

Minutes of the committee meeting on 13 March 2026 10:00am, Golf Road Centre

<u>Agenda</u>	<u>Actions</u>
1. <u>Welcome and apologies</u> Present: Carol Fowler (Chair), Denise McCoy, John McCoy, Sara Miller, Jan Poynter, Ponda Thomas and Heather Jackson (items 1, 2 and part of 3 only). Apologies: Ellie Brooks. Carol welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2. <u>Minutes of the previous meeting</u> a. The minutes were accepted as a true record.	
3. <u>Groups update</u> a. Heather reported that a number of groups are ready or nearly ready to start in April. b. Group Leaders who have had recent contact with Heather have confirmed that they are aware that Jan is taking over as Group Coordinator. c. Heather will forward emails with updates about groups or with unresolved issues to Jan as soon as possible. d. Heather resigned from the committee with immediate effect. Carol and the rest of the committee thanked Heather for all the work that she had done. e. Heather was requested to delete any personal identifiable information that she has about u3a members now she no longer has a 'legitimate interest', in order to comply with data protection and GDPR legislation, and she agreed to do this. f. Jan will be meeting with Bill on 20 March to look at developments with managing groups in Beacon. g. Heather clarified that she would like the opportunity to apply for a role on a WCC u3a future committee and then left the meeting. h. It was agreed that risk assessments in Group Leaders' homes will be addressed in the planned Group Leaders' forum and that risk assessments will be kept as simple checklists.	c. HJ e. HJ
4. <u>Matters arising</u> a. The committee agreed to continue to use the action list as a tool to monitor actions. A new process for classifying deadlines will be adopted: 1. Within a week 2. By the next meeting 3. Longer term, ongoing or tbc. Committee members committed to updating Denise with progress. b. Carol will review Heather's outstanding actions.	b. CF
5. <u>Committee</u> a. The committee meeting to review role descriptions will be held on Friday 20 March at 9:30am in Carol's house. (Sara has given her apologies). The updates to the Chair and Talks Coordinator role descriptions will be reviewed and the role descriptions for Treasurer,	

Membership Secretary and Groups Coordinator will be discussed. Jan to draft WCC role description for Groups Coordinator.	a. JP
6. Finance a. Carol signed off the February accounts and confirmed that Beacon matches the bank statement. b. John reported that the forecast suggests that WCC u3a will spend around £2,000 more than raised in income this financial year. The increase in membership fee agreed in the previous meeting will help WCC u3a comply with the Charity Commission rules around sufficient financial reserves in 2026/7. The membership fee will also need to be reviewed next year in the light of the financial position and level of reserves at the time. c. John reported that Jacqui Dodds has agreed to inspect the accounts. The committee thanked Jacqui for this important role. d. As has been previously agreed, in accordance with our current Finance Policy, John will ensure only John McCoy, Carol Fowler and Ponda Thomas are on the bank mandate. John has visited a NatWest local branch to try to move forward with updating the bank mandate. The issue has now been escalated and a case handler appointed. e. John reported that he has investigated accounts with higher interest rates and found that there are potentially rates of up to 4% available. However, there can be specific conditions associated with realising the higher rates of interest (requirement for dual access and longer notice periods for withdrawals) and the potential return would be low. It was agreed not to take this further at this point in time. f. John reported that Carol has not yet been added to the PayPal account. g. TAT have issued new guidelines about u3as claiming Gift Aid. They suggest that it is necessary to make clear the amount of the total cost that will be claimed at the point of members signing up for Gift Aid, which could be challenging. John intends to review the HMRC guidelines further and has a query with the u3a Treasurers' FB forum on the subject. John and Ponda will update the wording regarding Gift Aid ready for membership renewal time for approval. h. John had circulated a draft finance policy, which was unanimously agreed and will be uploaded to the website. i. John had circulated a draft budget for 2026/7, which was unanimously agreed. j. Jan is looking at the finances of groups, with the aim of groups breaking even in the future.	g. JM g. JM/JP
7. Membership a. Jan will develop a list of groups that have spaces before each new membership meeting, this will be added to Carol's presentation. b. It was decided that the addresses of those attending talks are no longer needed for the analysis of the spread of attendees. c. The talk at the Astor on AI on Friday 20 February was attended by 100 members and two guests. d. The talk at the Astor on 'Kent in the 19th Century' was attended by 102 members. e. There are currently 494 members, up from 488 last month. f. On 1 April, Ponda plans to send out the email to members about membership renewal. g. Ponda will add a link to the Beacon guide that Bill produced to the welcome email to new members. h. Two members have agreed to support Ponda in calling members who have difficulty updating their membership online. This will provide first line support and details will pass to others with the knowledge to help further. Several committee members also volunteered to help. i. Bill and Mary Venables and Philip Healey held an IT drop-in session, including supporting members in the use of Beacon to renew membership. It was noted that often the problems experienced seem to be issues with PayPal and not Beacon itself. j. The next new members' meeting is on 19 June at 11am in Sholden Village Hall. k. The visit from two members of the TAT communications team on 9 March went very well and they would like to keep in contact. After a successful lunch, they joined the Women in Society and History group. They made videos and undertook interviews which will be used	a. JP g. PT

in national communications. They were very interested in the significant increase in our membership, and Ponda has provided them with information on the actions that she has taken to increase membership. Carol informed them of some of our other initiatives for members including our quarterly newsletter, and they requested copied. They have accepted an invitation to the WCC u3a 30th anniversary celebration.	
8. <u>Talks</u> a. Sara reported that talks up until February 2027 are planned. Two of the talks would cost £155 which is above the pre-agreed cost of £150 per talk. It was agreed that the two talks could be booked. These costs are offset by other talks that are free or have a minimal cost. b. Sara has been investigating venues in Dover, including Maison Dieu, the Hilton and Riverside. It was agreed that Sara should book Riverside for the afternoon of Tuesday 31 March for a Coffee/Tea Afternoon gathering. Sara will confirm the costs and then send an email to members, and this will be added to the website events page. c. The suggestion box is now in use and two suggestions for talks have been received, after discussion, Sara will respond to the members who made the suggestions. d. It was agreed that Sara will arrange a talk on beekeeping in the Dover area. e. It was agreed that the offer of a talk and exhibition on women's mental health was not appropriate for the talks programme at this point in time, but that the SER welfare guidance should be awaited. Sara will inform the person who made the offer. f. Carol will discuss the options for offering hybrid Zoom and in-person talks and the AGM with staff at the Astor. It was noted that, if we are given permission by a speaker, the committee could use one of their own laptops with Zoom to enable this facility, but a license would be needed and the functionality would need to be tested before going live. Carol will with discuss with Russell how this works in Guildford u3a which already holds hybrid meetings.	b. SM c. SM d. SM e. SM f. CF
9. <u>Secretary</u> a. Carol and Denise have developed a draft Disciplinary Procedure, Complaints Procedure and Code of Conduct, which will be circulated to the committee for comment by Friday 20 March. b. Carol and Denise will be meeting on 23 March to continue the work to review policies.	a. DM
10. <u>IT/website</u> a. Bill and Mary Venables and Philip Healey held a very successful drop-in session on 9 March at The Landmark in Deal. The event was well attended. Carol has sent thanks to Bill, Mary and Philip for running the drop-in session. Carol will discuss future arrangements with Bill, Mary and Philip.	a. CF
12. <u>Network and TAT updates</u> a. Carol and Denise will be attending a Kent Network Trustee Day on 17 March and will feed back.	b. DM & CF
13. <u>Trips</u> a. Carol confirmed that two VIP guests have accepted the invitation to the 30th anniversary celebration on 4 August. They would also be delighted to be honorary members of WCC u3a. Carol is arranging a framed certificate. Carol will look into booking minibuses for some members for the event. b. Carol has made all the arrangements for the trip to Belmont House and Faversham on 13 May. John has created the draft booking form for the trip. Carol awaits confirmation of the one course lunch menu. Bookings will open following the Trips Process in a couple of weeks' time.	a. CF
14. <u>AOB</u> a. A member in Dover has advised the committee not to hand-deliver information to their flat due to access issues, but to use Royal Mail. In spite of Carol emphasising that there is no need, they have insisted on providing stamps.	

b. Carol will put together a letter for members with no email that summarises communication that has recently been emailed out to members. c. Ellie has requested to be removed as a Trustee due to commitments in her new area and can therefore no longer be on the committee. We thank Ellie for her support and contribution to this committee and wish her well and enjoyment at her new u3a in Oxfordshire.	b. CF
15. <u>Next meeting</u> Next meeting Friday 10 April at 10:00am in Golf Road Centre, Small Hall. Apologies from Sara.	