

**MINUTES OF THE 137th COMMITTEE MEETING OF STOKE-ON-TRENT SOUTH u3a,
HELD IN METHODIST CENTRAL HALL, LONGTON, AT 2pm ON THURSDAY 8th
JANUARY 2026.**

PRESENT

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

1. APOLOGIES

Lynne Stevenson, Diane Ellis and Phil Rowley.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

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

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

(i) u3a Trust

There had not been any reportable communications from the Trust over the festive period.

(ii) Regional matters

Regional Council Representative, Jean Jackson, is holding two meetings via Zoom on 15th and 16th January at 4pm and 10am respectively. The theme of the meetings is to determine from members what they want from the regional team, and what can be done to encourage members to stand as Council Representatives at the February 2026 elections.

Jean requested that at least one member from each branch should attend. AD stated that he would provide access details to the meeting should anyone on the committee be interested in attending. No interest was expressed, so AD stated that he would attend if available.

AD

5. SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Secretary (PR) was again unable to attend the meeting. Due to a health issue, he has been a hospital in-patient for a number of months. During a visit from AD, PR expressed a desire to be relieved of his committee duties and requested that the role of Secretary be offered to members at the May 2026 AGM. The committee were obviously very sympathetic to the situation.

AD distributed a proposed description for the role of Secretary, and the wording was agreed by all in attendance. This will form part of the AGM Invitation Letter.

AD

6. **TREASURER'S REPORT**

- (a) AS distributed a Statement of Income and Expenditure as at 7th January 2026. Details were as follows:

	£	
Current	-278.82	Balance 2025/26
	17,869.46	B/F from 2024/25
	£17,590.64	TOTAL BALANCE

- (b) The committee examined the details of the statement and no questions were forthcoming. It was concluded that the financial position of the branch remains sound.

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 420 of which 63 were new members. The committee were pleased with the number of new members, together with 357 renewals.

AS added that he was awaiting the details of a small number of new members from a group leader.

AS

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

Since there is no longer a co-ordinator in post, AD led the discussions.

(i) Potential new group – Board Games

At the last committee sitting, attendees were keen to explore whether Board Games would be of interest to members. Accordingly, the request was placed in the November/December 2025 Newsletter.

A very enthusiastic member, Derek Wardle, has responded to the chairman and has lots of good ideas in progressing the proposal. The committee confirmed that details of Derek's ideas should be placed in the January/February 2026 Newsletter, and feedback be examined at the next meeting. Derek will be kept informed.

AD

(ii) Mexican Train Dominoes

At the last committee sitting, there was some doubt regarding the future of the group. The group leader does seem to be available again, and AD agreed to include on the January Website Calendar on the appropriate dates. AD will include a comment in the next Newsletter.

AD

(iii) Potential second Ukulele group

Former group leader, Barbara Cooke, has expressed an interest in starting up a second Ukulele group for beginners. Again, the committee were supportive of any proposal, but were keen to explore the level of interest from members before approval. AD will include a comment in the next Newsletter.

AD

(iv) Family History group

Sadly, AD reported the passing of Les Waller, a longstanding enthusiastic member of the branch and group leader of the Family History group. AD has spoken to his wife Hilary, conveying the sympathy of branch members. AD agreed to write a short tribute in the next Newsletter.

AD

9. ENTERTAINMENTS CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

At the previous committee sitting, BM had asked for confirmation of the AGM date. AD confirmed this to be 21st May 2026.

(a) Pre-Christmas gathering – review

Feedback from members who attended the presentation on 27th November was complimentary regarding both the concert given by the Ukulele group, and the table served food.

AD did, however, add that he was a little disappointed with the attendance of only 33 members, given the amount of effort required by the committee to make the event a success.

(b) Bookings, etc.

(i) 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.

(ii) 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.

(iii) BM proposed that the entertainment at the 2026 AGM be provided by Chris Stratman. He plays the guitar to the “Shadows” music. The committee wished to have his charge firmed up before approval.

BM

10. PUBLICITY OFFICER'S REPORT

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

11. CATERING

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

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) AGM related matters

(i) The date of the meeting, and proposed entertainment have been discussed at Section 9.

(ii) AD explained that all four of the Branch Officer roles would require election at the AGM. Current Officers, KW and PR, have, however, stated that they will relinquish their roles at the date of the meeting.

(iii) BM stated that she too will relinquish her committee role on the same date.

(iv) AD will prepare an invitation letter to the AGM on the basis of known staffing intentions.

AD

(b) Other matters

(i) 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/KF are in the process of sourcing a piece of electrical equipment that should enable its use.

AS/KF

(ii) Mobile Phone use and AI Software

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. The committee decided that provision of a training session would be of limited value, and decided to no longer progress the matter.

(iii) Emergency telephone numbers- members

It was agreed at the November committee meeting that the above details should be recorded on the "Contacts Register" held by the group leader of each activity. AD has amended the current template accordingly, and will liaise with AS regarding distribution to group leaders.

AD/AS

(iv) Tesco Parking Update

KF confirmed that no concessions, regarding parking restrictions, will be provided by Tesco.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

12th February 2026.

The meeting was formally closed at 3.25pm.

Chairman: *A. J. Devlin*

Date: *12th February 2026*