

PAYMENT AND REFUND POLICY

1. Policy

1.1 Scope of the policy

This policy applies to the work of **Ellesmere Port & District** u3a. The policy sets out procedures and rules for **Ellesmere Port & District** u3a to collect, process and refund payments by members. The policy is reviewed on an ongoing basis by **Ellesmere Port & District** u3a committee members to ensure that **Ellesmere Port & District** u3a operates financially in a fair and reasonable manner.

1.2 Why this policy exists

This Payment and Refund Policy aims to ensure that **Ellesmere Port & District** u3a:

- is open about what members pay for membership, attendance at general meetings and group meetings, and for social events;
- is fair and reasonable, and in accordance with national u3a policies;
- makes clear to members what they should pay, when and how to pay, and under what circumstances a refund may be available.

2. General principles

1. All members pay an annual Membership Fee to **Ellesmere Port & District** u3a.
2. Members pay an entrance charge to attend the main general monthly meeting, whether there is a paid speaker, u3a speaker, or no speaker.
3. Members may pay an attendance charge for any Interest Group.
4. Members pay the full cost of any social event, including any entrance charge, refreshment charge or commercial travel cost.

2.1 Membership Fee

An annual Membership Fee is payable by all registered members of **Ellesmere Port & District** u3a for each annual session, which runs from 1st April each year to 31st March the following year. The fee is payable at or before the Annual Membership Renewal Meeting. Members will be notified 2 months in advance of the date of the meeting and the level of Membership Fee for the coming year.

1. The Annual Membership Renewal Meeting is normally held in March, at the date, time and place of the main general monthly meeting.
2. The purpose of the Membership Fee is to cover the main fixed costs of running **Ellesmere Port & District** u3a, including the annual capitation fee payable to the Third Age Trust, any maintenance or replacement of equipment associated with u3a activities, and any other fixed costs.
3. Non-members may attend TWO main general monthly meeting as visitors during each annual session, but are required to join, pay the Membership Fee, and become registered members if they wish to attend any subsequent main general monthly meetings in that session.

4. A discount is offered to new members who join in August of the session or later: those who join from August are offered a 1/3 rate discount on the Membership Fee; those who join from November are offered a 2/3 rate discount; those who wish to join in January or February are allowed to attend as visitors until the March Membership Renewal meeting.
5. The full Membership Fee is still payable by anyone who is also a member of any other u3a.
6. No refund is available to members who leave **Ellesmere Port & District** u3a during the session.
7. Payment may be in cash, by cheque, or by bank transfer (BACS).

2.2 Entrance Charge

Members pay an entrance charge to attend the main general monthly meeting, whether there is a paid speaker, u3a speaker, or no speaker.

1. The expected entrance charge for the coming session is notified to members 2 months in advance of the Annual Membership Renewal Meeting.
2. The Committee reserves the right to amend the Entrance Charge during the session if it becomes necessary, for example if there is a significant change to the hire charges for the venue or legislation should make a change necessary. Any change to the entrance charge will be notified to members 2 months before the change is implemented.
3. The entrance charge is payable in cash.

2.3 Interest Group Charges

Each Interest Group can set its own attendance or activity charge, by mutual agreement. The Group Convenor is responsible for ensuring that all group members are aware of the charges. Groups are not permitted to make a profit or loss, so that any charge must reflect the actual costs of running the group and its activities. Group Convenors are not permitted to gain financially or to subsidise the group. All charges must be open and transparent to group members, and to the Committee.

2.4 Social Event Charges

All Social Events should be entirely self-financing and cost neutral.

The Organiser of each Social Event must make clear to those who wish to take part:

1. The full cost per person for taking part, including any transport and entrance charges
 2. The amount of any deposit required
 3. The dates on which any deposit and any outstanding balance will be due.
- Payment may be in cash, by cheque, or by bank transfer (BACS) by agreement with the Organiser of the Social Event.
 - All payments will be managed and banked by the Treasurer, who is also responsible for ensuring that those who require payment for the Social Event (transport providers, refreshment providers, venues) can be paid appropriately and on time.
 - Refunds will not generally be available to members who choose to cancel in full or in part after the date for payment of the main balance.

- Deposits cannot generally be refunded to members who choose not to pay the outstanding balance at the date for payment of the main balance.
- All monies for committed planned events (e.g. bus, theatre ticket, entrance fees etc.) will be non refundable once the bookings have been confirmed and payment made to the provider. If a member is unable to attend an event, the place may be re-sold to the next person on the waiting list where one exists. Where the place can be filled a refund will be made, otherwise the loss will be borne by the member who was unable to attend the event. Any member who wishes to cancel may attempt to swap with another member and recover their costs in that way. Members should not expect the Organiser to find a replacement if there is no waiting list.
- If the Social Event cannot not take place or is cancelled by the venue, transport provider or other *force majeure*, the Organiser and/or Treasurer will attempt to recover costs from the venue and/or transport provider. However there is no guarantee that this attempt will be successful, and neither the Organiser nor the u3a will be responsible for refunding members in this situation.

2.5 Financial Accountability

- The Committee is responsible for keeping track of all Membership Fees, in association with the Membership Secretary and Treasurer.
- The Committee is responsible for setting the level of the Annual Membership Fee and the Monthly General Meeting Entrance Charge.
- The Treasurer is responsible for providing sufficient background information to the Committee to help in setting the level of both charges.
- Group Convenors are responsible for any charges applicable to attendance at their group.
- In general, **Ellesmere Port & District** u3a does not aim to make a profit or loss, but aims to maintain the accounts so as to allow for smooth running of the u3a, keeping appropriate reserves, handling cash flow in accordance with common practice and the policies of the Third Age Trust.
- Complete accounts will be made available to all Members at the Annual General Meeting.
- All Members are entitled to ask financial questions of the Treasurer and/or the Committee at any time.

This policy was adopted on date: _____

Signed: _____ Committee role: _____

Print name: _____

Policy review date: _____

Data Protection Policy		Ellesmere Port & District u3a	
Version	Description of changes	Date of change	Review date
1.0	First agreed version	19-MAR-2025	19-MAR-2027