

Minutes of the committee meeting on 10 April 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, Jan Poynter and Ponda Thomas. Apologies: Sara Miller. 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>Matters arising</u> a. The actions log was discussed and updated.	
4. <u>Committee</u> a. Role descriptions for all roles except Talks Coordinator have been finalised and it was agreed that they should be uploaded onto the website. Denise will amend the points on IT skills to add “as required” and “or equivalent”. Carol will discuss with Sara whether she would like a further meeting or if she is happy with the Talks Coordinator role description. b. A number of WCC policies and associated documents have been updated and were agreed by the committee (Communication, Complaints, Disciplinary, EDI, Health and Safety, Incident report form, Member Code of Conduct, Safeguarding, Safeguarding checklist, Trustee Code of Conduct and the Trustee Welcome Pack [and Financial Policy agreed in March meeting]). Denise will upload them to the website. c. The non-email member communication process was reviewed. The committee agreed to continue sending information by post for the time being. Non-urgent information should be included in the quarterly newsletter and any other non-time critical correspondence should be coordinated by committee members and sent together to save on postage. Time critical information will be communicated by phone. It was agreed to contact non-email members to find out their preferred choice of communication, such as by text, or via a “buddy”, post or other means. John offered to take on this task and report back at the next meeting. d. A partially sighted member was concerned that they were not up to date with WCC u3a news and information. John spoke to the member to reassure them that they are being sent updates by post and, more recently, in large font, and would be phoned about time critical information. Sara had also offered to talk to them from time to time to check that the arrangements are working.	a. DM CF b. DM c. JM
5. <u>Finance</u> a. Carol signed off the March accounts and confirmed that Beacon matches the bank statement. b. John had previously circulated the draft year-end accounts to the committee and reported our year-end position to be in line with his forecasts, with an underlying position that we have spent around £2,000 more than received in income. Our use of a “cash accounting” rather than “accruals-based” system clouds the issue and the year-end report for the AGM	

will cover this in more detail. John will also explore the potential implications and practicalities of switching to an accruals-based accounting system. c. Jacqui Dodds is meeting with John to arrange inspection of the accounts in early May. d. The bank mandate and “Bankline” access are now fully set up for Carol, John and Ponda. e. John is writing a letter of complaint to the bank because of the poor service when updating bank access. f. John reminded everyone that it is a requirement of the financial policy that all expense claims are accompanied by receipts or reasonable proof of expenditure for inspection and audit purposes. g. Jan has now signed the booking agreement with Sholden Village Hall. h. The process and guidance for u3as to claim Gift Aid (GA) remains unclear. One of the issues is identifying whether joint membership has been paid by a joint or individual's account, as the former would be claimable but not the latter (subject to the members' agreement). Another challenge is that not all taxpaying members appear to have ticked the GA box but may be happy to agree to GA. Carol suggested, and it was agreed, that we continue to research and review, and that GA should be included in the financial statement for the 2026 AGM and a further explanation should be raised at the meeting. John will produce a plan to share with the committee.	h. JM
6. <u>Membership</u> a. There are currently 502 members, up from 494 last month. There were 500 members at the end of 2025/6 on 31 March. b. Ponda sent out the email to members about membership renewal on 1 April. c. So far, 168 members have renewed and six have notified Ponda that they will not be renewing (due to moving away, being unable to attend activities, etc). d. A greater proportion of members have renewed using PayPal than at this point last year. e. It was noted that membership renewal has gone more smoothly than last year, and it was felt this was due to a number of reasons including better email and other communication, the drop-in session held by Bill, Mary and Philip, the video that Bill had produced and Carol's reinforcement of the process at talks. f. Ponda plans to send out a further membership renewal email on 1 May. g. Ponda was congratulated on the success of the membership renewal process so far and thanked for all her work to make the process run smoothly.	f. PT
8. <u>Talks</u> a. The afternoon tea this month at Riverside in Dover was well attended with 18 members and two guests. Members were very pleased to have an event in the Dover area and would like more activities there. One or two members came forward with suggestions and to volunteer to lead a group. Bill and Mary have volunteered to run a quiz in Dover. b. Sara is looking into holding a talk in Dover, preferably at Riverside, which is a good venue. c. The talk on 1 April in the Astor on Lord Douro's Secret Daughter was attended by 74 members and one guest. d. Carol has investigated what would be involved in holding a hybrid event using Zoom. There are various levels available for a Zoom contract and licence, depending on the number of expected attendees, amount of storage and other facilities required. e. Carol has also spoken to the member of Guildford u3a where they have used Zoom for some hybrid groups and an AGM. They have advised that equipment would be needed, such as a large screen, conference microphone and soundbar. It was agreed to investigate the viability of holding a hybrid AGM, but to run a trial for a talk or other event with some members of the committee joining remotely via Zoom. Carol will contact Bill Venables for comment and assistance. The Astor has confirmed their audio facility will work with a Zoom session. Carol will arrange a meeting at the Astor to review facilities and process. John will seek a temporary trial of a Zoom licence. It was further agreed that a test run would need to be booked with the Astor, probably at a Talks afternoon, before going live at the AGM. f. Carol will request the use of the gallery at the Astor for the AGM. g. Carol will check with Sevenoaks u3a whether the session on AI in June will be recorded.	e. CF e. JM f. CF g. CF

9. <u>Groups update</u> a. Jan reported that there are still spaces in the groups that were opened to members at the beginning of April. There also remain spaces in several other groups. b. Jan has been receiving queries from Group Leaders who need help to manage their groups because they do not have the functionality to do it themselves in Beacon. She is exploring their Beacon access with Bill to see if it is possible/desirable for them to have more functionality. Jan will also contact other u3as to see if there is anything to be learnt from them. c. A Group Leaders' Forum is planned for Friday 15 May in the meeting room at the Astor. The agenda will include introductions, venues, Beacon, succession planning, risk assessments for homes, ideas for inclusion in a Group Leaders' Handbook and ideas for new groups. Denise will send Jan the most up to date WCC risk checklist for groups held in members' homes. Carol will assist Jan. d. Jan is looking into holding a meeting for potential new Group Leaders following the next New Members' meeting in June.	b. JP c. DM c. JP & CF
10. <u>Secretary</u> a. Denise requested material for the May newsletter by 30 April, including Chair's report (Carol), Membership update (Ponda), Groups update (Jan), Gentle Explorers trip (Carol), Trips and 30th Anniversary (Carol) and IT update (Carol to request from Bill and Mary). b. It was agreed to publish the newsletter as a separate page on the website so that the access statistics can be reviewed. c. Denise had received an email from a residential home in Dover offering the use of a lounge, garden and bistro for events. Denise to find out how many people could be accommodated, the cost and the availability of parking. It was noted that it would need to be clear that only u3a members could attend a group held on the premises. d. We have been advised that a supermarket in Dover may have a meeting room they allow external groups to use. Denise to explore and, if so, establish how many it would hold and if there is a cost involved.	a. CF & PT & JP c. DM d. DM
10. <u>IT/website</u> a. Bill had run a training workshop on the website for Carol, Jan and Sara, which was very helpful. All committee members are now able to update our website as originally designed. b. Bill, Mary and Philip would be happy to run another IT drop-in session for members when needed and it was agreed that there would be a need prior to the release of groups in the summer.	
12. <u>Network and TAT updates</u> a. Carol and Denise reported back from the Kent Network Trustee Day on 17 March. It had been useful to meet with people from other u3as and to share experiences. It was a good opportunity to give feedback to TAT about the support that u3as need. b. At the event, it was announced that SE Region are developing PR/media guidelines and a meeting of publicity representatives from u3as is planned. Denise to update the contact for publicity on the TAT site to Carol. Ponda is happy to post on a variety of Facebook groups and Mary is currently the administrator for the WCC u3a Facebook group.	b. DM
13. <u>Trips</u> a. Carol and John had undertaken a transport survey for the 30th anniversary celebration and Carol had also investigated the cost of running a shuttle minibus from Borrow Pit carpark to the Golf Club. It was agreed that the number of members who would make use of the minibus service would not warrant it, neither would it be economically viable. Several members would be happy to give lifts to members that they already know to ease the parking situation, and a few members would also be happy to share their contact details with other members to arrange lifts. It would be the responsibility of individuals to make the arrangements and WCC u3a would not be involved in the organisation. b. The trip to Belmont House and Faversham is fully booked with 48 members and five reserves. Carol has created the attendee list for registration on the day and the menu	

choices for the Red Lion pub where members will have lunch. Carol has confirmed the arrangements with Belmont House, the Red Lion and the Faversham Society. c. Carol is progressing the arrangements for the next trip and the "Save the Date" will be sent out soon.	c. CF
14. <u>AOB</u> a. Actions following the death of a member were discussed. Carol had contacted other u3as to find out what processes they use, which vary considerably. It was decided that Group Leaders should be encouraged to inform the committee if they hear of the death of a member, Ponda would change the member's status on Beacon and Denise would organise a sympathy card for the next of kin on behalf of the committee. If there are special circumstances, then variations from this process would be considered on a case-by-case basis. b. The theme for the Walmer Castle Scarecrow Competition this year will be "Myths and Legends". Scarecrows are to be limited in size and there will be a new children's entry section for schools and children's organisations. Adults and children will vote on both sections as previous years. Ponda is happy to coordinate our entry by leading communications, but will not be involved in the design and building of the WCC u3a scarecrow this year. She will contact those involved previously to find someone prepared to lead the creation of the scarecrow	b. PT
15. <u>Next meeting</u> Next meeting Friday 8 May at from 10:00 to 12:30 in Golf Road Centre, Small Hall.	