Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

The Astor Theatre, Deal, on Wednesday, 2 September 2026

1. **Welcome and apologies**
    a. Carol welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for joining, both those attending in person and those joining online through Zoom.
    b. The meeting was quorate with 80 members attending.
    c. Apologies were received from 20 members.

2. **Minutes of the last AGM held on 3 September 2025**
    a. Accepted as an accurate representation of the meeting.
    Proposed by Jenny Wall and seconded by Heather Jackson.

3. **Matters arising**
    a. There were no matters arising.

4. **Chair's Report**
    a. The report had already been distributed and was accepted.
    Proposed by Jane Marguet and seconded by Paulin Meier.

5. **Treasurer's Report and Statement of Accounts**
    a. The report and accounts had previously been distributed and were accepted.
    Proposed by Margaret Gilling and seconded by Brian Brown.

6. **Membership Secretary's Report**
    a. The report had been distributed with the AGM papers and was accepted.
    Proposed by Doris Hammond and seconded by Julia Kent.

The Chair, Carol Fowler, explained that one of the purposes of the AGM is to reflect on the previous twelve months. White Cliffs Country u3a (WCCu3a) has proved to be a valuable community asset, providing opportunities to satisfy members' curiosity, as well as forge friendships and enjoy lifelong learning. She expressed her gratitude to all the committee members who have served during the year, as well as others who have volunteered and taken part in activities with such energy and enthusiasm.

The committee has reviewed operational processes, which has helped to develop a strong team work ethic. Carol reflected on the achievements in the past year, which have been mostly fun, including increasing membership, increasing marketing and ensuring a variety of Interest Groups, Talks, Trips, Coffee mornings, Christmas events and an anniversary event were offered, as well as an informative quarterly newsletter, for the low annual membership fee of £13. The financial health of WCCu3a is strong, but to maintain this, there will need to be a small increase in the membership fee for 2027/28. We will be claiming Gift Aid and members were encouraged to complete consent forms which were available on the day and are also available online on our website.

Carol thanked Heather Jackson and Eleanor Brooks, who had left the committee during the year, for their energy and dedication. Ponda Thomas is standing down from her role of

Membership Secretary, which she has held for two years. Carol thanked her for her enthusiasm and dedication and presented her with a token of thanks. Jan Poyner is standing down from her role as Groups Coordinator and Carol thanked her for steering WCCu3a through the Groups 'Go-Live' process. Although leaving the committee, she will be taking on a marketing role, linking with the committee through Carol. Carol presented her with a token of thanks. Carol wished them both well on behalf of the committee and membership.

7. **Election of the committee**
    a. Carol handed the meeting over to the Returning Officer, Jill Jones, whose role is to ensure that elections are held in accordance with the WCCu3a constitution.
    b. Jill thanked the committee for their hard work to ensure that WCCu3a is such a flourishing community.
    c. There were no contested posts, therefore Jill proposed that the nominees were elected en bloc, which was accepted.
    d. The nominated candidates were unanimously elected.

Office	Name	Proposed	Seconded
Chair	Carol Fowler	Allan Smith	Suzanne Le Chevalier
Business Secretary	Denise McCoy	Tracey Reed	Jane Marguet
Treasurer	John McCoy	Barry Matthews	Graham West
Membership Secretary	Philip Whiteman	Trevor Yetts	Jackie Ginn
Groups Co-ordinator	Gus Ege	David Thomas	Sara Miller
Talks Co-ordinator	Sara Miller	Gus Ege	John McCoy

The meeting was handed over to Carol as Chair. Carol thanked Jill for acting as Returning Officer.

Carol welcomed returning committee members and new members, Gus and Philip. She stated that the aim for the coming year would be to safeguard the long-term vitality of WCCu3a. Carol explained that priorities would include expanding membership to include the next generation of those retiring or not in full-time employment, further developing cohesive marketing, continuing to improve software accessibility, diversifying peer-led learning groups, involving the wider community and fostering an environment for learning for the simple joy of learning. She looks forward to working with the committee to turn these aspirations into success.

8. **Any other business**
    a. There was no other business.

9. **Carol chaired a question-and-answer session**
    Question: What is being marketed and who is the audience?
    Answer: Carol explained that it is WCCu3a that is being marketed, including what we stand for and the variety of groups, talks, trips and other opportunities to meet new people and make friends. This is being done through posters, flyers, posting on Facebook groups and exhibiting at events such as the Braderie, where volunteers explain what WCCu3a does for the community and encourage others to join and, perhaps, volunteer.

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Question: Is the committee aware that some members are not signing up for groups because of Beacon?
Answer: Carol replied that the committee is aware that a small number of members were concerned about signing up for groups online. Measures had been put in place to support members, including a drop-in session, an email helpline with follow up phone calls, the provision of self-help guides and proactively phoning members to talk them through the process. Carol emphasised the importance of a member contacting the committee to let them know if they are struggling so that support can be provided. She added that she is in dialogue with 'AbilityNet', which is an organisation that supports people with IT issues, with a view to working in partnership to provide additional help to members. Gus Ege, the Groups Coordinator, will be looking into further ways to support members.

Question: After having reviewed groups on the WCCu3a's website, a member found that when they logged onto Beacon several were full. Is it possible to attend a group before joining WCCu3a to try it out?
Answer: Carol responded that it is possible to attend one talk before joining WCCu3a but not a group, due to insurance reasons. She added that the committee will be looking at ensuring there is a primary source of information about groups to make it easier for members to plan which groups to join. They are continually reviewing the fairest way for members to join groups.

The meeting closed at 14.30 hrs.

Agreed as a true record…. …Chair

Agreed as a true record…. …Secretary

Date…… …..

The minutes will be finalised at the 2027 AGM

The meeting was followed by entertainment
Poetry by Alan Gleave, Brian Peterson, Judith Oakley, Edith Morgan and Heather Jackson and songs by Kellet Gut Shantymen, with much enjoyable audience participation. Kellet Gut Shantymen were awarded RNLI national recognition for raising £25k for the local lifeboat.

A few last words
- Carol announced u3a week from 19-27 September with the theme of 'expanding horizons'.
- WCCu3a is looking for members to join the 'Meet and Greet' team. If you are interested, please contact the committee.
- Carol closed the meeting, thanking all for attending with a quote 'We make a living from what we get. We make a life from what we give' - Winston Churchill.