Car Sharing & Voluntary Contributions Policy

This policy seeks to balance three equally important principles: supporting members to participate in u3a activities, ensuring that members who kindly provide lifts are treated fairly, and preserving the voluntary and friendly ethos of Stowmarket u3a.

1 Purpose

Stowmarket u3a encourages members to support one another by sharing transport to meetings, walks, visits and other u3a activities wherever possible.
This policy aims to promote fairness, encourage participation and provide consistent guidance for members, whilst preserving the voluntary and friendly nature of these arrangements.

2 Scope

This policy applies to all Stowmarket u3a groups and activities where members make private arrangements to share journeys.

3 Guiding Principles

Car sharing between members is an important part of the supportive ethos of Stowmarket u3a.
Members who kindly provide lifts should not normally be left out of pocket through their generosity.
Members receiving lifts are encouraged to make a voluntary contribution towards the driver's motoring costs where appropriate.
Contributions are intended solely to share the costs of the journey. They are not regarded as payment for providing transport or as a means of making a profit.

4 Voluntary Contributions

Passengers are encouraged to offer a contribution towards the cost of the journey.
Drivers are entirely free to:

- accept a contribution;
- decline a contribution; or
- agree another arrangement with the passenger.

No member should feel under pressure either to offer or to accept a contribution.
Likewise, no member should feel unable to participate in a u3a activity solely because they are unable to contribute on a particular occasion.

5 Determining a Reasonable Contribution

In order to offer clear and simple guidelines to members we recommend an individual member voluntary contribution of £3 per trip.
Of course, the amount of any contribution is a matter for those sharing the journey. In seeking to provide clear and simple guidance we do appreciate that a £3 fixed voluntary contribution does not take account of:

- the length of the journey;
- the number of passengers;
- the overall motoring costs incurred; and
- any other relevant circumstances.

In circumstances where clearly a £3 contribution is inappropriate then those involved in the car journey are, of course, free to decide other arrangements.

6 Insurance & Legal Responsibilities

This policy is intended only to encourage members to share the reasonable cost of a journey. It is **not** intended to create a profit for drivers or to imply that members are offering a taxi or transport service.
Drivers remain responsible for ensuring that they are appropriately licensed and insured, that their vehicle is roadworthy, and that they comply with all relevant road traffic legislation.
Any member who is concerned that accepting a voluntary contribution might affect their insurance should consult their motor insurer and follow the advice provided.

7 Role of Stowmarket u3a

Where group leaders or other members help members find lifts, Stowmarket u3a is simply facilitating contact between members. The u3a is not operating any form of transport service.
Responsibility for driving, insurance, vehicle condition, and any arrangements regarding voluntary contributions rests with the individual members concerned.

8 Equality & Inclusion

The purpose of this policy is to support participation by all members.
Nothing within this policy should discourage members from attending activities because of financial circumstances.
Equally, members who regularly provide lifts should feel that their generosity is recognised and that reasonable contributions towards their costs are encouraged.

9 Review

This policy should be reviewed if there are significant changes in legislation, insurance guidance or the operational needs of Stowmarket u3a. Otherwise it should be reviewed periodically by the Committee to ensure that it continues to reflect good practice, current guidance and the needs of Stowmarket u3a members

Created October 2026. Approved by the Committee – 11th November 2026.

Registered Charity: 1002987 | Website: www.u3astowmarket.org.uk