

Preston & District u3a Committee Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 26th September 2026 at St Cuthberts' Church, Lytham Road, Fulwood, Preston

In attendance: J Nixon (JN) – Chair, Sue Holder (SJH) – Secretary, Cathy Widdows (CW) – Membership Secretary, Paul Westwood (PW) – Treasurer, Mark Buckley (MB) – Speaker Organiser, Lorna McInuity (LM) – Vice Chair, Barbara Long (BL) – Assistant Treasurer

Apologies received: David Parker (DP) – Beacon Administrator, Sheena Clowes (SC) – Interest Groups Coordinator

JN welcomed the committee and pointed out fire exits etc.

Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting

Re. safeguarding: SH has found a possible safeguarding course via the Age Concern website and passed the details to CW who is willing to do the course subject to committee approval which was granted. CW will liaise with JN to organise the course funding (£33). JN has not yet completed checking committee members' job descriptions nor what the constitution says about the number of safeguarding officers.

Re. anniversary celebrations:

SH reported that early minutes dating back to the creation of the u3a branch are on BOX and provide some interesting historical details.

Action: SH to add BL to BOX

Re. Treasurer's report

PW still requires a printer. CW has offered a laptop which may connect to the existing printer.

Action: CW to provide a laptop to PW and help set up printing

Coffee Morning

This was deemed a success as a social event and as a way of thanking group leaders but did incur an overall loss due to lunch costs. As a result, there are 12 potential new members; 8 have in fact joined. In the future the coffee morning should be held on the 5th Friday of the month, possibly with just cake and coffee to reduce costs and possibly advertised in advance in a leaflet. MB wondered if Preston & District could be included in the NW region leaflet, he has been given. LM suggested waiting until she has completed the CANVA course before looking into leaflet production. CW pointed out that advertising is free in PR Pointer. It was decided to inform members about outcomes from the coffee morning in the newsletter.

Action: CW to look into advertising in PR Pointer

Action: JN to include a paragraph in the newsletter about the coffee morning.

HMRC Trustees' Report

JN has almost completed this and will send it out to the committee shortly for comments. This report was necessary because the u3a is a charity. This led to a discussion of whether it is necessary for our branch to be a charity. It would be necessary to consult the Third Age Trust about this. JN pointed out that, as a charity, we are able to claim gift aid which amounted to £1400 approx. this year. This is a relatively small amount for quite a lot of effort and the loss of gift aid could be offset by a modest increase in membership fees. LM pointed out that various grants are available to charities and it might be possible to obtain a grant towards the anniversary celebrations. There was a brief discussion of social prescribing and whether, if accepted, it would increase membership.

Action: LM to investigate availability of grants and to explore social prescribing with the Third Age Trust.

New Creative Writing Group proposal

This group has been proposed by A Scott, the Group Leader of the Creative Writing group, for those interested in longer form fiction. There are 8 members interested and it is proposed to run the group on the 4th Wednesday of the month at St Martin's. The current Creative Writing Group runs at a loss and it is not clear what impact the new group would have on attendance at the old one. The committee decided not to approve the proposal.

Action: JN to notify A Scott of the committee's decision.

Volunteer Bank

This item will be postponed until a later meeting.

Mechanism for informing members of deaths

It has been suggested that an 'In memoriam' section is required in the newsletter to ensure that members are not embarrassed/shocked when they discover inadvertently that someone has died.

Action: JN to put a note in the newsletter on this subject.

Officer's Reports

Treasurer

PW provided copies of his report and highlighted the main points. The figures cover the period from January to June of this year and indicate an overall surplus of £3333. Unfortunately, these figures are not accurate as not all Group Leaders are supplying the necessary information. Indeed, some need monthly reminders – see below.

Assistant Treasurer

Some group Leaders are not paying monthly and not providing a correctly completed attendance sheet.

BL will email Group Leaders and request:

- That they use the new attendance form
- They email her when on holiday/not holding a meeting
- If paying in by cheque they email group attendance figures to her
- If paying by BACS that they give the group as the reference.

Speaker Organiser

Generally, members seem happy with the speaker selection. Some of the older members feel that the talks are too long. MB put forward a number of ideas to introduce variety and make Monthly Socials more cost-effective namely just having speakers quarterly, taking up offers from members to give talks and interspersing talks with 'social occasions'. The latter might be based on a theme e.g. wellness, a craft fair, hobbies etc. Essentially these would take the form of a coffee morning where members could 'drop in', participate in any organised activities or play cards, do jigsaws etc but be free to socialise. LM has had several queries re. IT help and this would be a good venue for an IT Help Desk which LM would be happy to run. The committee agreed that alternating what is on offer at the Monthly Social was a good idea starting early in 2027.

Secretary

SH announced that she intends to resign at the next AGM by which time she will have served as secretary for 4 years. JN identified the need to co-opt more members onto the committee.

Action: SH to add a note to the newsletter.

Vice Chair

LM briefly summarised developments:

- The Facebook page now has 66 members!
- Canva Pro is free
- The Photography and Chess groups will be removed from the website
- Due to connection issues M Simms is looking for a new internet provider.

Membership Secretary

As already stated, 8 new members joined at the coffee morning. Since 1st April 44 new members have joined and there are now 760 members.

AOB

None.

Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting will be held at 10am on Friday 27th November in the Melrose Room, St Cuthbert's Church, Fulwood.

The Chair thanked the committee for their support and closed the meeting.

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RECORD.....

DATE.....
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