Washington Village U3A Committee

Glebe Scout Hut 10.00am – 16th October 2025

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

25.150 Welcome
The Chair welcomed Committee members to the meeting.

25.151 Apologies
Ann Dodd (guest) Richard Mulvey, Pauline Palmer

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

25.153 Matters arising

25.94 PR Update
It is 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

25.115 u3a Regional Festival Day 12 May 2026
This event looks interesting and it is likely we could contribute.
Closed: 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.
Closed – John to establish interest in a Podcast Creation team. -Two written responses to John's request have been received.

25.130 Risk Assessments
John has reviewed some risk assessments from other u3a's and will consider developing risk assessments for Washington Village u3a
Closed: John to continue to review and develop any risk assessments needed.

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

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.
Closed: John has reviewed the information required for the application, agreed that this is of interest and John to take it forward.
Action: John to make an application in behalf of Washington Village u3a

(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.

Resolved: 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.
Resolved: Helen to make contact with the event organizer to order, purchase and identify requirements (ie logo etc) for the wreath.
Closed: John to lay the wreath on behalf of the u3a on Remembrance Sunday.

25.154 Members Liaison Report
Four cards sent out this month.

25.155 Environment Update
Nothing new to report.

25.156 Business Secretary Report

U3A AGM REPORT – WEDNESDAY, 15TH OCTOBER, 2025
Tania gave feedback on the AGM at the WVu3a meeting on Thursday 16th October and it was agreed that an email will be sent by Tania to u3a UK – either to Jean Cubbin, the u3a Council representative for Northumbria, or to Liz Drury, Director of Communications, asking for clarification on the points highlighted in blue (see below). The AGM lasted 2.5 hours and is now available to view online https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/agm-2025

The AGM was held at 11.00am on Wednesday, 15th October, 2025. Key points included:

- U3a is using a new strapline: "u3a – Be part of something good"
- 350 u3as attended and there was a quorum (online, in attendance or proxied to the CEO)
- The 2024 AGM minutes were approved
- The same auditors as 2024 were approved
- There are now 430,302 members of u3a, up from 350,000 in 2020. Resolution 500k will continue to try and raise membership to 500,000 by 2028
- The second York festival will take place on 1-3 July, 2025
- Communications Report:
  - Free copies of 'u3a Matters' magazine are available for use by all u3as to help with recruitment (I did not know about this)
  - There is a new Publicity Support grant (I did not know about this)
  - There is a new Membership Growth and Community Connections grant to help with recruitment (WVu3a Committee did not know about this)

- All this information has been sent out to the network of u3a PR volunteers (I have not received anything)
- The Communications Department will speak to potential new members who ring up and follow them up to see if they have joined. There is no mechanism to record new members joining at local level (I asked why this wasn't recorded via Membership Secretaries but the question wasn't answered)
- The third part of the Boom Radio advertising campaign will continue (I asked what had been spent on the Boom Radio campaign, how it had been evaluated and how many members had joined as a result but the question wasn't answered)
- Communications is sharing all these conversations with u3as (I don't know where, when or how)

- Financial Report:
  - Income for 2024/5 was £3.4M. 49% from membership and 40% from magazine sales and advertising
  - Expenditure was £3.4M. 48% was on communications (this seems very high?), 17% on operations, 6% on finance, 8% on learning and 16% on advice and information
  - The forecast for 2025/6 will be 45% on communications, 17% on operations and 11% on learning
  - Magazine sales are falling so u3a UK is trying to get that back up. There is a digital version online
  - At the moment members have to opt-in to have the magazine. There was a debate about whether this should be opt-out instead. The new u3a Council will be discussing this issue
  - 718 u3as use Siteworks and 652 use Beacon
- 1015 u3as voted in the election for Vice Chair. Sheila Crawley received 495 votes (81%) and Nick David received 119 votes (19%) (No mention was made about the unfair selection process where Sheila Crawley was put forward by u3a UK as the preferred candidate)
- Report by new Chair, Allan Walmsley
  - The new Chair of the Council has been appointed – Sue Russell. There are 26 members. The Council will:
    - Communicate between u3as and the Trust
    - Focus on recruitment of new members
    - Have three SIGS (Strategy Implementation Groups)
  - A new strategic vision and mission is being developed under the heading: "PROMOTE – SUPPORT – UNITE" with a focus on a positive approach to older life, particularly cognitive, physical and financial. A first draft has been created but there is

more work to do. There will also be a 3-5 year plan on how to do this as apparently 70 is the new 50!

- The average age of members is increasing. In 2019 it was 74, it 1999 it was 72 and in 1989 it was 70. There must be a focus on recruiting younger members. A survey is only done every 10 years
- It is apparent that the u3a is no longer just about learning – it is about community, connection and fun
- u3a is operating in a "positive ageing space" and must partner with other organisations to challenge negative views about ageing and promote positive views about ageing
- The ambition is to get onto as many morning TV show sofas as possible to promote the benefits of joining u3a
- Allan said that it is taking a lot of time to get the Council set up, to decide what the priorities are and what to do next. There have been two in-person meetings plus additional meetings on Zoom. There is no timescale yet as to when any results from these meetings will be shared with u3a members. He asked for patience and understanding while they get themselves organised
- There was an annual satisfaction survey sent out this year and the results will be shared with u3as in November (I didn't know about this and neither did WVu3a Committee)
- U3a must provide opportunities for people who want to volunteer – if only 1% of the u3a's membership are interested in things outside their local u3a then that is 4,000 people and they need to be supported and given opportunities to get involved

- The focus on u3a activity going forward will be the impact on people's lives and the difference the u3a makes to that

25.157 Membership Secretary's Report

Noted that we now have 288 members seven of whom are new this month.

25.158 Speaker Secretary's Report

All speakers booked until June 2026. There has been a request for Boldon Auction as guest speaker from the members, however we have been advised that they are now reluctant to give individual appraisals as part of their presentation.

Action: Jackie to forward to Helen, November speaker's form of payment

25.159 Group Co-ordinator's Report

- We currently have 34 active groups run by 28 group leaders.
- A beginners Tai Chi class which started in October had 31 new members.
- A new beginners harmonica group started in October with 13 members.
- Reading Group 1 has a new group leader.
- A suggestion that group leaders briefly talk about their group at the monthly meetings was accepted, beginning with family history by John and CAMEO by Tania other suggestions include Quiz by Helen and Kurling by Derek in January.

- Group Co-ordinator training had focussed on Beacon and was very informative.

25.160 PR Update
Christmas invitation and the Poppy Wreath has now been organised. Third Age Trust had requested photos of members with no white hair enjoying their activities be forwarded to them to promote u3a as part of their national strategy. The inclusion of Third Age information is agreed to be included on new members table at monthly meeting.

25.161 Treasurer's Report
Noted. We are in a healthy financial situation.

25.162 Risk Assessments
Basic, generic risk assessments had been forwarded to selected group leaders and had been included for information and agreed at the meeting. These will be rolled out to groups over the new few months to use as a template and to be revised as groups change. Noted that all risk assessments should be made in advance of the activity.

25.163 IT/Website Update
Nothing to report.

25.164 Regional & Network Update including u3a Day 12th May 2026

Local u3a Network
John met with the other local chairs. Discussion was mainly on groups and issues around finding Leaders for groups. The perceived age profile within the network was also discussed.

Update on u3a Chairs Forum.
Sue Russell, u3a Council Chair, spoke to the Chairs' Forum to update on the Council's progress and to hear views from Chairs. Participants noted a disconnect between the Trust and local u3as, some saw the same pattern in how the Board and Office relate to the Council. Recruitment to the Council remains a live issue. Several vacancies exist already, and by April 2026 up to eight current members will be completing their terms. References to the Council and the Board often sounded like a 'them and us' situation, rather than two parts of the same organisation working together. Several Chairs reflected on the gap between national policy and the practical realities of running local u3as. Sue Russell agreed, describing flexibility as 'the nature and strength of the movement,' provided legal requirements are met. The Governance Committee has undertaken to review the process used in the recent Vice-Chair Election Process following the negativity created.

In respect of Ushaw Hall in May 2026 a site meeting will take place at Ushaw Hall on 4th November which Derek will attend. This will be followed by a meeting on 7th November. Topics include arrangements and pricing for lunch and day ticket prices. An email will follow. Another meeting will take place in November.

26.165 December 4th Christmas Meeting
Ticket price for members agreed at £5. Jackie and Catherine will sell tickets at November monthly meeting with careful note to be taken of food requirements. Entertainment has been booked; food and drinks and raffle will follow. Food will be served by the committee

as usual. Noted that it should be ensured that tea/coffee volunteers get tickets. Tania has volunteered to bring tablecloths. members will be asked to dress in the Festive spirit.
Action: Tania to confirm numbers to Sheila's Kitchen after this meeting.
Action: John to email members in respect of tickets before the November meeting.
Action: Jackie/Catherine to sell tickets at November meeting.
Action: John to ask Pauline to bring table decorations

25.166 Any other business

(a) December Committee Meeting
10.30 meeting at the Cross Keys, Washington Village followed by lunch at 12.00.

(b) Training Event
Lyn has updated information from two years ago which can be loaded into the laptop.

(c) Kettles
Noted that there were insufficient kettles for last monthly meeting. It is proposed to use our boiler as well as the Stella's. The tea/coffee volunteer mobility difficulties to be monitored next month to establish level of difficulty. It is suggested that our urn be put on as soon as we enter at 10am, though using the pub kettle first to give our urn time to heat sufficiently.
Action: John to ask Pauline if she would observe kettle use at November meeting