

**Minutes of Committee Meeting held at the
Laura Trott Centre at 1.30pm on Thursday, 21st November 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
Vanessa Lucas (VL) Website Coordinator	Heather Douglas (HD) Committee member
Sue Allum (SA) Speaker Secretary	Peter Harris (PH) Committee member
Andy Smith (AS) Committee Member	Brian Peel (BP) Committee member
Stewart Wagstaff (SW) Ast Program Editor	

- 1. Apologies:** Tony Knight. Jo Ware attended as an Observer
- 2. Minutes of the previous Meeting** held on 17th October 2024 agreed.
- 3. Matters Arising from the Minutes, not being discussed later:**

None

4. Chair's Report:

Welcome to our November meeting. Our speaker at the October meeting was very interesting, particularly for those members sitting in the front rows. Martin Orkin took us through the days when Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel performed together as Simon & Garfunkel. However, as we feared his sound system was not adequate to cope with the acoustics in the Laura Trott Sports Hall. Martin admitted to this after his talk. As reported at last month's meeting he chose not to use our system because he needed to be able to play the music tracks he had organised as part of his presentation, and he had requested a headset microphone.

I replied to Lewis Cocking's letter as agreed with a copy of the u3a Day Report. I welcomed him to use our Community Table at a future meeting. I received a reply within a couple of days from his Office Manager asking if we would be holding a meeting on 19th December as Lewis would be available then. I replied explaining that our December meeting would be a week earlier and that we have a Christmas party with no tables at this meeting. I suggested that he would be welcome at our meetings in 2025 instead but have yet to hear further.

The East Herts Network have asked if we can supply a list of speakers that we have used in 2024 that we would recommend. Steve Gollop was instrumental in starting this group up during his tenure,

so I do feel that we need to offer our details since the other Network members have already done likewise.

At the meeting Steve also informed the meeting that he had sent in the application to Broxbourne Council for a grant for next year. This is applied as a discount for the hire of council premises (eg Laura Trott for monthly meetings) and with pressure on council budgets it is expected that the size of the grant may well be reduced again.

Action: Sue to provide a list of speakers, with recommendations to the East Herts network.

5. Vice Chair's Report:

Our October meeting was well attended and our speaker Martin Orkin gave an interesting talk about the history of Simon and Garfunkel. Whilst the musical extracts were fine, unfortunately his spoken presentation using his own headset and sound system suffered from the poor acoustics in the sports hall. Following the meeting I investigated our equipment further and found that a box which I thought was for the 2 handheld mikes did actually contain 2 headset mikes and 2 lapel mikes. I have now purchased batteries and an extension cable for this system so will test them out when setting up for the November meeting. If successful the lapel mike would be a good option for speakers who turn away from the stand mike when speaking.

As a member of Hertford u3a I decided to attend their November meeting at the Beam theatre to check out the venue and thinking the talk might be of interest. I must say that I prefer our setup in that there were no tables in the foyer so no chance to meet group leaders in person, no meet and greet as such and everything seemed to be referred to their website or "Contact" which I think is their newsletter. Despite the venue with a professional audio-visual system and technician, the speaker still had problems with the sound and his slides. I felt that overall our Cheshunt format was more welcoming and the opportunity to chat to group leaders was a definite positive.

Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend the Christmas meeting due to a hospital appointment, so will have to leave the sound system setup to Andy.

6. Business Secretary's Report:

u3a mailings circulated and contacts received via website responded to.

Lesley confirmed she is available this month to assist Sue with the Raffle.

A member who attended last month's Volunteers event (held on the same day as our Group Leaders lunch at Laura Trott) passed on a card given to her by 'Age-Friendly Hertfordshire' whose aim is in creating an age-friendly community. Should we offer them a Community Table in the new year?

Also at that meeting was a representative of the Lowewood Centre who may also be interested in a community table.

Action: It was agreed that Christine should contact both parties and offer them space at the community table at future meetings. Dates to be agreed.

7. Treasurer's report:

Monetary Assets as at 18th November 2024

Main Account	£7,198.11
Groups Account (Restricted)	<u>£24,959.54</u>
	£32,157.65
Cash Floats:-	
Membership Secretary	£50.00
Books	£5.00
Cash in hand held by Groups	<u>£2,520.46</u>
	<u>£34,733.11</u>

Not much to report in the first month of our new accounting year. So far I have contacted two members who hadn't paid the correct membership fee again – Val Parker has now changed her standing order, which means she has now corrected last year's shortfall. The other – Mr. Lincoln has also changed his and this will be adjusted in April 2025.

Receipts in November are membership fees £47.50, raffle £138.65 and group receipts £3541.00.

The payments made were: printing of the October programme £156.00 and those for the groups £6303.50.

I just need some information from two group leaders and the accounts for last year will be finalised.

The CAF savings account has run into problems, in that I entered everyone's details on the forms and closed it down without saving it – so have lost everything. Can I ask you all to fill in your details again please?

Although not relevant to this report, I had an email from Fred Acheampong, who is the Finance Officer at National Office. He said they had received £256.41 from Riviera Travel in respect of our member Jill Freeman. She had used them for a holiday and told them she was a Cheshunt u3a member and for this we received this thank you 2 days ago. I had confirmation from Jill that it was correct. Perhaps this could be mentioned from the stage next week?

Action: Details of the possible donations from Riviera Travel to be included in the program. Stewart Walter to provide wording.

8. Membership Secretary's Report:

Last month there were 13 new members and 19 visitors so interest in our u3a remains high. New memberships and renewals for the year beginning April 2025 will be available from February.

Christine is not available to attend either the November or December meetings. For November, Frank and Brian will man the membership table and Christine will set Frank up to take any payments via Square. If there are any problems with connection etc, as a last resort we will accept cash.

There will be no membership table at the December meeting because this is a members only event.

There was then a discussion about non-members "sneaking-in". It was accepted that this did occur on a limited basis. In general John and Malcolm do try to monitor the queue and stop this happening but financially and otherwise this is not of great significance and probably not worth a major confrontation. There was a suggestion to reorganise the entry system to help stop this and this is something that should be looked at for future meetings.

Christine has included a question on the membership form to find out where new members had heard of Cheshunt u3a. It was noted that the poster at Tesco's Brookfield had been removed. We should add a new one at Tesco's both there and at the branch at the pond as well as at Cheshunt Library.

Action: Stewart to print out new posters and distribute.

9. RUG Co-ordinator's Report:

Tony was not able to attend the meeting but had left a telephone message with Steve with the names of 4 RUGs he had arranged for the November meeting. There remained some confusion as to who was manning the tea bar and whether Barry and Janet were required as meeters and greeters. There was considerable discussion around best use of RUGs. It was agreed that we need to encourage as many people as possible to volunteer as RUGs (or in other capacities) and to keep their enthusiasm by making use of them during the meetings.

To ensure clarity in future it was suggested that Tony prepare a rota for the RUGs ideally with at least a 3-month lead time, which can be circulated to the RUGs and key members of the committee (CL, ML, JD). It could be worth setting up a RUG's group in Beacon so that everyone knows exactly who they are, rather than just their first names.

Action: Steve will pass names from Tony to Christine L to contact and confirm for the meeting. SW will contact Barry and Janet and clarify their availability.

10. Speaker Secretary's Report:

This months speakers are Graham and Mary Brace with a talk entitled "Walk on the Wildside in India". They are wildlife photographers and conservationists who give presentations from various countries they have travelled to around the world.

They plan to arrive by 1.30pm, will bring a usb to go on our equipment but will also have their own laptop with them just in case. They will need a table. I have advised them to drive round to the back so could someone ok that with the staff at Laura Trott please.

Action: John to inform LT for access to the back of the sports hall.

11. Group Co-ordinator's Report:

Frank reported that the groups are going well. "Love to Dance" will start in January.

12. Website co-ordinator's Report:

Vanessa reported the website was still working well, with the most "hits" being on the programme page. Details of speakers up to and including May 2025 are on the website.

13. Programme Editor's Report:

For this month's issue we will be again have 600 copies. For the December issue the deadline for content is 3rd December. Contributors should note that this needs to contain information for most of January because the next issue will not be until 23rd January

14. Events Co-ordinator's Report:

Noted that the speakers this month require a table and access to bring equipment through the back door of the sports hall.

No community table this month.

15. Any Other Business:

- **Christmas Meeting**

500 programmes (colour printing for photos)

Proposed timings:

- The A Train require access to bring equipment through the back door of the sports hall from 11.30 (or as soon as possible after this time if sports activities ongoing)
- A Train will perform from doors open (13.30) until 14.10
- Singing for fun group will perform from 14.15 until approximately 14.45
- Raffle 14.50
- A Train will perform a second set from 15.00 to 15.45

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. Peter will liaise with Barry before the event to ensure that there is no duplication and if necessary revise the A Train play list.

Seats will be laid out facing the side wall as in previous years. **No stage is required this year**, which should leave more room for a dance area.

Tea bar will close at 14.15.

John D to liaise with LT to ensure that our parking permits are valid on this date (2nd Thursday not the usual 4th Thursday of the month)

Tony will organise the food. Proposed to have 300 mince pies and 300 stollen slices. Sue will contact Lynn at Tesco to see if they can donate any festive food. If we know what this is beforehand (eg mince pies) then we can reduce the number that we purchase by the appropriate amount.

There will be a table in the LT reception area with any as yet unclaimed membership cards.

Action: Peter, John, Sue and Tony as noted above.

- **Need for 'Cashless system' due to Bank closures**

This was an item raised at the last committee meeting and something that we do need to consider. However, it was not considered something requiring immediate action so was not discussed further. It was pointed out by both Jo and Sue that cash can be paid into the account at the post office, although Rob should be informed by email of any such deposits

- **New Members Welcome**

This was a suggestion raised by Margaret Partridge through Jan Speller on the new members table. It was suggested that we could have a new members table in the cafe ahead of the monthly meeting to chat to new members before they enter the meeting area. During discussion it was pointed out that the café gets very busy before the meetings and there would be difficulties making new members aware of this arrangement (website would be the only option). It was therefore decided that for now we would continue with the Monday morning sessions only. If there are "spare RUGs" available at any particular meeting they could be used to take new members around the tables in the meeting.

- **Stan Turner**

Stewart Wagstaff had been approached by Jan Speller to ask if she could bring Stan Turner to the Christmas meeting. Although no longer a member due to current circumstances, he is one of the original members and a former committee member. It was agreed that he could attend but on the condition that Jan take full responsibility for looking after him

16. Main Monthly Meeting: 1.30pm on Thursday 28th November 2024

17. Next Committee Meeting: 1.30pm on Thursday 16th January 2024

The meeting closed at 15.35