

**MINUTES OF THE 139<sup>th</sup> COMMITTEE MEETING OF STOKE-ON-TRENT SOUTH u3a, HELD IN METHODIST CENTRAL HALL, LONGTON, AT 2pm ON THURSDAY 12<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2026.**

**PRESENT**

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

**1. APOLOGIES**

Lynne Stevenson

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous committee meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026 were approved by attendees and signed by the chairman as an accurate record.

**3. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

**4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

**(i) u3a Trust**

(a) Applications for the position of Council representatives closed on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February. The Trust's CEO was pleased to announce that vacant Council Positions were filled in all regions except the West Midlands. No nominations were received from within our region.

(b) The Trust is conducting a "u3a and me – member survey." They want to learn from trustees; what they enjoy; what they get from their u3a; and how u3a fits into their lives. The Trust considers that responses should help them to raise the profile of the u3a.

(c) The trust has launched a short new animated film promoting the u3a movement. The film may be used by branches for promotion purposes.

(d) New photos are being sought of members taking part in activities. These will be used as a bank of photos freely available to all branches. AD opined that he had experienced a reluctance from branch members in having their photos on the branch website.

(e) The Trust has updated its brand guidelines, specifically relating to brand font and visuals.

(f) HMRC has made changes to their guidelines in respect of Gift Aid. In order to claim gift aid on core membership fees, the fee must be explicitly advertised at the point of payment. AD opined that the branch operates strictly in accordance with this requirement.

**(ii) Regional matters**

No correspondence has been issued, and no matters are currently pending.

**5. SECRETARY'S REPORT**

The Secretary (PR), although still in tenure, is now residing in Assisted Living Accomodation. He has confirmed that his committee tenure will cease at the May 2026 AGM.

**6. TREASURER'S REPORT**

- (a) AS distributed a Statement of Income and Expenditure as at 8<sup>th</sup> March 2026. Details were as follows:

	£	
Current	-348.07	Balance 2025/26
	17,869.46	B/F from 2024/25
	<b>£17,521.39</b>	<b>TOTAL BALANCE</b>

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

(ii) Since bank charges are now being levied, and small value coinage could add to these charges, AD agreed to place a request in the next Newsletter asking members to pay in denominations of £1 coins only.

**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 434, of which 64 were new members. The committee were pleased with the number of new members, together with 370 renewals.

Membership renewal forms and AGM papers are in the process of being distributed. In order to save on postage, hand delivery to members will be undertaken wherever possible.

**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**

Enthusiastic member, Derek Wardle, had proposed a number of good ideas for the introduction of a new group. After advertising the proposal in the January and February Newsletters, the response has unfortunately been poor. Two members only were interested in general board games and just one person in chess. AD will again converse with Derek Wardle and explain that the numbers are not viable.

AD

**(ii) Potential second Ukulele group**

Former group leader, Barbara Cooke, expressed a desire to start up a second Ukulele group for beginners, accordingly an appeal was placed in the January and February Newsletters.

AD reported that three expressions of interest had been received, but further interest was likely. Should Barbara Cooke wish to commence with a small number, the committee authorised a three months trial period. AD will explore a suitable day/time and report back.

AD

**(iii) Second Badminton group**

The second Badminton group has now commenced, meeting at the same Michelin venue every Monday. AD has spoken to new group leader, Linda Burgess, and she has agreed to undertake all the necessary administrative tasks.

AD confirmed that details of the new group had been input to the branch website, and recorded on the branch activity schedule.

**(iv) Indoor Kurling – Change of room/day**

The Indoor Kurling activity has now moved from its regular room on the top floor of Central Hall to the Main Hall. The attendance day will change from alternate Wednesdays to alternate Fridays, but the group's start time will remain at 10am.

AD will amend the details on branch administrative documents.

AD

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

**(a) Monthly Meeting 26<sup>th</sup> February 2026 – review**

Feedback from members who attended the presentation from Lou Macari was excellent. Lou was obviously very popular because attendance was much higher than normal. Lou demonstrated that, though he had led a privileged life in football, he still had a strong social conscience.

Following the generous contributions from the audience and the branch, a sum of £300 was raised in aid of the Macari Foundation.

**(b) Bookings, etc.**

**(i)** The entertainment at the Monthly Meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> March will be "Spring Bingo" and will be provided by committee members DE and BM. There will be three games of Bingo (Lines and Full House), with a quiz preceding the third game. There will be prizes for the winners (extra prizes will be available in the event of more than one "shout.")

The quiz will consist of 20 cryptic questions, but there will be only one winner (decider questions will be posed).

BM/DE

**(ii)** "Pets as Therapy" will be the title of the presentation on 30<sup>th</sup> April. This will be provided by Lauren Simmonds, who intends to bring along her dog "Boston."

**(iii)** Although guitarist, Chris Stratman, was originally proposed by BM, logistical difficulties have proved to be an issue. Consequently, popular local professional singer Holly Reynolds has been booked for the AGM on 21<sup>st</sup> May. Holly was very well received when invited a few years ago, and she will sing well known songs from the 50s and 60s.

**10. PUBLICITY OFFICER'S REPORT**

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

**11. CATERING**

(i) The Catering Officer (DE) confirmed that tea, coffee and Easter cake will be served at the next monthly meeting.

(ii) DE expressed her thanks to members who responded to the appeal to help out in the kitchen at monthly meetings. DE will write a note of thanks for inclusion in the next Newsletter.

**DE/AD**

(iii) DE remained concerned that although plenty of white cups were available for monthly meetings, there was a shortage of corresponding white saucers. Central Hall representative, KF, agreed to follow-up the matter and report back.

**KF**

**12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**(a) Urban Wilderness**

KF reported that Urban Wilderness were leading the “Town of Culture” application for Longton. All supporters are encouraged to complete an on-line survey so providing lines of direction. KF mentioned two meetings to be held over the next week at Longton Market and Longton Town Hall.

The initial application submission must not exceed 400 words.

**13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

9<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

The meeting was formally closed at 3.25pm.

Chairman: *A. J. Devín*

Date: *9<sup>th</sup> April 2026*