

Minutes of the committee meeting on 12 September 2025 10:00am in Ashford

<u>Agenda</u>	<u>Actions</u>
1. <u>Welcome and apologies</u> Present: Ellie Brooks (Vice Chair), Heather Jackson, Denise McCoy, John McCoy. Apologies: Carol Fowler (Chair), Sara Miller and Ponda Thomas. a. Ellie welcomed everyone to the meeting. b. A card from Paulin thanking the committee for her leaving gift and card was shared. c. Sue had sent a thank you message to the committee for her leaving gift and for their service and support.	
2. <u>Minutes of the previous meeting</u> a. The minutes were accepted as a true record.	
3. <u>Matters arising</u> a. Ellie wrote to all Sandwich members to ask about a lift for a member who was having difficulty getting to talks and other activities. The member has now been put in touch with several people who are able to provide lifts. b. Ellie has updated the lists of Dover and Sandwich members. It was agreed that, as Membership Secretary, Ponda should be asked to maintain the lists, which are kept in the groups section on Beacon under 'Z Dover Members' and 'Z Sandwich Members'.	b. Ponda
4. <u>New committee</u> a. The TAT run online training courses for new committee members, which can be accessed here (with a TAT login). All committee members are recommended to attend the course on governance. b. It was agreed that the committee can use email addresses openly for communication within the committee (i.e. without using bcc). However, emails to groups or all members should go from Beacon. John will draft an 'email etiquette' for consideration in a future meeting. c. The constitution had been circulated to committee members for familiarisation.	b. John
5. <u>Finance</u> a. Sue Edwards had previously signed off the July accounts and Ellie signed off the August accounts and confirmed that Beacon matches the bank statement. b. John explained that there are two aspects to the bank account, one is the 'high street' access, i.e. 'the mandate' and the other is online banking. c. The signatories on the online banking are appropriate for the time being. d. The committee agreed that only John McCoy (Treasurer), Eleanor Brooks (Vice Chair), Val Tierney (outgoing Treasurer) and Mary Venables (former Secretary) should be on the mandate, and any other signatories should be removed. e. The committee agreed that, in due course (once the transition period is over) Val Tierney should be removed from the bank mandate and be replaced by Carol Fowler	d. John e. John

c. Backgammon only has a small number of members so far. Heather will further publicise this group and consider offering it as separate groups for the Autumn and Spring terms. d. Heather will include a group's 3 letter code in its group name for as many as possible, prioritising those for which a fee is charged, to support the reconciliation of accounts.	c. Heather d. Heather
9. <u>Secretary</u> a. It was agreed that Denise will remove Paulin, Sue and Bill as Trustees from the Charity Commission site. b. Denise had updated the committee's details on the Third Age Trust site. c. John will work with Ponda on setting up a WCC u3a address to be used on the public-facing national u3a 'Join a u3a' website. d. Bill provides the TAT with regular updates on membership numbers on request. John will work with Bill on this to agree the best process going forward. e. John will edit the committee contact page on the WCC u3a website to include Vice Chair and to remove unnecessary roles for the time being. f. Denise will circulate information about the TAT AGM to see which committee member(s) would like to attend and to ensure someone is registered to vote. g. It was agreed, as per the request at the AGM, that any documents sent out to members should be in <u>accessible</u> pdf format and not Word. Denise to draw this to the attention of the committee. h. The asset register was reviewed, and no changes are necessary at the moment. i. It was agreed that time should be set aside by the committee to look through the contents of the WCC u3a storage cupboard in Golf Road Centre.	a. Denise c. John d. John e. John f. Denise g. Denise i. Denise
10. <u>Scarecrow competition</u> a. A group has now been set up and Ponda has been linking in with them. Ponda and Anne were thanked for taking this forward.	
11. <u>IT/website</u> a. It was noted that, if committee members have WCC u3a email addresses, these can be set up to forward to a personal email if desired. b. John will follow up with Bill about setting up generic WCC u3a email addresses. c. Heather will manage the list of group venues held in Beacon and update the Group Coordinator Job Description accordingly. d. A WCC u3a member (PH) works professionally in IT and will be meeting with Bill and Mary in October to see whether he would be prepared to take on the management of the WCC u3a website and Beacon. e. The discussion about AI was postponed until a future meeting. f. The support on IT offered to members comprises (these may be shared on the website in due course): i. The sharing of contact details of a WCC u3a member (JW) who may be able to help with a home visit for support with IT ii. Regular drop-in sessions held by Bill and Mary iii. Digital Kent, which provides free IT support. They have hubs in Sandwich, Dover and Aylesham. Contact details: email: digitalhubs@kent.gov.uk phone: 03000 410 950 website: https://www.digitalkent.uk/ g. John will update the news page on the WCC u3a website. h. It was noted that John now has admin rights for Beacon.	b. John c. Heather e. Denise g. John
12. <u>Network and TAT updates</u> a. Ellie explained that u3as are independent charities, but they do need to operate within the confines of the agreed constitution. b. The Third Age Trust is an umbrella organisation. U3as make a payment to them for which they provide support, such as organising insurance, providing the master website, arranging group rates on licensing, etc. c. There is a Council of elected members from u3as (which is relatively new).	

d. There are geographic regions which largely deal with communication within the region. e. Networks are not part of the formal structure of the u3a and are voluntary organisations. There is a network of all the u3as in Kent. It is useful for a member of the committee to attend Network meetings. Within the Kent Network there are peer to peer groups for Chairs, Treasurers, Secretaries and other committee roles. f. There is a general information email address at TAT for queries. g. The SER network contact is Sally Ingledew. h. There is a SER Network meeting on 17 September. Denise will find out the time and agenda and send to Ellie who will see if she can attend. (<i>Post-meeting update: WCC u3a is represented on the SERN by the Kent Network</i>). i. Treasurers receive additional support through the TAT. j. WCC u3a should have a voting representative at the TAT. k. Within the SER there is an annual summer school, which is held in Chichester. There is currently an opportunity for a Kent representative to assist with governance of the summer school, if anyone would like to volunteer. l. There is a Kent Network website. m. Mary is the Beacon administrator for the Kent Network and Denise will formally inform her of the new committee members: to include name, email and role.	h. Denise m. Denise
13. <u>Update from the Trips team</u> a. A new tracking template, as recommended for audit purposes, is now in place. b. There are only 2 places remaining on the Ightham Mote trip. c. The next trip will be arranged for the Spring.	
14. <u>Evaluation of AGM</u> a. It was felt that the atmosphere was positive and supportive. b. The meeting felt well organised and efficient. c. The committee agreed that it had been helpful to ask for questions in advance of the meeting, which gave time to prepare considered answers, but it was also good for members to have the opportunity to ask questions on the day. d. The final agreed minutes of the 2024 AGM will be put on the website, but the signatures of the Chair and Secretary will not be visible. e. The draft minutes of the 2025 AGM will be put on the website, watermarked as 'Draft', once all feedback from the committee has been incorporated. f. John will check whether the room has been booked for the 2026 AGM and for the talks on the first Wednesday of the month from 13:30 to 15:30.	d. Denise e. Denise f. John
15. <u>AOB</u> a. John will complete the Charity Commission annual report and seek help from Ellie if needed. b. In the light of the fees for using PayPal, a new policy for payments was agreed. When payments are being requested from members, BACS should be the first option, followed by PayPal and then the option to pay by cheque. BACS payment references should be Membership Number and Group/Trip code. c. It was the view of the meeting that the committee has the authority to increase membership fees if needed, as outlined in the AGM. Jacqui Dodds had raised the concern as to whether this could be done without a formal general meeting. (<i>Post-meeting update: Jacqui is now comfortable that a general meeting is not required.</i>)	a. John c. John
16. <u>Next meeting</u> a. Friday 10 October, 10:00-12:00, at Golf Road Centre, in the Small Hall.	