

<p>1.</p>	<p>Trustees' financial responsibilities</p>
	<p>The trustees of Stourbridge U3A are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 (Constitution) and relevant legislation (e.g. Charities Acts etc). • Preparing Annual Accounts in accordance with the Constitution and relevant legislation. The accounts should accurately reflect the transactions during the period and the financial position at the date of sign off. <p>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. The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the accounts are reviewed by a suitably qualified independent examiner.</p> <p>To enable the trustees to carry out these responsibilities, the financial policy and procedures detailed in this document will be followed.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The policy will be kept under review and revised as necessary.</p>
	<p><i>The trustees will receive a monthly report from the treasurer detailing monies held in accounts, large payments made, received or due. The treasurer will also present, at least one month before the year end, a recommendation for the level of fees for the following year.</i></p> <p><i>The Committee will appoint someone to act as Assistant Treasurer. This role will include the responsibility to monitor the accounts by means of accessing the current account and Beacon finance sheets online and assisting the treasurer to maintain accurate records.</i></p>

2.	Banking, transactions and accounting records
2.1	<p>Bank Accounts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All bank accounts are in the name of Stourbridge 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. • The authorised signatories are the Honorary President, Chairman, Vice Chairman, Business Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. This responsibility cannot be delegated. • All cheques must be signed by at least two signatories. • Stourbridge U3A will hold a current account and a linked deposit account which earns interest. • It will also hold an account with Paypal (or similar online money transfer account) for the sole purpose of transacting membership fees online through the U3A Membership and Finance management system. • The treasurer will be the main user, the assistant treasurer and membership secretary will be additional users permitted to transfer money from the Stourbridge U3A Paypal account to the Stourbridge U3A current account.
	<p><i>All transactions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Receipts and payments should preferably be by direct bank transfer but membership receipts may also be by Paypal, cheque or cash. Other receipts may also be in cash or be by cheque,</i> • <i>Payments should be made by direct bank transfer but may be made by cash where this is more appropriate. Payments by cheque will only be made in exceptional circumstances when no other method is available,</i> • <i>All bank statements must be sent to the Treasurer directly with the assistant treasurer given online access to the account,</i> • <i>The treasurer or assistant treasurer must undertake a monthly bank reconciliation,</i> • <i>Cash in hand should be reconciled by the treasurer or assistant treasurer to the cash account at least monthly but preferably more frequently,</i> • <i>All transactions should be recorded in a manual transactions log and then entered into the Beacon accounting system.</i> <p><i>Receipts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>All receipts are to be recorded in a manual transactions log and acknowledged by email. Receipts, primarily from interest groups and for events and outings, are preferred by direct bank transfer.</i> • <i>Cash and cheque receipts will be noted in a duplicate receipt book or acknowledged by email. It is the responsibility of the individual paying cash/cheques to the treasurer or other nominated person to ensure that the amount shown on the email acknowledgement or receipt matches the amount paid to treasurer.</i>

	<p><i>Payments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The treasurer or assistant treasurer are responsible for making routine payments by direct bank transfer. Routine payments include accommodation invoices, speakers' fees, coach hire and admission charges for outings but all speakers' fees must be authorised by the speakers' secretary and all coach hire and admission charges must be authorised by the member of the events and outings committee responsible for that particular outing/event,</i> • <i>Other payments must be authorised by two signatories. Authorisation may be by email or a second signature on the relevant invoice,</i> • <i>Where, in exceptional circumstances, payments are made by cheque, two signatures are required on the cheque and the signatories must check the payee and amount are in accordance with the invoice or other documentation,</i> • <i>Blank cheques will never be issued.</i> • <i>Blank cheques will never be signed by one signatory for a second to complete later.</i> <p><i>Transfers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The treasurer and assistant treasurer have authority to move money between cash, current and deposit accounts.</i>
<p>2.2</p>	<p>Online banking Where online operation of the bank accounts is in place, only trustees approved by the committee will have access to this facility. The security of the online system is in line with the arrangements offered by the bank of Stourbridge U3A 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 committee and in accordance with the bank mandate. All payments are authorised in accordance with the bank mandate. Access to the online accounts varies from bank to bank and may be via a card reader and personal access card or by logging on to the bank system with a personal password and access code.</p>
	<p><i>HSBC, U3A's current clearing bank, require that a limit on individual transactions and on total daily transactions is set in advance. These limits are currently set at £2,500 for the treasurer and assistant treasurer and at £1000 for the Business Secretary.</i></p>
<p>2.3</p>	<p>Payment by bank cards The issue of any bank debit or credit card in the name of Stourbridge U3A will be approved by the committee. Stourbridge U3A does not currently hold any bank debit or credit card.</p>

<p>2.4</p>	<p>Personal debit or credit cards</p> <p>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 for the use of Stourbridge U3A or specific interest groups in accordance with the policy currently laid out in the Group Leaders' Handbook. 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 Stourbridge U3A.</p>
	<p><i>When a personal debit/credit card has been used with prior agreement of the treasurer or committee, an expense claim with a receipt must be submitted to the treasurer for reimbursement.</i></p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Groups' Finances</p> <p>Interest groups are considered to be a shared resource of Stourbridge U3A for the benefit of all members. Ideally each group will be self-financing i.e. income will cover expenditure. However, in order to provide a wide range of activities, it is understood that some groups will incur expenditure in excess of income.</p> <p>The group leader must keep records to show names of members attending and money collected. Processes for dealing with expenditure are detailed below. The aim of record keeping is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>3.1</p>	<p>Receipts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Group Leader is responsible for collecting money and paying it into the Stourbridge U3A account. This role may be delegated to a named individual whose name must be given to the treasurer. • Group leaders should pay income to the U3A at least four times per year.
	<p><i>To manage the handover of cash and cheques to be paid into the Stourbridge U3A bank account the committee has decided that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Payment by direct bank transfer is preferred,</i> • <i>Bank paying in slips will not be given to group leaders for this purpose.</i> • <i>Group leaders may pay sums due by issuing their own cheque or paying online through their own bank account. Online payments should be notified to the treasurer by email.</i> • <i>Receipts by direct bank transfer will be acknowledged by the treasurer or assistant treasurer by email,</i> • <i>Where group fees are paid by cash or cheque applicable receipts will be given to group leader by email or where cash is paid in person by a duplicate handwritten receipt.</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Where net sums are being paid over this needs to be fully demonstrated to the treasurer.</i> • <i>Small sums (up to £10) for printing etc. may be deducted from income before being paid to the U3A.</i> • <i>Group leaders should not hold funds for cash flow purposes.</i>
3.2	<p>Payments</p> <p>The committee will inform relevant group leaders as to the approved process for payments relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group outings • Venue hire • Speakers • Tutors <p>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.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Planned expenditure for group materials or equipment above £10 must be approved by treasurer and group coordinator (above £50 committee approval is required) and will usually be by direct bank transfer but a U3A cheque or credit card may be used in exceptional circumstances where no other option is available. It may also occasionally be by personal card (see note above).</i> • <i>The treasurer will pay venue hire costs directly. Occasional speakers/paid tutors for groups should be asked to state their fees and any travel costs at the time of booking. Payment will be by direct bank transfer wherever possible. Otherwise in exceptional circumstances a cheque may be obtained from the Treasurer. Invoices are required for speakers/tutors.</i> • <i>When a group arranges an outing where the total cost per person is in excess of £5, this should be agreed in advance by the events and outings committee and should include the £1 regular members payment (or £2 for visitors). Coach hire and admission price should be paid by U3A by the treasurer by direct bank transfer or, where this is not possible, by cheque or credit card. The group leader is responsible for collecting money from attendees who should wherever possible pay by direct bank transfer although cheques and cash are accepted. The group leader and treasurer should agree the payments received before the outing takes place and, if necessary, the treasurer will arrange individual refunds in accordance with the current refunds policy shown in the outings policies..</i> • <i>Where a group travels independently and no advance payment is required for admission, attendees may pay personally without using U3A payment methods. Where this is part of the regular group meeting the members are required to make £1 payment to U3A (insurance cover is then in place for this event).</i> • <i>A group of members of U3A may arrange an outing as a private event and meet their own costs without reference to U3A. U3A insurance does not cover such an event.</i>

<p>4.</p>	<p>Social Events and Outings</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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. Stourbridge U3A does not make any financial reward (including small gifts) to members who speak at a monthly meeting or organise an event or outing. Nor does it make gifts to Officers/Trustees when they stand down from office. See <i>Guidance for Organising Outings document</i>.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Payments to other charities</p> <p>In line with charity law, a U3A cannot raise funds for another charity that does not have similar charitable objectives. Stourbridge U3A will make payments to speakers who have indicated that they intend to donate their fee to a specific charity or directly to a charity as purchase of a service (i.e. provision of a speaker).</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Expenses policy</p> <p>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 a member of the committee (for amounts to £20) and by the Chair or Treasurer plus one other member (for amounts above £20) 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Overnight accommodation will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances and will need the prior agreement of the committee.</p>

<p>7.</p>	<p>Membership Fees and membership of more than one U3A</p> <p>The membership fee is reviewed on an annual basis. Stourbridge U3A is committed to keeping the membership subscription as low as possible to ensure that the U3A remains accessible to all members.</p> <p>For U3A members who can evidence membership of another U3A, Stourbridge U3A will reduce the cost of membership by the amount that is paid to the Third Age Trust for each member.</p>
	<p><i>All U3A members are required to pay £1 for each group meeting or event/outing they attend. The interest group leader and lead organiser of an event/outing is excepted from this.</i></p> <p><i>Visitors to groups, events or monthly meetings are required to pay £2 per session. No visitor may attend more than three of these events (monthly meetings, interest groups or social activities/outings) in any membership year. A person attending any of these in the capacity of carer is not required to pay this attendance fee, but is required to pay the ticket price of the event/outing if applicable.</i></p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Asset Register</p> <p>An asset register is maintained by the Vice Chairman which records all assets held including their initial purchase price, date of purchase, estimated nominal value and location.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>All assets are considered to belong to Stourbridge U3A, even if their main use is by one interest group.</p>
	<p><i>A description of items purchased detailing make and model number and cost will be given to the Vice Chairman at the time of purchase.</i></p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Reserves</p> <p>Stourbridge 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.</p> <p>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.</p>
	<p><i>The treasurer is responsible for ensuring that the level of reserves throughout the year is in accordance with the Policy.</i></p>

Policy approved by Stourbridge U3A Committee at its meeting on 25 July 2024.