

**MINUTES OF THE 116th COMMITTEE MEETING OF STOKE-ON-TRENT SOUTH u3a,
HELD IN METHODIST CENTRAL HALL, LONGTON, AT 2pm ON THURSDAY 9th
NOVEMBER 2023.**

PRESENT

Andrew Devin	Chairman
Keith Ward	Vice-Chairman
Lynne Stevenson	Treasurer
Phil Rowley	Secretary/Publicity Lead
Alan Stevenson	Membership Officer
Pauline Williams	Groups Co-ordinator
Beverley Maher	Entertainments Co-ordinator
Diane Ellis	Catering Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Kevin Ford, Joe Neilson.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last committee meeting held on 12th October 2023 were approved, and signed by the chairman as an accurate record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A Matters relating to the u3a Trust - National

1. AGM

(i) Now available to view in full via the u3a website.

(ii) Main outcomes of the AGM were:

Resolution 1: The historical structures of the u3a require review, because South Eastern clusters dominate. (*Lost by a large majority*).

Resolution 2: To implement regular substantial national promotional activities and report the impact to the Board. Also, to include in annual reports. (*Passed by a large majority*).

2. Trustees Week

(i) Week commencing 6th November has been designated Trustees Week. Sam Mauger asked that her thanks and those of the Chair of the Third Age Trust, Liz Thackray, be conveyed to all members of every committee.

(ii) A number of workshops are running during the week, e.g. Contingency planning; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; Running a u3a; and Recruiting Members.

(iii) There will also be a workshop on 30th November titled Managing complaints and Disciplinary Processes.

B Staffordshire u3a Link Meetings

AD explained that both he and vice-chairman KW had attended the Link meetings at Oulton on 31st October. AD represented the branch at the chairmen's meeting, and KW represented the branch at the group co-ordinators meeting.

1. Chairmen's Meeting

(a) Branches in attendance were: Burton-on-Trent, Cannock Chase, Cheadle, Stoke-on-Trent South, Stone, Stafford and Uttoxeter.

(b) AD quoted statistics provided by the attendees regarding numbers of branch activities and membership numbers. These details provided some interesting comparisons to our own, there being some surprise at the high memberships at some branches. KW commented that demographics and a greater number of venues available to other branches was the most likely reason. This opinion was shared by committee members.

(c) No branch recorded any financial difficulty, and most were charging varying amounts for annual subscription, and activity attendance. Varying arrangements operated for TAM and postage (some have cancelled TAM completely).

(d) The present Link co-ordinator for the group, Bruce Evans from Stone u3a, stated that he wished to relinquish the post because he is no longer a committee member, and had undertaken the task for some ten years.

(e) Initial discussion regarding a new co-ordinator involved agreeing that responsibility and costs for the annual meeting should be rotated between the branches, as should the co-ordinator role. It was noted that Stone u3a had funded the venue and refreshment costs for the last two meetings. No other branch representative offered to host next year's meeting, therefore in order to maintain formal links AD offered to take on the role for next year. This will of course result in a cost to Stoke-on-Trent South u3a. Committee members considered this to be acceptable. AD did however add, that although the branches within the link considered Stone to be a central venue, he would prefer to host the meeting at Longton Central Hall where control could be exercised over meeting date, venue and refreshments.

It was noted that "National Link" responsibility is also attached to the role.

2. Group Co-ordinators Meeting

(a) The meeting was hosted by Stone u3a and chaired by their representative Brian Johnson. There were five attendees.

(b) The meeting discussed a range of matters, and common issues were evident. It was noted that some co-ordinators took on greater roles in the management of their branch, being a focal point for members' concerns and queries.

(c) Much time was taken in discussing the Beacon computer programme. Views were that the system is helpful, but has some disadvantages. It proves beneficial in maintaining membership lists and a way of contacting members, but many members do not possess or have use of a computer. It was also considered useful in maintaining income and expenditure records. Some branches have introduced PayPal and Bank Transfer facilities. There remains no link between Beacon and Sitebuilder.

(d) The reciprocal arrangements for members within the Staffordshire Link Group was acknowledged.

(e) There was uncertainty about insurance cover relating to meetings held in members' homes. Later examination of the insurance policy confirmed that both members and property are covered.

(f) KW concluded that he left the meeting with the impression that SOTS was well ahead in comparison to other u3as in terms of procedures and management.

5. BUSINESS SECRETARY'S REPORT

Correspondence

No items of correspondence had been received, and there were no other matters to report.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

- a A Statement of Income and Expenditure as at 7th November 2023 was distributed to the committee. Details were as follows:

	£	
Current	-770.08	Balance 2023/24
	17,399.10	B/F from 2022/23
	£16,629.02	TOTAL BALANCE

- b LS explained that room hire costs continue to be in excess of group income. The operating deficit of £770.08 for 2023/2024 was not considered to be of major concern due to holding strong reserves.

LS explained that a badminton group member had taken issue because she had paid £2.50 for a session at MAC. The committee was aware that the group had moved to MAC last year because of the better facilities and certainty of booking. Members of the group were made aware by the group leader that the move would result in a higher session cost and he would prefer attendees to fund the extra. The committee unanimously agreed to back the policy of the group leader.

7. MEMBERSHIP OFFICER'S REPORT

AS stated that, as at the date of the meeting, the number of members was 404; an addition of 9 relative to the previous month. He also stated that he will soon be ordering membership cards for next year.

8. GROUPS CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

- a Group Leaders Information Packs

PW updated the committee stating that she had issued seven packs to group leaders. She handed five packs to AD to deliver to group leaders at Wednesday activities, and will deliver those that she presently holds. She will then liaise with LS to have the remainder printed.

- b Beading/Parchment Group

A short discussion took place regarding the small number of attendees at this weekly group. The committee concluded that as a longstanding group it should continue weekly for the time being.

9. ENTERTAINMENTS CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

BM considered that the talk about Restorative Justice at the October monthly meeting was very interesting. AD commented that the presenters, Sheetal and Dee, were very good, but the subject matter could be emotive to many.

AD
PW

Bookings, etc.

(i) The North Staffs Accordion Band have again been booked for the branch Christmas gathering on 30th November. Both the music and the Singalong proved to be very popular last year. Copies of the lyrics will be distributed on the day to encourage everyone to participate.

The band will require 14 chairs and a power source. BM (with PW) will arrange for a separate coffee station for the band.

(ii) Paul Lucas, who is a member of Cheadle u3a, will entertain the branch on 25th January 2024. His presentation is titled "The perils of an educational transport officer."

(iii) Jo Austin will be the guest speaker at the February monthly gathering, her talk is titled "Aneurin Bevan and the troubled road to the NHS."

(iv) AD mentioned that a representative of Dougie Mac had contacted him regarding talking at a meeting about volunteering. AD agreed to revisit in the new year.

AD/PR

AD

10. PUBLICITY OFFICER'S REPORT

(i) Social Prescriber's Event

PR and AD will attend an event at St. Paul's Church Hall on 14th November, organised by the Stoke Central Primary Care Network. The branch will have the opportunity to showcase its activities and distribute publicity material.

PR/AD

(ii) Blue Sky Radio

AD informed the committee that a member had heard an excellent advertisement for the u3a on Blue Sky Radio. PR agreed to follow up and attempt contact with the station.

PR

11. CATERING

At the request of DE, the committee confirmed provision of "Christmas themed cakes" for the November Christmas gathering. DE commented that she had catered for 72 last year and would again use this number.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) CPR/Defibrillator instruction class

BM has contacted each of the ten members who has expressed an interest: (a) to determine whether an early evening session was acceptable, and (b) to keep everyone up to date.

BM

Arrangements are still a work in progress, with BM yet to determine from a provider: suitable days; dates; times; and maximum numbers. The session is now planned for the new year.

(ii) Local MP's Jobs Fair - Longton Central Hall

We have received an invitation to have a stall at the above Jobs Fair on Friday 24th November. The committee agreed that we should accept the invitation. The start and finish times of the event are to be advised.

LS/KF

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11th January 2024 (Committee agreed not to meet in December).

The meeting was formally closed at 3.45pm.