

# Financial Matters for Group Co-Ordinators

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 u3a Organisation

Founded in 1982, u3a is a United Kingdom (UK)-wide movement of locally-run interest groups that provide a wide range of opportunities to come together to learn for fun.

Waterlooville u3a (Wu3a) was founded in 2006 and merged with Portsdown u3a in 2024, its key aims are to:

- Enable older people no longer in full-time paid employment to help each other to share their knowledge, skills, interests and experience;
- Enable people to experience the pleasure of learning and socialising throughout life;
- Celebrate the capabilities and potential of retired people and their value to society.

### 1.2 Wu3a Obligations

Wu3a, as a Charity is subject to Charity Commission and His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) regulations / laws. Wu3a also has to conform to the practices approved by the u3a national body.

This document sets out how Wu3a expects its' Group Coordinators (GCs) should deal with the financial aspects of their role. Although primarily addressed to GCs, matters discussed, are of relevance to any Wu3a members who handle money.

### 1.3 Group Co-Ordinators

Wu3a recommends that this document, is read in connection with the Group Coordinators' Handbook which deals with all aspects of the GCs role for their Interest Groups.

The Trustees of Wu3a entrust GCs, to take reasonable care to adhere to the letter and the spirit of this document ensuring Wu3a's overall compliance.

GCs are advised to undertake Beacon training, as this enables them to view and manage the financial records for their group

Wu3a have 2 Treasurers who deal with all financial matters:

- The **Wu3a Treasurer** ([treasurer@waterloovilleu3a.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@waterloovilleu3a.org.uk)) deals with the main Wu3a finances that are not interest group specific, the Wu3a annual accounts, as well as managing GC allowances and grants;
- The **Groups Treasurer (GT)** ([groupstreasurer@waterloovilleu3a.org.uk](mailto:groupstreasurer@waterloovilleu3a.org.uk)) handles income and expenditure for interest groups and maintains the formal records for all these groups.

## **2 Forms**

To support GCs in the delivery of their role, there are a number of forms which can be downloaded from the “Members Area\Documents” section on the Wu3a Website, or on request from the GT or Wu3a Treasurer.

### **2.1 Payment Authorisation**

The Payment Authorisation form enables GCs to authorise payments to tutors, speakers or venues where an invoice could not be issued.

### **2.2 Expense Claim**

The Expense Claim form enables GCs to make claims from their own groups funds for out of pocket expenses, such as the purchase of supporting materials or equipment, that are purchased for the benefit of the whole group. The Expense Claim form can also be used to claim the groups’ annual allowance.

### **2.3 Group Activity Financial Record**

The Group Activity Financial Record form provides a simple ‘1’ page form to enable GCs to track group income and expenditure, if the GC doesn’t already have the means to do this.

## **3 Managing Group Income**

### **3.1 Overview**

Groups that need to make use of venues, tutors or speakers, will be required to collect funds from members to pay for them, which will be managed by the GC and transferred to the GT.

### **3.2 Principles**

There are several principles for GCs;

- Groups must be self-financing – that is all expenditure must be covered by prior income from the group members, who must make equal contributions;
- As the GC, you should never be out of pocket in the course of managing the group;
- All funds collected to cover the cost of venues, tutors or speakers should be passed to the GT as soon as practical
- The GC is responsible for setting the level and frequency of payments by group members and in general the GC should try to maintain the groups' fund holdings to no more than 3 months' worth of expenditure. To support the GC in setting this the GT maintains records of payments over time and will provide the information;
- If the GC anticipates a shortfall in funding, the GT should be advised without delay and remedial action agreed

### **3.3 Exceptions**

The following are a list of exceptions to Section 3.2:

- The purchase of items, such as ingredients, drinks for groups such as cookery, Wine appreciation may be purchased individually by members, or by a single member on behalf of the group.
- A cash "kitty" may be held by the GC for things such as refreshments, without it being recorded by the GT or reflected in Wu3a accounts, provided that contributions to the kitty and consequent participation in the refreshments are voluntary, mutually agreed, records kept and available to all participants. The GC will hold this cash at their own risk.
- The 3 months' group expenditure guidance can be ignored for those groups that only collect on an annual / bi annual basis; the GC should inform the GT of this intention.
- Payment for activities (such as theatre or coach trips) where participating members pay the provider individually, do not need to be reflected in the group's finances. However, where members make a group booking, this must be handled in association with the GT and recorded in the group accounts.

### 3.4 Group Subscriptions

The GC shall request payment from group members when required and can be collected in any combination of:

- **Bank Transfer**, which:
  - Is the most secure and fastest way;
  - Must be transferred directly to the Wu3a Social Account, not any other Wu3a account;
  - Must detail the group that the payment is to be credited to.
- **Cheques (payable to “Waterlooville U3A”)** which:
  - Are secure for both GC and Wu3a;
  - Are easily transferred to the GT.
- **Cash**, which:
  - Must be held securely for the shortest appropriate time;
  - Must be held separately from personal money.

Collected payments must be passed to the GT in one of the following ways:

- **By hand** to the GT or a committee member at a Wu3a meeting such as Coffee Morning or Monthly Meeting – or at other times arranged with the GT;
- **By personal delivery** to GT in a sealed envelope to the GT address (by prior agreement only);
- **By post**: Only subs collected by cheque, may be posted to the GT address.

## 4 Expenditure

### 4.1 Venues

Where a group meets regularly at the same venue, the hire agreement will be agreed and managed by the Wu3a Secretary and the venue issues invoices directly to the GT for payment.

If the venue is not required by the group on a particular date, the GC or someone from the group must inform the venue (preferably in writing) in good time, to ensure that they are not charged and that the GT is informed of the cancellation.

If a group only requires a venue occasionally, it may be convenient to make a one off arrangement with the venue and request an invoice. The invoice can be sent to you personally as the GC to check and forward, or sent directly to the GT. All venue arrangements must be on behalf of Wu3a and be approved in advance by Wu3a Secretary.

### 4.2 Tutors / Speakers

If your group requires the services of a tutor on a regular basis, they should be requested to supply invoices directly to the GT. If the tutor is unable or unwilling to provide an invoice, the GC will need to discuss the situation with the GT and a suitable arrangement (such as Payment Authorisation) will be agreed.. Before the services of a tutor is agreed, the Wu3a Secretary must be informed, so that they can ensure that all appropriate paperwork is in order.

If a group requires the services of a tutor / speaker on an ad hoc basis, the GC can liaise directly and request that an invoice is sent directly to the GC or forwarded to the GT. If an invoice is not forthcoming, a Payment Authorisation can also be used to organise the payment.

### 4.3 Ad-Hoc Purchases

Where the group needs to purchase equipment or materials, or other expenses that are to be paid from the groups funds, the GC must submit a *General Expense Claim form* (section 2.2) along with all receipts to the GT for reimbursement.

Where the GC incurs expenses related to the running of the group, such as paper or printer ink, the GC must submit a *General Expense Claim form* (Section 2.2) along with all receipts to the Wu3a Treasurer for reimbursement.

## 5 Keeping Financial Records

All GCs are required to keep records of income and expenditure for the group. The type of record is not prescribed, Wu3a have provided a *Group Activity Financial Record form* (section 2.4), which has a record of income and expenditure, for use by the GC, although some GCs use locally created spreadsheets, while others choose notebooks. It is for the GC to decide what best suits them. In all instances, the entries for income and expenditure must be recorded separately and not be combined into a single entry.

The groups funds, held in the Wu3a “Social” account, should periodically (e.g. monthly or quarterly) be compared with the GCs own records ensuring that the income / expenditure records match.

Whichever financial record that the GC uses, must be made available to the committee on request.

## **6 Group Closure / Refunds**

Whilst it is hoped that interest groups continue, over time a number of groups will close, for a variety of reasons. Where a group follows this path, the following principles apply.

In general, any remaining funds held in the group ledger or held by the GC, is deemed the property of Wu3a and is transferred to the main u3a account as a contribution for all Wu3a activities.

However, where payments have been made and can be directly attributed to identified group members for activities that did not occur, a refund will be considered to those group members, limited to the extent of those activities that did not occur.



## **7 Miscellaneous Matters**

### **7.1 Organiser Perks**

The principle of volunteering and mutual help, does not allow any member to receive benefits or incentives from suppliers. It is not uncommon for coach trip operators to allocate a “free seat” for a tour organiser, or a “commission” for taking a party to a restaurant. In no circumstances should the organiser benefit from such incentives. If accepted, the benefit should be shared by all participants in the form of reduced payments so that the payment by all participants including the organiser should be the same.

### **7.2 Dealing with other Charities**

In accordance with Charities law, no Wu3a money (including that held on behalf of a group) may be assigned (donated) to another charity unless the other charity has identical objectives with Wu3a. Such agreement of objectives are very improbable, except with other u3a organisations.

Special considerations:

- If a speaker asks for their fee to be paid to a charity, the fee should instead be paid directly to the speaker, allowing them to donate to the charity.
- If a speaker is provided by a charity, the speakers fee can be paid to the charity, against their invoice.
- A Wu3a group performing (or offering any service) for an external body and that the audience chooses to make a voluntary donation to another charity this is permitted provided that:
  - It is clear which charity is the recipient;
  - Money so donated does not pass through Wu3a accounts.

## 8 Wu3a Support

### 8.1 New Groups

Wu3a supports and encourages the formation of new groups, this help is arranged jointly by Groups Liaison (GL) ([groups@waterloovilleu3a.org.uk](mailto:groups@waterloovilleu3a.org.uk)), and the Wu3a Treasurer and where the group will require paid for venues / tutors, the GT.

Additionally financial support may be offered including 1 or more of the following:

- **Set-Up Meeting.** Prospective new groups will meet in a venue arranged by Wu3a, under the chairmanship of GL to determine the level of interest, to decide the initial arrangements (such as frequency, days of months, venues etc.) and most importantly, to appoint the GC.
- **First Group Meeting.** The hiring of the meeting venue, (if required), before the group has established any funds.
- **Group start up allowance (max £50).** With the agreement of GL or Wu3 Treasurer, a new GC is encouraged to identify any essential materials needed for the group's operation. (For example: playing cards, shuttlecocks etc.). Once agreed in principle, a claim should be made on a *General Expense Claim Form* (section 2.2) and submitted to the Treasurer for payment of invoice, or refunding any previously approved expenditure.

### 8.2 Established Groups

There are additional sources of central Wu3a funding for established groups:

- **Group Annual Allowance (£40 per annum).** This allowance is to meet any expense that the GC incurs in facilitating the group such as Postage, Printer Paper, etc. Claims for this Allowance should be submitted to the Treasurer using the *Group Co-ordinators Annual Claim Form* (Section 2.3) and must be accompanied by receipts or invoices for payment.

However, recurring consumables needed for the normal operation of the group (such as ping pong balls) cannot be claimed under this allowance but should be claimed with receipts against group funds, ultimately contributed by the group members' subs.

- **Exceptional situations.** In general terms each group should be self-funding and group members must cover the running costs. However, if a GC feels there are some exceptional circumstances, they may ask the Committee for additional financial support (e.g. unforeseen exceptional expense or legitimate training need). Discuss your needs with the GL or Wu3a Treasurer who can put forward your request to the Committee.