



WEST CHESHIRE RURAL u3a (WCRu3a)

Financial Policy

1 Purpose

All charities are required to determine their “Internal Controls” for running the charity, one of these being the Financial Controls, or Financial Policy.

“Trustees” includes all WCRu3a Committee Members.

2 Trustees’ financial responsibilities

The trustees of West Cheshire Rural 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.
- Preparing Annual Accounts in accordance with the governing document and relevant legislation.
- Keeping financial records in accordance with the governing document and relevant legislation (e.g. Charities Acts). Original and full audited Annual Accounts are retained for 6 (six) years.
- Ensuring the 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, sub-groups etc., where appropriate.

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

A copy of this policy is given to all trustees on their election/appointment to the committee and made available to members on request.

The policy is kept under annual review, or earlier if the trustees approve and implement material change[s] to WCRu3a’s financial management arrangements and revised as necessary.

3 Banking

3.1 Bank account

The bank account is in the name of West Cheshire Rural u3a and operated by 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 Chairman, Treasurer, and Standby (S/by) Treasurer This responsibility cannot be delegated.
- The S/by Treasurer is appointed by the trustees in accordance with the governing document. .
- Operation of the bank account does not include a cheque issuing facility.
- All bank statements are sent to the Treasurer directly. Each month the Treasurer provides all trustees with a copy of the previous month's bank statement and a Balance Statement detailing all Income/Expenditure activity on the bank account during the same calendar month.
- Whenever practical two people should be involved in counting cash receipts.

3.2 Online banking

Online operation of the bank account is in place and only trustees approved by the committee have access to this facility. The security of the online system is in line with the arrangements offered by NatWest Bank and in accordance with the mandated approval limits.

3.3 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. All payments are authorised in accordance with the bank mandate. Access to the online account is by logging on to the bank system with a personal password and access code.

The issue of any bank debit or credit card in the name of West Cheshire Rural u3a is approved by the committee. The Treasurer holds one business card. Authorised use of this card is limited to: (i) operating the online bank account as required by the bank, and (ii) facilitating Post Office transactions to pay-in cheques & to pay in and/or withdraw cash. All transactions made using this card appear immediately on the bank account (subject to the timescales for electronic banking transactions) and are subject to review by the nominated officer through the online banking service. All such payments/withdrawals are supported by an invoice or receipt made out to West Cheshire Rural u3a.

3.4 Personal debit or credit cards

The use of personal debit or credit cards for interest group activities is discouraged. Permission must be sought from the committee where a group feels that there is no other viable way to make payments, eg. theatre tickets where payment is required at time of booking.



Prior approval must be given by the committee for equipment and other items to be purchased for the use of West Cheshire Rural u3a or specific interest groups (where such purchases are the property of WCRu3a). 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 West Cheshire Rural u3a.

3.5 Payments to other charities

In line with charity law, a u3a cannot raise funds for another charity that does not have similar charitable objectives. Using the u3a recommended procedure and paperwork West Cheshire Rural 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.

4 Interest Groups' 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. Groups are permitted to make any expenditure deemed necessary by the group members, as appropriate. The Treasurer and Group Leader(s) agree what records need to be kept of their groups' transactions in order to:

- Allow the Treasurer to keep accurate accounts for presentation to the Auditor and 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.

4.1 Receipts

To manage the handover of cash and cheques to be paid into the West Cheshire Rural u3a bank account the committee has decided that:

- Bank paying in slips will not be given to group leaders for this purpose.
- Group leaders may not pay sums due by issuing their own cheque or paying online through their own bank account.
- Where applicable, receipts will be acknowledged by email.
- Where net sums are being paid over this needs to be fully demonstrated to the Treasurer.

4.2 Payments

The committee via the Treasurer 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 payment for venues, coaches, tutors, speakers etc must be paid by the u3a. In such cases, all invoices must be issued by the supplier in the name of West Cheshire Rural u3a.

Outside speakers should be asked to state their fees and any travel costs at the time of booking and either give their direct banking details or request a cash payment from the Treasurer. Receipts signed by the Speaker are required for all cash payments to Speakers.

Where the committee has agreed the use of a paid tutor, the tutor must provide evidence of their self-employed status and invoice WCRu3a, not the Interest Group.

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 their insurance and financial requirements.

4.3 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.

Essential 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 Trustees Expenses (for Interest Groups – see section 4)

5.1 Approval and Reimbursement

Trustees' out of pocket expenses incurred when involved with running the u3a will be reimbursed. Expense claims under £20.00 in total must be submitted with receipts to the Chairman. The Chairman has the right to refer any expense claim to the full committee for consideration.

Expense claims over £20.00 in total must be pre-approved by the committee and subsequent reimbursement will be authorised by the committee. No committee member can authorise her/his own claim.

All claims or part of a claim being made without a supporting receipt must include sufficient detail as to the need and nature of the unreceipted expense.



Properly authorised expense claims with their receipts will be passed to the Treasurer for reimbursement and recording. Reimbursement will usually be made by direct bank transfer.

5.2 Travel and Overnight Accommodation

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 are not be allowed.

Overnight accommodation will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances and requires the prior agreement of the committee.

6 Membership Fees

The membership fee is reviewed on an annual basis. West Cheshire Rural u3a is committed to keeping the membership subscription as low as possible to ensure that the u3a remains accessible to all members.

7 Asset register

An asset register is maintained by the Treasurer who records all assets held including their initial purchase price, date of purchase 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.

8 Reserves

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

Interest Groups' social account activities are excluded from this figure as these activities are entirely self-financing.

9 External Overview

At the end of each financial year, the Treasurer will prepare a set of accounts and submit these to an examiner/auditor who is not a member of the committee. The trustees will appoint annually an examiner/auditor, subject to AGM approval, who can certify that the accounts represent a true and fair view of WCRu3a's financial affairs for the year under inspection.

10 Succession Planning

The incumbent Treasurer maintains records, on paper and/or online, which ensure a full & timely handover to her/his successor.

Should the incumbent Treasurer become suddenly & permanently unavailable, emergency operation of the bank account devolves to the authorised S/By Treasurer until longer-term arrangements can be made.

Related documentation

Financial matters – u3a-KMS-DOC-033
WCRu3a GDPR Policy
WCRu3a Gift Aid Policy

Trustee Contact for this Policy:

WCRu3a Treasurer (email via <https://west-cheshire.u3asite.uk/contact/>)

Policy adopted at WCRu3a Committee Meeting on 02 September, 2024.

31.08.24