



Minutes of Petersfield U3A Management Committee Meeting

The United Reform Church, Wednesday 14 May 2025 at 1400

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

NOTE: * indicates pre-circulated paper

1. **Apologies:** Greg Cumming
2. **Declarations of interest:** none.
3. **Chair's Opening Remarks**

CP apologised for not having written a synopsis of members' plans for the current year, nor reviewing the website as intended. He requested that the Committee should consider options for a Christmas event shortly, to enable timely preparation. TF and RF will consider possible entertainment.
4. **Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2025***

These were agreed and signed by the Chair.
5. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.
6. **Members' reports**
 - a. **Finance* (GC)**

At the time of GC's report in April, Petersfield u3a had £2,130.84 in the cash account, and £29,663.36 in the Gold deposit account.
 - b. **Vice-Chair's Report (JT)**

See also under item 6d.

The Committee discussed the issue of finding volunteers. There are currently several vacancies. A direct approach to individuals seems most effective; advertising vacancies in Connect, although available to all members, has proved less productive. SS confirmed that the application form now requires new members to acknowledge that they are expected to contribute to u3a in some form. Welcome meetings and the

Welcome Committee are known to play an important role, but past experience has shown the importance of prompt telephone follow-up to locate potential volunteers. This could involve both the Welcome team and/or MC members (SR also offered to make phone calls).

CP noted that, with the improved member database, follow-up could be shared out amongst MC. This would require some form of standard role description. BO'R suggested that more flexible guidelines would be preferable, enabling a role to evolve once matched to a volunteer. JT emphasised the importance of identifying early what members can, or would like to, do in order to match them to vacancies later. As the database now amalgamates past and new member data, it can help with predicting volunteering vacancies and identifying people who might fill them. **ACTION: JT/SS/TW/PL/Sue B to consider.**

c. Membership* (SS)

The current total of 778 members was considered very good.

d. Groups* (BOR)

BO'R plans to advertise for a convenor for a new group focused on walking tours of London, and noted that other convenor vacancies also exist.

e. PL

PL continues to work with TW on data protection.

d. IT* (TW)

TW thanked Mike Bracey for his work in equipping members with new email addresses. CP observed that the IT team is working very well. The issue of whether convenors should also be offered u3a email addresses was discussed, along with whether their names as well as email addresses should be posted on the website. **ACTION: BO'R to discuss this in convenor groups.**

In relation to JT's proposal for IT training for Committee members (Agenda item 8), TW intends first to clarify exactly what will be relevant. He confirmed that IT training will be primarily for MC members, and then possibly convenors; a broader offer of support with IT to the wider membership might possibly be considered in the future if there is demand. JT noted that Age Concern offer an IT support service. **ACTION JT/TW: JT to inform TW of a misleading comment in Connect, TW to amend.**

e. Policy Review (DC)

The revised policy for Reserves, Surpluses and Deficits (GC/PL) features under item 8. DC continues to work on the draft review of Petersfield u3a policies.

f. Speaker Secretary's Report (TF)

TF reported that the '60s' Open Meeting was very well received, and that she now has a full programme for this year and next, with just one vacant slot. She would welcome

greater communication relating to AV support. **ACTION: JT to put TF in contact with Paul**, who organises the support schedule. Russ Stephens is the lead contact for the rolling show. In relation to an issue regarding authorisation of payments to speakers, it was agreed that the relevant policy guidance needs to be checked, and if necessary reviewed regularly. **ACTION CP/RN: to place on next meeting agenda.**

7. Plans for the post of Chair (CP/JT/RN)

When CP steps down as Chair, it is planned that JT will take on the role for a year (with periods of unavailability) with the support of RN and BO'R as joint Vice-Chairs, one or both of whom would assume the role of Chair in due course. CP welcomed the plan and thanked those involved. RN suggested that more specific guidance about the role of Chair and other MC roles would be helpful; JT observed that although there is guidance about aspects of these roles on the national u3a website, Petersfield u3a also needs to take into account its own aspirations. CP was asked to record his own activities as Chair and his thoughts on how these might develop. **ACTION: CP**

8. IT Skills Proposal* (circulated 24th April) (JT)

See item 6d.

9. Reserves, Surpluses and Deficits Policy* (PL/GC/DC)

This was proposed by RN and **AGREED.**

10. Lunch Group *

BO'R reported that future Lunch Group meetings are planned, and she intends to talk to convenors about future developments. She suggested there was no issue with the concept – other u3a branches organise similar events – but pointed out that for insurance purposes it needs to be an official u3a group, whether 'open' or 'closed', with membership recorded on Beacon; this needs to be clarified. Scanning attendees' cards might be one way of recording membership. **ACTION: BO'R**

11. Connect

Nothing to report.

12. Volunteers' Card * (email 1st May) (JT)

For 'Volunteers' Week', a 'thank you card' will be emailed to volunteers on the current list (to include convenors), accompanied by a general message of thanks in Connect.

13. Convenors' Project* (Jenny Stevinson)

CP and BO'R welcomed JS and thanked her for her hard work, and also for joining the meeting to put forward her proposals for consideration. JS talked to her report (previously shared with convenors) as follows.

JS has now led 5 meetings involving 44 convenors (over 50%), describing these as 'a way for convenors to give their points of view to the MC' (rather than asking them to do anything extra), and proposes to continue with the meetings (the next one in June).

She reported that convenors in general like their groups being part of u3a, and value having an MC representative at meetings; it is important that MC is seen to be adopting their ideas, supporting the convenors and enabling them to enjoy their role. JS would like the groups in due course to become self-sustaining. She recommended:

- Strengthening members' understanding of the self-help nature of u3a
- Developing convenors' understanding that they are part of a larger organisation, rather than just leaders of groups
- Establishing structures to help with the above, e.g. 'groups of groups', and developing more structural links between MC and groups to enable two-way communication about matters of relevance to the convenors on a regular basis
- Raising the profile of MC – e.g. MC members visiting groups

Subsequent discussion included the following points:

- Convenor lunch events need a clear purpose (i.e. are not purely social events)
- Induction is important
- Convenors' understanding of MC's role and how MC might support them varies
- Meetings of existing convenors need to be useful to them in general and aspirational in nature, rather than focusing on existing activity
- There is a need for two-way communication and ways to develop group involvement with MC/understanding of what MC can do for convenors
- Welcome meetings could be developed to emphasise the nature, importance and satisfactions of volunteering options
- Groups are better not to be too large
- TW requested an IT presence at each meeting

JS/BO'R/JT plan to move this project forward, with the support of MC.

14. 30th Anniversary* (BO'R)

BO'R clarified that preparations are going well. Currently about 60 attendees have registered, including MC members whose assistance will be welcome. As it stands, only those with an event ticket may attend the Open Meeting afterwards, although there may be some capacity on the day.

15. Any other Business

None.

The meeting closed at 17.10

Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 9 July 2025 at 1400.

Venue: United Reform Church

DMC 17/05/25

Chair's signature:

Date: