

u3a

Wilmslow

Conflicts of Interest Policy

Introduction

This document outlines the Conflicts of Interest Policy for Wilmslow u3a, created in accordance with national Third Age Trust guidelines and best practices from across United Kingdom u3as. As a registered charity run entirely by volunteers, it is vital that Wilmslow u3a maintains transparency, integrity, and the trust of its members and the wider community.

Charity trustees (Committee members) have a legal duty to act solely in the best interests of Wilmslow u3a. This policy is designed to help trustees and key volunteers identify, declare, and manage any conflicts—or perceived conflicts—between the interests of the u3a and their personal, professional, or financial interests.

Definition of a Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest arises when a person's decision-making could be influenced, or appear to be influenced, by another personal relationship, role, or financial motivation. Examples within a u3a context include, but are not limited to:

- A trustee or volunteer who is related to, or has a close personal relationship with, an external speaker, venue provider, or commercial contractor being considered for a u3a service.
- A trustee who stands to benefit financially from a decision made by the Committee (e.g., purchasing equipment from a business they own, or renting a venue in which they have a financial stake).
- A trustee holding a formal governance or volunteer position with another local organisation or charity whose interests might clash or compete with those of Wilmslow u3a.

Declaring Interests

Wilmslow u3a adopts a common-sense, proactive approach to declarations. It is always better to over-declare an interest out of an abundance of caution than to leave room for misinterpretation.

- Upon appointment to the Committee trustees must complete a Trustee Declaration Form listing any relevant personal, financial, or professional connections.

- Trustees must report any new relevant personal, financial, or professional connections to the Secretary if and when they arise.
- At the start of every Committee meeting, trustees are required to declare any specific interests related to items on that meeting's agenda. These declarations will be recorded in the official minutes.
- If an unforeseen conflict arises during the course of regular volunteer activities, the individual must immediately notify the Committee Chair or Secretary.

Managing Conflicts of Interest

Once an interest or potential conflict has been declared, the Committee must ensure it is managed transparently:

- The individual holding the conflict must withdraw from any discussions, evaluations, and voting related to the matter. They may answer factual questions if requested by the Committee, but must not influence the final decision.
- The remaining, non-conflicted trustees must hold a discussion and make the final decision. This decision must prioritise the best interests of Wilmslow u3a, value for money, and fairness.
- For transactions involving external speakers or service vendors, the Committee will ensure a fair process is followed, comparing multiple options where practical, to prove no favoritism occurred.

Recording Decisions

All declared conflicts of interest and the corresponding actions taken by the Committee must be documented thoroughly in the meeting minutes. The entry must record:

- The name of the individual and the nature of the conflict.
- Whether the individual withdrew from the discussion and voting.
- The rationale for the final decision to demonstrate that it was made impartially and in full alignment with charity law and u3a principles.

Changes to the Policy

This policy is hosted transparently on the Wilmslow u3a website. To ensure continuous alignment with regulatory standards, it may change from time to time. Members will be informed of any material changes to Wilmslow u3a's policies and procedures via the regular Newsletter and at monthly general meetings.

Queries regarding this policy

If you have any questions regarding this Conflicts of Interest Policy, or require guidance on whether a specific scenario constitutes a conflict, please direct your queries to secretary@wilmslowu3a.org.uk

Adoption and Review

This policy was formally adopted by the Wilmslow u3a Committee on 14th September 2026. It will be reviewed if there are updates to the national u3a guidance or statutory charity law.