator and Group Leader(s) will 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, where required

It is recognised that there can be no “one size fits all” procedure for groups finances as they are run under local and different arrangements. Group Leaders will agree the best way forward with agreement of the Group Co-ordinator and the Treasurer.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES are groups allowed to open their own bank accounts, or pay money into a private account

Receipts

To manage the handover of cash and cheques to be paid into the Blyth u3a bank account the following will apply

- Bank paying in slips will not be given to group leaders for this purpose.
- With prior permission of the treasurer, group leaders may 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 documented to the Treasurer.
- Cash held back for cash flow purposes will be within approved limits, as agreed with the treasurer.

Payments

The Treasurer and Group Co-ordinator 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 for venues, trips, equipment, speakers etc may be deducted from activity revenue or when payments must be made through the Treasurer.

Outside speakers should be asked to state their fees and any travel costs at the time of booking and payment obtained from the Treasurer.

The committee (via the Treasurer) will monitor the income and expenditure of the groups. Group leaders need to provide regular information, as agreed, to the 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.

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.

Payments to other charities

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

Expenses policy

Out of pocket expenses incurred by committee members or volunteers who are involved with running Blyth u3a will be reimbursed. Unless in exceptional cases, expenses must have prior authorisation by the committee. Expense claims must be submitted with receipts. 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 full committee.

Membership Fees and membership of more than one u3a

The membership fee is reviewed on an annual basis. Blyth u3a is committed to keeping the membership subscription as low as possible to ensure that the u3a remains accessible to all members. Membership fees will be agreed by committee each year before the AGM. All activities attended will be paid for separately.

The membership year will run from October to September. Members who join after October will pay a reduced fee for that year.

The fee due to the Third Age trust is due in April. It is therefore important that a contingency reserve is set aside for this purpose.

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

Reserves

Blyth u3a will aim to keep a minimum level of reserves that will cover six months of regular operating activity.

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.

Accounts

Blyth u3a became a registered charity in April 2024 and as such will produce annual audited accounts at the end of each financial year (1 Sept to 31 Aug)

u3a	Finance Policy	JG Blyth u3a
	Initial document	1/11/22
	Review due	1/7/24
	Reviewed 18/9/24 , 16/9/25 next review	18/9/26