

**Minutes of Committee Meeting held at the
Laura Trott
Centre at 1.30pm on Thursday, 21st August 2025**

Stewart Walter (SW2) Chair	John Durrant (JD) Events Coordinator
Jo Ware (JW) Vice Chair	Heather Douglas (HD) Business Secretary
Stewart Wagstaff (SW) Asst Prog Editor	Vanessa Lucas (VL) WEB Coordinator
Andy Smith (AS) Membership Secretary	Tony Knight (TK) RUGs Coordinator
Rob Scott (RS) Treasurer	Margaret Partridge (MP) Committee member
Brian Peel (BP) Assistant Treasurer	Malcolm Luff (ML) Committee member
Frank Sluter (FS) Groups Coordinator	

- 1. Apologies:** Sue Allum, Peter Harris
- 2. Minutes of the previous Meeting** held on 17 July 2025 agreed.
- 3. Matters Arising from the Minutes**
 - Hearing Loop – Progress still ongoing

4. Chair's Report

I would like to welcome you all to our July committee meeting.

We had a good attendance at our July meeting and the speakers, talking on British and European Wildlife were well received. Thankfully the venue was not as hot as I had feared, given the recent heatwaves. Our new “crackdown” on entry to the hall was effective in limiting the number of people gaining pre-entry without any confrontations. Well done to Malcolm and the team. It was generally agreed that the new entry layout could be improved by Andy's membership table being moved backwards a little way to ease the congestion in the doorway.

A total of 41 people went on the recent coach trip to Newmarket races (with 44 having paid and 3 cancelling at the last moment) and the feedback was very positive with everyone saying how much they enjoyed it. This did entail a fair bit of work by a team of 4 people, but together with our white-water rafting day earlier in the summer shows that there is an appetite for these one-off events outside the usual group activities. If members have any other suggestions then these can be considered, provided people are prepared to step forward and do some work towards the event.

Once again u3a week is scheduled for the last week of September and I have written to and received permission from the management company to use the space outside Tesco's and our new gazebo on Wednesday 24th September. We already have a supply of new member leaflets but also need to increase the print run of our program for the 25th September so we have some copies to hand out. Details will be discussed later under AOB.

The role of minute taking at our meetings remains an issue that needs to be resolved. Although Heather is willing to step in to cover on occasion, understandably she does not want to take this on full time with the workload that she already has as secretary and group leader. Up until our last AGM this was a role that was split out from the secretary and we need to do so again. This will again be discussed further under AOB but a solution needs to be found as a matter of urgency.

5. Vice Chair's Report:

Hello everyone,

200 years ago the first steam train 'Locomotion No.1' took to the tracks on the Stockton and Darlington railway. 1989 saw the invention of the world wide web, the early 90's was dial-up and we were immensely pleased when that was updated to quicker broadband speeds in 2000. Where would we be now without our phones and the internet?

Change can be a good thing and although we need to take our time to process how it works, it's always good to see the upsides and the benefits that it can offer. Not to scream and shout with a defensive vitriolic diatribe which is what happened when I spoke to one group leader about risk assessments and also not to send rude emails when I am trying to help this committee comply with requirements, progress and make things easier and simpler.

When I set up an Outlook email group for our committee, I thought it was just an easier way to send out group emails, without having to keep re-typing everyone's email addresses, just type 'Committee' instead. I was very surprised to see that it also has additional features of file sharing, which will enable all of us to access the risk assessments and any constitution or document updates, and also a calendar feature where upcoming events like the u3a day, BArts events and dates of committee and monthly meetings can be listed. Opting in to this group email, will enable the whole committee to 'sing from the same hymn sheet' and is a progressive step forward. I grant you, not as big an invention as the world wide web or indeed the wheel, but something that we can utilise and embrace.

So, even though change, especially with technology, can be daunting, it can also be a beneficial time and finger tapping saver. Having never had a mobile or email, one of the bowling group, just got his 1st smart phone, specifically for online banking. I think he is still in shock that he got a smart phone, let alone that he now banks online.

Change: safely, slowly and surely as the world is ever evolving and paradoxically; change is constant.

6. Business Secretary's Report:

I have circulated and responded where appropriate to all correspondence. With regard to the BARTS Open House on Friday 31 October I requested a table to give out information etc. for our u3a. As not until the 31 October will roll forward to AOB at the next committee meeting to discuss a rota for manning the table. I will be in the IOW for the next meeting but will produce the Agenda before I go. I can help out at this event and am available all day so jut fit me in on the rota.

BARTS have requested we mention them in our brochure as they are our umbrella group.

I have mentioned to them on several occasions that the Secretary details need to be updated as Christine Luff is still on the website and also receives some emails which she kindly passes to me. Some emails come straight to me. Lee Raynor said the person who updated the website had passed away. I will continue to try to get our details updated.

There is an Arts Café on Sept 16, Oct 21 and 18 Nov which we have been offered to take part in.

Action: The Arts Café was discussed and it was decided to decline the invite. Actions HD to send response re The Arts Café.

Action: VL to look at the website to see if she can sort out the amendments

Action: HD to ask BARTS for short paragraph to put in brochure

7. Treasurer's report

Monetary Assets as at 18th August 2025

Main Account	£	9,258.99
Groups Account (Restricted)	£	22,279.65
		<hr/>
	£	31,538.64
Cash Floats:-		
Membership Secretary	£	50.00
Books	£	5.00
Cash in Hand held by Grps	£	2,520.46
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	£	34,114.10

I have now filed the Annual Return for last year, together with the Trustees' Report, the Accounts and the Independent Examiner's Report. I've also updated the list of Trustees with the Charity Commissioners to reflect the current Committee members.

Money coming into our coffers was : £15137,70 from the various groups, £377.00 from membership fees and visitors, less charges of £3.45 for Square and £69.50 for the raffle. I have yet to pay in last months book receipts and refreshment money.

The money going out was: £17826.70 for the groups, £420 for last month's printing, £65 for the speakers and £209.99 for a new gazebo. There was finally a £15.00 membership refund.

The investment of £7500.00 is still on the "back burner".

In November 2010 I opened our two bank accounts with Lloyds and since then we have never had to pay bank charges. At the beginning of this month I received a letter from them telling me that on 13th November 2025 they will be closing our 2 Treasurers Accounts and opening them as Community Accounts and charging £4.25 per month for each account as well as charging for our day-to-day banking services (no amount yet mentioned), but to help with the they'll give us a 97% discount until November 2026. There are other little sweeteners, such as having 100 free electronic payments per month (which we are unlikely to reach). It will be cheaper to use the self-service immediate deposit machine rather than using the counter, but we don't get any details shown on the bank statements doing that. I need to have a long chat with the to see the way forward.

Action: It was suggested that RS contact the Ware treasurer (and any other u3a treasurers) to see if they are facing the same issues. SW2 & JW will raise this with Ian Matthews from TAT at the East Herts Cluster meeting to be held in September.

8. Membership Secretary's Report

294 attended the last monthly meeting. We now have 767 members, plus 14 new ones. The Short Walks Group has now closed.

ACTION : AS to update members list

9. RUG Coordinator's Report

August Monthly Meeting: Barry and Jan will be on holiday, therefore Panni, Jean and Ann will support on the door.

Group Leaders Meeting – Thursday 16 October

Action: TK will arrange the catering and invite RUGS. Invite Jan Speller to also attend from the New Members Table.

Action: RS to book for meeting room on 16th October from 12 noon.

Action: FS to advise group leaders of the date with an invite to attend.

10. Speaker Secretary's Report

The Speaker for next week is confirmed and will be arriving by train. He will bring his own equipment but will probably use ours as before. His name is Simon Keable-Elliott, and he will be doing a talk on "1920's Tahiti – South Pacific Craze"

11. Group Coordinator's Report

Andy Smith reported that his Short Walks group has ceased due to depleted numbers and to the fact that he has taken over the Membership Secretary role.

Basic French group will start in September. Good numbers and good keen teachers. Both pupils and teachers happy with arrangements: i.e. teachers live in France for the school holidays and return later in the year. Looks promising.

Basic Spanish also starting in September. Leader Paul Lee asking for permanent new leader in program. I'm not confident, but we'll see.

Book club seems to be working. I'm helping Fiona Hill operate this group.

Motown group has great possibilities under Jill Freeman's leadership.

The Community table at the August meeting will be used by the Communities 1st group.

12. Web Coordinator' Report

The website continues to run well.

13. Programme Editors Report

The colour copies for the July meeting were well received. It was suggested that we have 3 colour versions per year. This month we agreed to print 550 copies (B&W) with 50 of these for the U3A day in September.

14. Events Coordinator' Report

JD will be absent at the next monthly meeting but ML is confident that with RUGS he will be able to handle the organisation.

15. Any Other Business

- **Summer Dance Afternoon.** After talking to Tony Tutton his suggestion, based on what they had done for other u3a's (Welwyn & Hatfield is one) was a summer dance on a Saturday evening. Estimated cost £700, look to have 100-150 attendees. A venue needs to be found. Suggestions of Halsey Hall, Cheshunt Park Golf Club, Cheshunt football club and YHA were made and to be investigated. Also ask Ware the venue where they recently held their summer party. SW2 to continue research.
- **u3a Day Wednesday 24 September**

SW2 has received permission from the management company to hold the event in the usual place between Tesco and M&S at Brookfield from 10am-4pm. Set up from 9.30am, closes down at 3.30. BP will supply gazebo to be collected by SW and JD and do a “dry run” to erect it ahead of the event. SW2 will also request 2 tables from LT to be collected on the day by JD.

SW2 ask Peter Harris if A Train want to attend.

Thank you to those who volunteered their time for cover. Please see the confirmed rota below:

TIME	PEOPLE
09.30 – 11.30 (set up)	TK, JD, SW
11.30 – 13.00	HD, MP, JW
13.00 – 14.30	SW, FS, RS
14.30 – 15.30	ML, CL, SW
15.30 Break down	SW, JD

SW2 will write to The Mayor and local MP to see if they are available to come along.

- **Minute taking.** Neither Tracy nor Heather is available for the next committee meeting. Margaret could step in but does not have Word on her computer, only Google docs. Suggestions to borrow the u3a laptop or we purchase a copy of Microsoft office were made, but neither were seen as a good solution. SW2 will make an announcement at the next meeting to call for someone to come forward on a regular basis.

- **Gift Aid**

BP suggested having a separate table (which he can provide) for gift aid at the Monthly Meeting and will arrange a banner.

- **Risk Assessments**

JW reported that she is now approximately a third of the way through completing these and it remains an ongoing project. Malcolm thanked JO for all her efforts and this was echoed by the committee. Well done Jo!

15. Main Monthly Meeting: 1.30 on Thursday 28 August 2025

16. Next Committee Meeting: 1.30 on Thursday 18 September 2025

The meeting closed at 15.45