Washington Village U3A Committee, Glebe Scout Hut

10.00am – 17th July 2025

Attending: Lyn Bossons, John Edwards(Chair), Helen Edwards, Derek Ginsberg, Catherine Hambley, Tania le Marinel, Ian McIntosh, Richard Mulvey, Jackie Robinson

25.101 Welcome
The Chair welcomed Committee members to the meeting.

25.102 Apologies
Pauline Palmer

25.103 Minutes of the meeting of 19th June 2025 were considered and minor errors being addressed, acceptance was proposed by Derek, seconded by Lyn and approved by all.

25.104 Matters arising

25.76 Business Secretary report
The Charity Commission will require updating with John remaining the main contact and Richard and Jackie providing the required personal contact information to John. Their personal information will not be publicly advertised.
Resolved Action: John to update Charity Commission information

25.78 Speaker Secretary report
Speakers are booked for the next few months. A speaker on Woollies in the North in June, followed by strawberry cream tea in July which will have a choir, refreshments and group activities to finish.
Resolved: Noted that the choir is to commence at 10.30, Helen/John to inform choir of start time.

25.88 Chairs Report
First of all I offer my apologies for missing this meeting. The trip we (Helen and I) are on was booked over 12 months ago. We return on Friday 20th. We've just had a holiday and three trips back to Ireland in the last two months. Now we are away again for a week. Rest assured this is not normal. I feel I still need to assimilate myself properly into the role of Chair. On the Chairs forum the next meeting is on June 17th on the Topic of Chairing a u3a. Meetings are recorded so I will be watching this as soon as it becomes available. This is due to being away. I also have a link to the previous meeting which I will catch up on as soon as practical

for me. I have joined the Facebook u3a Chairs Group.
Resolved: John to notify Northumbria u3a in respect of changes

25.89 Treasurer's Report
Report was noted with the comment that we are in a healthy financial position.
The updated and revised Washington Village u3a Finance Policy was approved and its adoption proposed by Ian McIntosh, seconded by Jackie Robinson and approved by all. John is now the main contact for the Charity Commission.
Resolved: John to clarify Charity Commission contact roles

25.93 July Monthly Meeting
Final catering numbers are still required as are dietary requirements. Partyware to be purchased by Tania. The proposed schedule is:
Enter, with Frank and Pauline both taking an entry register, split alphabetically.
Choir
Catering delivered at 11.15 to be distributed by committee
Various groups to provide a five-minute showcase
Resolved: Pauline to aid Frank with registration
Resolved: John/Helen to provide choir numbers to Tania
Resolved: Tania to confirm final strawberry tea numbers to catering
Resolved: Tania to register our interest with Sheila's Kitchen for Xmas catering. Further information below.

25.94 PR Update
Tania was contacted by u3a UK's Communications Team who wish to write a feature article for 'u3a Matters' about our local network with the other 4 local u3a groups. Tania doesn't have any information on how or when the network was started and Derek is also unsure. Would the WVu3a Chair be able to check this with other network Chairs or is it OK for Tania to contact the Chairs direct to get the relevant information? We also don't have any photographs or images from network meetings which would be needed to accompany the article. There is no date for the article to appear and no hurry for the information.
Resolved: Tania is recommended to speak/email Gloria in respect of clarification of local u3a groups. Further update below

It is also recommended that the annual group leader meeting/lunch be resumed. A basic introduction to the group leader role and to Beacon would be very useful especially for those not conversant with computers. It is suggested that a small working group, led perhaps by John, Helen and Tania could further investigate an October Friday event, using the Scout Hut? It is also suggested that this be followed at a later date by a lunch to acknowledge the contribution of group leader volunteers.
Ongoing action: John, Helen, Lyn and Tania to form a working group to identify a means of updating group leader IT skills which will take place on Thursday 20th November at noon following the monthly meeting
Resolved action: Ian to investigate a pub venue for the group leader's lunch – by agreement, the most cost efficient is the Cross Keys. The lunch will take place at noon on Thursday 16h October following the monthly meeting.

Action: Ian to email group leaders requesting their training requirement for the training session on 20th November.

25.100 Any other business

The designated person (in our case the Business Secretary) or the u3a committee, will review any incident report and determine if further action is required. This might include investigating the incident, taking step to prevent similar incidents in the future, or addressing any insurance claims. An accident took place at the Pickleball group on 4.6.25 and a WVu3a member was injured. Thankfully the member is ok and WVu3a sent some flowers and a get-well card. An incident report was submitted and reviewed by the new Business Secretary as 'designated person'. No further action is required. The Leisure Centre will also have completed their own report and review. In the event of any further action, the Leisure Centre will be informed and asked for any appropriate response at this time, however no further action is expected. Group Leaders are required to complete the template for Incidents which is on the WVu3a website under 'Documents for Group Leaders' at the bottom of the Groups page. All forms need to be returned to the Business Secretary for review and retention.

This incident raised some concerns, chiefly that the privacy/data protection of the individual should be protected as it is the incident rather than the individual which is being investigated. However, in view of the changing nature of group leader activity, a refresher for all group leaders on risk assessment procedures is believed to be essential and should be incorporated into group leader training. The working group comprising of John, Helen and Tania are to review our risk assessment documents and process ensuring it is anonymised.

Ongoing action: John to review any current risk assessments prior to them being sent out to group leaders for comments and approval

25.105 Chair Report

Nothing to report.

25.106 Treasurer's Report

The financial report for June indicates we are in good financial health. Noted that table tennis is in slight deficit but not of concern at the moment with the situation being monitored. Helen clarified the new Beacon Finance Enhancements. Helen attended a zoom meeting on two Beacon enhancements 'Gift Aid' and 'Grant Account Access to Named Users'. Helen believes neither will have a significant impact on our u3a as they appear more useful to large u3as with multiple ledgers rather than our current single ledger.

Action: Helen to circulate the cost of the Strawberry Tea event to the committee

25.107 Business Secretary Report

Tania confirmed she now has card reader and banking access. Nothing else to report.

25.108 Membership Secretary's Report

We now have 266 members. One has been reinstated and one more new member is expected to join next week.

25.109 Speaker Secretary's Report

Speakers are now booked to March 2026. Mea Dean, a singer, has been confirmed for the December meeting. Discussion around the January meeting and in view of Stella commitments have informed the decision that the January 2026 meeting will take place on 8th rather than the 1st January.

25.110 Group Co-ordinator's Report

Currently there are 33 groups. The Comedy and Sketch group is inactive. The Strollers group has been reactivated. The Ukulele group members who took part in the Northern Ukes Festival have been receiving good feedback on their performance.

Action: Helen is to put the video of the Ukelele group performance on to webpage.
Action: Helen to send Tania the link to the video

25.111 PR Update

In relation to the request by the u3a UK's Communication Team who wish to write a feature article for 'u3a Matters' about our local network with the four local u3a groups, Gloria has a lot of information and photographs which she is sorting through and will give feedback to Tania shortly. Tania confirmed that Sheila's Kitchen is now booked for Christmas catering.

25.112 Members Liaison Report

One card sent out this month.

25.113 IT/Website Update

Committee Google account issues have now all been resolved. Problems have largely arisen from accessing Beacon via Apple and Android phones. A number of website pages have now been updated with the amended Finance Policy and the Drawing and Painting Group's Slideshow. Currently we have a page/tab named 'events' on the website which directs visitors to the groups page. Tania requested that we have an additional page 'Contact Us' which could be available for general enquiries from the home page for those scrolling through for the first time.

Action: Helen to establish a 'contact us' page for general enquirers

25.114 Environment Update

May and June were quiet months but July's 'plastic free' initiative, suggesting reducing use of plastic in the home and garden rather than a focus on recycling which has limited impact has been circulated. It is noted that several persons have commented on the April talk from Michael Gallagher and Bill Naylor from Sunderland Climate Action was very helpful and resulted in them making changes to their lifestyle.

25.115 u3a Regional Festival Day May 12th 2026

This event looks interesting and it is likely we could contribute.

Action: John to get in touch with their contact person to discover exactly what would be required/expected before progressing this further.

25.116 Regional and Network Update

There has been no Regional contact recently, therefore nothing to report. The latest discussion was on how to set up a committee which has no useful relevance for us. It has been noted that in general the u3a age profile is lowering, possibly due to earlier retirement etc. With the school summer holidays upon us, members are reminded that children are discouraged from attending u3a activities as we have no insurance cover for them. If required, an advisory email could be sent to the membership, however to date this has not been an issue.

25.117 AOB

(a) Risk Assessments

This will be discussed after further investigation at future committee meetings

(b) Monthly meeting start times

Members should not arrive at monthly meetings before 10.15am as this time is required for volunteers, committee and guest speakers to set up the room and prepare tea and coffees. A member of the committee will be on the doors to prohibit access prior to 10.15 for this reason.

(c) Proposed Filmmaking Group

A recent query in respect of a new film group which is proposed to run in conjunction with an additional external group had to be rejected as it was not conforming to u3a rules. The person querying was referred to another u3a film making group which might be of interest to him.

(d) Podcasts for website

The proposal is that individual members discussing their u3a experiences and group members discussing group activities for posting onto website. The cost of the microphone for this purpose is currently reduced to £79.99 from £120 and is considered a useful purchase as it can also benefit the publicity of the u3a. A Podcast group could also be set up to use the purchase if there are sufficient interested persons. The purchase was unanimously agreed by the Committee.

Action - John to establish interest in a Podcast Creation team.

(d) New committee members

Anne Dodds has expressed an interest in joining the committee and will be invited to attend the committee meetings whenever she is available.