

**MINUTES OF THE 138th COMMITTEE MEETING OF STOKE-ON-TRENT SOUTH u3a,
HELD IN METHODIST CENTRAL HALL, LONGTON, AT 2pm ON THURSDAY 12th
FEBRUARY 2026.**

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.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous committee meeting held on 8th January 2026 were approved, and signed by the chairman as an accurate record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Item 4(ii) – AD had stated that he would attend one of the two Regional zoom meetings to be held on 15th and 16th January. Unfortunately, he did not attend because due to a BT fault he was unable to access the internet during this period.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

(i) u3a Trust

During late January, u3a Council Chair, Sue Russell, had written to all Chairmen emphasising the importance of the Council, and encouraged them to seek out applicants.

Applications for the position of Council representatives closed on Tuesday 3rd February. The Trust's CEO thanked everyone who had put themselves forward for this role and he would be working through the nominations in the coming weeks.

(ii) Regional matters

Present Regional Council Representative, Jean Jackson, confirmed that no members within the West Midlands Region had applied for the two available posts of Council representative.

Jean Jackson will host the next Regional Zoom meeting on Tuesday 24th February 6pm to 7pm. She also confirmed that she would be standing down from regional duties in April 2026.

5. SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Secretary (PR) was again unable to attend the meeting, due to health issues, and is now residing in Assisted Living Accommodation. He has confirmed that his committee tenure will cease at the May 2026 AGM.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

- (a) LS distributed a Statement of Income and Expenditure as at 9th February 2026. Details were as follows:

	£	
Current	157.47	Balance 2025/26
	17,869.46	B/F from 2024/25
	£18,026.93	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.

The Treasurer (LS) was pleased to inform the committee that she had very recently received £519 from HMRC in respect of the Gift Aid Application.

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 430 of which 63 were new members. The committee were pleased with the number of new members, together with 367 renewals.

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

A very enthusiastic member, Derek Wardle, proposed a number of good ideas for the introduction of a new group. The proposals were placed in the January/February 2026 Newsletter, and feedback as at the date of the meeting has been poor. One member is interested in Chess, and two members in general board games.

The committee requested that AD converse with Derek Wardle to determine times of the day and minimum numbers he would accept for a startup. Additionally, to determine whether he would wish to converse with interested members at this time.

AD will again include a request for interested members to respond within the next Newsletter. **AD**

(ii) Potential second Ukulele group

Following former group leader, Barbara Cooke, expressing a desire to start up a second Ukulele group for beginners, an appeal was placed in the January/February Newsletter.

AD reported that as at the date of the meeting only one expression of interest had been received. Again, AD will again include, in the next Newsletter, a request for interested members to respond. Barbara Cooke will be kept up to date of progress. **AD**

(iii) Potential second Badminton group

A request has been received from a group of at least ten members of the Badminton group, who meet every Tuesday, to also hire two courts at the same Michelin venue every Monday. The cost of each court is £8.90, but it appears that the group are willing to cover these costs, and wish to continue under the u3a umbrella.

The committee were supportive to the proposal but will insist on a named group leader to undertake the administrative tasks, and that no other u3a member would be debarred from joining the group.

(iv) Introduction of Waiting Lists

The group leader of both the Badminton and Indoor Bowls group has informed AD that both activities are at maximum capacity, and that Waiting Lists would be commenced. AD agreed to make the appropriate annotations on the website, and include in the next Newsletter.

AD

(v) Indoor Kurling Venue - Issues

The regular venue for the Indoor Kurling activity has always been the second floor of Longton Central Hall. The group leader has recently written to AD to express concern that some members were having difficulty climbing the stairs and may have to reconsider their attendance.

The group leader has asked whether the committee could offer the room below, which has easier access. A start time of 11am was proposed after the Gentle Exercise class had concluded. Conversation with Central Hall staff has determined that this time is not logistically possible.

Central Hall staff can alternatively offer the main hall every Friday commencing at the group's usual start time of 10am. The group can if they wish, try out the main Hall on their next planned meeting date and time, because the hall is vacant on that date only. AD will convey these details to the group leader.

AD

9. ENTERTAINMENTS CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

(a) Monthly Meeting 29th January – review

Feedback from members who attended the presentation from Dean Dixon titled "1950s A Nostalgic Journey") were generally complimentary.

(b) Bookings, etc.

(i) Lou Macari has been booked for the Monthly Meeting on 26th February. Lou will talk about his work in providing shelter for the homeless in Stoke-on-Trent.

(ii) The entertainment at the Monthly Meeting on 26th March will be "Spring Bingo" and will be provided by committee members. There will be three games of Bingo (Lines and Full House), with a quiz after the first two games. There will be prizes for the winners.

BM/DE

(iii) "Pets as Therapy" will be the title of the presentation in April.

(iv) BM proposed that the entertainment at the 2026 AGM be provided by Chris Stratman. He plays the guitar to the "Shadows" music. This entertainer has yet to be confirmed.

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 confirmed that biscuits and drinks will be served at the next monthly meeting.

12. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

(a) **AGM related matters**

AD asked the committee to approve a proposed Invitation Letter to members, together with a Committee Application Form. Both documents were accordingly approved for distribution by LS/AS.

LS/AS

(b) **Other matters**

Urban Wilderness

LS considered that the branch should engage with Urban Wilderness CIC which is a community interest company based in Longton. The company is involved in workshops and was extensively involved in the Longton Carnival & Pig Walk Parade which took place each April of the last few years. AD asked that we should determine from Urban Wilderness how they would view any involvement from the branch. KF agreed to progress the matter.

KF

13. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

12th March 2026.

The meeting was formally closed at 3.40pm.

Chairman: *A. J. Devin*

Date: *12th March 2026*