Washington Village U3A Committee

Scout Hut 10.00am – 19TH February 2026

Attending: John Edwards(Chair), Lyn Bossons, Derek Ginsberg, Catherine Hambley, Ann Dodds, Helen Edwards, Tania LeMarinel, Jackie Robinson, Richard Mulvey

26.17 Welcome
The Chair welcomed Committee members to the meeting.

26.18 Apologies
Ian McIntosh,

26.19 Minutes of the meeting of 15th January 2026 were considered and minor errors being addressed, acceptance was proposed by Helen, seconded by Lyn and approved by all.

26.20 Matters arising

26.05 January speaker got the timing wrong but otherwise was fine. There had been good feedback from those who spoke to the speaker afterwards for more information. A speaker on the topics of wills, trust and similar legal issues is to be sought from Age UK, possibly combined with another speaker if the talk should be too brief. Beach Clear and Environment speaker is booked in October, this speaker also has links to Paws for Thought.
Ongoing Action: Jackie to pursue a speaker from Age UK on wills; trusts and related legal issues etc.

26.07 To reduce the chance of exceeding £25k groups should use up accrued balances thus reducing new income into groups: at the end of December there was £1,532.52 in group's accrued balances.
Resolved: **Helen to notify Group Leaders to reduce group surplus if possible between now and the end of March.**

26.10 Anne Dodds has now assumed the role of liaison officer.
Resolved: John to email members and announce at next meeting the change of liaison officer.

26.14 • N.B. Powerpoint of groups used during monthly meeting needs to be updated as there have been changes in groups and GLs over the last few months.
Resolved: Lyn to update the slide show

26.15 Regional and Network Update including u3a Day 12th May 2026
Resolved: John to notify Ged his fee will be paid for presenting at u3a day.

26.21 Speaker Secretary report
An issue had arisen where a member had directly approached a speaker and informed them that their first half had been ok but the second half was boring. Members are requested to

report these types of issues to a committee member rather than directly to a speaker. Noted that the same speaker reported that due to the funding raised from the talk, a new water pump and pipework to provide clean water to a village had been purchased. Noted that speakers are now booked through until November this year so no space remained for new speakers during that period.

Action: John to email the membership to advise that disappointing comments of the above type should be reported directly to a committee member and not to the speaker directly.

26.22 Treasurer Report

The monthly account was noted. It is reported that Lloyds Bank had taken the first small transaction fees from the u3a. Alternative banks without fees such as the Co-Op Bank were considered, but as the bank is not local and may change its rules regarding fees it was agreed that as the fees were small, we should continue with Lloyds Bank. Reduced group charges this month had reduced our overall reserves, consequently we should not be required to produce a financial report for the Charity Commission for this year. Noted that we had been unsuccessful in our grant application. Helen was thanked for her examination of the Cestria u3a accounts.

The Treasurer's Forum had three items to consider.

The Oversight of money; All-inclusiveness and Bank Accounts

The possibility of a one annual payment instead of one annual monthly payment and pay as required according to the member's participation was discussed, but considered unwieldy as some members attended only a few groups and others a number of groups, therefore one payment would not suit our members. Our single payment of £12pa was appropriate for monthly meetings including refreshments, Trust membership and magazines and individual subs for groups was believed to be more appropriate. The use of personal accounts, and consequent lack of insurance cover was discussed in the Treasurers Forum. Our processes and accountability of accounts are considered to be robust. The £12 membership fee for next year was proposed by John, seconded by Derek and approved by all.

26.23 Business Secretary Report

Tania accounted her activities and the u3a response from her January questions at the u3a UK AGM in detail to the committee. It is understood however that few of our members had heard of Boom Radio on which u3a UK had funded a publicity campaign. Communications from u3a UK had been poor and lacked detail. Responses that had been received from enquiries were general with little transparency.

Noted that Sunderland Council Links for Life advertising of fitness for the over 50s were targeting those with physical disabilities, not general fitness, therefore no further action was required as our activities are generally included anyway.

26.24 Membership Secretary's Report

We now have 309 members so are slowly growing in size. Noted that one advance payment for next year has been received. Members are to be notified by email not to pay annual fees prior to April also that £12 fees are confirmed for next year.

Following a fall last week, one of the members is still reporting lingering issues, so Richard is writing up an accident report for the incident.

Action: Helen to email membership to advise of 2026-27 fees of £12 and request members not to pay their fees before April.

26.25 Members Liaison Report
Three cards have been sent out. Where group leaders are aware of a situation causing membership absence from group, they could follow up as a courtesy.
Action: Ann to note that when cards are sent out it is suggested that the liaison officer could notify the membership secretary so he can advise the group leader.

26.26 Group Co-ordinator's Report
We currently have 35 active groups with 29 group leaders. Tania has agreed to talk at the next meeting about CAMEO, and Catherine to talk about her committee role. Group leader meeting/training date to be discussed at next committee. There are no free sessions for the jamming group to perform at monthly meetings for some time, however it is suggested that they could perhaps hold an open session whereby members could drop in to their regular meeting slot as a 'Dress Rehearsal' to observe? Or possible performances at Willow Brook, or at other venues such as the Black Bush?

26.27 PR Update
Nothing to Report

26.28 Environment Update
There is to be a possible talk in 2027 in respect of the Environment, but not yet confirmed. The Environment Group has a new Group Leader William Hird who has taken over from Helen Edwards.
Action: Lyn to change Beacon details and access for William

26.29 IT/Website Update
One group leader training received training this month. Website content has been updated. Noted that the majority of access to the website is 78% via the web, with the remainder largely from phones and 7% by referral. Noted that access has perked up since Christmas.

26.30 Regional and Network Update including u3a Day May 12th 2026
Noted that invitations have been circulated for the u3a Day. Derek commented that 121 have now booked from the region, noting that not all u3a's have passed the information on to their membership as they will circulate at the time of their monthly meetings, some of which have not yet taken place. 75 have also booked lunch. Lunch has a capacity of 200 but overall capacity is unlimited.

Derek has also been invited to attend the u3a festival in York to demonstrate kurling, but to date has only received his timetable slot of four hours, the exact requirements are not yet known.

in the Chairs Forum of 19th January there was shared concerns which came through consistently as follows:
• Committee recruitment and succession are a significant concern across u3as of all sizes, with Chairs describing reliance on long-standing volunteers, difficulty filling key roles (particularly chair, treasurer and secretary), and anxiety about stepping down without successors.
• Member engagement and perception were seen as closely linked, with Chairs noting that many members identify primarily with individual interest groups rather than with their u3a as a whole, reducing willingness to support the organisation.
• Public awareness of u3a was widely described as low, with Chairs critical of national messaging that emphasises ‘retirement’ rather than how potential members see themselves.

• Age arose mainly in relation to perception, with Chairs noting that how u3a looks – especially whether there is visible evidence of activity and energy – strongly shapes expectations of u3a and whether people see themselves as potential contributors rather than just attendees.
The meeting did not establish whether these shared issues are more severe, occur more frequently, or are harder to resolve in smaller or rural u3as than in larger ones. That question of difference in extent rather than difference in kind remains open.

26.31 AGM
Nomination forms will be circulated in March to all and must be returned by April meeting. Committee members are largely continuing in their present roles with only Catherine leaving the committee. A requirement for shadow roles is pressing, and committee members urged to seek likely candidates to join the committee. All members are welcome to observe and join the committee. It is noted that members require at least three weeks' notice of AGM.
Action: Tania to email documentation and to notify membership of AGM, giving three weeks notice

26.32 Any other business

(a) Jamming Group
A possible ticketed social evening is being considered for the end of September, possibly at North Biddick Club; the Westwood, or the Stella which could showcase some of our groups such as the jamming group, the line dancers or the Uke group. This item will return to the agenda next month for greater consideration.

(b) Beacon Enhancements
Group leader access to postal addresses of members is part of the recent refinements. This topic was considered in detail but believed not to be of sufficient relevance for group leaders so was agreed to leave as per current arrangement.

(c) Bowes Museum
Tania commented that CAMEO are arranging a visit to an art exhibition at Bowes Museum and queried whether a risk assessment was required. She was advised to contact Pauline Palmer who is arranging another day trip to Bowes now.
Action: Tania to contact Pauline Palmer in respect of Bowes risk assessment