

**MINUTES OF THE 129th COMMITTEE MEETING OF STOKE-ON-TRENT SOUTH u3a,
HELD IN METHODIST CENTRAL HALL, LONGTON, AT 2pm ON THURSDAY 13th MARCH
2025.**

PRESENT

Andrew Devin	Chairman
Keith Ward	Vice-Chairman
Lynne Stevenson	Treasurer
Phil Rowley	Business Secretary/Publicity Lead
Alan Stevenson	Membership Officer
Diane Ellis	Catering Officer
Joe Neilson	Committee Member

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the chairman thanked both the Membership Officer and the Treasurer for their hard work in printing and placing into envelopes the documents relating to membership renewal and the AGM.

1. APOLOGIES

Kevin Ford, Beverley Maher, and Pauline Williams.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous committee meeting held on 13th February 2025 were approved, and signed by the chairman as an accurate record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

a u3a Trust matters

1. Upcoming online workshops.

The chairman explained that four different workshops were available during March 2025, which would provide specific support in the running of a branch. The committee considered that there was no current need to attend any of these workshops.

2. Portal updates.

The Trust has requested that all branches check that the Portal contains up-to-date contact details of relevant committee members. AD agreed to undertake the check.

AD

The Trust reminded all branches that, on 1st April, they will request a submission of the Annual Return for 2025. Details need to be supplied via the Portal. As in previous years, the Treasurer and Membership Officer will liaise to produce the necessary details.

LS/AS

3. Access to the new Brand Shop.

Only appointed contacts for the brand shop will be permitted to purchase materials and merchandise. It had been agreed at a prior meeting that the two branch contacts would be the Chairman and the Treasurer.

b Trust election results.

At the February committee meeting, the branch agreed to vote for the following four applicants: John Bent; David Blanchflower; Alan Russell; and Elaine Toms. The results announced on 27th February revealed that two of the branch selection were elected, viz. John Bent and Alan Russell. The Chairman observed that two of the four newly elected trustees were members of Worcester branch, and he questioned whether this accorded with good corporate governance. It is anticipated that the new arrangements will commence from April 2025.

c Regional matters

(i) Regional Trustee, Jean Jackson, issued the Regional u3a Newsletter for March 2025. She thanked those who had voted for her in the national trustee election, and was disappointed to be unsuccessful. She will, however, become the second Regional Councillor until the Trust AGM in October.

(ii) The Regional Trustee invited all branches to attend an event where they could meet the new Chief Executive and Council representatives. The dates and locations are: 21st May at Kings Norton, and 22nd May at Lichfield. The Lichfield event clashes with our own AGM.

5. BUSINESS SECRETARY'S REPORT

PR stated that there were no specific matters to report. He did however ask about any plans for a Neighbourhood Link meeting, which would be chaired this year by the branch Chairman. The Chairman responded that because the fit "for the future" arrangements had not yet been implemented, it was logical to wait a little longer.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

a Treasurer, LS, distributed a Statement of Income and Expenditure as at 11th March 2025. Details were as follows:

	£	
Current	149.45	Balance 2024/25
	17,099.41	B/F from 2023/24
	£17,248.86	TOTAL BALANCE

b LS confirmed that all bills had been paid up to the end of February. Some small amounts of income have yet to be entered prior to year end, together with the receipt of Gift Aid in a value of £477. There may also be a small amount of expenditure in respect of postage stamps relating to the recent distribution of documents.

The balance carried forward from 2023/24 does include an unspent ring-fenced donation from Joan Rose (currently £441).

7. MEMBERSHIP OFFICER'S REPORT

AS stated that, as at the date of the meeting, the number in membership for the current subscription year was 447, an increase of 7 relative to that in February 2025. Letters and application forms for membership renewal/AGM invitation are still in the process of being distributed.

AS/LS

8. **GROUPS CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT**

- a PW had submitted an apology, and there were no matters to discuss.

9. **ENTERTAINMENTS CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT**

- a BM had submitted an apology, but sent a report to the Chairman who accordingly conveyed the details to the committee. BM reflected on the February presentation given by Mike Walker about "Beekeeping." She considered that he was a good speaker who provided an interesting and informative talk. Feedback from the audience was good, and he too enjoyed the session.

b **Bookings, etc.**

1. BM confirmed that the presentation for the monthly meeting to be held on 27th March would be provided in-house. It is titled "Chocolate Bingo". DE will lead the event, and will be supported by BM and LS. The plan is to have two games of traditional bingo, and one game of chocolate bingo. Additionally, there will be a fun "chocolate quiz" of 25 questions. Prizes will be given for a line and a full house for each game, and also for the quiz. The prizes will be small/ large baskets containing Easter eggs and chocolates. It was agreed that 8 tables would be needed.

BM/DE/LS

AD agreed to advertise in the March Newsletter, and on the website.

AD

2. The planned monthly entertainment for April 24th is agreed for Professor Ray Johnson to provide a presentation/film about Longton. He has decided that his subject will be "The Gladstone Story- 50th Anniversary". He will require a screen only.

3. Rebecca Done has been booked to provide the musical entertainment at the AGM on May 22nd.

4. PR stated that he had received a request from Hannah Moore, a representative of a charity called "Mary's Meals," to give a presentation at one of our monthly meetings. PR has provided BM with the details for her consideration and future discussion.

10. **PUBLICITY OFFICER'S REPORT**

1. PR stated that will be attending Stone branch on 3rd April to meet two members of the Trust publicity team. He will also observe arrangements over their canoe group, which is based on the Trentham Estate. PR will attend in his capacity as publicity lead for the region, and report back to this committee.

2. PR stated that he has placed publicity material in the noticeboard at the Old Sal Public House, the current home of the Sandford Hill community group.

3. A short general discussion took place regarding difficulty of access to some of the local publicity noticeboards.

11. **CATERING**

DE reported that she would be providing drinks and chocolate biscuits at the March monthly gathering.

12. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

a **Distribution of Membership/AGM documents**

AS confirmed that the distribution of the above documents was in progress, and there were no problems to date.

b **Other Matters**

1. AD had responded to the PHD student based at the University of York, providing her with a link to the advert in the March Newsletter. An immediate response of thanks was received.

2. KW asked whether any thought had, or should be given, to the ring-fenced value of £441 held in respect of the balance of Joan Rose's bequest. The committee considered that the money should only be defrayed for circumstances that would benefit many members, or the branch in general, e.g. an open day during the Summer.

3. Consideration was given to the possibility of arranging a committee meal. It was decided to delay for a future discussion.

13. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

10th April 2025.

The meeting was formally closed at 3.30pm.

Chairman: *A. J. Devín*

Date: *10th April 2025*