Washington Village U3A Committee

Glebe Scout Hut 10.00am – 18th September 2025

Attending: John Edwards(Chair), Lyn Bossons, Anne Dodds(guest), Helen Edwards, Derek Ginsberg, Catherine Hambley, Ian McIntosh Richard Mulvey, Jackie Robinson

25.134 Welcome
The Chair welcomed Committee members to the meeting.

25.135 Apologies
Tania le Marinel, Pauline Palmer

25.136 Minutes of the meeting of 20th August 2025 were considered and minor errors being addressed, acceptance was proposed by Helen, seconded by Lyn and approved by all.

25.137 Matters arising

25.94 PR Update
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: (note a change of group members) John, Helen, Ian and Lyn 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: Ian to email group leaders requesting their training requirement for the training session on 20th November.

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 sig-

nificant impact on our u3a as they appear more useful to large u3as with multiple ledgers rather than our current single ledger.
Resolved: Helen to circulate the cost of the Strawberry Tea event to the committee

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

25.113 IT/Website Update
Committee Google account issues have now all been resolved. Problems have largely arisen from accessing Beacon via mobile 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.
Resolved: Helen to establish a 'contact us' page for general enquirers

25.115 u3a Regional Festival Day 12 May 2026
This event looks interesting and it is likely we could contribute.
Superceded by an Agenda Item: John to get in touch with their contact person to discover exactly what would be required/expected before progressing this further.

25.117(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
(d) New committee members

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.
Ongoing Action – John to establish interest in a Podcast Creation team. - Two written responses to John's request have been received.

25.124 Business Secretary Report

We are now registered with the u3a portal. Tania found this difficult but did manage and has found that we need an Equality and Diversity policy and Complaints Policy which is available on the site. She has circulated a complaints procedure policy to the committee to discuss.

Voting for Vice Chair of the u3a trust: Tania has emailed all members with the names of the candidates. In the event of equal numbers for both candidates the Chair has a casting vote for our u3a. Discussion by committee members noted that that the voting procedure was felt to be undemocratic due to the trust announcing one candidate

was preferred. The committee felt that Washington Village u3a should formally complain about the voting influence.

Resolved: Tania to contact u3a Trust to formally complain regarding the voting procedure.

25.125 Membership Secretary's Report

We now have 270 members 4 new members were recruited at the last meeting. Richard has also had a request for membership from someone whose father has memory problems and has been refused by another u3a.

Resolved: Richard to contact them to give advice regarding transport and ask them to come along to the next meeting to see if they are comfortable and able to attend meetings either independently or with a carer.

25.126 Speaker Secretary's Report

Jackie has bookings until May next year. Fools Gold approached Jackie with a new performance and has been booked for next April. Our last speaker had contacted Jackie to inform her he had been made very welcome at the meeting. Following the jamming groups performance they are keen to perform at other venues .

Closed: Jackie to consider alternatives if a speaker cannot attend at the last minute

25.129 Treasurer's Report

There was discussion regarding different bank accounts as Lloyds bank is changing our account to a charity account which will have cost implication. After deliberating it was decided to remain with Lloyds and accept the charges. Group leaders are to be asked to check the receipts on the ledger to reduce our paper trail. No further paper receipts will be issued.

Gift aid will be claimed in January

Resolved: Helen to email all members with information regarding the bank charges and group leaders with the changes to receipts .

25.130 Risk Assessments

John has reviewed some risk assessments from other u3a's and will consider developing risk assessments for washington Village u3a

Ongoing action: John to continue to review and develop any risk assessments needed.

25.131 IT/Website Update

Committee Google account issues have now all been resolved. Problems have largely arisen from accessing Beacon via mobile 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. Info for Septembers has been added to the page. Usage is steady two thirds use phones to access information.

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

25.138 Members Liaison Report

One card sent out this month.

25.139 Environment Update

Nothing new to report.

25.140 Business Secretary Report

All members had been emailed asking for votes for Vice Chair of TAT, the majority voting for Sheila Crawley. An email had been sent to TAT registering our protest at the unfair election process for Vice Chair of TAT. A response had been received from u3a CEO, Iain Cassidy, which has been circulated to all committee members. Tania has registered to vote at u3a's forthcoming AGM and will attend the AGM online.

25.141 Membership Secretary's Report

Noted that we now have 281 members.

25.142 Speaker Secretary's Report

Speakers are now booked through till June 2026. A new talk on Heroes and Heroines of the North East and a picture which purchases will aid the RNLI, by Dennis Fox has been proposed for July 2026. Another speaker will promote his books. The u3a accepts this but will not promote it.

Action: Jackie to check how October speaker wants to be paid, by cash or bank transfer

25.143 Group Co-ordinator's Report

- We currently have 33 active groups run by 28 group leaders. 20 acceptances, 5 apologies and 3 non-responses have been noted in relation to the thank you event for group leaders on 16th October. Invitations to the group leader training have elicited 22 acceptances, 3 apologies and 3 non-responses. The numbers are now confirmed for the event. There followed further discussion on the extent of the training and agreed that in order not to overload the group leaders, it will concentrate on Beacon.
- A beginners Tai Chi class in October has 25 confirmed applicants with 11 on the waiting list.
- A new beginners harmonica group will also start in October but have been advised if numbers drop below 5 the class will close.

- Roger Glover had contacted us to set up a u3a film making and editing group and venues to run it. I reached out to ask if I could assist him by informing our membership but have had no response from him.
- Following the success of the Tai Chi demonstration, it is suggested that at the beginning of each monthly meeting, to promote groups, several of our groups could either demo their activities or equipment to the membership. This was discussed at length but without resolution.

25.144 PR Update
Nothing to report.

25.145 Treasurer's Report
Noted that there had been some confusion over carry forward sums from the previous year, however this is now resolved and the original document confirmed as accurate. Noted that all groups were in a healthy position as were u3a funds.

25.146 Risk Assessments
The general feeling is that few u3as use risk assessment documents, preferring to use the risk assessments provided by the various venues we use. John has however obtained some generic versions and will use these as a base for development.

25.147 IT/Website Update
Noted that beginner's harmonica on the website has been reactivated. Noted also that two thirds of those accessing the website do so by mobile phone.

25.148 Regional & Network Update including u3a Day 12th May 2026
There will be a meeting tomorrow of the Network Chairs Group, all but one member is expected to attend. The main topic of conversation on the Chairs Forum appears to be the different venues increasing costs. Noted that there will be a zoom meeting on 19th September about the charges for the Ushaw Hall event in 2026. The inconsistency e exists that this event may be entry charged, whilst the building is still open to the public has been noted. The venue accommodation and timings as well as costs remain uncertain.

25.149 Any other business

(a) Cash for Clubs
Noted that this grant is available for clubs offering sporting activities for over 18s and applications must be submitted by 8th December. We should consider whether we will submit a collective u3a application, or by individual groups for the sum of £2,000 for facilities, equipment, coaching qualifications, activity programmes or something else.
Action: John has reviewed the information required for the application, agreed that this is of interest and John to take it forward.

(b) Christmas meeting
It is agreed that as Sheila's Kitchen has already been booked to provide the food, a charge of £5 per ticket should be made, with the u3a funds supplementing the remainder of the costs. The event is to be publicised at the October meeting.

Action: Tania to design the tickets which should display, time and price. Tickets will be available from November meeting with payment after that meeting being encouraged via BACS.

(c) Washington Village u3a Remembrance Wreath

A remembrance wreath to be laid at the war memorial in Washington Village on Remembrance Sunday had previously been agreed. Ian has now acquired the contact details of the organizer and is to pass them to Helen.

Action: Helen to make contact with the event organizer to order, purchase and identify requirements (ie logo etc) for the wreath.

Action: John to lay the wreath on behalf of the u3a on Remembrance Sunday.