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The purpose of this bi-monthly newsletter is to provide useful information to our Beacon Users.

Message from Beacon National Support and Development Lead

As Beacon continues to grow and become relied on by more u3as, the Trust have a responsibility to ensure that the u3as using Beacon have adequate training and support and that the Beacon Development team have the tools they need to continue enhancing Beacon going forward.

Unfortunately, John Alexander who has managed Training and Documentation since the Beacon team was formed has decided to step down. For the future he will be chairing the Facebook u3a Treasurers' Forum and will be available for support and advice in that area. We are extremely sorry to lose John as he has been with us since 2018 and has worked hard setting up and managing Training and for the last four years managing the Documentation team. John will be missed on the Beacon team, and I wish him all the best in his new role.

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Message from Beacon National Support and Development Lead (continued)

Marian Luck who has been with Beacon since 2017, managing the administration of the Beacon team and supported John with Training, has also resigned from the team. She is now one of the Regional Councillors (South West) and is finding it difficult to make time for the Beacon role. I would like to thank Marian for the work that she has done over the past years and wish her all the best in her new role.

I must also announce that, with the arrival of our new Service Manager Wendy Halley, there will be a restructure of the Beacon team to provide better communication and improved access to training with stronger links to the TATTL Board. With this in mind I will be leaving the Beacon team at the end of this month after ten years, eight years as National Support and Development Lead. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in the Beacon team, and I would like to thank all current and past team members for their support and the Trust for allowing me to develop and improve Beacon over the past eight years with the aim of making Beacon simpler yet more flexible for Beacon users. I hope to continue working with the Trust as they endeavour to develop an overall digital communication strategy for the u3a.

Once again, thank you for your support, I have enjoyed working with you all.

Frank Bailey



FURTHER INFORMATION

Beacon Security

Deleting audit log entries

To improve security and protect an accurate audit log, the button to delete audit log entries has been removed.

Security and stability

The full, external penetration testing was completed at the end of January. Although generally positive, there were a few items that require attention. These are all in old code and have been identified as potential security risks more recently. Two issues have already been addressed. The work to resolve lower-risk potential vulnerabilities has been planned in and will be given priority over other items.

Beacon Annual Costs

The annual cost of Beacon for your u3a is determined by the number of current records that you have on 31st March each year. The invoices will be sent in early April.

For 2026/7 the licence cost is unchanged at £1 per record. Current members of any type (eg associate, honorary) are included. You can check to see this total number by viewing the Members list and ticking the status checkbox for Current. The total number of members is shown at the bottom of the table. This is why it is so important that your records are fully up to date, with anyone who has not renewed, within the grace period you may have set, is changed to be recorded as Lapsed or Resigned. An expired membership, showing red in the Beacon lists, will still incur the same £1 charge.

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Beacon Annual Costs (continued)

You are not charged (or refunded) for any fluctuations in membership numbers throughout the year, so it's a key action for membership secretaries to focus on each March. A reminder, with a link to the instructions, was also included in the Committee Newsletter sent at the start of February.

Full instructions for membership secretaries are here: [4.6 Non-renewals \(including Resigned, Lapsed and Deceased members\)](#).

Wendy Halley

Service Manager

Beacon User Statistics

As of the 5th March 2026, the number of live sites and their members are shown below, along with a number of u3as/Networks/Regions preparing to migrate or investigating the use of Beacon.

u3as / Networks / Regions	Number
u3as using Beacon	668
Members in these u3as	332,191
Networks / Regions using Beacon	17
u3as (7) / Networks / Regions (6) preparing to migrate to Beacon	13
u3as using the Demonstration site to investigate joining Beacon	42

Frank Bailey

National Support and Development Lead

John Hopkins

Support and Migration Lead

Farewell Message from John Alexander

After over 7 years on the Beacon Team sometime spending over 30 hours a week, I thought that it was time to have more family time and time to pick up with neglected hobbies.

When you read this, I will have already left the Beacon Team having finished on 28th February 2026.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all in the Beacon Team with whom I have shared highs and lows, challenges and successes. You have all been an inspiration and support.

When I started there were around 270 u3as using Beacon. As I write this there are 667 u3as plus 17 Networks. A testimony to the system but also to all of the team who have helped you all. It has been my privilege to share this expansion with the team.

I was tasked with starting to implement the training programme. I take pride in that this training, has for some years provided training for over 2,000 people each year. Not due to me but to the dedicated and skilled people who have helped deliver this training. I thank you all as well as those who helped manage the programme.

I too want to thank and show appreciation for the many, many people whom I have met through my time in the Beacon Team. Your working with me to provide feedback that helps develop the training and most of all your kindness and appreciation for what we, as a small team, have delivered has been much appreciated and inspired us.

I wish you all well for the future in the knowledge that Beacon will help us all run our individual u3a's effectively.

