

**Minutes of Committee Meeting held at the
Laura Trott Centre at 2.00pm on Thursday, 17th October 2024**

Steve Sell (SS) Chair	Christine Luff (CL) Secretary
Stewart Walter (SW2) Vice Chair	Frank Sluter (FS) Groups Coordinator
Christine Folland (CF) Membership Secretary	Malcolm Luff (ML) Committee member
Rob Scott (RS) Treasurer	John Durrant (JD) Events Coordinator
Tony Knight (TK) RUGS Coordinator	Heather Douglas (HD) Committee member
Vanessa Lucas (VL) Website Coordinator	Peter Harris (PH) Committee member
Sue Allum (SA) Speaker Secretary	Brian Peel (BP) Committee member
Andy Smith (AS) Committee Member	

- 1. Apologies:** Stewart Wagstaff
- 2. Minutes of the previous Meeting** held on 19th September 2024 agreed.
- 3. Matters Arising from the Minutes, not being discussed later:**

None

4. Chair’s Report:

Welcome to our October meeting. Given that everything happened in the one week I took off on holiday and this follows our Group Leader’s meeting I will leave Stewart to report on both the u3a Day and September’s meeting.

I have recently received a formal letter from Lewis Cocking thanking me for inviting him to the u3a Day at the Brookfield Centre.

The letter goes on to read ‘Firstly I am sorry that initially everything didn’t run smoothly for you and your fellow members. However, I am pleased that you finally were able to use the space, in the warm, in Tesco’s. I do hope you had lots of interest from local people and your membership will grow.

As I mentioned when we met I believe u3a is an important part of our community and if I can assist in any way in the future, please let me know. I understand you organise Tours to the Palace of Westminster but if you require any assistance with this in the future please email me.

With best wishes to all of your members.’

At the last meeting I mentioned holding another Committee meal in the new year. Do you have any further thoughts on a venue and date?

It was agreed at the meeting that we should schedule the committee meal at The Bulls Head on the evening of Wednesday 5th March.

5. Vice Chair's Report:

Our September meeting was well attended and our speaker Simon Keable-Elliot gave a very well presented and what I personally thought to be a fascinating talk around his grandfather Robert. It was a well-researched story which presented both a personal history and some much broader, little-known stories around the First World War. The meeting again generally ran smoothly although there was an issue with over-staffing of the tea bar and a potential shortage of cups. All well managed in the end and I am sure that we have learned the required lessons. On the Monday morning following the meeting myself and Malcolm attended the LT cafe in the hope of meeting some new members. Unfortunately, no other members turned up, despite it being announced at the meeting. However, I still think we should persist with this for a few more months.

The u3a day at Brookfield proved to be “interesting” and it could be said that we pulled out a victory from the jaws of defeat! Everything went smoothly and we completed the set up in the usual place when Lynn appeared with another gentleman who introduced himself as the “acting site manager”. It seems that the retail outlets employ an external company to manage the outside areas and although we had cleared it with Tesco we had not followed the correct procedure and obtained permission from this company. The site manager produced a form which we should have filled in but hadn't – a communication breakdown on our part. He was adamant that we could not get permission on the day because his boss was on holiday, and he was new in the role and not prepared to use any discretion. As we were dismantling, our new MP, Lewis Cocking turned up and tried to sort things out but was not successful. Thankfully, Lynn got hold of the store manager and he allowed us to set up inside Tesco, in one of the large open spaces available during the refurbishment. This proved to be a much better location, although unfortunately the band The A-Train could not perform. As a result, we had a lot of interest and I believe at least two visitors to the meeting the following day came along after talking to us amongst the frozen pizzas!

Lewis Cocking also offered to attend a meeting to listen to members issues and we should consider offering him and his staff the community table at a future meeting.

Action: It was agreed at the meeting that Steve should reply to Lewis Cocking and invite him to attend the meeting at our community table in January or February. Steve will also send a copy of the u3a day write up published on the national website (Stewart to supply a copy).

6. Business Secretary's Report:

u3a mailings circulated.

Janet will be helping with registration this month as Marilyn is away.

7. Treasurer's report:Monetary Assets as at 15th October 2024

Main Account	£7,428.88
Groups Account (Restricted)	<u>£23,203.54</u>
	£30,632.42
Cash Floats:-	
Membership Secretary	£50.00
Books	£5.00
Cash in hand held by Groups	<u>£2,520.46</u>
	<u>£33,207.88</u>

Over the last month there has been a bit of a slow down in the Receipts and Payments.

Membership fees received were £237.00 with the Square charges amounting to £2.24. A couple of months back I believe that the committee had to go into another room and for this inconvenience we have received £58.97 refund from LT. Group receipts however amounted to £14234.94, while the incidentals were: Puzzles £45.00, refreshments £68.18, Books £68.00 and the raffle £97.40

The payments made were: printing of the September programs £180.00. September speaker £110.00, the ante-room charge for today's meeting £70.79 and Group Payments £10276.79.

I have had notification from the bank that Stewart Walter and Brian Peel are now signatories to the bank accounts, but haven't had any documents for Brian yet.

All Trustees are now entered on to the Charity Commission website and the new people should have had some sort of notification from them.

With regards to the setting up of the Savings Account, I have been in contact with the Charities Aid Foundation Bank and have begun to fill in the application form. There are a couple of details I need from Steve and Christine to complete it and I will get those at the meeting today.

A couple of weeks ago I had a brief discussion with Steve about Brian's role as my shadow. Christine Folland was going to get him on to the Beacon Accounts training course this month, which was an excellent idea, but in order for him to do the role completely he will need to see invoices and make the payments, otherwise the bank statements will be meaningless to him. As we are fast approaching the end of our financial year, I would like to see him in the very near future make the payments and hold the records for everything. The mechanics for this need thinking about and could be quite involved but it should work out.

8. Membership Secretary's Report:

Although Christine was not at last months meeting the membership table was manned by Chris Bolton and Frank and there were quite a few visitors and new members.

Thanks to Christine for a comprehensive demonstration of Beacon at the Group Leaders lunch. A number of the GL's were very engaged and requested access in order to better administer their group members.

9. RUG Co-ordinator's Report:

Following the confusion over the manning of the tea bar last month it was agreed that shared responsibility is not working and that Tony is in charge and will decide the volunteers in the future.

For next months meeting Janet Wallace will help Christine on the registration desk so Barry together with Panni and Anne will be acting as meeters and greeters.

Thanks to Tony for organising the refreshments and the food from Simmons for the GL lunch. Much appreciated and virtually all finished so quantity spot on.

10. Speaker Secretary's Report:

Stewart has spoken at length to this months speaker Martin Orkin to discuss his requirements. He will have slides augmented with musical extracts played from an i-pod. This all seemed OK, but he does require a headset microphone rather than our hand-held mikes. As a result he will bring his own equipment which he is upgrading and hopefully will be adequate. He plans to arrive about 13.30 so there should be plenty of time to set up and test.

11. Group Co-ordinator's Report:

Frank reported that he has not been able to order 2025 u3a diaries, which have now been removed from the u3a website, so it may be that they have been discontinued.

Thanks to Frank for organising the GL lunch for which a total of 42 members attended.

12. Website co-ordinator's Report:

Vanessa reported the website was still working well. In the last 4 months since the revamp there have been 12,000 views with 2,000 visitors. The monthly program page has had the most hits.

Thanks to Vanessa for her presentation of the new website at the GL lunch.

It was suggested that we should try to identify how new members had learned of the u3a. This could be done by including a question on the new membership form. Options perhaps website/word of mouth/other.

Action: Christine F include question on membership form

13. Programme Editor's Report:

For this month's issue we will be back down to 600 copies.

14. Events Co-ordinator's Report:

Noted that the speaker this month requires a small table on the stage and another table to display his books

No community table this month.

Thanks to LT staff for setting up the room for the GL lunch.

15. Any Other Business:

- **Christmas Meeting**

Confirmed for Thursday 12th December.

It is still planned for the A Train to perform a first set of Christmas music, followed by the singing group and then the A Train with more "dance" music.

Details to be finalised at the next committee meeting.

- **IT Update**

Andy reported that he has completed a revision to the entry system so that it will now update automatically from Beacon without his manual intervention. No knowledge of Beacon is required for this.

Andy has also been trialling a self-scanning system on his own table. In the future he is proposing that this could be introduced as an option on the registration desk when only one person is available to help with the registration process.

Action: During the discussion on IT, it was agreed that with the closure of the local bank branches we should aim to move to a cashless system, with GL leaders having access to additional card readers. Some thought needs to be given to how this might be achieved. Add as AOB at the next committee meeting.

- **Gazebo**

Rob reported that he has strained his back moving the u3a gazebo after the u3a day event. He asked if anybody else could store it in the future. Brian agreed that he has space in his garage.

Action: Rob and Brian to liaise to move the gazebo. Note that they should engage additional help so that at least 3 people are doing the lifting.

16. Main Monthly Meeting: 1.30pm on Thursday 24th October 2024

17. Next Committee Meeting: 1.30pm on Thursday 21st November 2024

The meeting closed at 15.40