

**MINUTES OF THE 135th COMMITTEE MEETING OF STOKE-ON-TRENT SOUTH u3a,
HELD IN METHODIST CENTRAL HALL, LONGTON, AT 2pm ON THURSDAY 9th
OCTOBER 2025.**

PRESENT

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

1. APOLOGIES

Phil Rowley, Pauline Williams.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous committee meeting held on 11th September 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 CEO has announced that Sheila Crawley has been elected as Vice Chair of the Trust. She will be taking up the role of Vice Chair of the Trust on 15 October, after the AGM. Sheila stated "I'm passionate about the u3a movement, it has a great social purpose. My hope is that many more people of all backgrounds understand what u3a is and how transformational it can be".

2. The CEO also informed the branch that the person registered to vote in the recent Vice Chair election remained the registered person to vote at the AGM. No action was therefore required by the branch.

3. Any branch member who wishes to attend the AGM online may do so, but needs to book via the Attend2IT platform using a link which can be provided by the chairman. The chairman will attend the meeting.

4. This year's AGM will take place at 11am on 15 October at Sketchley Grange Hotel and Spa in Hinckley, Leicestershire. Again, any branch member may attend in person but must book their place on Eventbrite using the above-mentioned link by 11am on Friday 10 October.

5. The chairman noted that the AGM Agenda contained only two resolutions to be determined, both of which are statutory requirements. Since there are no contentious matters to be discussed, the chairman opined that the AGM is likely to be a quiet one.

AD

6. The Trust is still advertising roles on the governance and finance committees, and are seeking new directors to join the board of the u3a trading company (*TATTL*), and also the u3a magazine committee.

b. Regional matters

The Network Link Team had invited all u3a members to attend The Network Link Autumn event, which was held via Zoom, on Thursday, October 9th, 2025.

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 6th October 2025. Details were as follows:

	£	
Current	408.44	Balance 2025/26
	17,869.46	B/F from 2024/25
	£18,277.90	TOTAL BALANCE

b 1. LS explained that Room Hire remained some £800 higher than Group Income, but this situation was as expected and accepted by the committee.

2. Following general perusal by the committee, it was agreed that the financial health of the branch remained strong.

3. LS suggested that the branch should make a payment to Central Hall in respect of the expenditure line "storage rental." The committee agreed a contribution of £100.

4. As a result of the intention of Lloyds Bank to change the branch "Treasurers Account" to a "Charity Account" from 13th November 2025, bank charges for day-to-day banking services will result. In order to offset these charges, £10,000 held in the current account has been moved into a Community Instant Access Account bearing an interest rate of 0.60%.

5. KW requested that the ringfenced bequest from Joan Rose, with a current value of £441, be discussed at the next committee sitting. AD opined that it could be discussed at the current meeting under the AOB heading relating to the Ukulele group grant request.

LS

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 408, of which 51 were new members. The committee were obviously pleased with the number of new members, together with 357 renewals.

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

Potential new group – Seated yoga

Last month, PW had spoken to the leader of the current yoga class regarding the introduction of a Seated Yoga group, however the leader wished to have more time to ponder over the suggestions.

Since PW was not in attendance at the meeting and the committee were keen to resolve the issue, LS agreed to converse with the group leader to determine a way forward.

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

LS

AD

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

a **Caroline Speirs – review**

Feedback from members who attended the presentation on 25th September was again very positive, many sought out committee members to convey their pleasure. Caroline responded quickly to BM, thanking her for the branch hospitality.

b **Bookings, etc.**

1. 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.

Peter will bring a projector, but will require a screen. AD will ensure that back-up equipment will also be available.

AD

2. 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.” Songs will be a variety of well-known ballads and Christmas favourites. A short discussion also took place regarding layout of chairs, but this will be firmed up on the day.

3. BM proposed a talk from Dean Nixon in January 2026, titled “1950’s - A Nostalgic Journey.” The committee accepted the proposal.

4. AS confirmed that the lapel microphone purchased some time ago was compatible and working with the Central Hall speaker system. AD stated that this microphone would be tested at the next monthly meeting.

AD

10. **PUBLICITY OFFICER'S REPORT**

In the absence of the Publicity Officer, KF stated that the first issue of the Staffordshire Signal Flyer had been distributed on 17th October. The magazine will initially be free of charge. The editor is known as the “Red Haired Stokie.”

11. **CATERING**

1. DE confirmed that refreshments at the monthly meeting on 30th October would be the normal tea/coffee and biscuits.

2. DE presented her catering proposals for the pre-Christmas gathering on 27th November. (a) A turkey and stuffing bap with sausage roll and pork pie. This savoury food will be plated. (b) Christmas cakes and possibly some non-alcoholic punch will follow.

DE

The committee unanimously agreed with the proposals.

12. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

1. Staffordshire Link Meeting

AD informed the committee last month that, although the branch had been nominated to host the next meeting of the Staffordshire Link group, responses to an invitation had been very slow. Following the issue of two reminders and no response from two branches, AD has postponed any further discussion until the Spring of 2026. Those branches that did respond were in agreement with this approach.

2. Grant request from the Ukulele group

After a lengthy discussion between committee members at the September sitting, the group was requested to address a number of concerns prior to a decision being taken.

The main responses were:

- a. Should a member leave the group within two years, they will be required to return the grant contribution value, or return the garment.
- b. After initial purchase of garments, any new members will be required to pay the full price.
- c. The font style has been altered.

Committee members were content with the responses and authorised a grant payment of up to £300. It was also agreed that part of the ringfenced bequest from Joan Rose should be used to finance the grant. Branch Treasurer, LS, will converse with the group representative regarding timing of the payment, together with any documentation requirements.

LS

3. Mobile Phone use and AI

KW requested that these two subjects should be placed on the agenda for the November committee meeting.

AD

13. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

13th November 2025.

The meeting was formally closed at 3.42pm.

Chairman: *A. J. Devín*

Date: *13th November 2025*