u3a Cheshunt

Minutes of Committee Meeting held at the Laura Trott Centre at 1.30pm on Thursday 16 April 2026

Stewart Walter (SW2) Chair	**John Durrant (JD) Events Coordinator**
Jo Ware (JW) Vice Chair	**Heather Douglas (HD) Business Secretary**
Frank Sluter (FS) Groups Coordinator	**Malcolm Luff (ML) Committee member**
Stewart Wagstaff (SW) Asst Prog Editor	**Margaret Partridge (MP) Committee member**
Andy Smith (AS) Membership Secretary	**Vanessa Lucas (VL) WEB Coordinator**
Sue Allam (SA) Speaker Secretary	**Brian Peel (BP) Committee Member**
Peter Harris (PA) Committee Member	

1. **Apologies: Tony Knight and Rob Scott**

2. **Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 19 March agreed**.

3. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

   None

4. **Chair's Report:**

   Our meeting in March was probably the busiest ever with well over 300 members attending. There were several challenges in handling the queue outside the hall and those inside queuing to renew their membership and those queuing to pick up membership cards. Whilst most people were polite and courteous I did personally experience two people who were disparaging of the organisation, which was a little disappointing. We should expect a similar number of attendees this month and be prepared to face the same issues. I have agreed with Sharon Justo to trial a new queuing system for entry which I will explain under AOB, and we need to prepare for similar queues at the membership tables and learn from last month. That said, I would thank members of the committee and volunteers for stepping forward to help manage the queues and provide extra "bodies" as required. A special thanks to Andy, Debbie and Linda for getting through the new members queue in time to start the meeting, something that I did not think possible at 14.20.

   We also experienced an unfortunate incident with a member being run over and injured by a mobility scooter whilst attempting to help the driver. This is again something I have discussed with Sharon and will be covered in detail under AOB.

Once the meeting did settle down our speaker, Andy Smith, proved to be entertaining with his narrative and poetry, different to most of our speakers but for which I received positive feedback on the day.

Next week is our AGM and I believe we are well prepared. Once again, we have not received any questions or nominations so I expect the meeting to proceed rapidly as in previous years.

5. **Vice Chair's Report:**

Last month's monthly meeting was a very crowded affair, with many members either renewing their membership or picking up their new membership cards. People were delighted with the new cards, thankyou Andy.

Upon asking, it was explained that group leaders can collect both their membership cards and parking permits before the meeting commences.

Brian's use of the online AI tutorial provided by u3a has been very fortuitous for us as Brian's design for both the Summer Dance tickets and the advertisement going into the monthly programme are splendid, thankyou Brian. It just goes to show how useful and beneficial these online training courses are and that we can all take a look to see if there is anything of interest to us.

It is also beneficial that Stewart Wagstaff was our negotiator at the printers, as I thought that colour Summer dance tickets would be more expensive than the originally quoted coloured card and black writing, but instead Stewart waggled a discount. Well done Stewart.

With regards to risk assessments and the sale of Cheshunt Free Church and the Red Cow, I have started the amendments with regards to location updates. The new group risk assessments are required too.

The East of England area online forum yesterday was hosted by our new area representative; Ian Matthews. I sent you all the forum notes and key points but if there are any questions or anything that you would like to discuss with regards policies, induction and networking etc. we can do that in AOB.

6. **Business Secretary's Report:**

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The Annual Report has to be completed by the end of the month. I will need the member numbers as at 31 March.

As expected, which Stewart has already said, I have not received any questions regarding the reports or nominations for committee members at the AGM.

It has been a relatively quiet month with enquiries all of which I have dealt with or forwarded for information or action.

The most interesting one was the A Train being invited to play at the BARTS Arts café at the Spotlight which Peter followed up.

PH confirmed the A Team will be playing one or more dates which are TBC.

7. Treasurer's report:

Cheshunt u3a

Monetary Values at 14th April 2026

Main Account	£ 5,534.58
Groups Account (Restricted)	£19,186.70
Saffron BS 1 Year Investment Bond	£ 5,000.00
	£ 29,721.28

Cash Floats:

Membership Secretary	£ 50.00
Books	£ 5.00
Cash in Hand held by Groups	£ 6,301.33
	£ 36,077.61

During the last month, we have received £5829 in Membership Fees, less the Square charges of £63.92. Sue paid in £157 for the Raffle and I paid in £20 for Books, £15 for Puzzles and £30.70 for Refreshments. Collectively, the Groups paid in £14,781.90.

I have paid the next quarter rental for the Main Meetings and Bar Area until the end of August at £995.44 and 297.94 respectively. Also, the Beacon annual fee to March 2027 at £860, the March Speaker £120 and the Committee meal (inclusive of pressies for those not attending) £386.25, which is £200 less than last year. Flowers were bought for Pat Bailey who was injured at last month's meeting - £10, and I paid the BARTS subscription of £40. Bank charges this month were £60.18 and then Printing of the March Program, Accounts, Renewal forms etc was £436.80, while the Rubber Stamps that Andy purchased were £73.94. Finally, £21,492.74 was paid out for the Groups.

With regards to our bank closing, it appears that Lloyds have been telling some Group Leaders that they need to have a Debit Card in order to pay cash into the Post Office. I believe this to be incorrect, as Sue can verify. For that reason, I would like to see the new envelopes that we have had printed, as well as the rubber stamps handed out to the GLs at next week's meeting. If the Committee agree, I would like to send out a Beacon message to all concerned letting them know exactly what is happening and how we see the way forward.

Finally, not wishing to step on Brian's toes, he told me that he visited the Ware Banking Hub recently and was told that Lloyds do not accept cheques there either. So that's a non-starter.

HD had trialled using the post office at Goff's Oak to pay in cash and had posted the cheques by tracked delivery at the same time. The cash was paid in relatively easily although the PO said would be easier with a bank card but accepted with the paying in book and stapled a receipt for the cash to the paying in book. It was suggested HD liaise with RS to produce an information sheet for Group Leaders based on her experience by the meeting. SW said the bank envelopes were ready for printing he just needed the address details.

Some stamps/pads with the bank details were given to FS by AS for distribution to Group Leaders who regularly paid in multiple cheques.

Action: FS to distribute stamps/pads and the information sheet at the meeting which is to be produced by HD/RS in time for the meeting. Bank address details to be sent by SW2 to SW to enable printing. Envelopes to be distributed by FS at the meeting.

8. Membership Secretary's Report:

There were 810 members as of the 31 March.

So far 670 members have renewed and a further 191 still to renew. Reminders have been sent out with a good response. Renewals are going well with any problems being resolved. A few have been paid through the bank with no reference which will eventually be resolved.

Some of the sheets with the signatures for the receipt of the card have no membership numbers on them. If we are going to continue asking members to sign for the cards this needs to be addressed but the process is adding to the long queue.

9. RUG Coordinators Report:

TK was not present at the meeting but had said everything was in hand.

10. Speaker Secretary's Report:

Tony Tutton will be arriving at 1 o'clock and will park round the back. He will need a cheque for £125 on the day. He has his own equipment.

11. Group Coordinator's Report:

Not much to report all new groups are going well. The Astronomy Group is starting up. The leader is Denis O'Shea. I will organise a table sign and JW has said he could share her table at the meeting.

12. Web Coordinator' Report:

There have been 10.000 visitors in the last couple of years (5000 a year) and 60,000 views. March had the highest visitors at approximately 500 plus. We are consistently getting 400-500 a month. Less time is now required to update the website as have previously spent a lot of time reducing pictures to go on the site but this no longer needs to be done.

It was discussed that longer term it is necessary to find a volunteer to assist and cover for VL. Preferably one of our new younger members with the skills required.

13. Programme Editors Report:

No issues. 500 hundred copies are required for the monthly meeting.

14. Events Coordinator:

The table layout needs to changed so that the membership and the card collection tables are separate to ease the disruption from the queues. There will be 2 tables for each.

After discussion it was decided to sort out the layout in the hall prior to the April meeting on the day.

15. AOB:

<u>AGM (SW2)</u>

Chairs will be required for Committee members at the front for the AGM. VL to amend the agenda slightly for the brochure to include that we received no questions regarding the Chairman's and Treasurer's annual reports or nominations for new committee members.

Action: VL to amend agenda before brochure printing. JD to arrange chairs

Mobility Scooters and Walkers (SW2)

Following the accident at the last meeting Pat Bailey has been unable to go on her planned holiday to America to visit family. SW2 had a meeting with Sharon at LT to discuss the issue and viewed the CCTV. Sharon concluded that this was a freak accident. There was plenty of room around the scooter and Pat was trying to help the person using the scooter and was unfortunately run over. This was the first incident we have had and have had 84 sessions since 2019 with around 21,000 through door (VL) so just needs more awareness from all members.

There was a discussion and it was decided that an email would be sent to all members reminding them to be aware of members using all kinds of mobility aids. To also suggest those using electric scooters or wheelchairs to switch them off when stationary. Those manning the door will be asked to ensure disabled members have a clear passage in and assist them checking in if appropriate. The brochure would also be amended to include a reference to mobility aids awareness. SW2 will send an email to members informing them of the incident and remind all members how we can all keep safe at meetings with inclusion for everyone.

Action: SW2 to send awareness email to all members.

New Entrance Arrangements (SW2)

Following a meeting between SW2 and Sharon at LT it was decided to trial using the double doors by the bike rack for members to enter the centre at the next meeting, to try to ease the congestion in the reception area. LT staff will be at the door to assist. SW2 will send an email to members from beacon to inform them of the arrangements and include a photo of the doors.

Action: SW2 will send an email to members from beacon regarding the entrance arrangements.

Summer Dance

Thank you to BP for designing the advertisement and tickets for the dance and for SW for getting the tickets printed.

The hall hire cost has had VAT added and also a charge for using the stage so the costs for putting on the event have increased. For the hall hire and band it will be £1732. The cost of the tickets will be £15 with a maximum hall number of 120.

Tickets will be available at the May meeting a maximum for 2 per person. The dance is for members only. Committee members and volunteers will be offered tickets prior to the meeting as it is not possible for them to join a queue. Tickets will be cash only.

Action: Group Leaders to be offered tickets prior to the meeting SW2

Regional Forum Key Points (JW)

JW recently attended the online forum and had previously circulated her notes.

The notes were discussed and it was decided to adopt the u3a national policies for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and also Complaints rather than produce our own. They will be added to the website.

A Standard Financial Policy and External Speaker policy is being debated and formalised at the next u3a council meeting which we will then adopt as ours, as the policies will be a requirement.

The need for a vice chairman was also discussed at the forum as not everyone has them. Ian Matthews has the opinion that the post is not necessary. Our committee decided we have no intention of changing our current arrangement as the post is invaluable to us for cover for the chair and carrying out special projects. It was acknowledged that we are lucky to have a full active committee.

Action: u3a Policies for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and for Complaints to be added to the website VL.

Main Monthly Meeting: 1.30 on 23 April Thursday 2026

Next Committee Meeting: 1.30 on Thursday 21 May 2026

Meeting finished at 3.30pm