

**MINUTES OF THE 136<sup>th</sup> COMMITTEE MEETING OF STOKE-ON-TRENT SOUTH u3a,  
HELD IN METHODIST CENTRAL HALL, LONGTON, AT 2pm ON THURSDAY 13<sup>th</sup>  
NOVEMBER 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 9<sup>th</sup> October 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**

AD attended the Trust AGM online on Wednesday 15th October, and provided the key facts relating to the meeting.

(i) Of the 1,015 u3a branches affiliated to the Trust, only 350 branches attended either in person or online (about 1/3 of member branches).

(ii) The two statutory resolutions passed easily, the votes related to (a) approving the minutes of the previous meeting, and (b) appointing the auditors for next year.

(iii) Chief Executive, Iain Cassidy, gave a short annual report on achievements in which he thanked his team and the team of volunteers who help the Trust throughout the year.

(iv) Elizabeth Drury, Head of Communications and Policy, provided statistics relating to membership. She explained the current position regarding the 2023 resolution which was passed as a priority to have in excess of 500,000 members by the end of 2028. During 2024/2025 membership had only increased slightly to 420,000, so there is still much hard work to do.

(v) The Treasurer reported on the Consolidated Account which included the activities of the Trust and Third Age Trading. Key statistics were as follows:

(a) Income for 2024/25 = £3,474k

(b) Expenditure for 2024/25 = £3,402k

(c) The Trust does not own fixed assets other than IT equipment.

(d) Budgeted Income for 2025/26 = £3,602k

(e) Budgeted expenditure for 2025/26 = £3,763k

(vi) The Board are considering a new Vision and Mission for the u3a movement.

**AD**

**b. Regional matters**

The Regional Councillor has not issued a newsletter for October 2025.

**c. Committee staffing**

A discussion on committee membership, both present and future, was deferred until the January 2026 meeting.

**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 10<sup>th</sup> November 2025. Details were as follows:

	£	
Current	239.68	Balance 2025/26
	17,869.46	B/F from 2024/25
	<b>£18,109.14</b>	<b>TOTAL BALANCE</b>

- b** 1. LS explained that there had been little change to the accounts overall, and that the financial health of the branch remained strong.

2. A payment of £100 in respect of storage rental has been made following committee approval in October.

3. Again, in accordance with committee approval, a grant of £300 has been paid to the ukulele group to support the purchase of uniforms. KS queried whether this value had been deducted from Joan Rose's bequest. LS identified the payment on the Income and Expenditure Account, and also confirmed that the balance is £141.

4. Payments in respect of Room Hire were up to date.

**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 416 of which 59 were new members. The committee were obviously pleased with the number of new members, together with 357 renewals.

AS added that he would soon be ordering new membership cards for 2026/27.

**AS**

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

- a** **Potential new group – Seated yoga**

PW was not in attendance but had informed AD that she had spoken to the leader of the current yoga class regarding the introduction of a Seated Yoga group, but again the leader wished to have more time to consider the suggestions.

After a short discussion, the committee decided that because a group leader was not forthcoming, the proposal should no longer be progressed. AD will include a comment in the next Newsletter.

**AD**

**b Mexican Train Dominoes**

Due to the non-availability of the group leader for a number of weeks, the activity is suspended until the New Year, after which the issue will be reviewed. AD will include a comment in the next Newsletter.

AD

**c Board Games**

The committee was keen to explore whether Board Games would be of interest to members. AD will include a comment in the next Newsletter and also appeal for a group leader.

AD

**d Resignation**

Unfortunately, on 2nd November Groups' Co-ordinator, PW, wrote to the Chairman tendering her resignation from the committee with immediate effect. AD had responded by thanking PW for her input both during her current tenure and during prior tenures.

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

**a Peter Hardy Arboretum – review**

Feedback from members who attended the presentation on 30<sup>th</sup> October September was again very positive. The Feedback Box contained "Smiley Faces" only.

**b Bookings, etc.**

1. 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.

2. BM confirmed that Dean Nixon would provide the entertainment in January 2026, titled "1950's - A Nostalgic Journey." He will take a stroll down memory lane.

3. Lou Macari has been booked for the February 2026 Monthly Meeting. Lou will talk about his work in providing shelter for the homeless in Stoke-on-Trent.

4. BM requested that the date of the 2026 AGM and the proposed entertainment be included on the January 2026 committee agenda.

AD

**10. PUBLICITY OFFICER'S REPORT**

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

**11. CATERING**

1. DE presented amended catering proposals for the pre-Christmas gathering on 27<sup>th</sup> November. (a) A Ham roll with garnish, mini quiche, sausage/onion on a stick, + sausage roll. This savoury food will be plated. (b) The dessert will consist of purchased chocolate logs and mince pies. Non-alcoholic Schloer will be included as a beverage, LS will purchase two boxes of "Celebrations."

DE

The committee unanimously agreed with the proposals.

LS

**12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**1. Lapel Microphone**

Although a lapel microphone was available for branch use, it has yet to be tested as fully operational at a monthly meeting. AS confirmed that the lapel microphone was compatible with the Central Hall speaker system, but confirmation was needed that there was also an output for the hand-held microphone. KF to examine.

**KF**

**2. Longton Central Hall – Festive Season opening times**

AD requested the above details so that the December and January “Groups Calendars” posted to the website could accurately reflect activity dates. AS provided known dates and will inform AD of any other changes.

**AS**

**3. Mobile Phone use and AI Software**

KF agreed to determine whether any of his known contacts would be willing to talk to a branch audience to explain the basic principles when using a mobile phone. AD to include on the January 2026 agenda.

**KF  
AD**

AD explained that AI was software used by major companies like Google and Microsoft and was essentially an advanced search engine. It uses artificial intelligence to perform tasks that would normally require human intelligence, such as decision-making. It analyses large amounts of data to identify patterns. The user has no control over this process.

**4. Emergency telephone numbers- members**

Branch Facebook Officer asked that this matter be raised for committee discussion. Committee discussion confirmed that it would be a good idea for these details to be recorded on the “Contacts Register” held by the group leader of each activity. AD agreed to amend the template to include provision of an emergency number. AD and AS will liaise regarding their distribution to group leaders.

**AD/AS**

**5. Tesco Parking Update**

Tesco introduced new parking restrictions on their car parks commencing 06/11/2025. Contravention will result in a penalty charge of £70. AD will include details in the November 2025 Newsletter.

**AD**

**13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

8<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

The meeting was formally closed at 3.37pm.

Chairman: *A. J. Devín*

Date: *8<sup>th</sup> January 2026*