u3a Learn, Laugh, Live

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WHITE CLIFFS COUNTRY
Charity Registration No. 1050607
Serving Deal, Dover and Sandwich

Minutes of the committee meeting on 11 September 2026 10:00am, Golf Road Centre

Agenda	Actions
1. Welcome and apologies **Present:** Carol Fowler (Chair), Denise McCoy, John McCoy and Sara Miller. **Apologies:** Gus Ege and Philip Whiteman. **In attendance** (items 1-3 of meeting)**:** Jan Poynter. Carol welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2. Minutes of the previous meeting a. The minutes were accepted as a true record with the correction to the date of the next meeting.	
3. **Groups** a. Jan had undertaken a review of the 2026 group enrolment process with input from others, which she has shared with Carol and Gus. Gus will review the process and share recommendations with the committee. Jan has produced a handover document for Gus. He is planning on visiting some of the groups and the committee agreed that in the first instance he should prioritise groups with a waiting list. b. Jan was thanked for the report on the group enrolment process and all her hard work as Groups Coordinator. c. Gus had provided an update on groups: i. There are currently 43 active groups ii. In total, the groups have 602 attendees, with a maximum of 745 iii. There are 53 members on waiting lists iv. The longest waiting list is 10 (Deal lunch club has capacity of 16) v. Outstanding actions include contacting Group Leaders and members on waiting lists, contacting members still to pay for their group and following up payment for the venue for Women in Society and Health. d. Carol suggested and it was noted that a list of vacances by group would be helpful. e. John reported that GRC and Sholden Village Hall had recently introduced slight price increases for room hire. f. John reported there are now only two people in groups who have not yet paid. g. It is now possible to delete old "paid-for" groups from Beacon. It was agreed that the data from these should be downloaded in case they are needed for financial or other reference purposes and the groups should then be deleted. h. It was agreed that Jan should continue to have access to the administration system, Beacon, to allow her to send emails from Beacon. It was also agreed that Gus should have the same level of access that Jan had as Group Coordinator and that Philip should have the same level of access that Ponda had as Membership Secretary. John to organise. i. Carol had circulated information to the committee about a new venue in Dover called "The Bench" which may be suitable for groups. Sara will explore the possibility.	a. GE g. JM h. JM i. SM

4. **Marketing** a. All plans for the Braderie are in place, logistics for furniture, dressing of stall, new business cards, reprint of flyers and new flyers. Jan will administer the capture of the public interested and pass on to Philip as Membership Secretary. Jan will also undertake a post-event review for further events. The event has been very well supported by members volunteering to cover the stand for a two-hour period. b. Jan and Carol will produce a White Cliffs Country u3a (WCCu3a) Marketing Strategy and will include a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats). The strategy will also be useful in setting a marketing budget next year. c. Carol emphasised the importance of cohesive marketing so that the branding for WCCu3a is readily identifiable. She has organised the printing of more copies of the WCCu3a flyer and the design and printing of business cards. Carol has also developed a number of new posters to be used at the Braderie and other events. d. Jan is investigating sources of funding for marketing, which could be used for further resources e.g. a gazebo. e. Jan and Carol are looking into targeted marketing and this will be included in the Marketing Strategy. f. The communications team at TAT have asked Carol to provide names of members of WCCu3a who would be happy to talk to the PR agency as and when they require membership input. Carol has agreed this in principle but requested the criteria before proposing any names.	
5. Matters arising a. The actions log was discussed and updated.	
6. Committee a. The AGM on 2 September was attended by 80 members. b. Members of the committee felt that the AGM had gone well and have received positive feedback. The Zoom option worked well. It was agreed that for future AGMs questions should be requested in advance. The committee should still take questions on the day, but membership be advised that if questions are complex or if they have more than one question, it would be best practice to have notification in advance. Also, questions may be deferred to after the meeting in order to give a fuller explanation. It was also agreed that a roaming microphone should be requested for questions. c. Carol has asked Gus and Philip to document processes associated with their roles to bring to the committee for discussion.	b. PW GE
7. Finance a. Carol signed off the August accounts and confirmed that Beacon matches the bank statement. b. John had previously circulated an updated financial forecast and budget and said he is happy to answer any questions. c. John has found that an HMRC account is needed in order to apply for Gift Aid. He will make an application and HMRC will validate the details against the information about the committee on the Charity Commission website. It is not clear how long this process will take, but John plans to progress it in the Autumn. John will send a reminder to members who have not yet consented to GA in October in order to maximise income from the GA claim. d. John reported that Philip now has access to PayPal and to NatWest Bankline. His next priority is to add Philip to the bank mandate in place of Ponda. e. John confirmed that any archived financial documents more than seven years old have been sent for confidential shredding.	
8. Membership a. There are currently 476 members, up from 468 last month. b. The next New Members' Meeting will be at 11am on Thursday 24 September at Sholden Village Hall.	

9. <u>Talks</u> a. Carol will work with Sara on updating the programme of events on the website, adding 2027 events and a little information about each talk. b. Sara will contact Bill and Mary Venables about a date for the quiz in Dover. c. An additional member has agreed to join the "Meet and Greet" team. d. The Christmas entertainment at the Astor on 2 December will be "Christmas celebrations through the ages" by Martin Hoskins. Sara will investigate additional musical entertainment. She will approach our "Sing Folk Songs and Carols" group to see if they would be happy to perform or lead some seasonal singing and she will also follow up with other contacts. e. The committee normally provide seasonal refreshments for the Christmas entertainment event. John will assess the budget to see if WCCu3a can fund the refreshments this year. Members' refreshments for this event will be included in the budget for next year.	b. SM d. SM e. JM
10. <u>Secretary</u> a. It was proposed that the next AGM be held on Wednesday 1 September 2027, subject to the availability of absent committee members. b. Denise had circulated an updated incident report form, which closely follows the new TAT form. The committee agreed to adopt the updated form. Denise to upload to the website. c. Denise had followed up with TAT regarding "Keeping it Legal" training. She had been advised that the offer for u3as is being updated and will not include this specific training. She was provided with links to Charity Commission (CC) training, which is the same as that circulated recently by Philip. It was agreed that all committee members should watch the CC training videos by 13 November. d. Denise had updated the committee details for the Charity Commission, TAT and Kent Network. Denise will check with Jackie Wiggins regarding the correct contact for informing the SER about updates to the committee. As well as committee details, TAT also allow two people to access the TAT Brand Centre. Currently the contacts are Ponda and Denise. It was agreed that Denise should inform TAT that she and Carol will now be the two contacts. e. The importance of using bcc when emailing more than one member (or using Beacon which automatically does this) was emphasised in order to maintain the confidentiality of members' email addresses.	b. DM c. All d. DM d. DM
11. <u>IT/website</u> a. Carol has asked Bill to train Gus and Phil in editing the WCCu3a website and he has agreed. b. Carol has discussed refreshing and updating the WCCu3a website with Bill and Mary. She is considering how to take this forward and what support is needed. c. John and Bill have completed the Beacon enhancement to simplify PayPal payments and it is working successfully.	
12. <u>Network and TAT updates</u> a. Denise had circulated information to the committee about voting for the TAT Board of Trustees. It was agreed that Denise should vote for Jill McLaughlin on the basis of her personal statement. b. The TAT AGM is on 14 October at 11am and Carol plans to attend. Denise, who is unable to attend, will complete a proxy voting form. c. The Kent Network online EGM will be held at 10:00am on Wednesday 16 September to elect the committee. Carol will ask if Philip or Gus are able to attend as several committee members are on holiday. d. Carol had received the notes of the Chairs' forum and will share them with the committee.	a. DM b. CF b. DM c. CF d. CF
13. <u>Trips</u> a. The trip to Eltham Palace on 10 September was attended by 39 people and overall feedback was good. However, some of the feedback referred to the tours of the house being rushed and the coach arriving late at the first pick up place. Carol had experienced significant issues communicating with the venue to make the arrangements. She will provide constructive feedback to both the venue and the coach company. Denise and John will analyse the feedback forms to be shared with members, together with responses to the comments.	a. CF a. DM/ JM a. CF

b. The "Thank you" event for Group Leaders will be discussed at the next meeting. c. Carol is in the process of planning trips for 2027, which will be discussed in the November committee meeting. The dates will be put on the website well in advance to avoid clashes. d. Carol has now received the menu from The Courtyard (TCY) for the Christmas meal on 16 December and plans to send a flyer to members in the near future. Bill is developing the booking form and plans to organise the seating arrangements. John will manage the financial aspects of the event. Carol has developed a process document to clarify roles. Carol will be meeting with TCY again later in September.	
14. <u>AOB</u> a. There are still places available on the SER workshop in Winchester on 21 September. The morning session is on u3a insurance and the afternoon session on AI. The second SER workshop planned in Benson has been cancelled. It was agreed that it is not appropriate for committee members to attend the Winchester event due to the time and cost of travel. b. The report from the TAT survey of members, "u3a and me", has been sent to committee members. It includes resources and advice that can be used for marketing, both to encourage new members but also to encourage volunteering. Denise will send the report to Jan. c. John has now received the Copyright license.	b. DM
15. <u>Next meeting</u> Next meeting 10:00 on Friday 9 October, Golf Road Centre, Small Meeting Room.	