

**MINUTES OF THE 118th COMMITTEE MEETING OF STOKE-ON-TRENT SOUTH u3a,
HELD IN METHODIST CENTRAL HALL, LONGTON, AT 2pm ON THURSDAY 8th
FEBRUARY 2024.**

PRESENT

Andrew Devin	Chairman
Keith Ward	Vice-Chairman
Phil Rowley	Business Secretary/Publicity Lead
Alan Stevenson	Membership Officer
Kevin Ford	Deputy Treasurer
Joe Neilson	Committee Member

1. APOLOGIES

Lynne Stevenson, Beverley Maher, Pauline Williams, Diane Ellis.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous committee meeting held on 11th January 2024 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. Structure and Governance

The proposed new structure consists of: (i) a smaller board, focused on governance and finance, and (ii) a new Council, where elected representatives highlight and resolve issues that branches want to be addressed.

Two Council representatives would be drawn from each region/nation, and three members will represent u3a networks.

A new u3a board would focus on ensuring that the Third Age Trust meets all the requirements of the Charities Commission and corporate law. The role primarily involves legal and financial compliance, with the Board members being the Trustees of the Third Age Trust Charity.

A consultation will now follow, and if it indicates broad support from the u3a membership for change, the Board will submit a resolution to the AGM in October 2024. The resolution would require 75% of the votes cast.

2. Chief Executive

Newsletter dated 29/01/2024 records that Chief Executive, Sam Mauger, is to leave the Third Age Trust. She has worked for the Trust for eight years, and has decided to take a break from full-time working. She will leave in October 2024.

B Regional Trustee – January 2024 update

1. The Chair of Worcester u3a will run a series of zooms to answer questions and exchange views about the proposed Council.

2. The Trustee again advertised two recruitment events. They will be run by Paul Martinez, who has been booked for 7th March at Longton Central Hall, and 13th March at Balsall Common. Member bookings may be enabled via Eventbrite links. AD added that he had emailed all members of the Staffordshire Link to advertise the event.

3. Finally, there is a Zoom meeting on 27th February for members who would like to join the Regional Support Team. Any interested members should contact the Regional Trustee.

C Review of branch policy documents

It was agreed at section 4A4 of the previous month's committee minutes that AD would conduct a review of the branch "Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy", together with the "Member Code of Conduct", to which it is closely linked. The policy was amended to include current requirements on Inclusion. KW suggested one minor change, which was agreed by the committee. Both updated policies were authorised to be uploaded to the website.

AD

D Siteworks

Branch Webmaster, AD, explained that he was fully aware that branches would be required to migrate from the SiteBuilder database to SiteWorks during 2024. SiteWorks operates via the open-source WordPress software. He was looking forward to migrating early in the year and was eagerly awaiting information on the matter from the Trust. Unfortunately, and by chance, he discovered that some 500 branches had already registered with the SiteWorks team to migrate "in registration order." AD immediately registered the branch, but was nonetheless displeased at the complete lack of contact with any Stoke-on-Trent South official regarding the process.

E Monthly Meetings - attendances

It was decided at the January committee meeting to place the matter of poor attendances at monthly meetings onto the agenda of the current meeting. The Entertainments Co-ordinator provided an early apology and requested the matter to be delayed until she was in attendance. Accordingly, the matter will be placed on the agenda for the March committee meeting.

F General

AD explained that he had received a request from a worker from the Ministry of Justice for the branch to advertise a volunteering opportunity. The role is for applicants to join Independent Monitoring Boards, who monitor prisons for fair and humane treatment. The committee were in agreement that the request should be advertised in the branch Newsletter. AD will inform the MOJ representative of the branch decision.

AD

5. BUSINESS SECRETARY'S REPORT

No matters to report.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

A A Statement of Income and Expenditure as at 6th February 2024 was distributed to the committee. Details were as follows:

	£	
Current	-1,179.53	Balance 2023/24
	17,399.10	B/F from 2022/23
	£16,219.57	TOTAL BALANCE

B AS presented the report on behalf of LS who had submitted an apology. He explained that to date there was a deficit of some £1,000 when comparing group income to room hire costs. The operating deficit of £1,179.53 for

2023/2024, as shown in the above table, is not considered to be of major concern, and does exclude the ring fenced £700 donation from Joan Rose.

AS added that the Gift Claim to HMRC has been prepared, and will be in a value of some £400. The Treasurer requested help in collecting group income from outlying groups prior to the year end. AD offered to help.

LS/AD

7. MEMBERSHIP OFFICER'S REPORT

AS stated that, as at the date of the meeting, the number of members was 409; an addition of 4 relative to the previous month. Letters and application forms for membership renewal will be distributed at the end of February.

AS/LS

8. GROUPS CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

A AD presented the report on behalf of PW who had submitted an apology. The three remaining packs of the Group Leaders Guide have been printed and are to be distributed. AS added that copies of the 2024 Insurance Policy had been printed, and would need to be distributed to group leaders.

PW

B Other information relating to groups

(i) Sharon Molloy has replaced Alison Townsend as the group leader of the Walking group.

(ii) The Card Craft group wishes to amend its name to Craft Club. There is a strong likelihood that the Thursday Parchment Craft group (which is very small) will cease and merge with the newly named Card Craft group. A narrative prepared by PW will be included in the next Newsletter.

AD

(iii) A yoga class each Tuesday morning is planned to start from 5th March 10am to 11am, at Longton Central Hall (in the Main Hall). AD has agreed to advertise in the next Newsletter.

AD

(iv) PW has received a request from a lady wishing to join the Local History group. Her details were passed to group leader PR.

(v) Due to personal circumstances, Joe Neilson has, for the time being, shelved any plans for a resumption of the computer group.

9. ENTERTAINMENTS CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

Bookings, etc.

AD presented the report on behalf of BM who had submitted an apology.

(i) Jo Austin will be the guest speaker on 29th February monthly gathering. Her talk is titled "Aneurin Bevan and the troubled road to the NHS." She will require screen, projector, etc.

AD/PR

(iii) Steve Smith's talk titled "All the fun of the Fair" will be presented in two parts. The first on 28th March and the second on 25th April. He requires access to a screen only.

10. PUBLICITY OFFICER'S REPORT

No matters to report.

11. CATERING

No matters to report.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) AGM matters

Prior to the meeting, AD had distributed to committee members: (a) a draft letter of invitation to the AGM; (b) a draft application form for committee membership; and (c) two draft proposals for amendments to the branch constitution. The documents were examined in detail and authorised by the committee for printing and distribution. They will be distributed to every member, with the membership renewal documents at the end of February.

LS/AS

(ii) Entertainments Co-ordinator, BM, has booked the CPR and Defibrillator Training Session for Friday 15th March at Longton Central Hall, 10am to midday.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

14th March 2024

The meeting was formally closed at 3.26pm.

Chairman: *A. J. Devín*

Date: *14th March 2024*