



Minutes of Petersfield U3A Management Committee Meeting

The United Reform Church, Wednesday 12 March 2025 at 1400

Present: Charles Price (Chair), Rose Noonan (Secretary), Jenny Thwaites, Greg Cumming, Sandy Stephens, Bernice O'Reilly, Peter Lake, Tim Willans, Titian Fleming, Doreen Challen, Susie Reynolds

NOTE: * indicates pre-circulated paper

1. **Apologies:** none.

2. **Declarations of interest:** none.

3. **Chair's Opening Remarks**

CP confirmed that Pauline Kneen has regrettably stepped down, and stressed that we must hold on to what she has achieved in a short time. He was pleased to report that Louise Fox has agreed to continue until the AGM.

4. **Minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2025***

These were agreed and signed by the Chair.

5. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

Members agreed that the asterisk system for referencing a pre-circulated report was useful, but requested that such papers should be stored with the Minutes in Dropbox.

ACTION: DC

In response to requests, TW agreed to offer further hands-on training on the practicalities of using Dropbox.

ACTION: TW

6. **Members' reports**

a. **Finance* (GC)**

Petersfield u3a currently has £4,687.08 in the cash account, and £30,939.74 in the Gold deposit account. Gift Aid has been received in excess of £1800.

GC expressed his preference to return to a cash, rather than accrual, accounting system for the next financial year, and to continue using an Excel-based accounting system, rather than Beacon. This was **AGREED**.

Although financial documents are currently backed up securely by GC, TW observed that a more secure backup system is desirable, and that, in the short term, password protection of financial documents will enhance data security. **ACTION: GC**

CP/PL noted the need to document Petersfield u3a's banking procedures in order to assist new colleagues dealing with finances.

PL, GC and DC plan to meet to move forward with the Reserves policy.

b. Vice-Chair's Report * (JT)

c. Membership* (SS)

SS reported that of 44 lapsed member questionnaires sent out, about 25% were returned, with no patterns evident regarding reasons for leaving – a positive outcome. About 28 new members have joined.

Data security was discussed, including the benefits of storing membership data on Dropbox; the need to destroy data when members are no longer with Petersfield u3a; and the conflicts between different organisations regarding length of time data must be retained. PL and DC offered to help SS with workload.

d. Groups* (BOR)

BOR noted that several new groups have been set up and are progressing well, but new convenors require some assistance, particularly if less keen to engage with IT systems. Although LF will stay until November, the Groups team still requires more members.

Use of paid tutors – BO'R has investigated the use of paid tutors by some u3a branches, and reported that this entails significant administrative and financial workload. Her view was that we are not currently in a position to proceed.

AGREED: to remove from the MC agenda until at least after the AGM of Nov. 2026.

Convenors' Listening Groups: BO'R gave an update on the progress of the project that Jenny Stevinson is conducting with Convenor Listening Groups. She reported on progress to date as follows:

- 5 meetings have now taken place, which have been positive and informative. So far, more than half the Convenors have attended.
- The groups are making recommendations for improved lines of communication between them and MC. They are also identifying training needs and how these can be met so that Convenors feel fully informed and confident in their roles.
- There is an appetite for the groups continuing in some form and Jenny Stevinson will set these up in due course. This will require support from the MC, which has been agreed.
- Convenors will be asked to review the report with recommendations (currently in draft form) before it comes to MC.

Colleagues also acknowledged the value of MC members being involved in the convenor groups.

d. (PL)*

PL's paper addressed Matters Arising from the 8 January meeting.

e. IT* (TW)

The IT team plans to shift to Microsoft 365, which offers greater functionality than Google. All MC members will be notified when the changes take place, and training will be provided as necessary.

TW clarified that, although the IT team will shortly share a new, generic email address, at present communications directly to TW or other IT team individuals should use their existing gmail address.

The issue of Microsoft 365 licensing was raised. TW agreed to look into this with a view to supporting colleagues, and present a proposal to MC in May. **ACTION: TW**

f. Speaker Secretary's Report (TF)

TF is currently securing speakers for next year's Open Meetings.

g. Policy Review* (DC)

DC thanked colleagues for their feedback, and requested further comments by 12 April, earlier if possible. She noted that she will additionally cross-check content against the constitution and byelaws of Petersfield u3a. DC aims to seek approval of a final draft at the May MC meeting, but is willing to postpone until July if any colleagues previously working on policy would prefer to use that meeting slot. DC agreed to liaise with GC to update certain financial details in the byelaws. **ACTION: DC**

7. Current and future project plans*

No issues were raised. TW suggested that a holistic overview might be worthwhile. In relation to CP's intention to review the website, colleagues agreed that u3a funds could support professional enhancement of its appearance.

TW offered to set up a Dropbox folder to house the full set of plans. **ACTION: TW**

8. Feedback from the meeting of 6 March*/Resignations

It was agreed that PK's resignation strengthens the need to appoint more MC members, as well as a new Chair after the AGM. Although it is possible that a new member might be found who would volunteer for the Chair role, committee members expressed a general preference for JT (if willing) to assume a holding role as Chair for a year, supported effectively by one or two vice-chairs. In relation to this, JT provided the following statement: *"I would reluctantly take a holding chair role for up to a year, providing other more recent trustees among you agree that one of you would take over the role within a year. The committee agreed that you would support me during this year, which is encouraging, and would enable the committee to move forward, and newer members to feel more comfortable to take on additional responsibility."*

Members agreed that the current year should be used for consolidation, rather than new initiatives.

JT highlighted the need to take over and update PK's database, which she plans to do with SS. PL agreed to forward his earlier version of the database to JT, SS and TW.

ACTION: PL

9. Connect

There were no updates.

10. 30th Anniversary Plans* (BO'R)

BO'R explained that this event will precede the Open Meeting on Monday 9 June and last about 90 minutes, with a good finger buffet provided by local caterers along with a drink and some music. Following discussion, it was agreed:

- PCC has capacity for more than 80, and could probably accommodate 100-120 people if not seated at tables;
- Certain invited guests will have reserved places;
- Other attendees will be asked to register in advance;
- Only those who have signed up will be able to stay on for the Open Meeting;
- This information will be clearly explained to members in advance;
- If numbers are increased, the budget will be accordingly higher - £3000;
- Additionally, the Art Group will receive a trophy in memory of Bob Simmons to award within the group each year: cost £50-£100.

11. Any other Business: Reserves*

CP previously confirmed by email that MC has the power to reverse a previous decision (24 April 2024) to reduce membership fees, on account of the administrative burden this would create. He proposed the following resolution:

- To postpone any change to the subscription rate from the current £15, in order to allow the new management committee to have the opportunity to review options regarding the Reserve surplus.

This was **AGREED** unanimously.

The meeting closed at 17.00

Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 14 May 2025 at 2pm.

Venue: United Reform Church

DMC 14/03/25

Chair's signature:

Date: