

**MINUTES OF THE 117th COMMITTEE MEETING OF STOKE-ON-TRENT SOUTH u3a,
HELD IN METHODIST CENTRAL HALL, LONGTON, AT 2pm ON THURSDAY 11th
JANUARY 2024.**

PRESENT

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

1. APOLOGIES

Joe Neilson.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last committee meeting held on 9th November 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. Governance

The vision is for a smaller elected Board to handle governance alongside an elected Council which will represent the branches.

It is hoped that these arrangements will provide a necessary forum whereby ideas, concerns and experiences can be used to shape decision making. Currently, this model is being tested via a "Pilot Council."

2. Eligibility for membership

The Chair of the Third Age Trust has written to all branches explaining that legal advice has been sought regarding age limits for membership. Although the focus remains on older people who have retired from full time work, it is concluded that this is not a restriction. Therefore, as long as branch activities are generally educational, u3a objects do not limit who can participate.

3. Member access to the Trust website

In response to member feedback, the Trust are redesigning the content that members access on their website. This will be launching soon.

4. Equality, diversity and Inclusion - presentation

A new presentation which supports u3as to think about their legal responsibilities is now being delivered by Trust Volunteer presenters. The branch could request a presentation, but the committee decided that a review should be undertaken of the current branch policy, and any potential amendments be discussed at the next meeting.

AD

5. u3a Festival

In 2024, the first ever u3a festival will take place at the University of York between 18-20 July. There will be a wide range of activities, from sport to music and workshops. We will be informed of the programme in the next few months.

6. TAM submission window

The Third Age Trust have been advised that the company who handle the data transfer portal for the Third Age Matters Magazine has gone into liquidation. The Trust will therefore use the submitted data for November to dispatch the next distribution of TAM. The January submission window is therefore cancelled. The Trust will now source a new solution for collecting data.

LS/AS made the point that a branch member had died since November, and it would be upsetting for the family to receive an item of addressed post. AS agreed to contact the TAM office, and request removal from the circulation list.

PR also made the point that the Trust must ensure that the company who have gone into liquidation have destroyed all of the u3a data, so according with GDPR. The Regional Publicity Group has included this recommendation within its recent minutes, a copy of which will be viewed by the Trust.

AS

B Regional Trustee's Report – December 2023

1. In 2024, SiteBuilder websites will be replaced by SiteWorks which uses the open-source web content management system, "Wordpress." PR added that an example of the system may be viewed at <https://skiddaw.u3asite.uk/> This site went live very recently.

AD added that he had registered the branch to be in the queue for access to a skeleton system prior to going live.

2. The Trustee will, during 2024, arrange an everyone-invited Regional meeting to try and form a Regional Committee to set up a Summer School in 2025.

3. Recruitment workshops run by Paul Martinez, have been booked for 7th March at Longton Central Hall, and 13th March at Balsall Common. The Trustee provided Eventbrite links, which will enable member bookings. AD/KW/LS/PR/AS/DE agreed to be in attendance at the Longton presentation, but some would be representing the venue. DE agreed to be the catering officer for the event, and AD agreed to liaise with the Trustee regarding the expected attendance.

AD

C Website issue

AD commented on the recent phishing email received by committee members, and initially queried by KW. AD explained that access would have been via committee positions recorded on the website, not email addresses. He advised that any dubious emails should not be opened but immediately deleted.

D AGM Matters/Membership Renewal Applications

AD stated that the tenure of three of the four Executive Officers would cease at the AGM on 23rd May, and would require to be re-elected, viz. AD/KW/LS. Additionally, two general committee positions were vacant.

AD will prepare the Invitation letter to the AGM, together with the relevant committee application form.

AD

AS will prepare all documentation for membership renewals. These documents will be made available and agreed at the February committee meeting.

AS

E General

The committee engaged in a short informal discussion regarding the lack of attendances at monthly meetings, which result in regular financial deficits. No conclusions were reached, but it was decided that the matter should be included as an agenda item at the February 2024 committee meeting.

AD

One other matter under this heading related to former committee member, Sue Hartley, who wrote a note to the chairman and enclosed a key to a local noticeboard (she had located it only recently). She also conveyed her best wishes to the committee.

5. BUSINESS SECRETARY'S REPORT

Correspondence

No items of correspondence had been received, and any other matters were discussed under other headings.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

- a A Statement of Income and Expenditure as at 8th January 2024 was distributed to the committee. Details were as follows:

	£	
Current	-1,113.90	Balance 2023/24
	17,399.10	B/F from 2022/23
	£16,285.20	TOTAL BALANCE

- b LS explained that room hire costs continue to be in excess of group income. The operating deficit of £1,113.90 for 2023/2024 was again not considered to be of major concern due to holding strong reserves.

LS commented that other costs were expected over the next couple of months, i.e. the purchase of yellow paper, and AGM related expenses.

LS, also confirmed that she had entered last year's accounts onto the Charity Commission's website, and no comments had been forthcoming.

7. MEMBERSHIP OFFICER'S REPORT

AS stated that, as at the date of the meeting, the number of members was 405; an addition of 1 relative to the previous month. He also stated that next year's membership cards had been printed, via the Council's Print Unit. The Unit is due to close shortly, so an alternative source will need to be found next year. The colour of the cards for 2024/25 is pale green.

8. GROUPS CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

- a PW explained that only three packs of the Group Leaders Guide remain to be printed and distributed.

LS/
PW

- b PW requested that her former landline number, recorded on the Group Leaders Guide, be replaced by her mobile phone number.

AS/
AD

9. ENTERTAINMENTS CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

Bookings, etc.

(i) 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."

(ii) 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." She will require screen, projector, etc.

(iii) Steve Smith's talk titled "All the fun of the Fair" will be presented in two parts, at the March and April monthly meetings.

(iv) AD mentioned in November's committee minutes that a representative of Dougie Mac (Michael Thornley) had contacted him regarding a short presentation at a monthly meeting about volunteering. AD has since been informed that Mr Thornley has moved to a different role.

AD/PR

10. PUBLICITY OFFICER'S REPORT

(i) Social Prescriber's Event

PR considered that the event on 14th November went very well, and good contacts were made with Stoke Central Primary Care Network. PR thanked the Social Prescriber on 21st December for the publicity, about the u3a, placed on their Facebook page.

(ii) Local MP's Jobs Fair

Attendance at the Local MP's Jobs Fair was also considered to be a useful exercise.

(ii) Blue Sky Radio/ Cross Rhythms Radio

PR has attempted to converse with both Radio Stations, without success, but he will persevere.

PR

11. CATERING

DE plans to provide beverages and biscuits at the next monthly meeting on 25th January.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) CPR/Defibrillator instruction class

BM requested the committee to decide whether she should book the event for an evening or during a daytime. The preference was for the daytime, but this would incur a cost of some £100. After a short discussion, the committee considered this cost to be acceptable.

BM will now progress the matter with a provider, and explore suitable days, dates, times, and maximum numbers. Those who wish to attend will be kept informed of the details.

BM

(ii) AD asked for a very old, and now faulty laptop to be removed from the Asset Register. The request was authorised.

LS

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

8th February 2024

The meeting was formally closed at 3.50pm.