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

New look website

Beacon's website is now hosted by SiteWorks, so you'll notice a different look, but everything is largely as it was. However, we've introduced two new pages, to improve the communication between the Beacon team and all of the Beacon users.

You can read about upcoming and recent changes on the **Releases** page. We'll also email Beacon site administrators about anything that will significantly impact users.

We've also added a **Training** page – but more on that on Page 2.

Gift Aid feature

The volunteer testers on the Beacon team have been very busy testing and retesting the changes to Gift Aid. The multiple improvement requests, a change in the assigned developer, as well as their holidays, have delayed this release.

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Gift Aid feature (continued)

The release to demo sites will be on Wednesday 5 August, with the production release two weeks later. Full support resources will be available, with some essential information for you to understand before you start to use the new settings.

PayPal improvement

If your u3a uses PayPal for online joining and/or renewal, we'll be emailing you very soon with details of the upgraded integration. This gives a far better user experience, so joining or renewing members will no longer be sent through to PayPal but can easily use their debit/credit card without getting lost in a login loop!

The implementation isn't complex, but we'll be doing this gradually, with different u3as being able to move to it at different times, so that we can provide support. Watch out for the email coming soon.

Training

The Beacon User Group provided some fantastic feedback on the support and training resources. We've already begun implementing changes, with more to come. However, one of the key issues raised was awareness of the existing training sessions – many of those surveyed not knowing that they were provided.

The new process, through the website, has been running for a few weeks now and is going really well. People can read a lot more information about the sessions before they decide whether or not to register. This registration is directly with Zoom so they also get the joining information and link immediately. It's also massively cut the admin that the volunteer team has to do.

We'll gradually be adding new dates for the current sessions, as well as some brand new courses, so do encourage your Beacon users to go direct to the website. August and September dates are already there!

Beacon development

Full information is published on the **Releases** page of the website, before developments are deployed. We also push changes to demo sites at least a week before the production release so you can see them there.

This is a summary of the work that is in progress at the moment. However, please note that these are our current plans and priorities may change.

NOW

Release planned: 18/19 August 2026

- Gift Aid improvements
- New PayPal integration*
- Online joining form – improved responsiveness and accessibility

**** Phased release to u3as over multiple weeks.***

NEXT

- Enhanced statistics' report
- Ledger downloads: addition of missing columns eg category
- Improved download/backup process to resolve Cloudflare issues
- Group balance report in main ledger
- New time-period finance reports

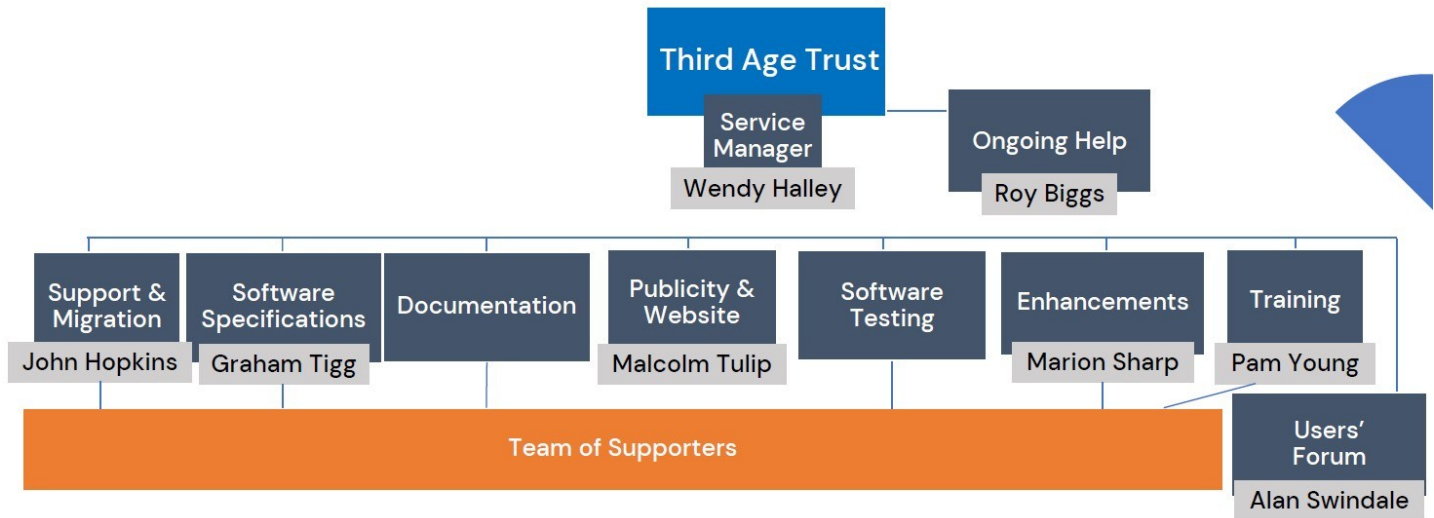
LATER

- Security and compliance updates
- Replacing Streetmap with Google maps
- Transactions: link to multiple groups
- Bug fixes, including send email to venue; improved validation for officers' emails
#LASTRENEW token

BEACON TEAM

Who we are and what we do

Beacon Team Structure



Individuals can have multiple roles and hence be in several Supporter roles

BEACON WEBSITE

Beacon is an on line management system designed by u3as, for u3as. It provides a simple interface for managing members, groups and finances. Beacon is available to all u3as/Networks/Regions in the UK that wish to take advantage of it. More information about Beacon can be found through the link to the website.

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