

**MINUTES OF THE 134th COMMITTEE MEETING OF STOKE-ON-TRENT SOUTH u3a,
HELD IN METHODIST CENTRAL HALL, LONGTON, AT 2pm ON THURSDAY 11th
SEPTEMBER 2025.**

PRESENT

Andrew Devin	Chairman
Keith Ward	Vice-Chairman
Lynne Stevenson	Treasurer
Alan Stevenson	Membership Secretary
Kevin Ford	Deputy Treasurer
Pauline Williams	Groups Co-ordinator
Beverley Maher	Entertainments Co-ordinator
Diane Ellis	Catering Officer
Joe Neilson	Committee Member
Lorraine Taylor	Invited Observer

Prior to commencement of the formal meeting, AD introduced Lorraine Taylor to each member of the committee. Lorraine was in attendance as an observer, having previously expressed an interest in the work of the committee.

1. APOLOGIES

Phil Rowley.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous committee meeting held on 14th August 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 Chief Executive thanked the five u3a runners for taking part in the Great North Run and raised money for The Third Age Trust.

2. The Chief Executive visited two large u3a events during August, the Summer School in the North West, and then to the Southport Flower Show at which Southport u3a had created a show garden.

3. u3a is celebrating the legacy of Eric Midwinter, one of the founders who passed away recently. An interview with former Chair Liz Thackray about Eric Midwinter was aired on BBC Radio 4 on 22nd August.

4. The Trust's Chair commented on a Strategy Day held in July, where the Trustees, Council Representatives and senior staff got together to brainstorm the purpose and vision of the Trust. Outcomes still need to be agreed.

5. Voting for Vice Chair of the u3a closed at 5pm on 11th September (the date of this meeting). As agreed, the branch voted for Nick David, and the chairman confirmed that he had received an acknowledgement from the Trust.

6. u3a week is being celebrated from 20th – 28th September 2025. This year, the theme is Positive Ageing, activities and achievements will be celebrated.

b. Regional matters

1. Regional representative, Jean Jackson, issued the Regional Newsletter for September. It can be located on the Regional website under NEWS.

2. The monthly Regional Zoom took place on Tuesday 9th September (all members were invited). The next Zoom is on 22nd October at 6:30pm. The link will be provided on the Events page of the Region's website.

3. The Newsletter contained the following information:

a. Rob Rowberry has resigned as a Council Representative, so the Region has now only one Councillor until the elections in February 2026. All members, therefore, have some time to ponder whether they wish to apply.

b. All Council Representatives have been working with the Board on developing the new strategy for the u3a.

c. Jean considers one of the top issues in the region, and is shared by many u3as, is the difficulty of finding a Chair and people to join the committee. The Council now has a working party investigating this subject in more depth.

d. Jean is appealing for members to form a West Midlands regional team, particularly in the area of raising the region's profile through PR. She is keen to hear from anyone who could be an effective PR adviser.

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. AD has agreed to liaise with AS to undertake this task.

AD/AS

5. SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Secretary was not in attendance at the meeting, no report was therefore presented.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

a LS distributed a Statement of Income and Expenditure as at 8th September 2025. Details were as follows:

	£	
Current	668.01	Balance 2025/26
	17,869.46	B/F from 2024/25
	£18,537.47	TOTAL BALANCE

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

2. LS had informed the committee last month that Lloyds Bank (used by the branch), were changing the branch "Treasurers Account" to a "Charity Account" on 13th November 2025. This will result in the bank charging for day-to-day banking services from December 2025. At the request of LS, AD has reviewed all of the planned changes and together with LS they have determined that charges will likely be incurred only at the beginning of a new subscription year. Since our first 100 payment types per month are free, this should have a minimal effect during the remaining months. BM asked about introducing an all-in annual fee similar to Stone, so reducing the number of transactions. AD/LS responded that the branch may have to move to this system, particularly if Lloyds Bank closed in Longton. Branch officers are acutely aware of the situation, and after consultation with the members may need to amend the branch financial strategy. This matter will remain a regular agenda item.

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 400, of which 43 were new members. The committee were obviously delighted to achieve 400 members.

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

1. Potential new group – Seated yoga

PW has conversed with the group leader of the present yoga class to determine whether she would be willing to also take on a seated yoga class, or combining the two classes. The leader wished to have more time to ponder over the suggestions.

Some of the members interested in seated yoga do attend the current yoga class, and are unlikely to attend both classes. Movement of numbers from the current class would likely leave it with few attendees. LS opined that a compromise would be to offer the classes on alternate weeks for a trial period, and then ask the attendees to decide which class they preferred.

PW will discuss the latter proposal and report back to the committee.

AD will keep members up to date with an appropriate comment in the next Newsletter.

PW
AD

2. High attendances at the Gentle Exercise class

The committee had been made aware of the high numbers attending this class (39 at one class in August), consideration to safety was therefore required.

PW has conversed with the group leader regarding the matter, and agreement was reached that the group was close to maximum. Not everyone attends every meeting, so the group leader has agreed to review numbers such that she will commence completion of a Waiting List at an appropriate time. AD has provided the branch Waiting List template for completion as necessary.

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

a **Crafternoon Tea – review**

Feedback from members who attended the presentation on 28th August was overall very positive, with 22 smiley faces and 3 ok faces. Members of the committee were in agreement that the event was clearly both

educational and social. AD confirmed that a narrative and photographs of the event had been placed onto the website (via the Events Tab).

b Bookings, etc.

1. Caroline Spiers has been booked 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 and she will also show a short film. Her fee is £50. Caroline has requested a lapel microphone, screen, and projector. KF and LS will determine whether the branch will need to buy this type of microphone, or will be able to use one that is the property of Central Hall. Action is to be left to the discretion of the two officers.

KF/LS

AD agreed to contact Caroline to determine whether she needs a laptop for her presentation, and also whether her presentation will be via PowerPoint and MP4 format for the film.

AD

2. 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.

3. BM confirmed that the pre-Christmas entertainment to be held on 27th November will again be provided by the branch ukulele group, and will include a "Singalong."

10. PUBLICITY OFFICER'S REPORT

In the absence of the Publicity Officer, information about the Staffordshire Signal Flyer was provided by KF:

- (a) The first edition is due to be published in October.
- (b) Articles need therefore to be submitted as soon as possible.
- (c) It will initially be a free magazine.
- (d) The editor is known as the "Red Haired Stokie" and is well known in the Local History community.

The branch officer is requested to comment on the first edition of the flyer in October.

PR

11. CATERING

At the Crafternoon Tea session on 28th August, cakes were served by DE. Feedback on the day confirmed that members enjoyed them very much.

DE will confirm at the October committee meeting her catering proposals for the pre-Christmas gathering.

DE

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. Staffordshire Link Meeting

AD mentioned last month that the branch would host the next meeting of the Staffordshire Link group, but stated that responses to invitation had been very poor from the Staffordshire branches. He will, however, persevere and update the committee in October.

AD

2. Grant request from the Ukulele group

A grant request to support the purchase of branch ukulele group uniforms and badges was received on 9th September. A costing schedule was provided which showed the total purchase cost of polo shirts, sweat shirts, and badges for 25 members to be £821.25. The group were requesting a support grant from the branch in a value of £350.

After a lengthy discussion between committee members, it was decided that a number of clarifications should be sought prior to making a decision. There were no major objections in principle, but there were a number of questions/ concerns that would need to be resolved.

The main issues were:

1. Were all members of the group in full agreement that they would still be required to pay approx. £20 each, should the grant be approved?
2. Should early leavers from the group be expected to pay back the value of the grant contribution?
3. What will be the arrangements for new group members, i.e. will there be an ongoing expectation of further grant payments?
4. If the u3a logo is to be shown on the badge, it must conform with both the colours and size of the u3a registered brand?
5. Agreement over timing of the grant payment would need to be obtained from the branch Treasurer, i.e. before or after purchase?

Committee member and ukulele group member, BM, agreed to converse with group members regarding the considerations of the committee and report back.

BM

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9th October 2025.

The meeting was formally closed at 4.04pm.

Chairman: *A. J. Devín*

Date: *9th October 2025*