

**MINUTES OF THE 133rd COMMITTEE MEETING OF STOKE-ON-TRENT SOUTH u3a,
HELD IN METHODIST CENTRAL HALL, LONGTON, AT 2pm ON THURSDAY 14th
AUGUST 2025.**

PRESENT

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

1. APOLOGIES

Kevin Ford.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous committee meeting held on 10th July 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. The Trust has welcomed Karen Green from Flintshire u3a as the new Chair of *Network Link*. She takes over from Sue Russell, who is now Chair of the u3a Council.

2. The Trust is again appealing for members to step forward and join two important committees that support the Third Age Trust, viz. the Finance and Governance Committees. Finance skills and knowledge of corporate governance/risk management are however requisites.

3. Voting is now open for the role of Vice Chair of the Third Age Trust. The two candidates are Sheila Crawley and Nick David. The Chairman read out key sentences from their supporting papers, and the committee unanimously decided to vote for Nick David.

The chairman confirmed that he was the branch voting representative. Voting is open until 5pm on Thursday 11 September. The successful candidate will start their role at this year's AGM on 15 October 2025.

4. u3a week is being celebrated from 20th – 28th September 2025. This year, the theme is Positive Ageing.

5. New images are available in the Brand Shop for u3as and may be used for publicity purposes. Access is restricted - each u3a has chosen two members to have access to the image library.

6. The Trust has requested branches to make members aware of a current email scam whereby criminals are continuing to impersonate the

AD

Government's Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Further details will again be included in the August branch newsletter.

7. The Chief Executive (Iain Cassidy) has informed all officers nationally of the sad news of the death of Eric Midwinter, one of the visionary co-founders of the u3a movement in the UK. Eric, alongside Peter Laslett and Michael Young, established the u3a in 1982 with the belief that later life should be a time of continued learning, connection, and contribution.

b. Regional matters

No matters to report.

c. Amended Branch Constitution

Following the agreed amendment to the Constitution at the AGM, there is a legal obligation to provide all relevant details to the Charities Commission. As on previous occasions, the Treasurer has agreed to undertake this task.

LS

5. SECRETARY'S REPORT

PR stated that there were no matters to report at the current meeting.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

a LS distributed a Statement of Income and Expenditure as at 12th August 2025. Details were as follows:

	£	
Current	918.81	Balance 2025/26
	17,869.46	B/F from 2024/25
	£18,788.27	TOTAL BALANCE

b 1. After perusal, the committee agreed that the financial health of the branch remained strong.

2. LS asked the chairman to appeal to members, via the monthly newsletter, to make attendance payments at activity sessions in £1 coins only. Recent receipts had contained a number of 20p coins, which are cumbersome to bank.

AD

3. LS confirmed that she had completed the branch Annual Return, and submitted it to the Trust via the portal. The chairman confirmed that he too was in possession of the details.

4. LS informed the committee that Lloyds Bank (used by the branch), were changing the branch "Treasurers Account" to a "Charity Account." This action will result in the bank charging for day-to-day banking services from December 2025, also there will be some changes to terms and conditions. The chairman will review all of the planned changes and together with the treasurer, will propose amendments to the branch financial strategy. This matter will remain an agenda item until the changes are implemented.

AD

7. **MEMBERSHIP OFFICER'S REPORT**

AS stated that, as at the date of the meeting, the number of members for the new subscription year was 394, of which 36 were new members.

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

A number of matters that were of interest to the committee were discussed.

1. The June Newsletter contained a general request for members to express their interest in two potential new groups, viz. Backgammon and Seated Yoga. AD reported that some ten members had expressed a combined interest to either himself or DE for Seated Yoga. Only two members showed an interest in Backgammon. The committee agreed that Backgammon will unfortunately not be progressed.

2. Presently, attendances at the Yoga class may be considered variable, and some of the above members interested in Seated Yoga do attend this class. It is, however, unlikely that they would want to attend both classes. PW has agreed to converse with the group leader of the Yoga class, with the view of a potential combining of both yoga groups. Since there were no offers from anyone to lead a new Seated Yoga group, a combined group was the preference of the committee.

PW

AD agreed to place a small comment in the next newsletter to keep all interested parties up to date.

AD

3. A current member had expressed an interest in commencing and leading a new group titled "Knit and Natter." After a short discussion, the committee were of the opinion that these two subjects were very similar to what is offered at the Friday Craft Club.

4. DE, as a regular attendee at the Gentle Exercise class, raised the issue of 39 members being in attendance on 6th August. There were also a number of other regular attendees who were not in attendance on that day. Space for individuals to safely exercise needs therefore to be considered. It was unclear during committee discussion what the views of the group leader were regarding a maximum safe number of attendees.

DE and PW, will converse with the group leader to determine her views, and decide (a) whether a Waiting List should be commenced, and (b) the administrative arrangements over its maintenance. The outcome will be reported at the next committee sitting.

PW/DE

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

a **Phill Evans – Hypnotist - review**

Feedback from members who attended the presentation on 31st July was overall very positive, with 24 smiley faces and 5 ok faces. The committee considered the presentation to be very entertaining, after the technical aspects had been explained by Phill. KW opined that he had never seen the members so quiet, but considered that it was because the presentation was something different.

b Bookings, etc.

1. On 28th August, "Crafternoon Tea" will again be directed by a number of committee members/group leaders. Four crafts will be showcased.

2. BM has booked Caroline Spiers for 25th September. Caroline is the daughter of Rita Baines who delivered planes to the RAF during the Second World War. This will be the theme of her talk. Presentation support equipment still needs to be resolved.

3. The presentation on 30th October will be given by Peter Hardy, whose talk is titled "The National Memorial Arboretum." The talk will cover the history and development of the Arboretum.

BM/AD/PR

10. PUBLICITY OFFICER'S REPORT

1. Following discussion at the last committee sitting, PR has updated the branch publicity flyer to include the Photography group. Amended copies have been issued to all relevant contacts.

2. PR agreed to examine the Staffordshire Signal flyer as provided by committee member KF. Another local publicity document titled "The Knott" was also mentioned. PR agreed to comment on both documents at the next committee sitting.

PR

11. CATERING

At the Crafternoon Tea session on 28th August, cakes will be served as an alternative to biscuits.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. PR requested that Heritage Open Days be publicised in the next issue of the branch newsletter. He has accordingly furnished AD with the relevant text.

AD

2. Since the branch is to be the host for the next meeting of the Staffordshire Link group, AD has commenced communication with the last known contacts to determine if there have been any changes. A suitable day, date and time of meeting will need to be agreed before a room can be booked with Longton Central Hall.

AD

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11th September 2025.

The meeting was formally closed at 3.42pm.

Chairman: *A. J. Devín*

Date: *11th September 2025*